



## Joy Dunlop Review

The Mid-Argyll Arts Association served up a real treat on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May, with a performance from Gaelic singer Joy Dunlop, accompanied by fiddle player Mhairi Marwick and guitarist Ron Jappy.

Probably best known as a weather and, more recently, BBC Alba *SpeakGaelic* presenter, Joy Dunlop is a renowned Gaelic performer, winner of the Royal National Mòd Gold Medal and nominated as Gaelic Singer of the Year four times. Argyll-born and a true West-Coaster, Joy presented us with a concert full of Argyll songs, with which she holds a real fascination. She made it clear that Lochgilphead holds a special place in her heart – originally from Connel, and learning Gaelic song there as a child, she performed in many Lochgilphead Gaelic Mòds – as she recalls, the last competition of the year before the National Mòd!

Joy, Mhairi and Ron treated us to a concert that included audience participation, a fiddle solo and step dancing. Joy has a passion for Gaelic story-telling through song, and has a natural and charismatic way of leading the audience there too. Through different styles of song, Joy brought us into her world – a world of comedy, tragedy and dance. Her beautiful interpretation of laments, such as *Cadal Cuain* and *Òran na bantraich*, and her rhythmic waulking songs (working songs for the making of tweed), including *Mo nighean donn ho gù* and *Buain a' choirce*, were fantastic. I think my favourite parts, however, were the exquisite *puirt à beuls* – fast and wordy songs for dancing to. These Gaelic 'tunes from the mouth' were created for dancing without instruments, and incorporate reels, jigs and strathspeys. Joy's perfect diction and amazing breath skills brought these songs to life, and, for me, were the highlight of the evening.

Mhairi Marwick and Ron Jappy (both East-Coasters, but we won't hold it against them!) provided beautiful accompaniment and sonorous harmony to Joy's bright soprano voice. A beautiful folk trio who charmed all who attended.

Mile taing, Joy – tha sinn an dòchas gun till sibh a dh 'aithghearr!