

Painting a Requiem

The Art Society got together with the Hertford Choral Society again this year to illustrate the Choral Society's Easter concert, held in All Saints Church, Hertford. This year it was Brahms's Requiem, traditionally sung in German. We supplied large pictures to hang from each of the aisle pillars, based on the text of Brahms's libretto. As ever translation of the sung word into an appropriate image produced a range of artistic responses. My favourites were Persis Limbuwala's take on the text 'The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth' – a Hockney landscape with an unbiblical tractor parked at the bottom, waiting to get to work; and John Jarratt's vision of a persecuted people 'with no continuing place, seeking one that is to come' – a futuristic picture of a crowd of manikins dwarfed by their urban surroundings gazing at some ethereal cityscape.

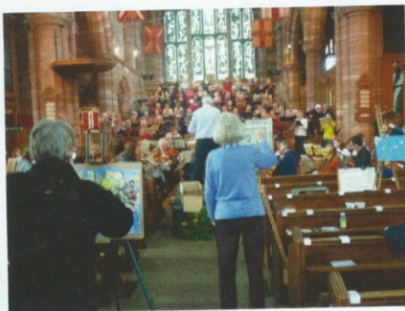
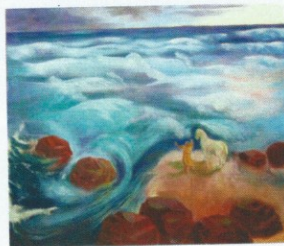
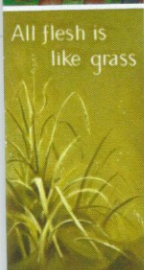
Oh, and Marianne Dorn illustrating 'Lord, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days' with a seascape overlooked by a man and his horse. A horse? What's that doing there? It's a Marianne picture, horses are more or less obligatory.

This year the Choral Society asked its members for their reaction to our work some of which appear to the right.

A big bonus of our collaboration with the Choral Society is that we are invited to set up our easels in the church on the afternoon of the concert, when choir, orchestra and soloists come together for the

first time and go through the programme as the choir's final rehearsal. We are up close and personal with 40 musicians and 60 singers all doing their thing and leaving us free to attempt to capture the scene in front of us. The music is inspirational as it swirls around us: the challenge of capturing orchestra and choir in full flight well-nigh impossible. But great fun to try.

Geoff Bennett



Long may the Societies' links continue – as a visitor this is the first such association I've come across

I loved the pictures... anything that adds to our understanding of the music and gives us another viewpoint is really helpful and inspiring.

The pictures show us another dimension and they re-interpret the words and focus our attention on a particular aspect of the text. Great!

It's lovely to involve other mediums/ societies and to see a whole work of art or music through other eyes.

Illustrating different movements of the Brahms, these pictures are an excellent visual aid to the music. Thank you HAS!

The pictures express the meaning in a different way from the music and the artists enhance our understanding of the music. Well done HAS!

Good to see your interpretations of the Requiem – much discussions triggered! Thank you!

Very expressive paintings – dramatic and poignant; well-researched and painted. Well done!

It was very interesting and thought-provoking to see the way artists reacted to the text of the Requiem.

