

Rosemary Philips REVIEW: *The Rainbow Comes & Goes*

23 November, St Paul's Church, Birmingham



After studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Rosemary established a career teaching singing and directing choirs of all ages and abilities. She was Music Director of the choir 'Viva Musica' which she founded in 1989 for 34 years and became President and Music Director Emeritus on her retirement. She is a Trustee of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Association of which she was Chair for 9 years

Paul Spicer presented a relatively unknown programme of wonderful 20th century English choral music, reflecting the beauty and fragility of nature. In his introduction, Paul commended the Birmingham Bach Choir for tackling the music, both technically and musically challenging. The Choir continues to emulate the qualities of a professional choir. Guided by Paul's excellent direction, the Choir sang beautifully and with sensitivity the opening 2 lyrical songs by John Ireland with a lovely sound and good intonation. The Five Flower Songs by Benjamin Britten were a delight, with the Choir capturing the very different moods of the songs from mellifluous to the humour and energy of *The Ballad of Green Broom*.

Martin Rawles played the 2 organ pieces superbly with such sensitivity and drama to reflect the descriptive quality of the music composed by Judith Weir and Grace Evangelin Mason. Martin's playing of the virtuosic organ music in *The Glory* and *the Dream* by Richard Rodney Bennett was brilliant and a tremendous support to the Choir. The music was equally virtuosic for all voices in the Choir. The Choir members must be commended for all their work to learn this dramatic music which was at times moving and thrilling. The sopranos deserve special praise for singing many very high phrases. There was the occasional hesitation but it was a very convincing performance and I particularly liked the expressive ending. Bravo to everyone!

Rosemary Phillips, 24 November 2024