



Arunda Wind Trio

15th March 2014

Our soloists on Saturday evening were the Arunda Wind Trio - a young group of talented Scottish lassies on oboe, clarinet and bassoon. They replaced the previously engaged Illuminati Wind Quartet which had to cancel due to unforeseen circumstances.

It is always refreshing to hear different and more unusual instrumental combinations and Saturday night's performance, given to a smaller than usual audience, was no exception. As the players explained there is not a large repertoire written specifically for this combination. Such compositions that do exist are generally of a short and light nature, lacking the gravitas of - say - Mozart's compositions for larger groups of wind instruments. In fact Mozart was one of the earliest proponents of the Wind Trio, and it was not until the 20th Century, when French composers explored its potential, that it received much attention; the Arunda's programme reflected this to a large degree, along with a few arrangements of operatic favorites.

With a programme containing nine pieces by nine composers space does not allow for detailed analysis; suffice it to say that the standard of playing and technical ability was high. The three groups of pieces by the French composers, Jacques Ibert, Jacques Leclair and Jean Francaix demonstrated clearly how well these composers understood the instruments and the genre - technically and rhythmically very demanding but combined with great wit. Particularly memorable were Ibert's "Allegro quasi marziale", the "Trois Croissant Beurre" from Leclair's "La Petite Patisserie" and the expressive "Elegie" by Francaix.

This combination of instruments, lacking as it does the more normal fourth and fifth instrument, can sometimes sound "thin" and achieving the correct balance and dynamic between the upper registered instruments and lower is taxing. Although generally the playing was crisp and well-balanced, there were occasions when the bassoon sounded a bit overpowering. However, putting this aside, we were given a very enjoyable evening's entertainment by three talented players who will doubtless go a long way in their respective careers.