

# Reviews

## MUSIC

### SCO Wind Soloists

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland



From the rich, beautifully sculpted unisons that kicked off Beethoven's opening E flat Wind Sextet, it was clear that this lunchtime recital from the SCO Wind Soloists was going to be special. And so it proved – not only a live taster of the ensemble's just-released all-Beethoven CD, but also a farewell to principal bassoonist Peter Whelan.

Whelan was joined by SCO principal clarinettist Maximiliano Martín for a gleeful Poulenc Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon, sandwiched by way of contrast between the concert's two big Beethoven offerings, and the duo had enormous fun with the Sonata's perky polytonality, capturing Poulenc's acid wit to splendid effect and negotiating his angular, multi-voice lines expertly.

But it was Beethoven who formed the concert's focus, and the ensemble found a convincing balance between Classical elegance and for-

ward-looking vigour in their two wind works from early in his output. Their strongly characterised Sextet had immaculate ensemble, just the right amount of rhythmic give-and-take in its shapely slow movement and remarkable attention to detail in its finale. This music would simply have been a 'background to chit-chat' in Beethoven's time, horn player Harry Johnstone told us in his engaging introduction to the more expansive Wind Octet, but with the first movement's driving energy, and the mischievous unpredictability of the exuberant third, you got the feeling that Beethoven would have thoroughly enjoyed the care and vividness with which the SCO players presented it.

**DAVID KETTLE**

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### Winterplay – Beethoven Concert

Queen's Hall, Edinburgh



The dark days of February have been indelibly brightened by Winterplay, a new weekend chamber music fes-