

# theStrad

VOICE OF THE STRING MUSIC WORLD SINCE 1890

## iPalpiti/Eduard Schmieder

ZANKEL HALL, NEW YORK 5 MARCH 2009

The 26-member string orchestra iPalpiti (from the Italian for 'heartbeats') draws its youthful players from leading orchestras and conservatoires around the world. While their many commitments limit the amount of time they can spend together, the ensemble plays with impressive unanimity of blend and rhythmic assurance.

The opening work, the remarkable 'Prélude à l'unisson' from Enescu's Orchestral Suite no.1, demonstrated an almost uncanny unanimity of sound and vibrato, a quality repeated again and again throughout the evening. All of the members of this ensemble serve as soloists and at one point conductor Eduard Schmieder seemed to delight in delegating each member of the first violins in turn to take the limelight. It was especially remarkable to hear such a wide variety of individual tones emerge and then slip back into those fabulous unisons.

Norwegian-born Catharina Chen and the Romanian Alexandru Tomescu were incandescent partners in Malcolm Arnold's Concerto for Two Violins. The deeply affecting *Musica dolorosa* of Latvian

composer (and double bassist) Pēteris Vasks combined wild, free passages with sorrowful music reminiscent somehow of both Pärt and Piazzolla.

For the final work of the evening, Schmieder presented his own judicious reworking of Grieg's G minor String Quartet for orchestral strings. He and iPalpiti threw themselves into the music with passion, intelligence, refinement and imagination. This is plainly a work that has long been in the ensemble's repertoire, and the players drew from it splendid dark sonorities and a wild rhythmic drive in the finale. It sounded as if Grieg were translating the tarantella to Norway.

BILL MCGLAUGHLIN