

Let there be Light

Saturday 22 November, 2025, St Francis Church Bournville

By Rosemary Philips



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 '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 Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Association of which she was Chair for 9 years

The Birmingham Bach Choir's concert to celebrate John Rutter's 80th birthday was a very fitting tribute. The beautiful St. Francis Church was an ideal setting which highlighted the lovely programme.

Rutter's double-choir anthem, 'Hymn to the Creator of Light', was well balanced, bringing out the dynamics and the words leading to a very moving final chorale.

Martin Rawles' immaculate performance on the organ of the wonderful Bach chorale prelude was so beautiful and expressive with the balance of the chorale delicately supported by the interwoven melodies.

The 'Laudes Organi' was exactly that as performed by the Choir and Martin Rawles. The Choir sang with conviction, bringing out the dynamic contrasts of the music and words with good diction. The ending, praising God, was powerful, moving into a beautifully sung Amen.

In Rutter's Requiem, the Choir sang with warm, beautiful tone and very expressive phrasing throughout, highlighting the words and the mood of each movement. Soprano, Ciara Preston Myakicheff, sang the 'Pie Jesu' effortlessly with lovely, sustained high notes. Oboist, Tommy Hill, and cellist, Joseph Roberts, played sensitively and expressively. Again, Martin Rawles played wonderfully on the organ. The Requiem was a very moving performance with credit to conductor, Paul Spicer. He conducted throughout with precision and tremendous musicianship. A wonderful celebration to John Rutter!

