

## **The Britten Concert – A little note by Anne Schuetz**

It was a great pleasure to be part of the large audience for the Britten concert!

My first thought was that most audience members seemed to be happy to pay the full price for tiered seating or balcony. The stalls were almost empty which unfortunately looked like a barrier between audience and orchestra.

### **Rejoice**

Words were very clear and I noticed that other audience members didn't check their programmes. Well done, choir! It wasn't easy to sing and stay in tune, especially in the parts without instrumental accompaniment. The sound was uplifting throughout, especially in the Hallelujahs and the 'silly fellow'. However, the balance between voice parts was not always perfect. It might have been affected by the big block of men in the centre of stage and my seating location at the alto end but the sopranos seemed sometimes overpowered which was a shame.

I truly enjoyed the soloists, particularly the soprano whose voice sounded angelic. Unfortunately the organ accompanist didn't always adjust to her tempo. The alto had an impressive voice; however the words weren't always clear. The tenor solo was strong, overcoming a slightly flat start quickly. The bass solo was brilliant.

### **St Nicolas**

It was a nice gesture to rehearse the congregation parts at the beginning of the second half. I heard appreciative murmur among the audience.

The orchestra started strong and kept the tempo and energy going throughout. The first choir entrance sounded a bit hesitant but the singers grew in confidence quickly. The soloist's voice was brilliant, well-articulated, he was just the right person for the Nicolas role. Well done for convincing him to sing at such short notice! His younger counterpart was the star of the night I felt. His voice was clear and confident, it was a shame he didn't sing more! But also the choir excelled itself, especially the women's choir in the 'birth of Nicolas' section and the men's sailor choir stood out. Well done everyone! Throughout the choir kept the energy alive and reflected the dramatic story line by easily switching between dynamics. And the audience enjoyed being part of the performance by playing the congregation.

The concert ended on a very high level and I can ensure you that this concert was definitely one of our strongest!