

The Bournemouth Symphony Chorus have returned from a very successful trip to the Czech Republic. The main purpose was to perform *'Mirror of perfection'* in Brno under the baton of Richard Blackford, the composer. Richard is one of the choir's Vice-Presidents but he is also 'Composer in Association' to the Brno Filharmonie. It was at his suggestion that the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus were invited to take part in the concert which included the Dvorák *'Te Deum'* and Janáček's *'The cunning little vixen'*.

The rehearsals were held in the Besedni Dum where Janáček conducted this very orchestra which added greatly to the excitement for the singers. The concert was given in the Spilberk Castle in Brno and the al fresco performance area was excellent for its acoustics and, as it was a warm evening, also very comfortable. The project created much media interest. A television crew filmed and interviewed during the rehearsal in the Besedni Dum with the result that the choir and orchestra were on national TV news that evening!

Performing the *Te Deum* in Dvorák's homeland was obviously a risk but the choir of over 100 delivered superbly and the audience appreciation and comments afterwards confirmed their enjoyment. The soloists were Eva Danhalova (soprano) and Tomas Badura (baritone).

The choir also visited Prague where chorus director Greg Beardsell conducted an afternoon concert given in St Nicholas' Church, Old Town Square which featured works by Hubert Parry as well as other English and American choral pieces. They were asked to 'announce' the concert in a rather novel way. Just before they were due to begin the whole choir were assembled on the steps of St Nicholas' Church to sing the first couple of phrases of *'I was glad'* to the crowds. It certainly brought them in! Chris Dowie was the organist and the choir were fortunate to have the services of Margaret Burdett (soprano) and James Davies (bass).

