

Spring 1975

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Great volume of engaging sound

IT WAS a happy idea on the part of Nantwich and District Choral Society to usher in Holy Week with a performance of Dvorak's Stabat Mater in the Central Methodist Church.

Dvorak's works range from folk dances and even embrace Negro spirituals, but it was Stabat Mater, which he conducted in London in 1884, which first made him known in this country.

Sixty voices and some 30 instrumentalists combined to produce, at times, a great volume of engaging sound. But Michael Bax, who conducted competently, failed in one respect, in that on several occasions the orchestra, enjoying their field day so much in this entrancing piece, completely swamped the four principals, whether in solo parts or in quartet.

This was a pity since Jean Samuel (soprano), Katharine

James (contralto), James Watson (tenor) and Arthur Young (bass) each have attractive voices. Indeed, had they not been located in front of chorus and orchestra one doubts whether they would have been heard at all at times without some sound amplification for the solo parts.

Poignancy

The chorus sang in fine style and achieved a touching poignancy, particularly in the finale, when they were unaccompanied. This choir have made notable advances and added to their laurels with this

performance. For me it was therefore a disappointment that the Miserere by Gregorio Allegri, based on Psalm 51, which was to have been included in the concert, had to be abandoned owing to the illness of one of the principals, for it would have been sung unaccompanied.

In spite of what may seem to be strictures as to volume on the part of the instrumentalists, this is not to say that they were not most competent players.

We shall look forward to Haydn's Creation in November.

MAS

Summer Concert June "Carmina Burana" Off

The choir also took part in the Crewe Festival in June 75.

Popular choice

MAIN WORK in Nantwich and District Choral Society's next concert will be Carmina Burana by Carl Orff.

This setting, for soloists and chorus, of medieval words of fortune, love and drink is unique among modern choral music for its rhythmic vitality and tunefulness and has become a favourite with singers and audiences.

For this performance the accompaniment is two pianos and percussion.

The concert, follow-up to several successful concerts by the Society during the season is at Audlem Road Boys School, Nantwich, on Saturday June 21, at 7.30 p.m.