

Sydenham International Festival

The impressive opening and closing concerts of this year's Sydenham International Festival featured two very gifted soloists from Eastern Europe. In the programme on May 24, the young Serbian cellist Maja Bogdanovic gave an absolutely breathtaking account of Shostakovich's First Concerto, literally from first bar to last. This was her British debut, and it was obvious why she has won such a clutch of important prizes on the Continent – she is a player in the highest class. The closing concert on June 21 brought the equally-gifted 20-year-old Russian violinist Sergey Dogadin – a frequent visitor to this Festival – in

Beethoven's Violin Concerto, with which work he made his British debut with the Philharmonia Orchestra at the age of 15. He is equally a master of his instrument and multiple major prize-winner – and the deepening of his reading of this masterpiece in the intervening five years has brought richer rewards. One can certainly prophesy that in ten years' time his reading of Beethoven's Concerto should be of world stature, by which time he will have come to grasp more fully the integral nature of the first movement's structure and have decided on which cadenza he will play (on this occasion, it was a mixture of several, including his own).

Within the week he was back in Russia to perform the Concerto in St Petersburg under Vladimir Ashkenazy. But this was a superbly compelling performance, abetted by a splendid partnership under Robert Trory, to whom we owe the appearances of these young virtuosi. With the hand-picked Festival Orchestra, drawn from the finest players of London orchestras, Trory delivered strong yet sensitive accounts of Overtures by Rossini and Mendelssohn and of Haydn's *London* and Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphonies in those opening and closing concerts – ending, as an encore, with Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri*, the first item heard on May 24. **RM-W**