



Concert raises £700 for Shining Life Children's Trust

The 22nd November is the feast of Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of musicians. It was an auspicious date, therefore, for a feast of words and music inspired by opera performed in Saint Mary's. The concert was given by members of Saint Mary's in aid of Shining Life Children's Trust, a small charity which works to improve the lives of children in Sri Lanka by setting up sustainable projects such as micro-credit schemes. Some 50 or so people braved the chill of the evening to be rewarded by a veritable banquet of operatic delights.

The programme covered opera from Purcell to Britten and included two of the most beautiful soprano arias from the operatic repertoire: 'Dido's Lament' from 'Dido and Aeneas' by Henry Purcell and 'Ach ich fuhl's' from Mozart's 'Magic Flute', both sung with exquisite tone and phrasing by Quin Hughes. Jonathan Bailey treated us to some beautiful flute playing, including a dazzling display of virtuosity in a 'Fantaisie Brillante sur Carmen' by Francois Borne. This delighted the audience with all their favourite Carmen tunes, woven around with a dazzling tapestry of arpeggios, runs and leaps, and drew a roar of approval when it finished. Jonathan Wikeley put in much sterling work throughout the evening as a sensitive accompanist but stepped into the limelight to perform the 'Angel Scene' from Engelbert Humperdinck's 'Hansel and Gretel' on the organ with much poise and delicacy. The musical pieces were interspersed with readings on operatic themes, expertly delivered by Cynthia Newman and Stephen Miles and the evening was rounded off with the charming 'Flower Duet' from 'Lakme' by Delibes (known to many as the British Airways advert) in which soprano and flute wove an intricate pattern of rising and falling phrases in a most delightful way.

In all, the evening was highly rewarding. The music and readings were well-chosen and most professionally performed and the visual impact was on a par: the performers smartly turned out in evening dress, with matching red buttonholes. Everyone who was present enjoyed the evening tremendously and we are indeed fortunate to be able to call on such talent at Saint Mary's in such a worthy cause.