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Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Bach Choir
Chichester Cathedral

Graham Hewitt

The Cathedral part of the Festivities could not have ended on a higher or more jubilant note.

With the world-famous Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Bach Choir conducted by the eminent composer John Rutter, this must have been the finest concert presented in the whole of Great Britain that night for it would be impossible to conceive of anything better.

It was unequalled for its perfection and quality and the Chichester Festivities organisers should be praised and thanked for having the courage and confidence to stage such a prestigious and successful concert.

The orchestral version of John Rutter's Requiem was the outstanding highlight of the evening. With the composer conducting the seven sections of the work the meditation on the themes of life and death had tremendous impact.

Francois Rieve's cello solo was a magnificent introduction to Out of the Deep, wonderfully augmenting the powerful singing of the choir.

Led by the choir's tenors and basses, the gripping and haunting Agnus Dei grew in intensity and drama, ending with an almost tangible tension.

By contrast, the lovely oboe obbligato (John Anderson) in the Lord is my Shepherd gave a deep feeling of gentleness and serenity.

Elizabeth Weisberg sang the soprano solos but it was her interpretation of Pie Jesu that was spontaneous and sublime.

The combination of the choir and orchestra in the final movement, Lux aeterna, celebrating death was immensely compassionate and reassuring.