

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Lighthouse, Poole

8:51am Thursday 15th December 2011 in Reviews

By Mike Marsh »

Thrilling. Stupendous. Pick any superlative; and it'll fit. Handel's Messiah propelled with almost breathless abandon, yet directed by Paul Goodwin with absolute precision and passion.

The pacing had good momentum from the start and Goodwin possessed the knack of building a performance that brought spontaneous applause after the tremendous Hallelujah Chorus and was close to that scarce standing ovation on the final Amen. Gavin Carr should be rightly proud of his choir.

Good soloists are a crucial element and those on this roster were all gifted with that elusive quality of exemplary diction, even when the tempos were pressing. Soprano Claire Booth seemed to revel in the polished flexibility of her voice in Rejoice greatly and delivered a finely controlled I know that my redeemer liveth.

Matthew Brook, bass, showed his mettle in a brilliant account of Why do the nations? And Robert Murray, tenor, elicited sterling expressiveness, notably in Thou shalt break them. The upper-range strength of counter-tenor William Towers was impressive; showing a fine sensitivity in He was despised.

Goodwin's attention to orchestral nuance and balance was fully reflected within the chorus; their attack was whistle clean, supple, packed with punchy accentuation, fabulous clarity and harmony and sung with a perspicacious level of consummate choral charisma.