

Tayside Organists' Society

Concert by pupils of Morgan Academy

Morgan Academy, Dundee 29th November 2022



Review by Sally Carus

In the splendid, rebuilt but slightly industrial looking assembly hall of Morgan Academy some dozen members of TOS and a good representation of parents and family, and some FPs, all seated at tables in a relaxed manner, were entertained by pupils of the school. Given carte blanche they had opted to present us with a St Andrew's Eve programme of Scottish music and poetry.

After a welcome from depute rector, Gregor McBain, president Ron Oliver also welcomed us on behalf of TOS before handing over to Ms Kirsten Brown, co-head of the Music Department who was the compère for the evening.

The first item on the programme was called Ceol Hup (ceol being Scots for music and hup being a cheer) and was quite a long set of Scottish instrumental and vocal pieces performed by seven young fiddlers, some guitarists, drummer and three young singers. It's always hard being the first item but they all acquitted themselves with confidence.

Eshan Hussein followed this with a short poem of his own entitled 'Greetin' in the rain' which he had written for a competition. I take my hat off to him as, like him, not being a native Scots speaker I found much of the evening's language beyond my comprehension so to write in it is a great achievement.

The next item was mysteriously entitled 'Christmas Shopping' but turned out to be an advertisement for a recording by the schools' piping instructor called 'Lone Piper'. This lone piper in question is called Derek Potter who from 2008 to 2012 was Queen Elizabeth's personal piper. Since then he has been instructing pupils in Dundee. We were shown a short video of the Gordon Duncan Experience which was a series of Scots music workshops held in Perth on Saturdays which two of the pipers we were to hear later had attended.

My understanding was further tested in the next item, another recording but this time of a pupil, Safa Satar, reading from the Scots translation of *The Gruffalo's Bairn*. She read at speed but the audience enjoyed it and gave her a warm round of applause in her absence.

At last, something to sit back and watch: Ashleigh Neill's dancing was accomplished and included a sword dance but what a shame that she danced on the floor not the stage so we could not see her feet!

Then came *Tam O'Shanter* recited from memory by teacher Mrs Anderson. I do know the story of Tam and was able to follow as this was declaimed very dramatically with only one slight slip of memory. Mrs Anderson has recently had her head shaved for charity and there was a QR square on the programme for further information and for anyone who wished to donate to her cause.

Next up was Ceol Dun Deagh which is a group assembled from all schools in Dundee consisting of strings, chanters, guitars and drum kit. Coached by Derek Potter and Jack Christie they performed a jig, a slow piece and then a faster piece with a rhythmic drum introduction. The lead violinist was enjoying herself thoroughly and encouraging an excellent performance from all involved.

The decibels increased in the final item of the night when the Dundee Schools' Pipe Band took to the stage. Nine pipers, four side drummers and a bass drum create quite a loud sound but here were a couple of tunes I knew. Under the leadership of Pipe Major Derek Potter the pipes were well tuned and they played well together, the side drummers looking very proficient. This was a great finale to the evening.

A vote of thanks was given by George Bell, vice president of TOS, before we adjourned for tea/coffee and biscuits. I would just add my thanks to all the pupils and to the music staff who must have spent a lot of time and effort working out a programme, rehearsing (no doubt in lunch times) and encouraging every one taking part. The department is also heavily involved in the Stobswell Christmas lights switch-on later in the same week so they have been very busy. Well done!

