

MUSIC

Trio Zimmermann

Queen's Hall



It was an unapologetically serious-minded, even cerebral, programme that Trio Zimmermann brought to the Queen's Hall. And potentially quite a lot to digest at Ilam: Schoenberg's thorny String Trio (premiered the year the International Festival was founded) and the visionary journey of Bach's Goldberg Variations, arranged for violin, viola and cello by the players themselves.

But what they offered were fresh, zesty accounts, full of passion and sharply etched in thrillingly incisive playing. They were clearly an ensemble of soloists, and each player's individual musical personality was stamped across the performances: cellist Christian Poltéra assertive and sometimes gruff; violist Antoine Tamestit leaning into phrases for gentle emphasis; and violinist Frank Peter Zimmermann bright and direct in his strongly defined playing.

They dovetailed immaculately in the Goldbergs, however, taking on and spinning forward Bach's intricate interplay of voices, and bringing a ringing clarity to the canonic movements. In their opening Aria they conjured the austere beauty of a viol consort, but in later movements there was an almost Tchaikovskian orchestral richness to their trio arrangement. Their opening Schoenberg Trio gripped from its ferociously intense opening and dared you to look away. These were astonishingly accomplished, brilliantly perceptive performances.

DAVID KETTLE

MUSIC

Room 29

Kings Theatre



When you are handed a key and invited to join Pulp frontman Jarvis Cocker and pianist Chilly Gonzales in Room 29 of the Chateau Marmont hotel, the legendary Sunset Strip playground of the rich and famous, it would be rude not to join the party.