

**Winchester Music Club: New Hall, Winchester College
19 March 2017**

Winchester Music Club is preparing for its centenary in 2025 and, as part of the celebrations, is performing all twelve surviving Masses of Joseph Haydn, a piece of concert-scheduling that may well be unique as few, if any, choirs have presented all of them in a concert series. Haydn came to Winchester in 1794 during one of his visits to England, so the Winchester connection lends added impetus to the Music Club's plans.

The work chosen to start this series is the most famous Mass: the 'Nelson' or the *Missa in Angustiis*, a dramatic setting with elements of martial music as well as many lyrical moments. From the opening *Kyrie* the choir gave a big, full sound, urged on by their conductor, David Thomas. The large body of singers demonstrated energy and attack in later passages such as the *Quoniam tu solus* and the *Et resurrexit* and showed that they could also sing very softly when required. In general, the contrasts between louds and softs were conveyed very well.

The soprano soloist, Charlotte Beament, shone in her florid runs (of which there were many) and had a lovely lyrical tone as well. She blended well with the mezzo Samantha Price, who sang with a rich tone in the *Agnus Dei* and was complemented by the ringing top notes of tenor Nick Pritchard and the firm bass of Gavan Ring. The bass was a little under-powered in his solo *Qui tollis*, not quite dominating the orchestra who played very stylishly throughout the concert. The natural trumpets and period timpani made their own brilliant contribution in the martial sections.

Winchester College's Jamal Sutton provided an expert *continuo* organ accompaniment and he gave a brilliant rendition of Handel's C major Organ Concerto. The concert opened with a firm account of Mozart's 'Solemn Vespers' from choir and soloists, the soprano's *Laudate Dominum* being the stand-out moment. A most enjoyable evening and a great start to the Music Club's centenary project.

Duncan Eves