**WNO Orchestra: A Midsummer Celebration - Reviewed by Isla Williams**

The talented WNO Orchestra displayed an intricately curated programme with a variety of contrasting movements and created a lovely atmosphere from start to finish with David Adams bringing the musicians together.

Being 16, I don't usually attend concerts for classical music as my friends are more likely to choose more modern music. I would recommend a concert like this to people of any age, the experience was enriching and very enjoyable. From the dressing up to getting tickets to sitting and being 'proper' (even there is no pressure to do this!), it all only added to the excitement of the experience.

I looked around at the members of the audience smiling, tapping their hands and feet and really living in the moment of the music and appreciating the performance as a whole. This mirrored the performers themselves who amidst their concentration took moments to smile while always embracing their passion for their instruments.

Opening and closing with Mendelssohn, featuring the classic The Lark Ascending with Finzi and my favourite, Y Gogarth by Owain Llwyd inspired by Llandudno and played for the first time that night. WNO Associate Artist Aaron O'Hare, the superb baritone, performed with talent and emotion and engaged the audience greatly.

Being a clarinet player myself, hearing the clarinets' counter melodies and its warm tone come through against the main violin sound was a highlight. I also particularly loved the cello and double bass section and the deep sound they created. I found my eyes pinned on their expressive playing and my attention was especially drawn to Alison Gillies who's smiles made her love for the music very clear. The triumphant brass section and the skillful woodwind section created suspense, a well balanced sound and moments of excitement but also tranquility. Jonathan Burgess' phrasing and musicality balanced perfectly with the dynamics of the string section.

David Adams' solo playing really demonstrated his musical prowess and ability to capture the audience. He made the fast passages with perfectly controlled dynamics look easy and his leadership role became apparent immediately with all of the orchestra knowing when and how to accompany his melody and each other.

The WNO's creativity and expression is unmatched and if you have a chance to see them in concert, do. Even if you believe orchestral music isn't 'for you' as such, the WNO's concerts are the place to hear very good music in person and embrace the whole experience. I am hoping to see the WNO again soon and I thank The Riverfront and staff, as always, for providing the best services.