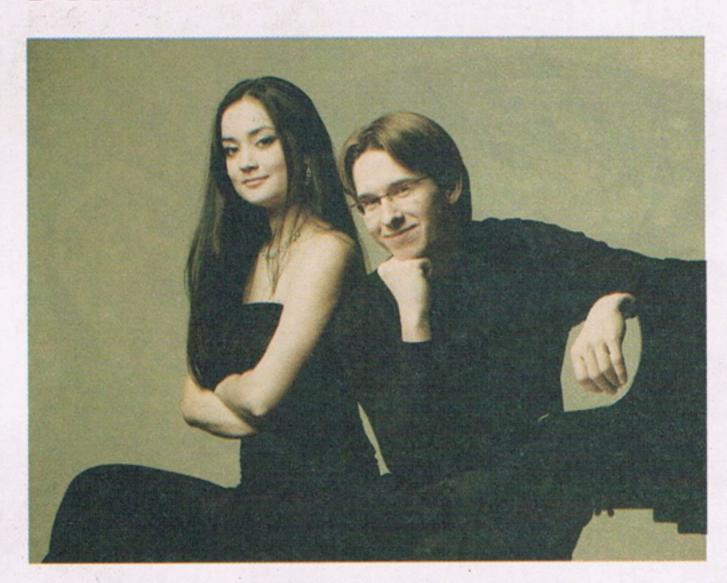
DYNAMIC DUTCH PIANO DUO



What an absolute delight and privilege it was that the Royal Netherlands Embassy and HIFA brought us the remarkable and fast-rising piano duo Scholtes and Janssens. The NMB Recital Room, for the first time, was absolutely packed.

Scholtes and Janssens presented us with a programme of French music from around 1900. First, there was Claude Debussy's Petite Suite. It is a charming work, and Lestari Scholtes and Gwylim Janssens did its subtleties in harmonic tone-colouring full justice. And then the fireworks started.

Not in any crude sense of course:
Ravel's Rapsodie Espagnole
was played with such musical
conviction and technical brilliance
that on the one hand one could
relax in the knowledge that the
difficult music was in a safe doublepair of hands. On the other hand,
one was transported and made
to sit on the edge of one's seat:

following a musical performance that was unique.

As if that was not enough, we then were treated to Stravinsky's Petrouchka: a very difficult work for the pianists, but also not easy to understand for the audience. Luckily Janssens explained the story of Petrouchka, and helped in understanding the music. Archie could not stay still after the energetic Petrouchka and kept billowing out enormous clouds of cigar smoke - making even my eyes water, let alone his - saying: 'this was the best musicianship of HIFA, this combined an expert understanding of the composer's vision with a brilliance of technique that was astounding. We were spoiled!' I simply nodded silently.