

**Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Chorus: Lighthouse, Poole  
Saturday 18th December 2010**

By Mike Marsh

As a child the eagerly anticipated pre-cursor to a visit from Father Christmas was sitting up with my parents listening to the BBC's annual broadcast of Handel's Messiah. Well, some things change but the joy now of listening to the BSO with full chorus never fails to stir those fond memories.

This year David Hill's chance to put these forces through their paces which, with persuasively buoyant tempos in many of the numbers, made an enthralling evening.

A late stand-in for indisposed Neal Davies, bass Jonathan Lemalu made a considerable impact. A softly grained 'For, behold darkness' showed the illuminating quality of his voice with a thoroughly well prepared performance.

Counter-tenor Iestyn Davies elicited a fine clarity throughout and sensitive tenderness in 'He was despised', and in tenor Benjamin Hulett we had a characterful singer whose compassionate 'Behold, and see' was typical of his thoughtful application.

Sarah Tynan gave some finely voiced solos including a touching 'If God be for us' in a performance where the soloists timing of an entrance from behind the orchestra, as last year, worked well.

**In choruses, passionate and powerful, penitent and profound the BSC were superb with some nicely proportioned dynamics in the great surging Hallelujah!**