

There was so much variety in this concert of music by Vivaldi that the decision by conductor James Atherton to perform three works by one Baroque composer was perfectly justified and was thoroughly enjoyed by audience and performers alike. Relying on the orchestral resources Vivaldi would have used set against a choir of greater numbers was a risk but the balance was well regulated. The Corelli Orchestra, with their baroque instruments, was a constant pleasure with fine playing particularly from the trumpet, oboe and continuo players. *Dixit Dominus* is a setting of Psalm 109 for two distinct choirs which came over well particularly with echo effects despite the restrictions of the building. After an uncertain start the music settled with a solid chordal sound followed by lively unison passages for voices and instruments. The soprano and contralto soloists balanced well with sensitivity in the florid duets, although the tenor and bass soloists were not so compatible with the strong tenor dominating. The *Judicat In Nationibus* was especially well performed with virtuoso playing from the trumpets and lively singing from the choirs.

The less known, shorter *Magnificat* opened with power and directness. Again we were treated to excellent solo work from soprano, contralto and tenor, while the slower choir numbers displayed subtle dynamic variation. The final *Gloria* employed full resources in slow block chording before the more lively contrapuntal section completed the first half of the concert.

The opening number of the more familiar *Gloria* RV 589 burst forth in fine form with attention to dynamics and tonal quality although word endings were slightly ragged at times. The second movement was particularly effective creating a feeling of stillness although intonation was suspect in the slow chromatic vocal lines. The soprano soloists excelled in the *Laudamus Te*. The chordal nature of the chorus writing in *Gratias agimus tibi* was strong but fugal entries tended to rush. The orchestra again excelled, especially when accompanying the soloists. Despite some occasional lapses in ensemble, this whole work was performed with energy and enthusiasm and made a fitting end to the concert. James Atherton's second concert with this choir displayed the hard work and clear direction he has brought to the choir. The concert was dedicated to former conductor Michael Power who died earlier this year.