

5th March 2016 Concert – “Music from the Movies”

The power of music to define, enhance and capture the essence of a film is, in my opinion, as important as, and inextricably linked to, the visual impact on any screen. This was borne out by a thoroughly enthralling and energetic concert entitled 'Music from the Movies', performed by the Sandwich Concert and Training Bands last Saturday 5th March at 7.30pm in St Nicholas' Church, Ash. Audience members, which included the Mayor and Mayoress of Sandwich, were treated to diverse range of popular tunes from films past and present.

Benedict Preece, Director and Conductor of the 40 plus strong Concert Band, chose a programme of classical and popular music that ranged from movies such as Disney's Jungle Book to Gladiator and on to Moulin Rouge, which perfectly demonstrated the players' versatility and ability to recreate visual stimuli for the audience. I was practically 'beamed up' from a pew in a medieval church in the Kent countryside onto the Starship Enterprise by their medley of Star Trek tunes. For an hour and a half the sizeable audience was treated to a multitude of engaging film renditions the most sensitive of which I felt was soloist David Rajan's understanding and smooth tone in Morricone's 'Gabriel's Oboe'. Maggie Isherwood demonstrated her experience and command of the flute in her solo performance of the main theme tune from 'Ladies in Lavender'.

Benedict successfully extracted meaningful light and shade moments from the Concert Band in his interpretation of the chosen film scores, most notably in Brahms' Hungarian Dance No 5 which, I am sure, would have had the toes of every audience member, and player alike, tapping uncontrollably in the faster invigorating passages. There was absolutely no escaping the dynamics and sparkle that filled the church in this number.

The assortment of inter mingled tunes from the classic film 'My Fair Lady' demanded many key and time changes, demonstrating the unity of the band's ensemble playing as they recreated many scenes from this movie.

Rossini's 'La Gazza Ladra' (The Thieving Magpie), made famous in the film A Clockwork Orange, was an exercise in concentration and articulation, and this five year old Concert Band showed off their tenacity and potential from the first famous drum roll and throughout the piece. Benedict clearly enjoyed conducting this item in particular as he steered the musicians through the many contrasting passages.

The Training Band, which is made up of players from between Grades 1 and 4 and rehearsed and conducted by Kate Robinson, gave a very creditable performance of their rendition of themes from Harry Potter as well as instantly recognisable melodies from The Sound of Music. There were also arrangements from Elton John's 'Can you feel the love tonight' and the chart topping single '(Everything I do) I do it for you', the soundtrack from Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves. It was heartening to see very young musicians perform alongside more mature band members which further enhanced the community spirit of the whole concert.

I have been to several Sandwich Concert and Training Band performances and on each occasion I have been inspired by the range and fluidity of their music making, whatever genre of music was on the programme. How wonderful it is to hear brass and wind instruments in particular really come into their own. Benedict and Kate gave light hearted introductions ahead of each piece which included some interesting facts about either the composer, film or film score.

I very much look forward to hearing what Benedict and Kate have in store for their next concert 'Last Night of the Proms' on Saturday 4th June at St Mary's Arts Centre, Sandwich.

Katherine Walker 12th March 2016