

Fireworks ensure spectacular end to the Festival



Last night's *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* began in spectacular style with a volley of fireworks travelling at 200 miles per hour over Edinburgh Castle while around 250,000 people gathered across the city and beyond to watch the popular annual event.

The *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* drew to a stunning close with the sky filled with 60 silver Croisette fireworks topped by a layer of gold and silver firework palms. To the closing bars of Walton's *Agincourt Song* and the applause and cheers of families and friends, visitors to the Scottish capital joined its residents to fill Princes Street Gardens and streets across the city to enjoy the grand finale of the Edinburgh International Festival. A packed Princes Street crowd added their appreciation to the celebrations.

The Reporter was at home listening to the music on the radio rather than jostling for position among the photography enthusiasts, so our photo is from last year, but here is a flavour of what some other people saw and what they thought of it:-

[View the story "Fireworks mark the end of the Edinburgh International Festival" on Storify]More than 100,000 fireworks were launched during the 45 minute concert in a display designed by fireworks wizard Keith Webb of Pyrovision and synchronised perfectly to music performed live by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

The music for this year's *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* celebrated the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and echoed the 2012 Festival's Shakespearian shows – which included highly acclaimed adaptations of *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

With Pyrovisions's display bringing the sky to life, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra led by Garry Walker gave a wonderful performance of Walton's noble *Orb and Sceptre* march, written for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II; Vaughan Williams's glowing setting of the folk song *Greensleeves*; excerpts from Prokofiev's fiery ballet score for *Romeo and Juliet*; and the concert's triumphant conclusion, Walton's music for Laurence Olivier's acclaimed 1944 film *Henry V*.

After the stunning opening volley the display continued with three 200 feet high rippling red Comet Stars rolling across the sky.

The much loved Waterfall drew gasps of amazement from the audience as it descended over 130 feet down the Castle Rock 35 minutes into the concert during Walton's *Death of Falstaff*.

After a brief pause, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra launched into the music from Walton's *Henry V*.

For *Charge and Battle* the sky above Edinburgh Castle was

divided in two as the fireworks created the spectacle of two opposing armies charging at each other. On one half the red and white of the English, on the other, the blue and gold of the French. As the forces met, silver swirling fireworks painted a picture of clashing swords, and gold and silver firework arrows flew across the sky.

The most spectacular of all was saved for last. With Garry Walker driving the musicians on, the beginning of the music for *Agincourt Song* from Walton's *Suite for Henry V* was accompanied by three two and half meter long Volcanic Star Storms firing 1995 shots in ten seconds. Seconds later four Volcanic Star Storms fired 2660 shots in three seconds.

In total four tonnes of explosives were used, and the display months in the planning, which took seven days of 15 pyrotechnicians working at the Castle to lay out the fireworks, was over for another year.

This was the 28th fireworks concert. Adrian Borne, Sub-Principal Double Bass with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra has played in, and the event has lost none of its magic. He said, 'The oohs and aahs said it all. Tonight's Fireworks Concert was as great as it is every year. A total aural and visual spectacle.'

Alongside Keith Webb in the control room at Edinburgh Castle, the score reader for the concert, Sarah Cuthbertson from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, had provided the skills of an experienced musician as she followed the live music and called out the fireworks cues to Keith Webb.

Sarah, having just finished her first ever Virgin Money Fireworks Concert, said, 'As timings are planned to the second, the tempo of the Orchestra's performance can make a huge difference. My role was to follow the music note by note and indicate to Keith any deviation so he could immediately react in timing the release of the fireworks. It was exhilarating, and huge fun. I can't wait for next year!'

On the ramparts of Edinburgh Castle Keith Webb said, 'We're over the moon at another hugely successful concert. All the hard work and dedication the team has put in was well worth it.'

In Princes Street Gardens where he enjoyed the Virgin Money Fireworks Concert with friends and colleagues from the Festival, Jonathan Mills, Director, Edinburgh International Festival said, 'The first fireworks concert which took place thirty years ago caused a sensation across the city. In this year of the successful Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Year of Creative Scotland, we celebrate the conclusion of this year's Edinburgh International Festival with our very own closing ceremony! I've been lucky enough to see some of the world's most famous fireworks displays and this year's Virgin Money Fireworks Concert was among the best. I would like to thank Virgin Money for their continued support of this family and Festival favourite. What an amazing way to bring the city's summer festivals season to an end.'

Joining Jonathan in Princes Street Gardens was Virgin Money's Head of Sponsorship Andrew Nicholson. He said, 'Virgin Money is extremely proud to be the official sponsor of such a

wonderful event. The concert this evening has brought together such a diverse background of people who have all enjoyed the wonderful musical performances and the mesmerising pyrotechnic extravaganza. My own personal favourite had to be the Volcanic Star Storms, it was so loud and truly amazing on the eye. This is a fantastic conclusion to what has been another magnificent Edinburgh International Festival and I am already looking forward to next year's event.'

Roy McEwan, SCO Chief Executive, said, 'We're delighted to be working with Virgin Money to deliver this iconic event. Pyrovision always produces an amazing display, choreographed perfectly to the music – in this case suitably romantic and regal to match both the Edinburgh International Festival's Shakespearean theme and the year of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. As ever, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra is very proud to be at the heart of this spectacular event.'

Cllr Steve Cardownie, the City's Festivals and Events Champion, said, 'The traditional firework display, along with superb musical performances, is a fantastic way to close yet another successful festival. The country may have had a wet summer but nothing can dampen the enthusiasm shown by residents and visitors for this spectacular event.'

97.3 Forth One and 1548 Forth 2 broadcast the concert live hosted by Darren Adam and Carol Main. Fresh from the show Darren said, 'Watching and commentating from our vantage point right in the middle of the spectacle, I am always amazed at how every year's concert is able to top what went the year before. I'm amazed again tonight.'

Assistant Chief Constable Graham Sinclair said, 'This year's annual fireworks display was a spectacular end to Edinburgh's festival season, and we are pleased that it passed off safely and without incident.'

'We would like to thank the public who came out to enjoy the display for creating a fantastic atmosphere, and we would also like to thank our partners for their co-operation and assistance during this evening's policing operation, and throughout the planning stages.'

Virgin Money Fireworks Concert

Scottish Chamber Orchestra

Garry Walker Conductor

Walton *Orb and Sceptre*

Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on Greensleeves*

Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet (excerpts)*

Walton *Suite from Henry V*