



Katherine Aitken & Rebecca Taylor

September 28th 2019

On Saturday the 28th of September Ardrishaig hall launched the new Arts Association season with a fantastic duo – Katherine Aitken and Rebecca Taylor and their journey through Lieder and Chanson.

Katherine Aitken – a graduate of both the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, London - is a Scottish mezzo-soprano with a rich caramel chocolate quality to her voice. Her partner Rebecca Taylor read music as an organ scholar at Lincoln College, Oxford before attending the Royal Academy of Music where she was a Junior Fellow and completed the MA in Piano Accompaniment.

We were introduced to the pair with an intense piece by Mozart about burning letters and it certainly woke us up. We moved onto Schubert's "Du Bist Die Ruh" which was beautifully controlled by both singer and pianist. This was contrasted with Schubert's angsty "Gretchen am Spinnrade" and I commend Rebecca Taylor for playing the right hand part with ease. We then moved through Schumann and into Brahms where the audience murmured in agreement at the rollercoaster of emotions before us.

As we reached Wolf the themes took a darker turn in a short but intense piece about crying tears of blood. Swiftly moving onto Strauss and Mahler we were given songs of simple love, a sing off between and cuckoo and a nightingale and a man in great pain which reigned the audience in with a spiritual lull.

The second half opened with a stunning rendition of Faure's "Apres Un Reve". Through Debussy's impressionist piece, Rinaldo Hahn's Operatic journey and into Du Parc comforting his love with a dream like harp created by the piano.

The Duo then gave us a contemporary piece by Joseph Horowitz which comprised of snippets from the monologues of Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth and the music tracks her descent into madness. It was a refreshing choice and made the audience consider new composers.

As a light and fun ending we were given "I can be a sexy lady", a piece about poor mezzo's and how they always play boys and not much else in opera's. I highly recommend you Youtube it for a bit of light entertainment.

The partnership between the two is one I've not seen all that often and you can tell that they really enjoy working together.

Eve Maxwell