

MUSIC**BRODSKY QUARTET**

MERCHANT HOUSE, GLASGOW

★★★

IT WAS an ambitious and wide-ranging programme that the Brodsky Quartet players had chosen for their lunchtime concert, part of the enterprising fortnightly series in Glasgow's Merchant's Hall. And there was no mistaking the vigour with which they attacked it – a little too vehemently at times. It was dramatic stuff, high on passion and energy, yet despite the musicians' easy-going introductions, yet sometimes you longed for a little more straightforwardness and simple beauty in their playing.

The Schubert Quartettsatz in C minor is often a genial concert opener, but in the Brodskys' hands it became a seething, schizophrenic beast, swinging wildly between tormented anger and soupy lyricism with

theatrical abandon. All far too extreme. Puccini's sorrowful *Crisantemi*, written in a single evening following the death of the composer's benefactor, allowed first violinist Daniel Rowland to demonstrate his rich, syrupy tone, but the players pulled the rhythm about so much in the search for expressiveness that they sometimes lost the sense of line.

With its theatrical twists and turns, Wolf's quirky *Italian Serenade* seemed made for the Brodsky players, and they gave a colourful if somewhat hard-driven performance. Things mellowed, though – thankfully – in the Debussy Quartet, where they struck a nice balance between pastel-coloured languour and sharp definition. Viola player Paul Cassidy was nimble in the sparkling scherzo's tricky figurations, and their slow movement was full of sonorous intensity.

DAVID KETTLE