

An Evening of Renaissance to Contemporary Choral Music

Ryde Chorus, Director Jurgita Leistrumaite

Guest Accompanist James Longford

Friday, 5th May 2023 at 7.30pm, Garfield Road Methodist Church, Ryde

It's been a turbulent few years for Island choirs, starting with Covid and followed by a number of changes, some deliberate and others forced upon them. So it was a pleasure to hear an accomplished performance by Ryde Chorus on Friday, 5th May at Garfield Road Methodist Church, Ryde, marking new beginnings and charting a course for the future.

This was the choir's first performance under their new Director, Jurgita Leistrumaite, well known in musical circles on the Island.

A concert of 13 choral works spanning 500 years, from the 16th to 21st centuries, with different styles, languages and musical approaches, would challenge any amateur choir. The versatility required is considerable and can tax the concentration of the most committed choir. Ryde Chorus rose to the challenge.

There were some wonderful moments when the choir found its stride and produced a bright, confident *tessitura* that showed the piece off to its fullest extent – notably the chorus "And the Glory of the Lord" from Handel's Messiah.

And there were some lovely contemplative pieces such as Bruckner's "Locus iste" and the eternal "Cantique de Jean Racine" by Fauré, with a mellow tone and peaceful last chord that was truly resonant. A number of choir members sang solo parts, and the guest accompanist James Longford, who also performed solo pieces on the organ and the piano, displayed an impressive lightness of touch.

With any new project, there is always room for further development, but the overwhelming sense in the audience was that Ryde Chorus produced a splendid performance, promising well for the future.

The choir's next concert will be on Saturday 8th July at St. Catherine's Church, Ventnor when, amongst other pieces, they will be performing Vivaldi's Credo.

Toby Wallis, 5th May 2023