

NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND MUSIC SCHOOL
in association with
LUNCHBREAK CONCERT SERIES

COWDRAY HALL, ABERDEEN
Thursday 10th November, 2022

Moira Docherty soprano
Barbara Scott mezzo-soprano
Robert Duncan piano

PROGRAMME:

Duets:

Vivaldi

‘Esurientes’ from ‘Magnificat’ & ‘Laudamus Te’ from ‘Gloria’

Rossini

‘La Pesca’, (Notturmo)

Barbara solos:

Massenet

‘Nuit d’Espagne’

Richard Strauss

‘Zueignung’

Duets:

Mendelssohn

‘Gruss’ Op. 63 No 3, ‘Ich wollt’ mein lieb’ Op 63 No 1,

‘O’ Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast’

Anne Campbell McLeod

‘Skye Boat Song’

Moira solos:

Reynaldo Hahn

‘Ah Chloris’ & ‘Fêtes galantes’

Duets:

Tchaikovsky

‘Tis Evening’ from opera ‘Queen of Spades’

Delibes

‘Flower Duet’ from opera ‘Lakmé’

Encore:

‘Westering Home’

Soprano Moira Docherty studied at the North East of Scotland Music School with Raimund Herincx, Alison McDonald, Lisa Milne and more recently with Judith Howarth. Great names and superb vocal tutors. You would expect her to be an exceptional performer. On Thursday in the Cowdray Hall that is exactly what she proved herself to be. It was not just her singing which was

fabulous, but her ability to connect so warmly with her audiences. She made us feel so welcome and at home. I remember that as being the special attraction of Lisa Milne.

Moira has for some time been a principal soprano with Tayside Opera and it was there that she became a close friend and colleague with the two musicians she brought with her to Thursday's Lunchbreak Concert. They were mezzo-soprano Barbara Scott based in the Scottish Highlands and prize-winning piano accompanist from Tayside Opera, Robert Duncan, originally from Methlick. This excellent trio of performers opened the concert on Thursday with two excerpts from Oratorios by Vivaldi, 'Esurientes' from 'Magnificat' RV 610 and 'Laudamus Te' from 'Gloria' RV 589. Both parts in these duets are quite high in the register so to begin with, Barbara Scott sounded like a second soprano rather than a mezzo. However, here was the initial proof that the two voices were going to be in perfect balance. Both duets had quite florid decorative vocal passages and in these the voices blended deliciously well. Robert Duncan's accompaniments were clean and fluent, exactly what was wanted.

The third duet in this opening section was an art song by Rossini, 'La Pesca' (Fishing), actually a seashore love song. Here the two voices moved apart with Moira soaring skyward while for the first time we were able to fully appreciate Barbara's creamy-warm mezzo tones.

It was Barbara who took the first solo section in the concert starting with Massenet's 'Nuit d'Espagne'. The piano had a delightful almost fizzy champagne-like opening gambit before moving to waltz time accompaniment. Above that, Barbara's delivery of the words captured that dance-like undercurrent splendidly well. Her second song was one of my all-time favourites, 'Zueignung' by Richard Strauss. Easy flowing yet passionate singing from Barbara with its lovely repetitive end of verse, 'Habe Dank'.

The second duet group began with three settings by Mendelssohn. 'Gruss' Op. 63 No. 3 and 'Ich wollt' mein lieb' Op. 63 No. 1. Both had particularly delicious harmonies delivered in perfectly well-chimed singing by Moira and Barbara. The third of the Mendelssohn songs was a setting of a Robert Burns poem, 'O' Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast'. I first heard that song when I was taking part in a concert of Victorian Music by Aberdeen Philomusica Society in the Art Gallery in the mid 1960s. I have always loved it and our three performers took me right back to a happy moment in my early life.

They completed this section with a beautiful version of the 'Skye Boat Song'. Both girls had passages where they delivered the ever-popular tune. Moira soared sky-ward, or should I say Skye-ward with dazzling descants composed by Evelyn Sharpe.

Now it was time for Moira to delight us with her two solo songs, both by Reynaldo Hahn. 'Ah Chloris' was composed over a piano part recalling J. S. Bach's 'Air on the G string' and then there was the colourful almost painterly 'Fêtes galantes', a setting of a poem by Paul Verlaine. It is perhaps based on some of the paintings by Watteau. The piano had a light tinkling dance-like accompaniment while Moira, in excellent French, painted a picture in words and song of a colourful open-air party in late nineteenth century France.

There were two songs in the final duet section of the concert. The duet 'Tis Evening' from Tchaikovsky's opera, 'Queen of Spades' was sung in English and the girls delivered a splendid broad panorama of a Russian open air nightfall with their singing.

They completed the official programme with the famous 'Flower Duet' from 'Lakmé' by Delibes. It was a pure delight. The audience responded with a torrent of appreciative applause to which the trio replied with 'Westering Home' as their encore. This was the perfect ending to the concert and as I walked to my car in the rather dank and gloomy surroundings of the Denburn car park, there was still in my head, to quote the words of Westering Home, 'A song in the air'.

ALAN COOPER