

Fireworks display ends the 2013 Edinburgh International Festival



Magical Virgin Money Fireworks Concert enthralled audiences across Edinburgh

The *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* drew to a stunning close, the sky filled with giant walls of silver and golden crackle effect fireworks, bursting 225 metres above Edinburgh Castle. As the closing bars of Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* rang out to the applause 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. Approximately 250,000 people gathered across Edinburgh and beyond to watch the popular annual event.

More than 400,000 fireworks were launched during the 45 minute sell-out concert in a display designed by fireworks wizard Keith Webb of Pyrovision, synchronised perfectly to music performed live by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

The Scottish Chamber Orchestra conducted by Garry Walker, gave a wonderful performance, opening the concert with Smetana's *Dance of the Comedians* from comic opera *The Bartered Bride*, before performing the evening's central work, Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Written in 1874 as a tribute to the composer's great friend, the artist Viktor Hartmann, the suite comprises 10 musical 'pictures' in a walk around a gallery, each one re-visualised during the Concert by the fireworks.

The 'Waterfall' drew gasps of amazement from the audience as

it descended over 130 feet down the Castle Rock 30 minutes into the concert. The Waterfall lasted around 1 minute, the end marking a short pause before the Scottish Chamber Orchestra resumed the performance.

And this year for the very first time there was not one, but two spectacular 'Waterfalls'. The iconic effect was used both in its traditional form – spilling down the centre of the Castle Rock – and also again in a surprise addition a few minutes before the end of the concert, highlighting the full outline of the Castle in a shimmering fairy-tale effect.

The most spectacular of all was saved for last, with the music for the last picture, *The Great Gate of Kiev*, punctuated by huge silver crackle fireworks blasting to the beat of the music.

In total four tonnes of explosives were used, and the display, which took months to plan and 15 pyrotechnicians seven days to set the fireworks out, was over for another 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 of the Edinburgh International Festival said, '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 absolutely 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 so many people who have all enjoyed the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's wonderful performance and the mesmerising pyrotechnic extravaganza. This is a fantastic conclusion to what has been another magnificent Edinburgh International Festival.'

Roy McEwan, Scottish Chamber Orchestra Chief Executive, said, 'Rehearsals and preparations for this huge concert are always very intense because of the precision and co-ordination required, not just of the performance, but also the general management and front-of-house arrangements. We are immensely satisfied with the way everything came together tonight. A big thank you to all our technical partners, health and safety partners, City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh International Festival for all their fantastic work on this event, and of course our sponsor Virgin Money'.

Virgin Money Fireworks Concert

Scottish Chamber Orchestra

Garry Walker Conductor

Smetana Dance of the Comedians

Musorgsky Pictures at an Exhibition (arr. Ravel)

Sunday 1 September 9.00pm

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