

It is unusual for the viola to feature as a solo instrument but Ugne Tiskute, from Lithuania, produced a warm, and vibrant tone throughout. She could play the big moments with impressive virtuosity and she often found the soul of the instrument in lyrical passages lower in the register, closer to the songlike tenor range of the 'cello.

The opening Arpeggione sonata by Schubert has been arranged for many instruments. Here it sounded perfect on viola as Ugne brought a disarming simplicity to the melodic line and an exciting dancelike quality to the joyous sequences.

Her accompanist, Alexandra Vaduva, from Romania, proved an ideally balanced partner, giving the viola space to breathe and to soar, whilst always ready to build the crescendos or to support. Alexandra also performed as a soloist in Enescu's Suite for piano, a fellow Romanian whose works she is studying for her Phd. First performed in 1897 Enescu was looking back beyond Romanticism to the glories of the Baroque. The inevitability of its fugue and the Toccata-like brilliance of its finale were delivered with controlled and fleet fingerwork .

The generous programme also included a viola sonata by Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979), a Rhapsodic work showing a folksy English style coupled with Impressionism and a Phantasy by York Bowen(1884-1961) which sounded like film music and it transported my neighbour and me to the Cornish cliffs of Daphne du Maurier's "Rebecca"!

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