

Choral society performs Rossini's last work

Nantwich Choral Society will be performing G Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solonnelle' in St Mary's Parish Church, Nantwich, on Saturday June 25.

The work, first performed in 1864, was Rossini's last major work. It received the praise of both public and critics and his own comment of the piece was that he wished to leave a final legacy which might serve as an example of how to write for the voice.

'His words have proved apt - the Choral Society has great pleasure in singing this work and it is hoped the audience will find

equal pleasure in listening,' said spokeswoman for the choir.

Soloists will be Catrin Ley, soprano, Marjorie Seddon, contralto, James Watson, tenor and Benjamin Odom, bass, together with Joy Roberts, pianoforte, and Richard Watson, harmonium. The choir is conducted by Stephen Buckman.

The harmonium for this performance has been kindly loaned by James Watson and concert sponsors are NMW Computers, Stapeley.

Tickets are available from the Tourist Information Centre, Nantwich or on the evening of the concert at the door.

Masterpiece stands the test of time

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Choral Society choose Rossini's last work

ON Saturday, June 25, Nantwich Choral Society will be performing the work of G Rossini, 'Petite Messe Solonnelle', in St Mary's Parish Church, Nantwich, at 7.30pm.

The 'Petite Messe Solonnelle' which was first performed in 1864, was Rossini's

last major work. It received the praise of both public and critics and his own comment on the piece was that he wished to leave a final legacy which might serve as an example of how to write for the voice.

His words have proved apt - choral society members say

they have had great pleasure in singing this work and it is hoped the audience will find equal pleasure in listening.

Soloists for the concert will be Catrin Ley (soprano), Marjorie Seddon (contralto), James Watson (tenor) and Benjamin Odom (bass), together with Joy Roberts (pianoforte) and Richard Watson (harmonium). Conductor is Stephen Buckman.

The harmonium for this performance has been kindly loaned by James Watson and sponsorship is courtesy of NMW Computers. The Choral Society is very grateful for their assistance and support.

Tickets are £3

(OAP's/students, £2). They are available from the Tourist Information Centre, Nantwich, or on the evening of the concert at the door.

The Chronicle

18/6/88

WELL DONE NANTWICH!

I RECENTLY spent a few days holiday at my sister's home at Shavington. My last Saturday in the district, before moving on to Europe, was spent shopping in Nantwich. What a town to be proud of, and those timbered buildings!

Passing through the car park behind your lovely church I noticed a car festooned with stickers advertising a concert that evening (Saturday June 25).

One sticker said 'Choral Classic in Cathedral Setting' and another said 'Make Rossini's Last Work Your Next.'

I felt such adventurous publicity

deserved support so, after a hurried tea, I came with my wife back into Nantwich for the performance of Rossini's 'La Petite Messe Solennelle.'

Had it not been for those eye-catching car stickers I would have left the area without having seen the inside of your lovely Parish Church.

Nor would I be

going around Europe, within a few days time, with the sound of your fantastic choir in my ears. How can such a small town gather into one group such outstanding talent?

I could dream up all sorts of adjectives in praise of such a performance and it would probably be unfair to single out the highlights of the evening.

But I cannot let this 'thank-you' pass without paying a few words of commendation and congratulations to:

● The Musical Director Stephen Buckman for outstanding interpretation, musicianship and control. I heard from a lady near me in the Nave that he travels from London. It was worth every mile!

● The Pianist, Joy Roberts. Such stamina and skill. Playing without orchestral support for over two hours was a musical marathon and so tastefully done!

● The four soloists, Catrin Lay (soprano), Marjorie Seddon (contralto), James Watson (tenor) and Benjamin Odom (bass). Their presentation, interpretation and blend was worthy of a London concert hall and contributed to the undoubted success of the fine evening.

● What can I say about your wonderful choir? Their confidence, especially in the fugue passages, their sensitivity in the pianissimo sections, their complete integration with the soloists to make this a complete work! Every 'part' did well. But if I could take a 'taxi load' back to Canada it would undoubtedly be your tenors. I can hear them now, in balance, but their notes (even the top A's!) placed just right. Look after them, choir members. Tenors are like gold and yours are—the cream on your choral cake.

My stay had many 'peaks' but I shall never forget that moment when I casually glanced, in a car park behind a lovely English Church, at a notice in a car on my last Saturday morning in the old country.

What led me there? The Almighty? Rossini himself? Who cares!

An unforgettable experience was mine!

Bravo Nantwich! Bravo Nantwich Parish Church! Bravo Nantwich Choral Society!

THOMAS EDWARD MACNAB,
24 Argyll Drive,
Torrington,
Hamilton,
Canada.

CHOIR'S STYLE CHANGE

NANTWICH Choral Society has proved in previous concerts that it has become a good Handelian-style choir.

Saturday's concert proved that it was able

to change this style and to follow the intention of Rossini in producing the work in a Bel Canto manner, a style of singing considered old fashioned in 1864 when a more florid operatic style was the then vogue.

Well what is Bel Canto? It is simply translated as beautiful singing, long, flowing phrases growing from the correct attack of sound with no distortion of the vowel shape. Therefore the choir had to learn to breathe the phrasing and to carry the voices to the audience on the rise and fall of each melodic line.

This was done so with great conviction and control and made a performance which had been well rehearsed and faithful to the wishes of the composer. Well done choir, well done choir-master Stephen Buckman.

The accompaniment of piano and harmonium was interesting and was surprisingly adequate in providing enough sound to give a balance of support to the choir. It was first class and Joy Roberts, the societies accompanist excelled in the 'Preludio Religioso' playing with a warm intensity which was admirable and much appreciated by the large audience.

Bel Canto

The loveliest singing of the evening was the Soprano Solo 'O Satanas Hostis,' a great example of pure Bel Canto singing, with soloist Catrin Lay. More convincing singing from soloists Marjorie Seddon, contralto and James Watson, tenor further enhanced the evening.

- E.