

DYNAMIC DUTCH PIANO DUO



What an absolute delight and privilege it was that the Royal Netherlands Embassy and HIFA brought us the remarkable and fast-rising piano duo Scholtes and Janssens. The NMB Recital Room, for the first time, was absolutely packed.

Scholtes and Janssens presented us with a programme of French music from around 1900. First, there was Claude Debussy's *Petite Suite*. It is a charming work, and Lestari Scholtes and Gwylim Janssens did its subtleties in harmonic tone-colouring full justice. And then the fireworks started.

Not in any crude sense of course: Ravel's *Rapsodie Espagnole* was played with such musical conviction and technical brilliance that on the one hand one could relax in the knowledge that the difficult music was in a safe double-pair of hands. On the other hand, one was transported and made to sit on the edge of one's seat:

following a musical performance that was unique.

As if that was not enough, we then were treated to Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*: a very difficult work for the pianists, but also not easy to understand for the audience. Luckily Janssens explained the story of *Petrouchka*, and this helped in understanding the music. Archie could not stay still after the energetic *Petrouchka* and kept billowing out enormous clouds of cigar smoke – making even my eyes water, let alone his – saying: 'this was the best musicianship of HIFA, this combined an expert understanding of the composer's vision with a brilliance of technique that was astounding. We were spoiled!' I simply nodded silently.
