

Last night's Mid Argyll Arts Association concert in Ardrishaig Public Hall was part of a Scottish tour by Robert Plane and the Gould Piano Trio. A very appreciative and large audience were delighted to experience the skills and techniques of four world class musicians and be introduced to two lesser known composers.

The Gould Piano Trio consists of pianist Benjamin Frith, violinist Lucy Gould and cellist Richard Lester and as a group they have been at the forefront of the chamber music scene for 30 years. Robert Plane, world renowned clarinettist, joins the Gould Trio for this tour.

The opening number was Brahms Piano trio No.3, one of the greatest piano trios in the repertoire composed during a summer holiday in Switzerland in 1886. Clara Schumann, someone who Brahms would often question about his work, described the 2nd movement as it as "tender" and "wonderfully poetic - a very apt description.

Following this was "Chamber folk Music for clarinet, violin & piano" by Tibor Serly. This is a work which includes several Hungarian folk songs, shades of Bartok and some American touches. For many of our audience this was their introduction to Tibor Serly and to the highly acclaimed clarinettist Robert Plane.

The "Piano Trio in A minor" by Amy Beach was the opening of the 2nd half. Beach had very interesting life and musical career and is "one of the most acclaimed American composers". The very opening of the first movement hints at Debussy's Impressionism with the second movement travelling through many keys and time signatures. The final movement demonstrates the rhythms of Ragtime with challenging writing , particularly for the piano. This was another fine example of the performers closeness, experience and confidence in performing together.

The final performance was of Walter Rabl's "Quartet in E-Flat Major for Clarinet, Violin, Cello, and Piano, Op. 1." - the other unknown composer worth looking into. This composition won first prize in a competition for young composers in the Vienna Tonkünstlerverein (Musicians' Society). It has been described as the next best thing to a full orchestral composition, but this is only performed by a quartet! As such we were treated to this brilliant work by Robert Plane and the Gould Piano Trio and what a performance it was. If you missed it you can purchase the CD or even if you were at the concert you can purchase the CD and enjoy it again and again and again.

Our next Mid Argyll Arts Association concert is on Sunday 12th March when we welcome the Clyde Duo(Flute and Harp) to Lochgilphead Parish Church. We look forward to seeing you there.

