



The combined choirs of St. John's and St. Andrew's United Churches treated nearly 200 guests to a stirring presentation of Handel's Messiah Sunday night in St. John's. Conducted by Terry Champ and accompanied on organ by Dale Wood, the choirs' efforts were augmented by soloists Brenda Archer, Heather Dickson, Pat Grashy, Dave Shrubsole, Bruce Armstrong and Lou Darcie.

(Herald photo)

A Halton Hills Arts Council feature

Two church choirs combine for overwhelming 'Messiah'

By ENID WILLIAMS
Herald Special

The combined church choirs of St. Andrew's and St. John's United churches performed to a capacity audience at St. John's Sunday evening. Handel's Messiah was performed ably by the two choirs, with the teenage choral singers from each congregation joining the adult singers as the choirs overwhelmed the public with glorious sound.

Terry Champ, organist-director of St. Andrew's choir, greeted the audience in his unassuming sincere manner, took up his baton and never lost control of the choirs through the evening.

Dale Wood, organist-director of St. John's choir was the organist for the performance of the second portion of the Messiah. Mr. Wood made the organ talk, sing, dance and relate a story in music, to be remembered.

The choirs were supported by the interest of the local cable television station and newspaper.

As the programme opened with "Behold the Lamb of God", our ears enjoyed good balance, clear tones in the soprano section and deep resonance from the male voices. Throughout the programme, the alto section sang with control in supportive rich tones.

The soloists sang their respective arias with a variation of pathos, technical aptitude and melodious cadences. Pat Grashy, alto soloist, sang with deep feeling as she rendered "He was Despised". Heather Dickson, soprano, sang with fluid cadences, "I Know that My Redeemer Liveth" and overcame her nervousness as she finished with a controlled musical phrase. The organ accompaniment in this piece was beautiful, particularly in the echo phrases, as Mr. Wood played with sensitivity.

Dave Shrubsole sang the tenor solo with convincing empathy and a dramatic ability which held us spellbound with the story in song unfolding. Difficult passages in "Behold and See" were rendered acceptably and the audience enjoyed Mrs. Shrubsole's interpretation.

Brenda Archer, the young soprano soloist, enthralled the audience with her rendition of "How Beautiful are the Feet".

Brenda is developing a pleasant, round resonance in keeping with her age. She sang with gentle clarity and control.

Bruce Armstrong, bass soloist, sang "Why Do the Nations So Furiously Rage Together", which is the most difficult aria in the Messiah and demanded great expertise from this soloist. He sang the runs reasonably well and left us hoping for more on the high notes, although he finished the piece with deep resonant tones.

Lou Darcie, another bass soloist, sang the recitative "Behold I Tell You" with confidence and clear resonance. As Mr. Darcie went on to sing "The Trumpets Shall Sound" his high register was put to the test and he did succeed. He sang with expression and meaningful dynamics.

The choir opened "Surely He Hath Borne Our Griefs" with crisp phrases, emphasizing that Christ had carried our sorrows. Light, definite entries and confident handling of musical runs in this piece delighted the audience.

A contrast of mood was felt as they sang "All We Like Sheep", wherein the choir used interesting dynamics and precise diction.

The confident entries by vocal parts in "Lift Up Your Heads" impressed the attentive audience who all stood in respect as the choir rendered "The Hallelujah Chorus" which was uplifting and colored with expressive hills and valleys.

We were all moved to the death scene of Christ as the choir sang "Since By Man Came Death". Suddenly jolting us from sorrow to elation the choir depicted Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, arousing us dramatically back and forth from sorrow to joy as they sang dynamically. The choir sang with heart, they were together in spirit and song as they musically raised the hopes of man towards Christ's resurrection.

Contrasts of majestic vocal expertise and light frothy phrasing, coupled with confident runs and entries, finished the choral programme with fluid arias by all parts.

Brotherly love shown in the combining of these two choirs was a fitting tribute to Christ. Easter often is celebrated less than Christmas, al-

though the true spirit of Christianity evolves from the crucifixion. Through the worthwhile efforts of these choirs and their respective directors, the message of Easter was brought to those present.

The disciplined direction of

the two church choirs culminated in a performance of Handel's Messiah sung with feeling, clarity and pathos. We in Halton Hills are indeed fortunate to have such a wealth of talent and diversified offering of music through the year.

Lack of entries blamed

No GDHS folk festival in 1980

By KEN KUHL
Herald Special
The anticipated eighth edition of Georgetown District High School's annual folk music festival will not be held this year due to a shortage of entries.

"The lack of entries has forced us to cancel the festival," according to Jim Broughton, teacher-advisor to the school's Folk Club. "We worked harder than ever to set up a good show this year, but the entries were just not forthcoming."

Folk 8 had been scheduled for this month. Last spring, Folk 7 attracted between 70 and 80 performers from high schools across the province. The annual festival, sponsored and organized by GDHS Folk Club members, has been held each year since 1972.

The cancellation of Folk 8 does not mean that the Folk Club will be idle for the balance of the year. Mr. Broughton said. A second "Coffee House", featuring a series of informal, intimate performances by young artists, is planned for later this spring. In addition, he said, several Club members are hoping to compete in a Kitchener folk festival this season.

The possibility of reviving the GDHS festival next year has not been ruled out, Mr. Broughton added.

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