

Fox You (Very Much)

Concert Review: The PGSO Presents Lord of the Dance, With Special Guests Out of Alba and the Old Time Fiddlers!

27 Jan

I had the immense pleasure of attending last night's *Lord of the Dance* performance, a very special presentation by the Prince George Symphony Orchestra (PGSO) (<http://www.pgso.com/>), the Old Time Fiddlers (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/BC-Old-Time-Fiddlers-Association-Branch-1-Prince-George/168512246538111>) and local Celtic group Out of Alba (<http://www.outofalba.com/>).



<http://vyxen.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/lord-of-the-dance.jpg>

Wow!

As a notorious fan of Celtic music and the PGSO, picking up a ticket to this show was an absolute no-brainer for me. Without introduction, as soon as Conductor Kevin Zakresky (<http://www.kevinzakresky.ca/>) strode onto the stage, the Symphony launched into a stunning rendition of beloved English folk tune *Greensleeves*, the perfect way to begin the evening. At the conclusion of the piece, Zakresky took the mic and reminded me why, beyond his incredible musical talent, he is a perfect fit to the PGSO as he introduced the next composition. *Prairie Dawn*, a piece from Canadian composer Stephen Chatman, promised to pull the audience further into thrall. It was Zakresky's charming excitement that did it for me – that, and his advising that the audience pay special attention during “the fast bit” so as not to miss the bird calls played by clarinet and violin. His enthusiasm was not misplaced, this piece was amazing and the PGSO executed it with the passion and skill they are so known for. *Prairie Dawn* was spot on, sounding

exactly like the sonic sunrise it promised. A brilliant addition to the show.

Few PGSO events are complete without the introduction of a special guest musician, or two. The first of our contributing acts last night was a small group of Old Time Fiddlers. These were not just any fiddlers, these were *young* fiddlers and their talent was absolutely outstanding. In each of their collection of toe-tapping ditties, these musicians shone. Murmurs of awe erupted all around my seat during their performance and culminated in hand-throbbing applause at its conclusion.

It was in the second half of the show that Out of Alba took the stage. To begin, they were unaccompanied by the PGSO. [Alan O'Reilly, Jim Sayle, Carolyn Kelly, Jim and Margaret Coyle](http://www.outofalba.com/about.htm) (<http://www.outofalba.com/about.htm>) and [Ross Williams](http://www.reverbNation.com/rosswilliamsbc) (<http://www.reverbNation.com/rosswilliamsbc>) – of Prince George metal band Axis Disrupt, a special guest of Out of Alba for the evening. I am sad to admit that this is the first time I had seen Out of Alba perform, but thrilled to be a new, eager, loyal fan! These folks are exceptional musicians with a glowing repertoire. They have been playing together for years and it shows – not only do they complement each other beautifully and seem to play with an almost supernatural connection, they have a lot of fun doing it! Out of Alba embodies the reason I love Celtic music: it feels like home. We could just as easily have been sitting in their living room rather than Vanier Hall, last night.

After a short, amazing set, Out of Alba called Zakresky and the PGSO back onto the stage to play with them. Thanks to Trevor Hoffman, the PGSO had the orchestrations needed to flawlessly accompany Out of Alba in their next set. Then, just when I thought the evening couldn't get any better, the Old Time Fiddlers were back on the stage, adding another layer to the performance. This show was so well received that the evening's musicians were called back for not one, but two encores. *Wow!*

This was one of my favourite PSGO events. The combination of Prince George Symphony Orchestra and the tunes of the Celts was perfect. Thank you, so much, PGSO, Out of Alba, Ross Williams and the Old Time Fiddlers – you absolutely made my night! Please consider a repeat performance.

[Chatman – Prairie Dawn](http://www.drstephenchatman.com/Prairie_Dawn.mp3) (http://www.drstephenchatman.com/Prairie_Dawn.mp3)

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