

Saturday 17th February 2024 - Scottish Opera Highlights

Mid Argyll Arts Association were delighted to welcome Scottish Opera's touring company to Ardrishaig last weekend. The last time Scottish Opera visited Ardrishaig was 1991 and such was the enthusiasm for this 'Highlights' Concert that tickets were sold out weeks ago. MAAA were then asking people to put their names on their waiting list! The audience was varied: a young 11-year old experiencing opera for the first time, along with regular followers of Scottish Opera.

Appearing were 2023/24 Associate Artist, mezzo-soprano, Lea Shaw, along with three of Scottish Opera's Emerging Artists, the tenor, Shengzhi Ren, soprano, Inna Husieva and baritone, Ross Cumming. The touring production's accompaniment was provided by their Music Director, James Longford on piano. Most of the programme was sung in the original language, the excellent acting skills of the singers allowing the audience to understand the drama of these operatic tales. Skilful set- design by Ana Inés Jabares-Pita must be mentioned too.

The scene is a wedding. Four singers portray the characters, staff and guests. The story is then told through a musical programme, devised by Derek Clark with script by Laura Attridge, of operatic delights. The music is drawn from over three centuries of opera, ranging from Mozart's 'The Magic Flute' to Gilbert and Sullivan's 'HMS Pinafore' and then to a contemporary 2023 work composed specially for Scottish Opera's touring company by Emma Jenkins and Toby Hession. 'In flagrante' opened the second half of the evening. Three government ministers find themselves in a 'morning after the night before' situation. The spin-doctor arrives . . . Through a variety of arias, duets, trios and quartets the antics of the wedding guests are revealed!

'The Saga of Jenny' from Gershwin's 'Lady in the Dark' brought the evening to a close. Long and enthusiastic applause from the audience ensured a further treat from the singers in their encore. This was "Wrong Note Rag" by Bernstein and brought the concert to a perfect end!

'Brilliant', 'fantastic', 'What voices!' were just some of the responses to this wonderful evening. Perhaps the most telling, 'When are they coming back?' Scottish Opera's 'Highlights concert' was a truly magical evening of opera and MAAA is already looking forward to the company's next visit to Mid-Argyll.

Our last concert of our 40th Season is with the Tim Kliphuis Trio on Saturday 23rd March in Ardrishaig. We look forward to welcoming you there.