

AN MAIL



This photograph of the choir in concert at Macon was taken by Jean-Claude Ducray, father of Virginie Ducray who came from Macon to do work experience on the Guardian this summer. He is one of the correspondents on the local daily paper.

Feast of music and friendship

From Mr Cecil Bateman, Public Relations Secretary, Nantwich Choral Society:

MAY I, through the medium of your paper, thank all who assisted the Nantwich Choral Society in its visit to Macon.

The purpose of the trip was the first Choral Jumelage ("twinning") between the Nantwich Choir and the Choraes A Coeur Joins Macon.

The highlight was the Gala Concert held in the massive medieval Eglise Saint-Pierre, where the choir's full sound was heard at its best in the wonderful, but challenging, acoustics of the vast cathedral-like church. The effect of the grand organ and the accompanying trumpet, at the opposite end to the choir, added to the majesty of the Handel Four Coronation Anthems. Who, of Nantwich Choral, will ever forget the look of surprise and ex-

hilaration on the faces of the audience as the visitors "hit" the opening chords of *Zadok the Priest*. Magnifique!

But the week-end was more than a musical feast. It initiated a fellowship which is surely at the heart of all twinning.

The choir members were lavishly entertained in the homes of the Macon choristers. Locally-arranged visits to several Romanesque churches and vineyards in the Macon and Cluny regions, and to the world-famous International Ecumenical Youth Centre at Taize all contributed to the initiation of friendships which will be long-maintained.

On the return trip to Paris Airport, a lunch stop at Beaune gave the opportunity to visit the world-renowned Hotel Dieu Hospital.

From the warm welcome

given by the mayor and local officials in the Macon Town Hall on the Saturday morning until the emotional farewells on Monday, it was obvious that visitors and local folk alike had no intention of waiting until 1992 to take down any barriers with Europe!

I am sure that your readers will want to join with us in anticipating the return visit of the Macon choirs to us, in November 1990.

May I thank you all once again for assistance and encouragement in this and all of our ventures. All the planning and preparation will, I am sure, bring rich rewards in so many ways.

Nantwich Musical Director, Stephen Buckman, and the members of the choir have every right to feel that it was a job well done. The area can be justly proud of them!

CHOIR'S STYLE CHANGE

NANTWICH Choral Society has proved in previous concerts that it has become a good Handeleian-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, free-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 Satutaris Hostila,' a great example of pure Bel Canto singing, with soloist Catrin Ley. More convincing singing from soloists Marjorie Seddon, contralto and James Watson, tenor further enhanced the evening.

- E.

THE GUARDIAN, Friday, November 3, 1989

Choral society to open festival of music and art

NANTWICH Choral Society have been chosen to open the prestigious Festival of Music and Arts in Beckenham this weekend (November 4).

Their performance of *The Messiah*, under conductor Stephen Buckman, will launch this week-long festival on Saturday.

The trip is part of a packed autumn schedule for the Nantwich society. They have just returned from a successful visit to Crewe and Nantwich's twin town, Macon in France, and

will stage three concerts in Nantwich in the next two months.

On November 18 they will sing the Saint Saens' *Mass* and Kodaly's *Missa Brevis*. On December 2 they stage *The Messiah*, and two days before Christmas they hold their popular annual carol concert. All will be held in St Mary's Church.

Further information is available from Judith Dooley, Nantwich.