

REVIEW – Devizes Arts Festival – Aglica Trio 7th June, 2023 @ Town Hall

Classical Comes Calling

Andy Fawthrop

The Devizes Arts Festival continued to deliver its wide-ranging programme yesterday. Following tango, folk, opera, talks and drama, Wednesday and Thursday saw the arrival of its two back-to-back classical concerts in The Assembly Room in The Town Hall. It seems like you wait ages for the classical bus to come along, then two arrive together!

Wednesday night saw The Leslie Taylor Memorial Concert, delivered by the young and very talented Aglica Trio, and Thursday lunchtime featured the Dieci Corde duo.

The Aglica Trio was created in 2016 in the Guildhall School of Music & Drama when Carys Gittins (flute), Agnieszka Żyniewicz, (viol), and Lise Vandersmissen (harp) graduated with Distinction. All of them are now multi-award winners, and have pursued careers as both soloists, and as part of various other ensembles. Bringing together Welsh, Polish and Belgian influences, this promised to be something a little different.

Their programme on Wednesday began with Claude Debussy's Sonata in three movements, where all three instruments were well to the fore, engaging in a light conversation of themes. It was light and airy for the most part, but with a somewhat fiery finale. This was followed by The Song of Amergin by Hilary Tann, which was much more strident in character, and by Two Interludes by Jaques Ibert, wherein Lise managed to make her harp sound very much like a piano at times.



After the interval there were three more pieces. First was a lively flute-led Sonatine by Maurice Ravel, a couple of short exercises written by harpist Lise, and finally (my personal favourite of the evening) the Zodiac Trio Op. 70 by the Welsh composer William Mathias. This final piece really showcased the different voices of the three instruments – Pisces, the jolly, easy-going flute, then Aries, the “miserable” viol, and at last Taurus, the fiery and passionate harp. Although at times slightly discordant, this was a wonderful piece with an exhilarating finish.

Fully deserved rapturous applause was the only possible outcome.

Next day, in exactly the same venue, it was the turn of Dieci Corde in the shape of Clare Deniz (cello) and Mihael Majetic (guitar). Both of them have thriving independent musical careers, but they regularly perform together as Dieci Corde (ten strings) as it lets them explore more interesting ways of performing with their respective instruments.