

**The Herald**

**Monday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006**

## Music

**HADDO HOUSE CHORAL AND  
OPERATIC SOCIETY, MUSIC  
HALL, ABERDEEN**

ALAN COOPER  
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VERDI'S Requiem was a fitting choice by Haddo House Choral and Operatic Society to celebrate their 60 years of adventurous music-making. The foyer of the Music Hall was decked out with pillars and arches of balloons in the society's blue and gold colours. Inside, the platform was packed to capacity by the Haddo Chorus, augmented by

members of other north-east choirs and by Aberdeen Sinfonietta, expanded to its fullest extent and ready to tackle one of music's most spectacular and dramatic works.

Guest conductor David Jones and the four soloists took their places and the whispered yet portentous opening of the Requiem promised an electrifying performance. Searingly powerful choral singing marked the Dies Irae and the ferocious attack of the Orchestra was made all the more effective by the precision of the playing. It was a performance marked by wonderful contrasts of choral and orchestral sound.

In addition, the ensemble singing of the four soloists was superb. Mezzo soprano Karen Cargill was

spectacular through the range that Verdi's music drove her voice. Not only was her technique superb, her ability to convey the full emotional impact of light and darkness in the music was breathtaking.

Bass Gerard O'Connor aimed at the darker, more fearsome delivery of his solos such as the Mors. Stupebit, arguably just what this music requires, while tenor John Hudson contrasted that darkness with the fiery brightness of his singing. But it was at the end of the Mass, in the Libera me, that soprano Elizabeth Atherton came into her own. Surely this music has never been more effectively sung. She summed up the true meaning of the entire work.

**The Press and Journal – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2006**

## **Operatic society mounts a Requiem attack to amaze the audience at the Music Hall**

### **REVIEW**

By Roddy Phillips

The Haddo House Choral & Operatic Society set its sights high when it decided to perform Verdi's hugely demanding, epic Requiem in the Music Hall in Aberdeen.

After building a considerable reputation with its charismatic conductor Alice Dennis performing at Haddo House and successfully competing at a national level, the society rightly thought it was time

to show the city what it was made of.

On Saturday evening they came to town and gave a landmark performance of a truly professional magnitude along with the excellent Aberdeen Sinfonietta, and four superb soloists conducted by David Jones.

You would expect the professional soloists to be outstanding, and they were, but they must have been delighted by the high standard of the society.

It was sheer depth, range and level of attack that amazed the audience.

Engaged by the acoustic of the Music Hall the choir literally sounded startling, but with a palette of colours and tones that never ceased to surprise us.

Hopefully this will not be a passionate one-hit wonder for the brilliant choir and we'll see them giving regular performances at the Music Hall.