

“VOICES OF EXMOOR” CONCERT

St John the Baptist Church, Witheridge Saturday, April 13th.

It was strange to find myself in the audience for the “Voices of Exmoor” concert at Witheridge. I had been a member of the choir for five years but had never seen them perform and I am writing this short piece as a concert goer and absolutely not as a critique.

As guests of the Witheridge Concert Committee and as part of the Witheridge Concert Season, the choir presented a mixed programme of music with something for everyone including show songs, popular music, some “John Rutter” and even a dash of calypso and ragtime.

The venue lent itself well to the concert, a lovely old church, spacious, and with favourable acoustics to complement the “Voices” and our hosts and audience made us feel very welcome.

The assembled choir looked wonderful, all in the dress code of “black with bling”, the ladies in cocktail/evening wear with lovely jewellery and the gentlemen with a dash of colour provided by their ties and handkerchieves. Anticipation of the performance was palpable with an air of excitement from both singers and the audience and any nerves were well concealed.

The programme had been carefully chosen to showcase each section of the choir. The Altos, only six in number, sounded beautifully “blended”, and together with the Sopranos gave a wonderful rendition of the very difficult “Wherever you are”, the soprano solos filling the church with a beautiful sound.

Not to be outdone, the Tenors and Basses, normally the more recalcitrant element of the choir, were definitely on form. Their performance of “Play a Simple Melody” was perfect to a note and sung with such exuberance and flair.

Kevin (Lawes), the “Voices” raconteur, entertained with his expressive solo of “Grandfather’s Clock” encouraging the audience to join in, which went down a storm. The audience also “helped out” the choir with “When the Saints” and “Oom Pah Pah”, both almost raising the (very high) roof!

Throughout, the choir were totally disciplined and focussed on their Musical Director, Amanda, delivering crisp beginnings and endings, with some impressive crescendos and fades.

But, the concert could not have taken place without the skill and support of Joke, our wonderful accompanist and that of Amanda, our musical director, both of whom work tirelessly to ensure that the choir can perform to their very best level and deliver such enjoyable performances.

I make no apology for being partisan and my specs might be a shade “rose tinted” but I thoroughly enjoyed the evening and congratulate my choir colleagues on yet another fantastic performance. Well done, all!

CM