

The Church Seasons Classical Concert



Bonfire Night saw light and stars of a different kind at St Martin's Church this year. At least once every year, the Church hosts a concert led by the Church Choir, with friends from the surrounding area joining us for the evening. This year, after faithfully attending eight weeks of rehearsals, 42 singers sang a wide variety of pieces to celebrate the seasons of the church year. Our good friend and gifted musician Jonathan Delbridge accompanied us on the church's wonderful pipe organ. Talented soloists, including Jonathan himself, Kasumi Murphy on flute, and Ros Ball, soprano, added variety and richness to the choir programme. Rev'd Steve presided over the evening, giving an introduction to the theme of the Church's Seasons and brief comments on each Season in turn, setting the music in context.

Many people in the audience commented on the variety and quality of the items we sang and played. Especially memorable for me among the Choir pieces were Stainer's "How beautiful upon the mountains" for Advent and his "God so loved the world" from The Crucifixion for Passiontide, along with an anthem by former Truro Cathedral scholar Philip Stopford, "Oh How Glorious is the Kingdom" as a triumphant ending to celebrate the feast of Christ the King. No such concert would be complete without a piece by John Rutter ("Look at the World"). Among the classical composers were Bach (including some fine organ music played by Jonathan), Handel (from The Messiah, of

course!), Mozart and Mendelssohn, and some lesser-known composers of classical church anthems from the medieval period including Gibbons' beautiful "Drop, drop slow tears". And the audience joined in for several rousing hymns, including two great Easter pieces, "This joyful Eastertide" and "Thine be the glory": and how fitting that the greatest day in the Christian year and the foundation of our faith, the day of Jesus' resurrection, should inspire so much wonderful music.

On a personal note, it was my first time singing tenor in a concert, and I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge: thanks to my all-male colleagues who so kindly welcomed me! And the thanks of all of us should go to the tireless workers behind the scenes and on the night, including those who provided the welcome glass of wine during the interval... The concert raised more than £500 for the church re-ordering project.

It was a truly magical evening. with great solo performances, lovely choir singing and inspired co-ordination by Rev'd Steve. A huge debt of gratitude, owed and expressed by performers and audience alike, is due to Music Director Chris Howarth for his inspiration, enthusiasm, patience, dedication and sheer hard work. And if all this inspires you to come and sing with the Church Choir, or simply line up to sing among our Friends at the next concert, please contact Chris.

Kathy Lang

