

BEDFORD CHORAL SOCIETY

Verdi Requiem – April 2008

"A REAL 5-STAR BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY MUSIC EVENT ~ IT WILL BE A LONG TIME BEFORE BEDFORD HEARS ITS EQUAL AGAIN!"

One of the masterpieces of Western Art Music was given two outstanding performances at the Bedford Corn Exchange on successive evenings as the climax of the Bedfordshire Music Service's Easter Concert Series. The performers were the County Youth Orchestra, Bedford Sinfonia, Bedford Choral Society, Concord Singers, Danesborough Chorus, and Kempston Musical Society under the baton of Michael Rose. The soloists originally booked are all international stars who are connected with Bedfordshire: Rachel Nicholls, Susan Parry, Bonaventura Bottone and Ashley Holland. Sadly Holland was indisposed and Timothy Dawkins deputised.

This critic is rarely moved to stand at the end of any performance but the experience of this superb interpretation brought me to my feet, along with a substantial number of the audience. Michael Rose conducted the performance seamlessly without an interval, and with an overall vision that never faltered. It was more symphonic than any performance of the work that I have heard, and his performers rose to his vision with barely a missed stitch.

The soloists, as expected, were superb with, perhaps, Rachel Nicholls just outshining her excellent colleagues. There was some really impressive playing from members of the Youth Orchestra, not least from the principal bassoon and principal flute.

The chorus was as disciplined and well balanced as any I have heard over many years of attending choral works at the Corn Exchange. Homophonic music and counterpoint were handled with equal skill and the range and control of dynamics was astonishing.

The Corn Exchange was half-filled with performers: the audience squeezed into the remaining, restricted area. At times, especially in the *Tuba mirum*, the hall was overwhelmed with the vision of the Day of Wrath. It was just as it should be: amazing, memorable and a great advert for Bedfordshire Music, both youth and adult. I hope that many councillors from the new unitary authorities attended one night or the other.

Dr Roy Tipping

April 8th 2008