

Brampton Festival Singers Present:

“Magnificent Mozart”

The Rose Theater, Brampton: May 29^h, 2011

Overview

Congratulations on a wonderfully successful evening, I am certain everyone involved feels tremendous at the results—and what a terrific turn out. On the whole, everyone did a really fantastic job—the soloists were terrific, the orchestra was ideal and the chorus was impressive. I thought that you made good use of the tech available at the Rose—the projections were well suited and the choir was well broadcast, though there should have been a second mic for the men in the solo group. The stage set up was well done as were your wardrobe selections.

I was very impressed by the level of consistency that you were able to bring to this concert, with an exception being the slight drop in focus at the beginning of the second half. The orchestra did a wonderful job accompanying the soloists and the choir—the intonation between the strings and the woodwinds was, for the most part excellent (the viola had some issues during the second half). I was thrilled to hear such a solid and rich sound from the choir—it was very clear that everyone was putting all they had into that performance, there was no sense at all that anyone was just going through the motions, great work. As you will see in the notes below the standard musical elements of phrasing, dynamics, intonation, energy, etc., were all very well attended to by each section. One minor exception to this was the trumpets, they had a tendency to play a bit too loud and over-somewhat, causing some pitch issues.

As I mentioned, the choir really did a terrific job, all the basic musical parameters were covered and well worked. There was a few times however when the diction seemed a bit to labored, almost as though everyone was very determined not to mess it up. While this allowed for a very clear presentation of the text, it did cause a little bit of stiffness, this was very minor and not a continuous issue. On the same topic, there were also a few times (see the notes below) where it seemed as though the choir was singing only the phonetic sounds of the text and not the words—by insuring that the meaning (and gravity in the case of a mass) of the words are understood, then this can be transmitted though the music adding a greater depth of expression to the music.

I thought that the program was very well chosen; I particularly liked the peppering of Schubert. There was also a very good variety of solo, instrumental and choir features. While I understand the programming reasons for breaking up the mass (K 167), this did affect the overall impact of the piece as a whole, especially the Agnus Dei. Like movements of a symphony, the sections of a mass are all intimately related members of a single composition and they have their greatest impact and meaning when performed in relation and sequence.