

SNAPE MALTINGS CONCERT HALL SATURDAY 17 MAY 2014
'A NIGHT AT THE OPERA'

Aldeburgh Music Club Choir
Prometheus Orchestra
Conductor: Edmond Fivet
Linda Richardson (Soprano)
James Edwards (Tenor)
Graeme Kay (Narrator)

The Aldeburgh Music Club Choir ventured out of their normal comfort zone of oratorio on this occasion and gave us a well-varied selection of popular excerpts from opera.

They coped very creditably indeed. Though relatively small in number, they held their own against the large orchestra necessary for some of the excerpts such as the Grand March from Verdi's *Aida*, and dealt valiantly with the challenge of singing in no less than three different languages, though they did jib at Russian for the Waltz from Tschaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. Under the spirited direction of their musical director Edmond Fivet, both choir and orchestra performed all the varied opera choruses with accuracy and panache.

Both soloists, the tenor James Edwards and the soprano Linda Richardson, were excellent, both producing impressive top Cs in the final duet from Act 1 of Puccini's *La Bohème*. Linda Richardson perhaps stole the show somewhat with a stunning performance, with clear and accurate coloratura and a pinging top E flat, of *Glitter and be Gay* from Bernstein's *Candide*, no doubt included as a tribute to the AMC's President, Humphrey Burton, close friend and biographer of Bernstein, who was singing in the choir.

A considerable contribution to the success of the evening was provided by the narration given by Graeme Kay which succeeded in being witty, informative and interesting even to a seasoned opera buff like me, and wholly unpatronising to those less well-acquainted with the items in the programme.

The evening concluded with a riotous encore of the *Brindisi* from Verdi's *La Traviata*, in the course of which Violetta obviously decided that she fancied the conductor rather more than she did Alfredo, leading to them waltzing together to the latter's obvious extreme annoyance manifested by Mr Edwards performing the considerable feat of singing his contribution through gritted teeth.

The audience clearly enjoyed the whole occasion hugely, and it must certainly be counted as a great success for the choir, the soloists, the orchestra and their musical director. It did great credit to the Aldeburgh Music Club as an organisation that it has had the courage to try something out of the normal scope of activity for its members and made such a success of it. I look forward to further such occasions in the future. Perhaps operetta next time?

John Sims