

Sal Ferrantelli's Farewell I Cantori Winter Concert at the Mission

For the past 35 years Dr. Sal Ferrantelli has led I Cantori in a series of richly programmed concerts at various venues on the Monterey Peninsula. Since Ferrantelli recently announced his retirement, this year's series of Winter Concerts at the Mission will be his last. The Winter Concert on Friday evening, December 3, with orchestra and soloists was, as always for him, a labor of love and demonstrated how much we owe him a great debt of gratitude for his high professional standards, superb musicianship, and his ability to assemble and inspire some of the finest musicians on the Monterey Peninsula. I am sure that more than one member of the audience last night felt that these outstanding performances under his direction rival or surpass some of those presented by the Carmel Bach Festival.

Dr. Ferrantelli put together a successful and satisfying program spanning the ages from the early Renaissance to the present day, beginning with a moving rendition of William Byrd's processional, *Nun Nobis Domine* (the professional brass players at the work's conclusion were amazing), and ending with the spiritually uplifting Saint Theresa Mass by Joseph Haydn. The impressive ambience and acoustics of the Carmel Mission was a major enhancement of the program as it ran the gamut of liturgical works spanning five centuries.

Seated in the fourth row close to the string section, I was able to observe among the orchestra players violinists David Dally (concert master), Vernon Brown, Laura Burian, Gretchen Taylor, Arlyn Knapic, violinist John Wineglass, cellist Margie Dally, clarinetist Erica Horn, trumpet Scott Seward and many other fine musicians we are so fortunate to have in our midst.

Equally impressive were the vocal soloists in the Haydn Mass, soprano Katherine Edison, mezzo-soprano Linda Purdy, tenor Arthur Wu, plus the ever versatile bass Reg Huston, who also was impressive as narrator in the American Indian poem in Ferrantelli's composition, "Nu Ma 'An Yash He'eh." Incidentally, in this work we heard a lovely, beautifully shaped, clarinet solo by Erica Horn, who was surprisingly effective in making the clarinet sound like an Indian flute.

Also a surprise for me on the program was the lovely performance of *Ad te Domine* by Alessandro Scarlatti. the chromaticism and suspensions were very moving, and the lovely quiet ending - it is so satisfying to hear a true pianissimo from a chorus - was breathtaking. Another surprise was the contemporary a cappella work "Make we joy now in this fest" by Rene Clausen, and directed by Susan Mehra.

Ferrantelli always presents interesting programs, and this was no exception. The programmed works shifted back and forth between centuries during the first half of the concert, and then after intermission, came the largest and most substantial work on the program - Haydn's *Theresienmesse*, and it was a knockout. Chorus, soloists, orchestra, and Ferrantelli's exciting direction kept us enthralled throughout the performance. It may have been a cold night outside, but inside the mission the musicians really brought up the temperature with intense and moving performances.

Dr. Ferrantelli, are you really going to retire? I think not. You will be back in some new imaginative configuration and will be finding lots of new and old music to inspire and move us.

by Lyn Bronson
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