

## A SHEFFIELD GEM

Ruth Gibson (viola), Tim Horton (piano)

The Upper Chapel in Sheffield was the venue for a splendid Viola and Piano recital at the end of November, as part of the Music in the Round series. These concerts normally take place in the Crucible Studio, but on this occasion the venue added visual appeal - while reducing the intimacy of the 'in the round' formula. A large audience (Ruth congratulated us on our turn-out!) was treated to toe-tapping Prokofiev, grief-filled Britten, and multi-faceted Franck.

The Prokofiev brought four of the movements from 'Romeo and Juliet' arranged by Vadim Borisovsky, with encouragement from Prokofiev himself. We then moved to Benjamin Britten, whose 'Lachrymae' gave Ruth full opportunity to show virtuosity, and at the end a breath-catching tenderness as Dowland's sombre tune is revealed.

From 1950 Aldeburgh we moved back to 1886, to César Franck's Violin Sonata. In this version for Viola and Piano, Ruth was able to display the brilliance of the original (even without an E-string!) and the darkness of a C-string by dint of some judicious octave transpositions. The performance was an excellent partnership with Tim Horton, who skilfully balanced his cascades of notes against his need to avoid overwhelming the viola player. At the end of the concert, the applause was loud and long. A memorable event: even the programme notes were top drawer!

Roger Hoyle