

Choral success

Doing justice to one of classical music's great oratorios is no easy task, but Exmouth Choral Society surpassed this feat on Saturday night with a moving performance of *The Creation* by Joseph Haydn.

From the sensitive orchestral opening to the rousing final chorus, charismatic conductor Laurence Blyth instilled in his musicians a rare brand of musicality and, in particular, dynamic sensitivity. Highlights included some barely audible pianissimo playing by the orchestra and a sense of ensemble in the choir that ensured not a word was lost in diction.

Three spell-binding soloists complemented the chorus. Stephen Connolly, formerly of the King's Singers, brought consummate musicianship to the bass solo role. Young tenor Clement Hetherington belied his years in combining versatility with subtlety and soprano Emily Griffiths added a heavenly purity, fitting of the Holy Trinity Church setting.

When trio and chorus combined the effect was invigorating.

Music is nothing without feeling and the triumph of this performance was not the correct notes, which were abundant – especially impressive given the youngest member of the Camerata Concertante orchestra was 11 years old – but its emotive power. The singers and players hung off Mr Blyth's every movement, nuance and facial expression. They exceeded 70 in number but performed as one.

"Achieved is the glorious work" rang out the final chorus. Indeed it was. And how.

Richard Abbott