

Impressive presentation

CONCERT

UWA Choral Society
Winthrop Hall
Review: Neville Cohn

There would have been more than usual interest in this performance at the weekend because this was Jango Chapkhana's debut as director of this long-established choir.

It was an impressive presentation, with Handel's Ode for St Cecilia's Day memorable for often-splendid choral corporate tone and tempo choices that sounded intuitively right.

Confident attack, well-maintained momentum, phrasing of finesse and clarity of diction augur well for a choir that sounds refreshingly alert and revitalised as in From Harmony.

An orchestra led by Daniel Kossov gave us finely managed dotted rhythms and clean lines in the overture and a gracefully stated Menuetto Strings, overall, were in excellent fettle.

I liked the tenderness that informed much of The Soft Complaining Flute but singing was not always quite on the note here.

There was much that gave listening pleasure, too, in Bach's Magnificat in D with the choir once again strikingly in form and evoking what one commentator has so perceptively described as the work's "unearthly jubilation".

Stewart Smith was beyond reproach at the organ.

In Suscepit Israel, vocal soloists Stephanie Gooch, Sarah-Janet Dougiamas and Meredith Wilkie sang to fine effect with Robert Hofmann coming into his own in Quia Fecit. David Woodward brought a supple and musicianly voice to his arias.

There was also a deeply felt presentation of Bach's O Jesu Christ, Mein Lebens Licht.