

Bedford Choral Society

18th June 2011

Handel - 'Israel in Egypt'

Not being able to sing myself I thoroughly enjoyed listening to the performance. Well done BCS! Although the choral society did not have its full choir for 'Israel in Egypt', strong and determined singing gave a really exciting concert.

Even knowing how many movements were sung by the choir it still didn't seem like a long concert at all being in the audience.

Dynamics balance between choir and orchestra was difficult in parts – especially no 7 (He gave them hailstones) and 27 (The people shall hear and be afraid) when the choir sang quietly but the orchestra drowned the singing. However beautifully sung and well balanced with orchestra was chorus 8 – He sent a thick darkness - it sounded mysterious. Also well balanced was the first and last movement, whenever the double choir sang unison and forte or fortissimo.

Very clear entrances in choruses 21 and 22, sops were nicely strong here (in other parts they seemed a bit hesitant and therefore not loud enough); tenor entrances were impressively loud regarding the small numbers of tenor singers but in 22 (And with the blast of thy nostrils) it felt too loud and unfortunately not all in tune. Altos and Basses throughout were strong and blended in nicely.

The soloists had great voices - all four of them. It would have been great to hear more from Philip Tebb. Duet of sopranos sounded beautiful but Marie Elliot was more convincing in the parts where she sang Alto. The way Bethany Seymour sang the high notes very light and seemingly without any effort was great! Joseph Cornwell was welcomed back again, especially in the recitatives.

Anne Schuetz

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