

On 26th March at 7.30, All Saints' Church, Eastbourne was full to capacity. Liz Barker, the chairman, was busy organising additional chairs that were needed, to accommodate an enthusiastic audience for Eastbourne Choral Society's performance of Handel's Messiah. They were accompanied by The Eastbourne Sinfonia, leader Jenny King and directed by John Hancorn. Four young soloists completed the team.

Following the overture, Jack Roberts set the standard for the singing with his able tenor voice and precise diction in the opening recit Comfort Ye. The choir followed his lead when they rose to sing the first chorus And the Glory of the Lord. Despite the large numbers the choir now attracts, they produced a light and clear tone with every word audible. There was an athletic approach to the semi quaver runs in All We Like Sheep and some beautiful soft singing but the Hallelujah chorus gave the choir a chance to raise the roof of All Saints' and they certainly did.

Catrin Woodruff then brought us all back to earth with her beautifully controlled rendition of I know that My Redeemer Liveth.

Marcus Plant joined James Williams for the The Trumpet shall sound and Nick Houghton, now a resident of Eastbourne and the choir's regular accompanist was always supporting the proceedings from the chamber organ.

John Hancorn, as always, was in control and led the whole ensemble from tender pianissimo to rousing fortissimo while retaining a style appropriate for this great work.

The choir were immaculately turned out and the staging allowed everyone to see and be seen clearly. The informative programme was presented at the door with a smile.

The audience were on their feet at the end, having had a wonderful evening. This was a free concert and a lovely gesture from Eastbourne Choral Society to the people of Eastbourne, enabling everyone to enjoy Handel's best known work this Easter.

Jean Hill