

***NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND MUSIC SCHOOL
SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT 2024***

Friday 21st June 2024

Springfield Church (Formerly Craigiebuckler Church)

PERFORMERS:

- **Freya Corry** Voice (Aberdeen Bach Choir Scholarship)
- **Emily Gow** Flute (Dorothy Hately Scholarship)
- **Isla Rippiner** Flute (Sandy MacDonald Woodwind Scholarship)
- **Matthew Mcguigan** Piano (Gina Dallas Harper Piano Scholarship)
- **Harry Wood** Piano (Tom & Cath Johnson Piano Scholarship)
- **Harry Williamson** Piano Accompanist

PROGRAMME:

Freya Corry:

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828) *Ave Maria*

Gabriel Fauré (1845 – 1924) *Pie Jesu* from *Requiem*

Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842 – 1900) *Poor Wandering One* from *Pirates of Penzance*.

Franz Lehár *Vilja* from *The Merry Widow*

Giacomo Puccini *O mio babbino caro* from *Gianni Schicchi*

Luigi Arditi *Il Bacio*

Emily Gow:

Emil Kronke (1865 – 1938) *Suite en stile ancien*

Cécile Chaminade (1857 – 1944) *Concertino*

François Borne (1840 – 1920) *Gypsy Dance* from *Fantasie Brilliante sur Carmen*

Matthew Mcguigan:

Franz Schubert *Impromptu Op 142 No. 2 in Ab*

Frédéric Chopin (1810 – 1849) *Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2 in Eb*

J. S. Bach (1685 – 1750) *Prelude & Fugue in G BWV 884*

Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918) *Arabesque No.2*

Isla Rippiner:

John Rutter (b. 1945) *Ostinato* from *Suite Antique*

Lili Boulanger (1893 – 1918) *Nocturne*

Claude Debussy *Bruyeres*

Jeremy Norris (Keeps birth date secret) *La Parisienne* from *Jazz Suite*

Harry Wood:

Chopin *Waltz in c# minor*

Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893) *Juin*

Chopin *Etude Op. 10 No. 3 E major*

Franz Lizst (1811 – 1886) *Un sospiro*

REVIEW:

The five splendid young performers in this year's NESMS Scholarship Concert all hold special awards from the School. We expected something spectacular from them on Friday evening and we were not to be disappointed. We were not just to hear performances of technical accomplishment but matched by examples of sheer musicality and deep understanding of the music they were about to perform.

The first young musician to perform was soprano **Freya Corry**. She sang three pieces in the first half of the concert. She opened with Schubert's celebrated *Ave Maria* sung with splendid flowing clarity and steadiness. In both this piece and the following *Pie Jesu* from Fauré's *Requiem* there was just a hint of delicious creaminess in her vocal quality. Perhaps as her voice matures she will be able to tackle mezzo roles? Both these first pieces were expressive often floating beautifully through the church. Her control of vocal dynamic expression was well thought out. Freya's third piece was from a different area of music. It was *Poor Wandering One* from Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* in which Sullivan picks up on the coloratura aria. Freya captured that idea brilliantly in her performance. In the second half of the concert Freya chose light opera with the clear brightness of Lehár's *Vilja* from *The Merry Widow* sung in English. She put over the famous melody so well. There was more power and projection in her performance of Puccini's *O mio babbino caro* in Italian and then she really acted out the words of Ardit's *Il Bacio*. With smiles and shining eyes she brought real feeling into her music.

Flautist **Emily Gow** opened with Emil Kronke's *Suite en stile ancien*. Free flowing flute playing had a delightful sense of dance within it. There was liveliness and delicacy too, especially in the bright and shining second movement. Cécile Chaminade's Concertino was a real showpiece. Many sections of the piece seemed to promise an approaching cadenza and indeed there was one which Emily played brilliantly. In the second half of the concert Emily performed just one piece, François Borne's *Gypsy Dance* from *Carmen*. *Carmen*, I'd better put it politely, is a bit of a seductress and in her performance, Emily captured that idea to perfection. This is actually a fiendishly difficult piece to bring off perfectly, so Emily's performance was one of the stunning high points in the entire concert.

We had two flute players on Friday and two pianists as well. The first of those pianists was **Matthew Mcguigan**. He opened with a splendidly expressive performance of Schubert's *Impromptu Op. 142 No. 2 in A flat*. Variations in tempo and dynamics had been carefully thought out. Matthew's performance contrasted lightness of touch with strength and weight. He followed this with Chopin's *Nocturne Op. 9 No 2 in E flat*. He captured the romance of the piece splendidly well with its trills. This was a passionate performance. For the second half of the concert Matthew had chosen two real finger breakers of pieces. The first was J. S. Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in G BWV 884* followed by Debussy's *Arabesque No.2*. Matthew was taking no prisoners with his performances of these pieces. He went at them at full speed. I am not sure that Bach should be played like that but the Debussy came across far better. I watched Matthew's fingers in these pieces and thought, well neither of these is for me. My fingers are too old these days.

Isla Rippiner was the second of the two flautists. She opened with the *Ostinato* from Suite Antique by John Rutter. What impressed me with Isla's playing was the smooth flowing beauty of tone that she brought to the music. She picked up splendidly on the growing expressiveness that Rutter wove into his piece. Lili Boulanger's *Nocturne* was happy cheerful music. Isla's playing brought a smile to it. In the second half of the concert Isla opened with *Bruyeres* by Debussy. It means heathers or possibly heath lands. Debussy's music is often pictorial and Isla captured that in her fluent and expressively melodic playing. She followed this with *La Parisienne* from the *Jazz Suite* by Jeremy Norris. Isla also captured the pictorial quality of this music I could almost smell the strong black coffee and the whiffs of Gauloises.

The second of the two pianists was **Harry Wood**. All four of the pieces he performed across the two parts of the concert were played entirely from memory. For me, Harry also provided several special high points in the entire concert. He began with Chopin's *Waltz in c sharp minor*. We enjoyed smooth light fingered playing full of mature musical enthusiasm. Tchaikovsky's *Juin* was stylishly brilliant and full of feeling – a splendidly mature performance. In the second half, Harry began with Chopin's famous *Etude Op.10 No. 3 in E major*. I can play the tuneful bits at the beginning and end. The middle part I will leave to Chopin himself and of course to Harry. He followed this with *Un sospiro* by Liszt, as brilliant to watch with its crossed hands as well as to listen to with its glorious singing melody over the rippling accompaniment. What a splendid conclusion to a most satisfying concert.

Before I end however, I must not forget to mention the superb piano accompaniments provided for the flautists and the singer by **Harry Williamson**. Now he really is the most splendid musician. His accompaniment to Arditi's *Il Bacio* really was something special.

ALAN COOPER