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Review

Bach concert memorable production

The majestic, sonorous tones of the B minor Mass by Johann Sebastian Bach, considered the composer's greatest work, were presented in full performance Sunday afternoon by the Rogue Valley Chorale with four guest soloists, the Oregon String Quartet from the University of Oregon and the Chamber Orchestra.

This is said to be the first performance of the entire mass ever presented in the Rogue Valley. The project is the most ambitious ever undertaken by the chorale and its founder-director, Lynn Sjolund, and the performers' year of dedicated hard work resulted in an impressive production.

From the powerful opening chords of the Kyrie with its deeply felt plea for forgiveness to the dramatic *Dona nobis pacem*, an eloquent prayer for peace that concludes the work, the singers and soloists combined their talents to produce a truly memorable concert. With the accompaniment provided by the chamber orchestra players, the performance should be considered outstanding.

The soprano and contralto soloists, Ellen Frohn-mayer and Mira Frohn-mayer, who are sisters-in-law, appeared in two duets, the middle section of the Kyrie and the lengthy *Et in unum Dominus Jesum Christum*, the third part of the *Symbolum Nicenum*, the first part of Bach's extension of the traditional Latin Ordinary. Their fine voices

Mary Ann Campbell.



blended beautifully in the Kyrie eleison and shone dramatically in the flowing rise and fall of the second duet.

Ellen Frohn-mayer's clear, soaring soprano was a delight in her solo, the angelic *Laudamus te* in the Gloria and in her duet with tenor James Stanard, *Domine Deus, rex coelestis*, her bell-like tones shone through the inspired tune.

In her two solos, the moving *Qui sedes ad dexteram patris*, and the final aria, the *Angus Dei*, Mira Frohn-mayer's warm contralto eloquently drew out the powerful prayer of the first and the tender music of the latter.

Stanard's aria, the *Benedictus*, the final part of the *Osanna, Benedictus* section, had some moving qualities as he sang to the gentle violin accompaniment.

The bass solos, sung by Ellison Glattly, were the powerful aria, *Quoniam tu solo sanctus* in the Gloria, and the gentle, melodic *Et in spiritum sanctum* of the *Symbolum Nicenum*. Both were notable for his strong voice and excellent diction.

The chorale's finest moments came in the mysterious, mystical *Et incarnatus* and *Crucifixus* and the joyous *Et resurrexit*, in their impressive readings of the *Gratias agimus* in the Gloria and the *Confiteor* in the *Symbolum Nicenum*. They also sang a wonderful final note in the deeply moving *Qui tollis peccata mundi* in the Gloria and their high tones were moving in the triumphant and joyous *Cum sancto spiritu* on the Gloria.

The concert was interrupted toward the end of the Gloria when the French horn encountered mechanical difficulties. The player cried out, "I need a screwdriver." He managed to get the instrument working temporarily but his chair was vacant after the intermission.

With or without the French horn, the two-and-a-half-hour concert will be repeated at 7:30 tonight in the Medford Senior High School auditorium.

Admission is \$10.