

BCS Concert - 16th March 2024

MAGNIFICENT EVENING OF MUSIC FOR VOICES AND BRASS

Botley Choral Society's Spring concert together with Maritime Brass Ensemble, on Saturday 16th March gave us a veritable feast of wonderful music.

The evening started with choir and brass ensemble performing Vaughan Williams' "O Clap Your Hands" - the brass a little overpowering at times.

Three Bruckner motets followed:

"Locus Iste" here the unaccompanied choir blended beautifully with almost perfect intonation. "Ave Maria" and "Ecce Sacerdos" – provided us with excellent diction and dynamics.

The trombone accompaniment enhanced the performance and it was good to see everyone paying attention to and watching the directions of the conductor, David Burgess.

As an excellent finish to the first half, Graham Brown and his Maritime Brass Ensemble performed pieces by Purcell, Scheidt and Baron. All superbly played and warmly received by the full church.

Maritime Brass opened the second half with a fanfare by Strauss, written for the Vienna Phil, arranged for brass and organ by trombonist Adrian Cleverly.

This was followed by works by Gounod, Alford, and Woodfield. Again, excellently executed, with perhaps the highlight being "The Two Imps" with virtuosic xylophonic playing by Mark Streater and Ronnie Flatman.

The final work in the evening was John Rutter's wonderful "Gloria", scored for choir, brass, percussion and organ. One or two hesitant moments from the lower voices early in the first movement were well rescued by the sopranos when they entered.

The second movement opens with an organ interlude played by Mark Dancer. Some beautiful singing followed particularly by the trio of soprano and alto soloists from the choir – Elinor Hoile, Kate Phillips and Fran Slater.

The third movement contains many glorious, syncopated passages all magnificently handled by the performers, with the choir finally singing out and clearly enjoying the experience, all brilliantly directed by maestro Burgess!

The enthusiastic appreciation of the capacity audience was evidence of the quality of the performance throughout, and the pleasure of being there.

How lucky are the folk of Botley to have such quality of concerts within their easy reach!