

# Dedicated to Diana Review

A unique and original tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales took place at the Turner Sims Auditorium in Southampton on 11th November. The film, which was made by New Forest artist Melanie Sanderson was synchronised to live music from US composer Craig Cervantes who travelled from the USA especially for the concert. For Craig & Melanie this was also to be their very first meeting as all of their prior work had been completed via the internet. The music was performed live by around 50 members of Southampton University Symphony Orchestra, augmented by a rhythm section and vocalists to perform the varied styles of music in the piece. The orchestra was ably conducted by Sergiu Rusu.

Starting with the dramatic chimes from Big Ben, the music moved steadily through Craig's symphony whilst the film showed portraits of a young Diana growing up. The portraits illustrated her engagement and wedding as well as her changing image after her marriage ended. A ballad using the line 'In your eyes' was teamed with close ups of Diana's eyes in some of the most beautiful paintings from the collection. The audio visual concept of the concert undoubtedly attracted people who



*Craig Cervantes and Melanie Sanderson*

rarely attend orchestral concerts, proving that the unusual medium of film and live music could be very entertaining and satisfying in its format.

After moving effortlessly into a jazzy, easy listening passage followed by a beautifully executed piano solo, the climax of the performance came with images of Paris and some paintings of Diana, some superimposed, accompanied by the musical adagio and a suggestion of Diana passing through the Elysium Fields.

Once the sombre climax was over, the music and imagery reverted to an uplifting celebration of Diana's life with happier Diana portraits, and another vocal ballad, 'Diana's Theme' with evocative lyrics. The audience expressed their enthusiasm at the end with sustained applause for the musicians as well as the Artist and her Composer colleague, who both took a bow with the young conductor. Craig, Melanie and Sergiu were clearly delighted with the audience reaction, and very happy that the whole performance was filmed for posterity.

The final portrait shown was entitled 'Let's Party', and exiting the auditorium was musically accompanied by Billy Joel's 'Uptown Girl'. This was the record to which Diana had famously performed with British dancer Wayne Sleep. The enthusiastic buzz in the foyer afterwards was the real evidence of the success of this unusual and tasteful production, a worthy tribute to 'The People's Princess'.