



Superb: Pascal Roge and Ami Hakuno performed works in the original piano duo format — four hands at one piano. Picture: NICK GRANITO

Rare occurrence cause to celebrate

WHAT: Pascal Roge & Ami Hakuno (piano duo). Music by Ravel, Debussy, Faure and Dukas

WHERE: Genesis Energy Theatre, Upper Hutt, Tuesday

REVIEWED BY: John Button

THANKS to the enterprise of Roger Lloyd, Pascal Roge and Ami Nakuno were coaxed from a tour of Australia to give a brief series of concerts here: Palmerston North, Waikanae and this one in Upper Hutt. And what a concert of sheer delight it was.

Though the music was thoroughly familiar, the fact that three of the works were performed in the original piano duo format — four hands at one piano — was a rare occurrence, and a reason for celebration.

Pascal Roge is one of the great interpreters of French piano music, and his skills were shown by some wonderful playing of six of Debussy's preludes — four from *Book 1* and two from *Book 2* — and as

stylish a performance of Ravel's *Sonatine* as could be imagined.

But the playing of Ravel's *Mother Goose*, Faure's *Dolly* and Debussy's *Petite Suite* by the two pianists was what made this concert completely special.

The pianism was seamlessly superb on a keyboard crowded by four hands, and to hear the music in the original form, before subsequent orchestrations made the music familiar, was to step back in time.

As a delightful finale we heard Dukas' own four-hand arrangement of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and, as an encore, a waltz by Francis Poulenc, brilliantly done.

The piano was a Schimmel, courtesy of Piano House, and it was played without the lid.

This enabled a top view of the keyboard to be shown — most effectively — on a screen, but it also contributed to a great clarity to the sound and no significant lack of body.