

A View from the Green Room

Movie-go-round with the Waterford Concert Orchestra

A PACKED Large Room really enjoyed the Waterford Concert Orchestra with leader Teresa Costello, being joined by multi-award winning choir Madrigallery, in the latest Symphony Club of Waterford concert, writes Pat McEvoy.

This orchestra was established by Musical Director Kevin O'Carroll three years ago from largely professional and semi-professional players from around the South East and has played concerts at various venues around the area. During this time, it has established a reputation for top quality playing and a repertoire that has great appeal with its audiences. The event in the Large Room was no different with a homage to movie classics that have used classical music in their scores. In some cases, the music was better known than the films.

A feature of the programme is Kevin's introductions to the various pieces. I always think that it's important for the conductor to establish a connection with the audience and the musical director's quirky, mischievous humour was enjoyed by the packed house. Sibelius' Finlandia,

used during the film *The Hunt* for Red October and used by the short-lived state Biafra, opened the concert. Written in 1899 as a protest against Russian occupancy of the state, and banned by the Nazis during WWII - it was consistently played under various titles - the opening, snarling, brassy notes and its largely rousing and turbulent music, captures the composer's contempt for the occupiers of his country and the Finnish people's struggle for freedom.

Stephen Mackey played the Mozart Clarinet Concerto used in *Out of Africa*. This was a beautiful, sensitive interpretation by Mackey of Mozart's gentle flowing melody with its long extended phrases and orchestral repetition throughout. Madrigallery, who were positioned on the balcony at the rear of the Large Room, sang the German version of Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* in a live setting of 'surround sound'.

Kevin O'Carroll remained faithful to Bach's original intention of choir accompanied by trumpets, oboes and strings. Debussy's *Gymnopédie*, used by Woody Allen in his film *Another Woman*, with its gentle piano chords

and flowing oboe solo, was a quiet moment in the programme.

The first half of the concert featured the Lacrymosa from Mozart's requiem that featured so strongly in the final sequence of the Academy Award winning movie *Amadeus*, where dramatic invention ignores fact for fiction. This was a magical piece of theatre with Madrigallery's solemn, grave, fearful message of death; closing in the funeral drum beat that echoes through the orchestration and carries the medieval terror of death. A Yeoman of the Guard overture brought my old friend Dick McCarthy back to the old light opera festival days when jesters went a wooing; while Madrigallery's Humming Chorus from *Madame Butterfly*, used in *Natural Born Killers*, featured a sensitive and moving viola solo from Deirdre Scanlon. Another stand out solo was leader Teresa Costello's sensitive, moving playing of 'I could have done more' from Schindler's List. This haunting melody, full of self-reproach, expresses the humility of an extraordinary man humbled by his own limitations

and yet transcending them. Fiddler's 'Symphonic Dances' swirled around the room in a welter of pulsing excitement that had feet tapping along.

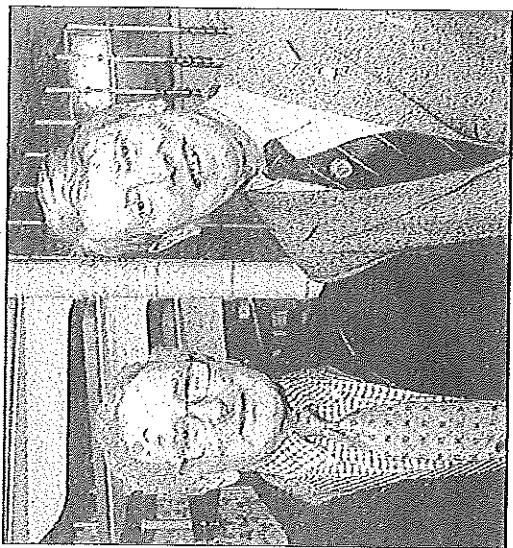
The concert closed with a tribute to composer John Williams who remarkably won five Academy Awards and received 47 nominations. This was a very exciting finale to the concert with the Superman fanfare connecting with the sweeping themes from *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and that menacing *Jaws* pulse. A final flourish from E.T. brought poet Elizabeth Bishop's line to mind... 'and everything was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow ... and off we went, on our bikes, with the extra-terrestrial in the basket, heading for home.'

This was a really good concert and the overflowing attendance pointed to the need for a repeat performance with SCOW - but in a larger venue.

The Waterford Concert Orchestra's next performance will be their Christmas concert featuring an orchestral accompaniment of the Christmas classic 'The Snowman' at Dooley's Hotel on December 2.



Mary Meade and Pat McEvoy, Waterford News & Star arts correspondent.



Tommy Coady and Pat Grogan.