

Chairman's Notes and Awards

I have never been more proud of GCS than in this thrilling performance of Missa Solemnis. It was thrilling, committed, energetic, accomplished and musical; each and every one of you can be hugely satisfied.

For me, it was our best concert since we did Berlioz Grande Messe des Morts.

I have said this many times before but GCS is a first class choir with excellent singers – we MUST say this to others more often. The only shame was that you did not have a bigger audience to appreciate your art.

No matter.....Well done!

THE GOOD

Every section played their part, whether it be the strong lead from the sopranos particularly in the higher register, the attack from the basses which gives such a fine foundation, the tenor “Quoniam” and “Et Resurrexit” were highlights but generally very good or the Altos “Judicare” – you really went for it – it was a very polished performance. I had been made aware that some of the altos had organised additional rehearsals with Russell and it clearly showed so congratulations on your commitment.

All our new singers acquitted themselves superbly as did the young singers, no mean feat in a new environment; the balance was just right and the quiet singing was magical. The diction was excellent and you all seemed to sing for each other.

The contrast between the afternoon and evening was marked. It is a sign of a very good choir to take their performance to that level after the only rehearsal with the orchestra and soloists.

I sang this work as part of the Three Choirs Festival chorus in 2015 and I am certain that your performance was significantly better. I had urged you to take courage and you certainly did to the extent you looked confident and were clearly enjoying yourselves.

The Gloria was just wonderful and “driven”, the Agnus Dei was mastered and the Dona Nobis Pacem gave us superb contrasts in dynamics – masterful.

We were fortunate to have four terrific soloists (who were not perfect, however) and a wonderful orchestra with Roger Huckle giving us a sensitive and accomplished solo.

As ever, Adrian was totally in command and you really watched him and followed his clear and helpful direction – it was a wonderful team effort and members of the audience I spoke to were just as impressed as me!

In the afternoon, we generated a good deal of ticket sales and interest in our future concerts.

So, thank you to everyone for your commitment and musicality and to all the helpers in whatever role. A particular well done and thank you to Jennifer Bury, ably supported by the section reps.

THE NOT SO GOOD

I am being deliberately picky here but in truth there were very few less good bits.

- The sits and stands need work, although the platform discipline was generally very good
- The Hosanna was a bit vague in parts but still pretty good
- As always, some people in every section did not watch as much as they could
- Tiredness meant the energy dropped at about the three-quarter mark but it picked up to give a stunning finish.
- Don't wait for Adrian to tell you to smile at the end. You had every right to be happy so show it!
- Some singers were very late back after the break but beaten this regard by one of the orchestra! I know the coffee shop is not the most efficient but please try to avoid being late. In the Three Choirs this year I was late back and Adrian quite rightly "roasted me" – it was my fault and I deserved it; please be in good time in future.

THE UGLY

The rude member of the public who strutted into the nave from the cloisters and proceeded to eat a caramel slice very noisily and ostentatiously – very poor behaviour.

HONORABLE MENTIONS AND AWARDS (Some of which are not intended to be serious!)

Serious ones:

- Best platform discipline – Simon Draper...again, who will depose him?
- Good "watchers" – Jessica Scaife, Liz Quinlan, Margy Wheeler, Dominic Lewen, Hamish Charters, Paul Collins, Alan Passey, Neil Truphet, Tony Mitchell, Anthea Holland, Jill Beddoe, Joan Leyfield, Sarah Goodwin, Jane Hardman, Sophy Darlow, Caroline Stacey, Ruth MacLeod

N.B. I could not see all the front row at all so please forgive me if I did not mention you.

- Most animated singer – Julian Whittaker; a joy to watch!
- Best debut – ALL the new singers – brilliant!
- Best individual "Et Resurrexit" – Peter Holmes – commitment personified.
- Best father and son performance – Stephen and Rhys Moore – great to see.
- Best father and son-in-law performance – John Merrick and Dominic Lewen
- Best mother and daughter performance – Sheila Lamb and Lauren Brice
- Best sisters performance – Sue Colquhoun and Nicky Tyler (honourable mention for Liz Quinlan and Margy Wheeler)

Not serious ones:

- Best "Almost sneaking undetected in 30 minutes late" – Harry Kirby – I know there was a good reason but it brought a smile to my face.

- Best yawn – Tony Washington and the choral scholar his left (rude of me not to know the name – apologies) – perfectly synchronised yawning...almost as if it had been planned!
- Best looking utterly lost – nobody!!
- Best looking elegant when muffled-up against the cold – the ladies – carried it off beautifully
- Best disruptive coughing – the chairman – sorry if you were put off as much as the audience member in front of me – hence my moving to the side aisle
- Best conspiracy theory – the singers who asked me what dark motive I had for moving over to the side aisle!

So, thank you for a wonderful evening and ONWARDS to Messiah.