

Madrigallery celebrates its 21st at Christ Church.

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Arts Correspondent

Madrigallery has been entertaining Waterford and national audiences for twenty one years now and has been the trend setter for all choral groups in the area. Their quality comes from the mix of talented voices, challenging and unusual pieces allied to imaginative and thoughtful musical direction. I have attended a series of quality performances over the last quarter-century by this talented group and their autumn concert for 2011 was named as 'Concert of

the Year' by the Waterford News and Star (unfortunately omitted from the pre-concert publicity by their P.R.O.).

The madrigal form of music from which the group takes its name began in Italy in 1520 and was hugely popular in England where its unaccompanied a cappella style appealed greatly to choirs. The choir opened the concert with two madrigals by Thomas Morley—'I love, alas, I love thee' and 'Leave, alas, this tormenting'—where the placing and rhythm of the play on the word 'alas' or 'alas'—a typi-

cal medieval witticism—teases the audience.

One of the entertaining aspects of these concerts is the interaction between audience and conductor. Kevin O Carroll constantly gives us amusing and interesting anecdotes about the pieces, composers and incidents that have occurred with the group over the years. A Japanese folk song, the 'Takeda Lullaby' which they sang outside Christ Church some years ago as part of the Imagine Festival, managed to find a group of Japanese tourists visiting the church in a typically Fr. Ted

moment. Kevin also dedicated the concert to former members, and generously recalled Jennifer Long in particular as the first conductor of the group in 1980.

The Mendelssohn Psalms 100 and 160 remembered Bach in their composition where the basses provided an anchor to the sopranos soaring melody. Micheál Griffin's sympathetic and colourful tenor voice featured as a solo in the fugue; the only piece to be accompanied by Marion Ingoldsby in this section where the melody moves around the different sections of the

choir. John Rutter's 'The Heavenly Aeroplane' was a fun up-tempo piece that had the group clicking and swaying to Rutter's technically tight swing sound while 'John The Revelator'... 'tell us what he's writin'... was a Bible-belt Gospel Tent repetitive sound that had the audience clapping and foot-tapping along.

The second half was a pot-pouri of the group's favourite pieces over the last half century with the Manhattan Transfer 'Java Jive' as the stand out let-your-hair-down tune. The incidental and colourful comments

throughout filled the song with humour as our favourite blend of coffee teased our senses. Madrigallery's 'Armed Man' mass for peace from a decade ago remains for me as the stand-out choral concert by a local group and I was delighted to hear the closing section of the composition by Karl Jenkins. Finally a very percussive version of 'Beidh Aonach Amárach' left us wondering why that Clare mother refused her daughter permission to attend the fair in Co. Clare; there must have been more on offer than cattle for sale.

Madrigallery has been providing quality work for the last quarter of a century and belong to the great tradition of singing in Waterford that we are rightly proud of.

Finally a note to remind readers that Wexford Sinfonia in conjunction with the Symphony Club of Waterford will present a concert on Sat May 26th at 8.00pm featuring a gala evening of best-loved opera arias, music from stage and theatre and orchestral favourites. Tickets available at the door at €16.