

Israel in Egypt 19.03.06

The Arun Choral Society, under their conductor John Henville, presented Handel's oratorio 'Israel in Egypt' in Arundel Cathedral on Sunday 19th March.

Accompanying the choir was Sinfonia of Arun, leader Robin Morrish, and Sarah Plumley, organist.

The soloists were six young students from the Royal Academy of Music.

Israel in Egypt is like a marathon for the choir; one graphic polyphonic chorus following another and another with very few breaks between.

The Arun Choral Society rose to the challenge, helped by an infusion of guest tenors, as the work demands a number of double choruses, and the resulting balance between the voice sections was good. The choir's versatility was shown, under John Henville, in the depiction of the dramatic inflictions on Egypt; Flies, Locusts, Hailstones, Fire and then the mysterious hushed portrayal of thick darkness.

The young soloists were heard in solos and in a pleasing number of duets.

The two bright voiced sopranos, Rebecca Hodgetts and Lisa Crosato; the two virile voiced baritones, Samuel Evans and George Humphreys, in their martial duet; and most pleasing, the sensitive blend of warm voiced mezzo Lucie Spickova and the clear tenor of Christopher Diffey.

The Sinfonia of Arun contributed an accustomed excellent and reliable accompaniment, under their leader Robin Morrish, and the large audience responded with warm applause at the conclusion of another accomplished and well received performance.

Duncan Robertson