

Choristers' Messiah just as the composer intended

NANTWICH Choral Society sang Handel's Messiah with an easy, buoyant grace at St Mary's Church on Saturday night.

It was pleasant to hear the work performed as the composer intended, with a small band and harpsichord continuo. Symphony orchestras and massed choirs sound imposing, even overwhelming, but they tend to clog the astonishing brilliance and vivacity of the music; if you want to reach the heart of the greatest oratorio, go for something on a smaller scale.

Messiah is obviously a party-piece for the Nantwich choristers, and they were alive to the slightest signal from

By Eric Snape

their conductor, Stephen Buckman. His interpretation was close-knit but without hustle.

The soloists were all good - Jane Deakin, a young soprano with abundant warmth in her voice; Stephen Carter, an alto with a touch of ice in his; Robin Green, a dramatic tenor; and Philip Ravenscroft, a bass who never gives other than a splendid performance.

Led by David Routledge, the Nantwich Sinfonia players provided a sensitive accompaniment. Joy Roberts was at the harpsichord.

Concert is a huge hit

MUSIC-lovers flocked to a choral performance at an historic South Cheshire church.

More than 400 people crowded into St Mary's, Nantwich, for the latest offering from Nantwich Choral Society.

The 14th century church provided a magnificent backdrop for the choir's equally stunning repertoire of Handel's Messiah.

Society spokeswoman Sheila Luke said: 'The annual concert is always a big crowd-puller and this year was no exception. The church was packed to capacity.'

The 90-strong choir, which includes members drawn from across the borough, is celebrating its 21st anniversary year.

It rounds off its 1993 programme with a carol concert at the church on December 18.

Mrs Luke added: 'This is always a very popular event, particularly with families.'

'There's a lovely Christmas atmosphere with everyone joining in with the singing.'

Tickets for the concert are available from the church shop.

NANTWICH Choral Society's popular annual performance of Handel's 'Messiah' is on Saturday, December 4. The work was first written for performance during Lent and is not a straightforward account of the life of the Messiah. The work was too austere for the flamboyant London society of the time and was not well received. After his death in 1759 the 'Messiah' grew in popularity.

The Choral Society is in its 21st season and has an enviable reputation for its high standard of performance under its conductor Stephen Buckman. The performance is in St Mary's Church, Nantwich at 7pm. Jane Deakin is soprano, Stephen Carter counter tenor, Robin Green tenor, and Philip Ravenscroft bass. Tickets are £6 (concessions £3) and are available from Society members, the Church shop, at the door or telephone 625641.

Nantwich
Chronicle