

# A MAAA-rvellous afternoon of music

Lochgilphead Parish Church was the place to be when Mid Argyll Arts Association (MAAA) held its concert featuring the celebrated Clyde Duo.

An afternoon of delight with calm, mesmerising, meditative and at times hypnotic sounds, the pair, harpist, Sharron Griffiths and flautist, Aisling Agnew brought a programme of music from the traditional European schools to the more exotic rhythms and tonalities of Egypt and India.

A MAAA spokesperson said “With our concert at the same time as the Scotland/Ireland 6 Nations match we did wonder if our audience would be smaller – not at all. In fact it was a very enthusiastic audience which was commented on by Aisling”. As a performer she said, ‘there is nothing nicer than an audience smiling back at you’ and that was our MAAA audience.

“A sonata for the harp, with flute obligato by Afro-French composer, Joseph Bologne, opened our concert. This was just the first of many new pieces that the audience were treated to as Sharron and Aisling are actively performing work by lesser known composers. Sonatas by Nina Rota (of ‘The Godfather’) and Princess Anna Amalia of Prussia (1723 – 1787) followed later in the afternoon. This later sonata was composed during what became known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Golden Age for Flutes and by one of the very few female composers of the time.”

The other works were all stand alone compositions showcasing the skills and virtuosity of Sharron and Aisling. They included ‘Entr’acte Jacques’ (Ibert), ‘Nocturne’(Boulanger) and ‘Danse Lente’ (Jongen).

“A visit to Egypt by Adbel-Rahim who is known as the ‘Bartok of Egypt’ used exotic Arab harmonies and highly decorated solo lines in his ‘Dance of Isis’. A very different and technically challenging sound was brought to both harp and flute by the Clyde Duo for this work. Moving on to Indian and a composition by Ravi Shanker KBE, transcribed for flute and harp completed the captivated audience’s round-the-world trip. The harp was very clearly portraying the sound of the Indian sitar with the flute played in an Indian style using circular breathing. Without knowing anything about this piece, on hearing it, this was a fine example of Indian chamber music.”

“Before performing ‘Watching the Wheat’ (Bugeilio’r gwenith gwyn) for solo harp, Sharron gave the audience a whistle-stop tour of her full-size orchestral harp. Many in the audience were surprised to learn that a harp has the same number of notes as on a piano and has seven-foot pedals each with 3 individual sections. The audience were then told to watch her feet, as it is a full work out for her”.

“The final piece ‘In Ireland’ by Hamilton Harty has the descriptive title addition ‘In a Dublin street at dusk, two wandering street musicians are playing’. The Clyde Duo had spent some time prior to the concert taking in the sights and sounds of Lochgilphead and thought this a very apt finale. This would have been the case, but the audience were so enthusiastic that we were treated to The Londonderry Air. “We discovered only minutes later that Ireland had won at Murrayfield.”

The next MAAA concert is with Cheryl Forbes (Mezzo) and Gordon Cree(Piano) on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April in Ardrishaig Public Hall.

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