

A summer's evening concert from Thames Philharmonic

It was with great pleasure and anticipation that we gathered on Saturday 9th June at All Saints' Parish Church, Kingston for the concert to be given by Thames Philharmonic: the Choir, accompanied and enriched on the organ by Stephen Disley; the whole directed of course by John Bate.

The first part of the evening was a miscellany of music: the choir beginning with the haunting *Cantique de Jean Racine* by Fauré. This performance was a joy to listen to, with its warm tones and familiar beauty. It set the scene, creeping up upon us the peace of the summer evening in such a setting.

The *Mass for Four Voices* by Byrd was interspersed twice by organ soli (lovely idea) – one by Gibbons: *Fantasia of Four Parts*, and *Miserere* by Byrd himself. Stephen Disley demonstrated his usual combination of passion and restraint and thoughtful musicianship in these works.

The Choir opened the Byrd Mass with accuracy and enjoyment that marked their performance of this impressive work of Byrd. After the Credo their confidence and punch provoked a spontaneous burst of applause, before the lively and sparky Gibbons solo on the organ. Nice.

Following the Byrd Mass, two organ soli from the *9 Organ Pieces Op. 40* of Langlais were well-contrasted: the *Chant Heroique* was an excellent finale to part 1 of the evening – Stephen Disley used the 'bells' of the 2' Zimbelstern stop on this remarkable instrument to round off with a flourish of amusement this feast of French and English music.

The Requiem of Fauré is a favourite with Thames Philharmonic audiences. The Choir gathered in confidence as we progressed. The Sanctus broadening into 'full glory'.

We were treated at the Hostias to the striking depth of tone of the baritone soloist Timothy Edlin: we waited in eager anticipation for his return in the final Libera Me. A highlight was the Pie Jesu solo, for a member of the choir was chosen for this: her voice was mature and rich.

The silence held as the final note was reached spoke of how this had been one of the best summer concerts we have had here – a cracking evening.

M N Woodroffe