

Reviews for Asier Polo, at the San Sebastián Quincena Musical Festival, 3 August 2017

Pedro Unamuno, "El Mundo"

Mena / Polo, all-round engagement in the Kursaal

"The conductor and cellist performed a work by Elgar to open the classic and prestigious festival in San Sebastián.



On the stage, respect for the score and technical ability are a pre-requisite for a good performance. But for a truly special performance it's also necessary to have complete engagement between the musicians and also with the audience. All these elements came together on Thursday night at the opening of the 78th San Sebastian Quincena Musical Festival, in the hands of conductor Juanjo Mena, the BBC Philharmonic and the cellist Asier Polo.

The two Basques (the first from Vitoria, the second from Bilbao) aren't a bad combination for achieving

the lyricism contained within Elgar's Cello Concerto, with which the concert opened. Before the performance, Polo explained that it was an "ideal" work for cello – "expressive, introspective and reflexive"....

.... And following his display of virtuosity with the Elgar concerto - a touchstone for all great cellists – [Asier Polo] gave the audience an unusual encore as a gift: the Prelude to Gaspar Cassadó's Solo Cello Suite."

<http://www.elmundo.es/cultura/musica/2017/08/05/5984c02c268e3e9b0b8b45f8.html>

Mikel Chamizo, "Gara"

The Basque shone in Elgar

"The highlight of the evening was without doubt Asier Polo's performance of Elgar's Cello Concerto. One of the most famous works of the British repertoire, it's also the work with which Polo made his professional debut as a soloist, when he was just 21. His profound knowledge of the score could be seen in so many details of his interpretation, and especially in the elegant manner with which Polo unified the contrasting passages of the concerto, that varied from lyrical passion to almost mystic intimacy.

It was a great performance that lasted right up to the encore, the "Preludio-Fantasia" by Cassadó, which he played with incredible beauty."

Gonzalo Alonso, Beckmesser

"Asier Polo fine-tuned Elgar's beautiful but complex Violin Concerto in E minor, mastering its introverted lyricism and bursts of enormous expressiveness, but also its most difficult passages. After cheers from the public, the encore by Ravel only served to confirm that we were in the presence of a great artist, possessor of a rich, beautiful and always musical sound. The encore, the "Suite for cello" by Cassadó, was admirable."

<http://www.beckmesser.com/juanjo-mena-y-la-orquesta-de-la-bbc-bazas-solidas-en-donostia-y-santander/>