

Reviews

Green party a vocal

MUSIC

BBC Proms in the Park

Glasgow Green



With rays of golden sunlight slanting across Glasgow Green, it felt like a proper end-of-summer celebration. The welcoming weather brought out a sizeable crowd of picnickers and listeners, too, for the BBC's Last Night of the Proms outdoor outpost north of the border – and there were even a few EU flags flying in among the Saltires and Union Jacks.

As comedian Jason Manford quipped, he rarely did gigs where families had transplanted their dining rooms to the middle of a field.

He was there, however, not to provide gags but to offer renditions of a handful of songs from the musicals – one of a panoply of singers across the evening. A very creditable job Manford did, too – he might have been a bit mannered in Stars from *Les Misérables*, but he pulled off *On The Street Where You Live* with gutsy heartiness.

It was perhaps unfair to set Manford alongside eminent jazz singer Claire Teal, though, who was effortless and smooth in *The Folks*

Who Live on the Hill', and commanding in a joyfully up-tempo *Got Rhythm*.

Irish soprano Ailish Tynan was exquisitely golden-toned in arias from *Tosca* and *The Merry Widow*, and her careful attention to musical detail was matched by that of Capercaillie vocalist Karen Matheson, who delivered a deeply expressive account of Donald Shaw's *At the Heart of It All*, with Shaw giving a sensitive keyboard accompaniment.

The evening's stand-out vocalist, however, was also probably its youngest: Josie Duncan from Lewis, winner of the 2017 BBC Radio 2 Folk Award alongside Spanish guitarist Pablo Fuente. The duo were joined by Kinross fiddler Charlie Stewart in a brief but dazzling trio arrangement of *Bonnie House of Airlie*, topped off by Duncan's effortlessly pure, supple vocals. It felt like a fresh breeze of simplicity blowing through the evening's more opulent offerings.

But the concert's real stars were the players of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, showing just what a versatile band they



are across classical showpieces, jazz, film music and folk.

Conductor Stephen Bell might have driven them rather hard in Mussorgsky's *Great Gate of Kiev* and an unaccountably brisk *God-*

celebration of song



rather theme, but they delivered their Glinka Ruslan and Ludmilla Overture with enormous gusto and enthusiasm, and their Rossini William Tell Overture bubbled with mischievous energy. By host

Jamie MacDougall's closing Loch Lomond and Auld Lang Syne, it had been a sometimes bewilderingly wide-ranging evening, but one of many delights.

DAVID KETTLE

↑ **The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra - versatile and full of bubbling energy**