

Previous Reviews

Joy to the World 19th December 2009

Conductor Adrian Lucas never fails to provide Worcester with a packed Christmas stocking of music. Even he would probably agree that all expectations had been exceeded with this concert, for it truly sparkled and glittered.....Finzi's *In Terra Pax* was the highlight of the night by a clear margin. Worcester Festival Choral Society was on particular good form, delivering an exquisitely beautiful *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, a piece that was endowed with an almost ethereal quality.

This was a night of glorious music in a perfect setting. What would Worcester do without Adrian Lucas and his baton...or is it actually a magic wand ?

John Phillpott Worcester News

Messiah Saturday, 12th December 2009

Just a note to let you know how much we enjoyed the Messiah on Saturday night. It was a first rate performance by the Choral Society, Queen's Park Sinfonia and Soloists.....it was a memorable occasion befitting of Handel's 250th anniversary. **David and Margaret Hubball**

Under the baton of Adrian Lucas, the Worcester Festival Choral Society and Queen's Park Sinfonia gave a rendition of Handel's great oratorio to fulfil the audience's need for tradition of this kind. It was just right for getting everyone in the mood for Christmas.

The evening also had all the energy that we expect not only from Adrian Lucas but also the choruses and orchestras he conducts. The well known Hallelujah chorus had such vitality that the audience's standing up seemed to express reverence for the performance as much as for Handel himself. **Lucas Ball, Worcester News**

The performance of Handel's *Messiah* conducted by Adrian Lucas with Worcester Festival Choral Society, Queen's Park Sinfonia and soloists fulfilled all the expectations we now anticipate from them....."Worthy is the Lamb that was Slain" followed by the "Amen" had the choir giving superb performances with all the colour and rhythm that is predominant in the composer's work. For a packed cathedral, on the 250th anniversary of Handel's death, this was without doubt an evening to remember. **Margaret Campbell**

Scarlatti, St Cecilia Mass and Duruflé Requiem 14th November 2009

Margaret Campbell writes: The concert given by WFCS, soloists and the Westminster Chamber Orchestra conducted by Adrian Lucas gave an unforgettable performance of these two works. Although differing in style, both works were tackled admirably by all concerned. The performance of the Scarlatti was authentic and colourful throughout, whilst the Duruflé brought a different mood in which all performers brought out the tragic underlying influences. The choir and conductor are to be congratulated on being able to achieve this and a very special mention must be made of the boy trebles who gave an outstanding performance of the Pie Jesu.

Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, March 28th, 2009

Margaret Campbell (FRSA), a music journalist from the Independent, writes:

Brahms's 'German' Requiem is a compelling composition by anyone's standards, but when it receives a performance such as that given in Worcester Cathedral on Saturday 28 March, by the Worcester Festival Choral Society, the ESO conducted by Adrian Lucas, and two outstanding soloists, it is riveting.

From the opening bars, 'Blessed are they that mourn' to the final chorus, 'Blessed are the dead', Adrian Lucas had both orchestra and chorus under his control so that every nuance

and change of colour could be felt. Thus the choir was able to give a *fortissimo* that would fill the cathedral, or a *pianissimo* that whispered without being lost.

In Part II 'For all flesh is as grass' was bone-chilling, whereas 'How lovely are thy dwellings' was given warmth and assurance. This change of colour was apparent throughout and both choir and conductor are to be congratulated.

The soloists also gave outstanding performances. Soprano Alwyn Mellor has a beautifully produced tone which she can colour at will but at the same time is able to convey the underlying seriousness of her message. By the same token baritone Jonathan Gunthorpe gave a spine-chilling interpretation of the frailty of humanity and almost achieves a tenor quality in his higher register.

Messiah, December 6th 2008

Milla Pitts writes; "I purchased a ticket at the door for The Messiah. The choir was disciplined, crisp and clear, and really came to life in the second half. I was particularly taken with the two female soloists – the expressive warmth and clarity of diction of the young soprano drew me right in, and the phrase "Though the worms" to "shall I see God" brought, for the first time ever, a lump to my throat. The mezzo had some lovely low notes and sang with assuredness".

David and Hilary Garrett; "We thoroughly enjoyed this concert, in fact for us it was one of the best renderings of the Messiah we have ever heard – we really felt part of it, and in such a beautiful setting".

Haydn Stabat Mater and Mozart Litaniae Lauretenae, November 22nd 2008

Lucas Ball, Worcester News; "The highly energetic chorus provided a most supportive accompaniment to the soloists".

Carmina Burana, March 2008

Lucas Ball, Worcester News; "Under the decisive baton of Christopher Allsop, Orff's *Carmina Burana* had something of a Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* feel, what with all the time signature changes and dissonances. To spice things up further still, there was tremendous penetrating energy in Michael Bracegirdle's tenor voice and operatic recitative feel to Mark Evan's baritone sound. Both Soprano Maureen Brathwaite and the chorus had amazing control, even when there were huge numbers of Latin syllables to fit in."