

**Polish Chamber Orchestra
at St David's Hall, Cardiff**

A superb musical rendition

By IFAN PAYNE

REVIEW

CAUGHT between Grieg's *Suite* and the interval there was little danger in being made to feel trapped into hearing yet another mundane run through of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*.

On Thursday evening the Polish Chamber Orchestra, a sober-faced and doleful looking group of players, were just the boys and girls to keep us awake and musically on our toes.

Did I hear a guffaw of disbelief or, perhaps, protest at the seemingly fast tempo adopted for the opening allegro?

We have I fear grown far too used to hearing ponderous, large-scale renditions and this allegro sounded fresher and more plausible for being in tempo.

Only a certain lack of inflection in this and the succeeding movements gave cause for concern.

"We often find that we disagree with what the critics say," said the couple during the interval and then promptly fell into disagreement with one another regarding the performance of Elgar's

Introduction and Allegro.

I found this to be superbly performed, both technically and musically.

Because of the clarity and discipline of the playing, the complexity of Elgar's multi-part writing could be fully admired.

But those individual strands were woven into a stunning musical tapestry. By any standard this was a great performance, thoroughly responsive to the emotional and musical ebb and flow.

Similarly, with breathtaking technique and musicianship the Polish Chamber Orchestra caught the very essence of the *Waltz and Elegie* in Tchaikovsky's *Serenade For Strings Number One* to perfection.

For its first encore the orchestra performed with exceptional flair a movement from Britten's *Variation On A Theme Of Frank Bridge* and made me hope to hear much more of this superb ensemble in an even wider repertoire.