

Concert on 20th October Song For A Forgotten People

Any part of the Crypt at Canterbury Cathedral makes an perfect setting for a musical or liturgical event, providing, as it does, an excellent acoustic, to be filled, easily, by the remarkable voice of Angeline Kanagasooriam who, with her three-octave range is equally able to sing from below Middle C, up to G, four ledger-lines above the treble stave. To be able to sing several top C's, pianissimo, without any apparent effort, needs some doing, but Angeline did just that in her performance of *Casta Diva* from Bellini's *Norma*, performed within the Opera section.

The concert, given in an easy, informal atmosphere, all beautifully accompanied by pianist Stephen Matthews, started with two items from Handel's oratorio "Messiah" – "Rejoice greatly" and "How beautiful are the feet" (voice and piano), performed as part of the on-going commemoration of the 250th anniversary of Handel's death.

The oratorio/chamber section continued with recitatives & arias from Bach's "St Matthew Passion" – "*Du Liebe Heiland du*", and "*Aus Liebe*." (voice, flute and piano). Requiring much breath control to accurately execute all the semiquaver passages, Angeline took it all easily in her stride. Bach's Sonata for flute and keyboard (in this case, pianoforte) in E Minor, BWV1035, was played by Thomas Hancox and Stephen Matthews, who, quite apart from giving the music the necessary bounce by beautiful phrasing, and articulation of every note, was enhanced by Tom's concise talk that preceded the performance of the piece.

Moving on through the evening, into Opera, first it was the Countessa's recitative and aria *Dove Sono* from Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro", then *Casta Diva*, followed by Tatyana in the "The Letter Scene" from Tchaikovsky's "*Eugene Onegin*". Simple props, a 5-branch candelabra, a table, pen, and paper, created the setting for this very long aria, performed from memory and sung in English. This was the only work of the evening not sung in the original language. It is not always possible to use translations convincingly, as musical accents are liable to fall on the wrong syllables. This translation, however, worked well.

From the troubled Tatyana, Angeline moved on to the joyful Juliette with "*Ah! Je veux vivre*" – Juliette's birthday party song from Gounod's "*Romeo et Juliette*." This would tax any soprano to sing the very florid passages, in tune, but not Angeline. Lastly, we were treated to Mussetta's "*Quando men vo*", set in a café in the Latin quarter of Paris. It goes without saying how Angeline handled this!

If demisemiquaver passages such as those in "*Romeo and Juliet*" would tax the voice, how much so would those in the next item, "*La Flute de Pan*" by Jules Mouquet, tax the technique of a flute player. I have never heard this piece before but Tom and Stephen made it sound so easy, playing it beautifully. They deserve to go on to great things.

To give Tom and Stephen a break, Angeline took over the piano, accompanying herself in a gentle medley of songs called The Journey which I felt all fitted in nicely. The concert ended in a completely opposite vein to its beginning, with a selection of songs by George Gershwin (voice, flute and piano), performed with a relish that left the audience delighted.

The concert was a great success, well- attended despite the atrocious weather and the competing event in the Shirley Hall next door. For the absentees - YOU MISSED A GREAT EVENING!

MNC.