

Bright Stars Shone for Us

by [markaspen](#) on 25 September 2019

Transcending Tchaikovsky

Bright Stars Shone for Us

by Tama Matheson

Word & Music and the London Mozart Players, Wimbledon International Music Festival, Kings College School Concert Hall, Wimbledon until 21st September

Review by Helen Astrid

Russian poet Alexander Plescheyev supplied many poems for composer Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky to create a series of Russian songs. The poet's collection entitled *Words and Music* includes *Нам звёзды кроткие сияли*, *Bright Stars Shone for Us*, the title of this performance. In this unique production which launched the Wimbledon Music Festival, the stars were evidently on stage.

This was a unique and smart concept called Lyric Drama, devised by the multi-talented Tama Matheson alongside Davina Clarke and Dr Kirsten Fehring. It combines the spoken word with live music. The result? A powerful performance transcending all other art forms. It was captivating from start to finish and the trio of performers Tama Matheson, Eleanor McLoughlin and dancer Alexander Nuttall, were accompanied by the outstanding London Mozart Players.



Bright Stars Shone for Us is based on the tumultuous personal and professional struggles of Tchaikovsky. The unadulterated and shocking truth about his life was revealed to us with such sensitivity and compassion, that the generous-sized Kings

College School Concert Hall in Wimbledon did not deter from the intimacy which engulfed us.

Interspersed with the music of Tchaikovsky and a few bars from the overture of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, references to *Eugene Onegin* permeated throughout.



We are drawn to Tchaikovsky's constant struggle with his sexuality causing him anguish and a yearning for salvation. Even God ignored his prayers. A string of eligible society ladies threw themselves in Tchaikovsky's direction, but nothing matched the craving and passion he had for his many male lovers. These moments were breathtakingly choreographed and acted by Matheson and Nuttall. It was impossible not to be moved.

The London Mozart Players, founded in 1949 by Harry Blech, demonstrated some fine playing as well as acting, being an integral part of the action on stage. Clever. Founded in 2018, **Word & Music Production Company** is one to watch out for. A genuine and heartfelt performance left us eager for more from this fresh and innovative young company.

Helen Astrid

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Photography by Oskar Chu