

Songs are interesting part of Chorale's performance

By MARY ANN CAMPBELL

Mail Tribune Staff Writer

A group of songs by Benjamin Britten provided an interesting section of a concert by the Rogue Valley Chorale directed by Lynn Sjolund, Sunday

Review

afternoon in the Southern Oregon State College recital hall, a performance to be repeated tonight at 8 o'clock in the First Church of the Nazarene, Medford.

The Britten compositions were a "Festival Te Deum," with organ accompaniment by Larry Crummer, assistant professor of music at SOSOC, who also played some Bach compositions as soloist; "Rejoice in the Lamb" and "Hymn to the Virgin."

In the "Festival Te Deum," dramatic sections were interspersed with short, lyrical passages, ending on a soft, pure, sustained note by the soprano soloist, Roberta McKay, and the organ. Ms. McKay's solo, "O Lord, See My People," provided a warm, sensitive passage in the typically Britten composition, which follows a conven-

tional mode in the modern idiom.

"Rejoice in the Lamb" is developed as a cantata, with 10 short passages, contrasting the dramatic and lyrical, with such unusual religious references as a cat and a mouse, along with the more conventional images. Soloists were Sharyl Lonstron, soprano, who sang the cat passage; Bertie Alfrey, alto, whose solo described the mouse; Dale Borum, tenor, and Richard Edmundson, bass, in "And Therefore He is God." The work ends on a soft, solemn, religiously moving passage.

In the "Hymn to the Virgin," the chorus separated into two parts, to exchange parts in a tender, gentle, poetic praise of the Virgin Mary.

The Britten songs were followed by "The Shepherds Had an Angel," by Maurice Besly, a childlike song of wondering, with Dr. Glenn Matthews, English horn, and Mrs. Lesta Whittaker, soprano, as soloists. Crummer's three solo works by Johann Sebastian Bach, ranged from a lively

prelude and fugue in A minor, and the prelude from the "Leipzig Chorales, to the gigue marked fugue in G Major. The first follows the characteristic Bach pattern, formal and precise in the 18th century manner. The prelude, "From God shall nought divide me," is softer and more introspective, with a few dissonances, and the gigue gives the audience a lively dance, based on peasant folk tunes.

The final two works on the program, "The Three Kings" and "Sun of Righteousness," by Healey Willan, seemed less interesting than the rest of the songs.