

THE CRITICS

THE HITS AND MISSES, NEWS AND REVIEWS ACROSS THE ARTS

Classical Anna Picard



St Bartholomew's Church, Sydenham, was transformed into the Villa Wesendonck during **Susan Bullock's** performance of Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* with conductor Robert Trory and the St Bartholomew Festival Orchestra last weekend.

Scratch bands don't come finer than this (sharp-eyed listeners will have spotted principals from the LSO, LPO and Philharmonia), or local festivals more ambitious than Sydenham Music. Luxuriant of tone and gloriously firm, Bullock's voice is thrilling at close range, losing none of its edge, sophistication or sensuality at the softest dynamic. Felix Mottl's orchestration of Wagner's narcotic love songs leaves one wanting to hear the *Liebested*, but Trory's breezy account of

'Luxuriant of tone, gloriously firm, Bullock's voice is thrilling close up'

Ravel's orchestral fancy, *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, led instead to a selection from Canteleube's *Chants d'Auvergne*. No need for angst here, just blissed-out portamento and sun-warmed simplicity. Bullock's Wagnerian career may have swept her past such girl-ish repertoire, but her voice is still nimble and true. Encores of "O mio babbino caro" and an unaccompanied Welsh folk-song were sensational.

Susan Bullock

St Bartholomew's Church
SYDENHAM



THE KEY



Awful



Bad



OK



Good



Outstanding