



## Bardic Trio

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January saw a full house in Ardrishaig Hall as Mid Argyll Arts Association welcomed Bardic Trio.

The Trio consisting of Scottish Tenor Jamie MacDougall, Guitarist Matthew McAllister and Welsh Harpist Sharron Griffiths have been together since 2013 and have commissioned eminent Scottish composers Eddie McGuire and Alasdair Nicolson to arrange new settings of Welsh, Scots and Orcadian traditional songs including Burns and the Balfour Song Book.

Jamie has been the 'nation's voice' for classical music on Radio Scotland since 2001. He regularly presents for Radio 3 and for 15 years has anchored BBC Proms in the Park as part of the Last Night of the Proms Festivities. He continues to enjoy a busy singing career which takes him around the world working with some of the world's top baroque, chamber and symphony Orchestras. Jamie completed a 5 year project to record all 429 songs of Haydn Folksong arrangements with the Haydn Trio Eisenstadt, to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Haydn, culminating in concerts in Milan, New York, Washington D.C., Vienna, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, as well as numerous European festivals. As a recitalist, Jamie has appeared at the Edinburgh International Festival, the Perth Festival, Australia, the Salzburg and Aldeburgh Festivals and in the Wigmore Hall.

Welsh born harpist Sharron Griffiths is also in great demand as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician in recitals in concert, recording and TV and radio broadcasts around the world. She is a member of several successful chamber ensembles and regularly works with BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Opera, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Trondheim Symphony Orchestra. Sharron is also a lecturer in pedal harp at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and harp tutor for the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

The third member of the trio is widely regarded as one of the most exciting and talented Classical Guitarists in Europe. Matthew McAllister has been delighting audiences worldwide for well over a decade. He has performed at major venues across the world such as The Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, The Purcell Room, London, Teatro Britanico, Lima, The Sage, Gateshead, Cenart, Mexico City, Caesars palace, Las Vegas, Eugene O'Neil Theater, San Jose and Dom Armije, Sarajevo to name a few.

The program opened with Jamie singing from the Robert Burns Songbook, arrangement by Eddie McGuire – The parting of love in 'The winter it is past', followed by the rollicking 'The De'il's awa wi' the' exciseman' and the ever beautiful 'Ae fond kiss'. He was accompanied by both Matthew and Sharron. Matthew then played 'Farewell to Stromness' by Peter Maxwell Davies, originally for piano and voice, informing the audience that it was part of the 'Yellow Cake Revue' – yellow cake being the slang for the form of uranium found on Orkney and the threat of uranium mining near Stromness. This was followed with a Welsh Songbook with Sharron playing 'Watching the Wheat' on harp by John Thomas, the true story of the tragic love affair of Wil and Ann. Matthew, on guitar, then played the traditional 'Clychau Aberdyfi' from 1785, Jamie sang the beautiful lullaby 'Suo Gan' in Welsh and English, then read an excerpt from Dylan Thomas 'Under milk wood' while the harp and guitar played in the background. All three musicians congregated once more together for 'Ar hyd y nos' (All through the night) another traditional Welsh song.

Following the interval we were entertained with music from an Irish Songbook with Matthew playing 'My gentle Harp' (guitarists normally explain at this point how the guitar sounds just like a harp but not on this occasion with a harp in the hall!), 'Meeting of the Waters' and 'Minstrel Boy'.

The afternoon concluded with Jamie singing from Robert Burns Songbook accompanied by Sharron and Matthew, 'Rattlin' Roarin' Willie', 'The slaves lament' and 'For all that an' all that'. This was a great way to end a wonderful afternoon of music and the rest of the audience agreed by the sounds of the rapturous applause bringing the trio back to the spotlight for a second bow.

Eve Maxwell