

**Purcell Concert Rosenethe Singers
Church of the Holy Rude, Stirling
Sunday 2nd May 2010**

After an uncharacteristically tentative start, the Rosenethe Singers settled down to give their usual accomplished performance. One of the highlights of the concert was the group of three short Anthems with the choir placed at the East wall of the church. Here we heard lovely clear textures with cadences rounded off musically. The words were clearer from that position, although the singers can still work harder on diction, especially vowel sounds which require more strength and focus.

The changing moods in “Jehova, Quam multi Sunt Hostes” were well defined, and the first half of the concert ended with a bright and precise performance of Jeremiah Clarke’s “Sound ye Trumpets”.

Well balanced choral singing in “Welcome to the Pleasures” showed hints of the great choruses to come in “Dido and Aeneas” some years later, and in “A Song for Saint Cecilia” the choir lifted their performance with excellent diction and tone. “Fairest Isle” is a challenge for any singer and was sung with a very good legato line. This would have been enhanced by the stronger use of dynamics which the choir brought to “If Love’s a Sweet Pleasure”, sung with a suitable light touch.

The altos really shone with their tone and diction in “Sleep, Downy Sleep” and then the men went to town in the two drinking Catches, holding tankards instead of music and singing beautifully through various stages of inebriation before collapsing in a blissful heap.

The concert ended with the wonderful chorus “To the hill and the vales” which followed a selection of music from “Dido and Aeneas”. The choir was supported by the excellent playing of the Scottish Bach Consort who throughout the evening had performed some complex Fantasias by Purcell, under their leader, Angus Ramsay.

We look forward to this adventurous and polished choir’s performances of music by Elgar, and Bach’s “St Matthew Passion” conducted by the scholarly and energetic Matthew Beetschen.

Sasha Alexander