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ESSENTIAL READING

**FRESH
THINKING
FOCUS****ELECTRIFYING
CONCERTOS****THE LATEST
INNOVATIONS
FOR 2013****FÉLIX
LAJKO**THE BOUNDARY-BUSTING
HORSE-WHISPERING FIDDLER**Laura van der Heijden (cello)**
**Clio Gould (violin) Royal
Philharmonic Orchestra/Paul Daniel**

CADOGAN HALL 30 OCTOBER 2012

Laura van der Heijden – the 15-year-old winner of numerous musical prizes – may well be the UK's answer to Sol Gabetta. A pupil of Leonid Gorokhov, she was commanding both musically and technically in Walton's Cello Concerto, the work with which she won the 2012 BBC Young Musician of the Year competition. Although the opening was taken at a rather deliberate pace, with unfocused playing from the Royal Philharmonic that lacked the shimmering timbres that in part forge the exquisite and mystic atmosphere, van der Heijden nevertheless managed to evoke poignant emotions in the questioning theme. Undaunted by the largely unresponsive orchestral partnership, she was assured in the lyrical passages, the only minor caveat being the double-stopped passages, which could have benefited from a greater sense of melodic continuity.

In the scherzo, van der Heijden generated an exciting rhythmic energy in the motivic writing, but she was perhaps most impressive in the finale's solo cadenza, where she drew well-voiced lines and a compelling narrative. Although the orchestra was lacklustre in the Walton, Clio Gould's accomplished rendition of the violin part in Holst's rarely heard but eloquent *A Song of the Night* saw the players respond more sensitively as chamber musicians. Even better was Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, which boasted top-calibre playing with marvellous character and refinement.

JOANNE TALBOT

