



Thanks to Argyll & Bute Council for allowing the use of Kilmory Castle as the venue for this concert from the Mid Argyll Arts Association Season with GAIA (Violin and Cello duo). This was the second concert in GAIA's 11 concert-tour with Alice and Katrina delighted to be performing in Lochgilphead to such an appreciative audience.

Alice and Katrina took it in turn to introduce the music they were performing with some very interesting facts about the composers and the music. The concert opened with "Sonata for Violin and Cello Op.5 No.9" by Corelli. There are three movements in this work and we were told the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement was a favourite of Neil Gow (famous Scottish fiddler of the 18<sup>th</sup> century). After hearing it there you could hear the connection with the jigs that Neil Gow himself composed – it could have been composed by Neil Gow himself!

Ravel's "Duo for Violin and Cello" was our next offering, which Ravel dedicated to his contemporary, Debussy. With Ravel's "Bolero" being the only music by Ravel that many of the audience knew, this was very different. Katrina described it as "a challenging workout for strings" with harmonics, pizzicato, double stopping, glissandos plus many different bowing styles included. As Gaia are a duo who perform to an extremely high and exacting standard, all four movements were most definitely well-performed, with the last one beginning with an almost "Western" film sound!

After the interval there were two works by female composers with Rebecca Clarke's "Lullaby/Grotesque" first. Rebecca Clarke (1886 – 1979) was a violist so she originally composed it for viola and cello before arranging it for violin and cello. The lullaby was gentle, smooth and mesmerising while the Grotesque demonstrated a wide range of dynamics and numerous glissandos all ably portrayed by Gaia.

The final piece was a work by Sally Beamish, commissioned by GAIA and premiered at the St Magnus Festival in May 2021. They worked closely with Sally Beamish during lockdown and the 3 movements are all Orkney inspired. Like the Ravel piece, it uses many techniques for strings but this work also includes the stamping of the performers feet to keep a beat in the opening movement. The 2<sup>nd</sup> movement showed an abundance of harmonics and trills, perhaps representing the wind on the waves. Very apt as the wind was blowing outside with the windows open due to COVID requirements. The final movement was full of dramatic rhythm and percussive style "chopping" sounds from the cello bow and dramatic, rapid scales from both violin and cello brought this "Stone, Salt and Sky" commission to a finish.

An extremely appreciative audience were rewarded with an encore of a traditional Strathspey and Reel composed by Lady Stirling of Ardock, allowing GAIA to continue with their championing of female composers.

This concert was provided by two outstanding young musicians who have won numerous awards and if today's concert is anything to go by there will be many more awards coming their way.

The next concert is a special concert by Glasgow Phoenix Choir on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December. Tickets are available in the usual way.