

## Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Lighthouse, Poole

7:38am Thursday 17th December 2009

### Daily Echo

Who could possibly have left the Lighthouse Concert Hall on Wednesday night without feeling thoroughly elated?

Messiah, Handel's great masterpiece, given under the direction of the distinguished choral conductor Simon Halsey, held inspiration aloft.

The Handelian-sized orchestra of some 40 musicians offered an agreeable balance to the full 120 members of the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus whose diction seemed, if anything, even more refined and from whom artistic merits were to be appreciated in the series beginning Surely He hath borne our griefs as much as in the glorious Hallelujah and Amen.

Diction from the soloists is also crucial and again, this year, they attained as near perfection as anywhere in concert. There was not the theatricality that sometimes attends these occasions, for here an extra degree of sincerity was evident; not least in tenor James Oxley's account of Behold and see.

The amount of righteous anger that bass Christopher Purves put into Why do the nations was simply enthralling and once through his first aria counter-tenor Yuri Minenko proved wonderfully rounded.

Calling the soloists from behind the orchestra in turn seemed a neat idea and the presence of soprano Sophie Daneman just lit up the auditorium with superbly shaded dynamics in all her solos.