

MUSIC



CONDUCTOR Jessel Murray and the Orchestra acknowledging applause as the concert is about to begin.

Classical delights from NSO

By ANNE HILTON

THERE WERE some anxious moments on the Queen's Hall stage on Sunday as the National Sinfonia Orchestra performance in concert was billed to begin at 6 pm but did not in fact do so until 6.10 pm, or thereabouts.

Waiting on stage to begin the concert could very well account for the rather ragged playing in the strings as they tackled the overture to "Ruslan and Lyudmilla" by Mikhail Glinka. Indeed, one wondered whether whoever selected this brisk, brilliant piece that appears as the first item on many an orchestral concert wasn't being, perhaps, a tad over-ambitious?

Taken at breakneck speed by professionals, it was only to be expected that, since so many members of the National Sinfonia are, perforce, amateurs, practising, playing and performing in their spare time for the sheer lover of music, Glinka's overture was more sedate than usual. And

things improved as the orchestral players got over first (and only) night nerves.

I thank Jessel Murray - or whoever chose "Eight Russian Folk Songs" Op 58 by Anatoly Liadov for the next item on the programme. If, as they did last year, the NSO make a CD of the concert, for my money it will be worth it if only for those Russian songs — some funny, some wistful, some soothing, some joyful. And I thank the orchestra for playing these unfamiliar yet haunting melodies.

One must also congratulate the audience who heeded conductor Murray's appeal not to applaud until the last notes of the last song died away.

Of "Pomp and Circumstance March No 1" by Edward Elgar (aka "Land of Hope and Glory") the programme notes it to be "the second unofficial National Anthem of the British Empire"; we were intrigued to see at least one elderly member of

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KWAMÉ LEWIS playing Weber's Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra.



CHRISTON GRANT playing a cello solo from von Suppé's "Poet and Peasant" Overture.

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CONDUCTOR Jessel Murray bows as the orchestra stand to acknowledge applause.

Patriotic flourish to end show

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the audience singing along. Suffice it to say the orchestra gave a creditable performance of the piece.

Sothie Paul-Duraisamy in no newcomer to Trinidad, having performed with the National Sinfonia twice already. While purists shake their heads and mutter about bastardising a symphony concert with what was originally intended to be a piece for piano and jazz band, Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" is popular with the public - and earned sustained applause in the Queen's Hall on Sunday night.

After the interval Kwamé Lewis took the solo spot to play Carl Maria von Weber's "Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra" Op 26 -



THE National Sinfonia Orchestra with Jessel Murray conducting.

with a somewhat reduced orchestra, as the score demands.

The "Poet and Peasant Overture" by Franz von Suppé surprises the audience not familiar with the work with one well-known theme after another. The passage for solo cello

was most ably performed by principal cellist Christon Grant.

One must never, never end a concert in TT without a local piece. Thanks to Liam Teague, who arranged these pieces for steel orchestra, and Gary Gibson, who transcribed them for symphony orchestra, "Colours Again" and "Nostalgia" by Mark Loquan ended the National Sinfonia Concert with a patriotic flourish. As ever, our thanks to Music Director and Conductor Jessel Murray, the tutors from Massachusetts who coached violin, viola and cello, and the members of the orchestra who gave their time to create music, live music, without any electronic intermediary (thanks to the Queen's Hall 'Shell') for our delight.



SOTHIE PAUL-DURAISAMY, the soloist, playing Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue"