

Choir tunes up

FORMER Nantwich Choral Society member Sarah Wright returns as a soloist for the Society's summer concert this Saturday.

Sarah, who sang with the choir as a teenager, performs the mezzo soprano in works by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Richard Strauss at Nantwich's St Mary's Parish Church.

She is joined by bass Philip Ravenscroft in the first concert to be sponsored by the

recently-established Friends of the Society.

The programme opens with *In Windsor Forest* by Vaughan Williams, first performed by the composer in 1931. Its five movements are adapted from his Falstaff opera 'Sir John in Love' and the work is known for the beauty and simplicity of the lyrics.

The concert also includes *Madchenblumen*, poems by Felix Dahn, set to music by Richard Strauss.

It closes with *Five Tudor Portraits*,

Vaughan Williams' largest secular choral work which was first performed at the 1936 Norwich Festival. The five movements are settings of poems by John Skelton, a Tudor poet and one-time tutor to Henry VIII.

The choir is conducted by Stephen Buckman, who travels from London each week to rehearse with the Society. Doors open at 7.30pm.

Tickets are available on the door, from choir members, or from the Parish Church shop.

Diverting

AS a diversion from Mozart Requiems, out-of-season Messiahs and Vivaldi Glorias, Nantwich Choral Society's offering on Saturday at St Mary's, the finest church in Cheshire, has much to commend it — if you like Vaughan Williams and Strauss.

Stephen Buckman will conduct two VW works in this first concert sponsored by the new association of friends of the society.

The first is *In Windsor Forest*, which was launched in 1931 and has been struggling for popularity ever since — like *Sir John in Love*, the opera from which the five movements are adapted.

The second is another five-movement effort, *Five Tudor Portraits*, settings of John Skelton poems. This is Vaughan Williams' largest secular choral work which was written for the 1936 Norwich festival.

So a trip to Nantwich could be worth while, not just for families and friends of the choir members and soloists Sarah Wright and Philip Ravenscroft. Details from Judith Dooley on 0270 628188.

M/C Evening News
21st June 1991

REVIEW

Romantic Germany, pastoral England

NANTWICH Choral Society sang two Vaughan Williams suites for soloists, choir and orchestra at St Mary's parish church on Saturday night, and both were enjoyable.

But, sandwiched between them, a young mezzo, Sarah Wright, presented a set of four Richard Strauss lieder. And that was undoubtedly the highlight of the evening.

"*Madchenblumen*" ("Girl-flowers") is German romanticism at its most romantic, but Sarah encompassed its harmonic range radiantly. The singing of the second song, "*Poppies*," was particularly remarkable for its sparkling trills, and the

interpretation throughout was exquisite.

The concert had begun with a full-blooded performance of "*In Windsor Forest*." Conductor Stephen Buckman released all the atmospherics of the piece, and the choristers responded with enthusiasm though the drinking song was a trifle too decorous.

Sarah Wright sang the solos, as she did again in "*Five Tudor Portraits*." This was obviously much more difficult for the choir, but, aided by Sarah's thrilling mezzo and Philip Ravenscroft's rich bass, they gave a performance as warm as it was lyrical.

Eric Snape

"Evening Sentinel"