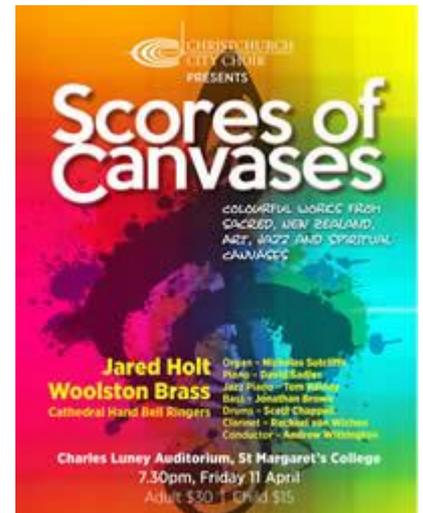


Christchurch City Choir



SCORES OF CANVASES - REVIEW

Reviewed by David Sell in The Press, 14 April 2014

Presented by the Christchurch City Choir with Jared Holt (baritone soloist), Woolston Brass, the Cathedral Hand Bell Ringers and Lucy Cammock-Elliott (narrator), conducted by Andrew Withington, at the Charles Luney Auditorium, St Margaret's College, Friday 11 April 2014.

Entitled Scores of Canvases, this first concert of the year by the Christchurch City Choir offered as many shades of music as its programme did of colours. It was Andrew Withington's first concert as musical director, a role that he has swept into with enthusiasm and high-level competence. All this is helped by a personality that attracts the best musicians, draws them together and brings out their best.

Not only was the music good but it was arranged into a concert that never dipped in its appeal. Martin Shaw's Grand Processional on Lobe Den Herren with which they opened brought together the Handbell Ringers, Woolston Brass and organist Nicholas Sutcliffe. Then it was on to Vaughan Williams' O Clap Your Hands before Jared Holt joined with the choir in a moving performance of the same composer's Five Mystical Songs. It was a real pleasure to hear Jared Holt again after the years in which he has established himself internationally as one of our finest baritones.

Much of the colour came after the interval, first with a group of three songs by Anthony Ritchie, Then I Understood. Before each song, a poem was beautifully and tastefully recited by preparatory school student Lucy Cammock-Elliott. After that the mood swung over to jazz with Bob Chilcott's A Little Jazz Mass. Again, good taste and quality prevailed as the choir was joined by a jazz trio led by Tom Rainey.

Then, to ensure that we all danced home with the same bounce with which Withington conducted the final item, he had chosen an arrangement by John Rutter of When The Saints Go Marching In for the choir to march out to.

It wasn't only the bright acoustic of the Charles Luney Auditorium that gave the City Choir its strong, clear quality. A group of young choral scholars and invited singers added a youthful buoyancy to the established choir.

Judging from this concert, there is only one thing better than hearing the City Choir, and that is to sing in it.