

Previous Reviews

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."