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Classical

Irish Chamber Orchestra

CITY HALL, CORK

★★★★★

Declan Townsend

RIGHT from the sound of the first notes of Mozart's Symphony No 27 in G, it was obvious the Irish Chamber Orchestra was about to create magic.

The ICO was under the direction of Gabor Takacs-Nagy, the founder of the world-famous Takacs String Quartet, who has, in recent years, branched out into conducting. On the evidence of this performance, he has another glittering future in front of him.

The Mozart symphony had fabulously sprightly energy and gorgeous dynamic contrasts in the first movement, poised elegance and stunningly intense pianissimos in the Gavotte, while the excitement created in the Presto was indescribable.

The 23-year-old US cellist Bartholomew LaFollette's approach to Haydn's delightful Cello Concerto in C was stylistic, elegant, poised, tasteful, technically brilliant and, together with the ICO, absolutely exhilarating.

Although some may question the policy of playing chamber works as orchestral pieces, Dvorak's String Sextet in A works marvellously, particularly when it is played with such exquisite taste as it was by the ICO.

In this utterly charming work, Takacs-Nagy's coaxing of superbly subtle dynamic gradation, beautifully judged rubato and brilliant excitement from his players was sheer magic.