

February Concert Review

Although the weather was very windy and wet, this did not deter a near capacity audience for Saturday evening's concert in the Reid Hall, Forfar, by Tayside Symphony Orchestra, who were joined on stage by singers from the Friends' Group from Arbroath. The evening of music from opera, films and shows proved very popular with the audience.

Musical director Richard Allan had thoughtfully and sensitively brought together a challenging programme for the orchestra and choir comprising popular and well-known music. Richard achieved the right balance at all times between orchestra and singers and it was clear that both groups enjoyed performing together enormously.

Favourites such as Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*, *76 Trombones* and a selection from *Chicago* were well-received. The choir joined the orchestra for the inspirational *Climb Ev'ry Mountain* in the final section of hits from Rodger & Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music* much to the delight of the audience. Memories of the BBC Light Programme at the end of the 1940s/ early 1950s were remembered in *Devil's Galop*, the theme tune for the radio thriller Dick Barton - Special Agent. The warm and sensitive performance of a selection of other well-known pieces, including hits by Josh Groban, the beautiful song *Thankful* and the theme from the TV series *Band of Brothers*, gave pause for reflection and a well-structured contrast to the other more upbeat sections of the programme.

The interaction between orchestra, singers and conductor was evident throughout the programme and the comedy moment during John Williams' *Star Wars Epic*, where the brass section's light sabres were ultimately outdone by Richard's replacement baton (which was worthy of Skywalker himself), hit just the right tone.

The Friends were in good voice. Their contributions included *Africa*, the lively *Lord of the Dance*, *Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves*, *Skyfall* and a toe-tapping rock medley which included *The Final Countdown* and *Jump*. It is rare to experience a full orchestra and choir performing together and this partnership produced a spectacular evening of entertainment which will hopefully be repeated in future.

As an encore, the evening ended with the lively *Twist and Shout*. This was an evening during which many of the audience were able to reflect on music of yesteryears and at the same time, thoroughly enjoy and appreciate more modern hits from screen and stage.

The June concert - '*All at Sea*' - promises to be an equally entertaining evening when TSO will be joined on stage by Angus Youth Orchestra.