

Virgin Money Fireworks attracts audience of 250,000



Last night the festivals which have taken over the city for the last month and more came to a spectacular close.

The *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* 2016 filled the sky with giant walls of silver and golden crackle effect fireworks bursting 225 metres above Edinburgh Castle to the closing bars of Shostakovich's *Festive Overture*.

Around 250,000 spectators watched the event across Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife, with visitors to the Scottish capital joining residents to fill Princes Street Gardens, the surrounding streets and vantage points across the city, to enjoy the annual finale to the Edinburgh International Festival and the closing event of Edinburgh's summer festival season.

More than 400,000 fireworks were launched during the 50 minute concert in a display designed by Keith Webb of Pyrovision, synchronised perfectly to music performed live by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Kristiina Poska.



Alongside the *Festive Overture*, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra played a selection of music inspired by the greatest love story every told – William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the bard's death. Prokofiev's vibrant ballet music for *Romeo and Juliet* – featuring the swaggering 'Dance of the Knights', kicked off proceedings, followed by Leonard Bernstein's flamboyant 'Symphonic Dances' from *West Side Story*.

The traditional 'Waterfall' captivated the audience as it descended over 130 feet down the Castle Rock, during the closing bars of Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances*, lasting for around 1 minute.

The most spectacular effects of all were saved for last, with the huge climax of the *Festive Overture* featuring enormous silver and gold fireworks bursting above the Edinburgh skyline. In total four tonnes of explosives were used and the display, which took months to plan and 16 pyro-technicians eight days to set the fireworks out.

This year's Fireworks Concert marks the 5th anniversary of Virgin Money's support of the event, having come on board as title sponsors in 2011. In that time over 1,250,000 people have enjoyed the event from vantage points across Edinburgh and beyond, with an estimated 2 million fireworks having exploded over Edinburgh's Castle.

The three event partners, Edinburgh International Festival, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Virgin Money, are delighted to offer a celebration which the whole city and its residents can share in, giving everyone more to enjoy on the final day of the summer Festivals.

On the ramparts of Edinburgh Castle Keith Webb said, 'We're over the moon at another hugely successful Fireworks Concert. All the hard work and dedication the team has put in was well worth it. And after all our efforts, it's still as thrilling an experience as ever to see it come together!'

In Princes Street Gardens where he enjoyed the Virgin Money Fireworks Concert with friends and colleagues, Fergus Linehan, Director of the Edinburgh International Festival said, 'This year's Virgin Money Fireworks Concert was absolutely amongst the best displays of its kind anywhere in the world. I would like to thank Virgin Money for their continued support of this incredible community event, and for their additional support

which this year made possible the second of our Edinburgh Schools Concerts, which took place in blazing sunshine this morning in Princes Street Gardens. The Fireworks Concert is always an amazing way to end the Edinburgh International Festival and to bring the city's bumper summer festivals season to a close.'

Joining Fergus in Princes Street Gardens was Virgin Money's Head of Sponsorship Andrew Nicholson, who said 'Virgin Money is extremely proud to be the official sponsor of the Fireworks Concert – it is 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. The *Virgin Money Fireworks Concert* is a fantastic conclusion to what has been another magnificent Edinburgh International Festival and Virgin Money is delighted in its continued support of this event.'

On his first day in the job as Chief Executive of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Gavin Reid said, 'What a hugely ambitious and impressive event we have witnessed tonight. It is clearly an enormous collective effort from the whole of the city. Thank you to everyone who came to enjoy the evening, and also to all our technical and health & safety partners, City of Edinburgh Council, Forth 1, the Edinburgh International Festival for all their incredible work on this event, and our sponsor Virgin Money. At the end of my first day in charge of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra back in my home city, I feel privileged and very proud to be part of such a fantastic event.'

A small number of anti-social incidents were recorded outside of Prince Street Gardens. Police Scotland would like to thank audiences for their general cooperation and enjoyment of the event.

Images by Mihaela Bodlovic