

## Concert Review:

# Music for Voices and Trombones

Saturday, 8 June 2019  
All Saint's Church  
Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne  
Newcastle upon Tyne Bach Choir, conductor Eric Cross  
The Concert Trombone Quartette



BY PETER CHESTER

To have a debut performance with at least two UK premières and one world première in the same concert does not come often to the good people of Gosforth. Yet, it did happen on 8 June for those who turned up, in goodly numbers, to a concert in All Saint's Church in Gosforth, given by the Newcastle upon Tyne Bach Choir, conducted by Eric Cross, and partnered by [The Concert Trombone Quartette](#).

The CTQ, directed by Adrian France, was featured in the spring edition of the BTS magazine, and this very successful first concert was a clear demonstration of the CTQ's skills and musical intentions. Adrian's colleagues in CTQ, Susan Addison, Miguel Tantos and Emily White, all have an abiding enthusiasm for exploring the trombone, particularly its place in music before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To that end they are very skilled in playing period instruments and in trying to recreate the sounds that trombones from these earlier centuries would have made. For this concert, the audience was treated to the sound of original German trombones, made in Dresden around 1860, as well as reproductions of earlier 18<sup>th</sup> century models, decidedly more sackbut than trombone, especially in the large bass instrument, complete with handle, played by Adrian. The clear ringing tone of these Classical period trombones gave a very arresting start to the concert, with a performance of Beethoven's famous *Equale*, given even more effect as they were played at the rear of the nave, out of view of the audience.

Newcastle upon Tyne Bach Choir, conducted by Eric Cross is something of a specialist in performance of 18<sup>th</sup> century choral music, although they have commissioned

Newcastle upon Tyne Bach Choir  
**Music by Bruckner  
and his contemporaries**  
*The Concert Trombone Quartette  
on period instruments*  
Saturday 8 June 2019 at 7:30pm  
All Saints' Church, Gosforth  
Seating unreserved: £15,  
£5 student and unwaged, Under 18s free

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works from contemporary composers as well. For this concert the choir presented a well-researched programme of hitherto little-known music exploring the Germanic-Austrian tradition of combining trombones and voices in liturgical settings. For example, the choir's polished and controlled sound blended perfectly with the trombones, in a setting of *Ecce quomodo* by Franz Joseph Aumann (1728–1797) of St Florian. This led to Bruckner himself adding parts for trombones to the work one year after its composition demonstrating not only Bruckner's respect & influence of his tutor's music but also to illustrate his future intentions of the use of writing for trombones and voices.

Research into this music and its era had unearthed a composer called Wenzel Gottlieb Lambel (1768–1861), who turned out to have been Bruckner's lodger in the 1840s. He composed a series of ten *Equale* for trombones, one of which was presented. Perhaps brighter and lighter than those of Beethoven, their rich

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chords sounded glorious on the German trombones.

The central work of the concert was Bruckner's *Requiem* in D minor, written in 1849 and considered his first large-scale composition, and one specifically incorporating trombones alongside the choir. As you might imagine, the trombones' function was to support the choir and add varieties of colour. They played in almost every movement, but particular mention might be made of some lovely alto playing in the *Benedictus*. Alongside the *Requiem*, however, three other liturgical motets by Bruckner, from later in his life, were presented, with trombones, period string instruments and an organ adding their colours to the voices.



The final music of the concert was a World première on trombones, this time a vocal work, *Domine Deus*, written by a pupil of Bruckner, Joseph Gruber (1855–1933). For this reviewer at least, this proved to be a case of 'saving the best until last'. The rich harmonies of the music and beautiful tone of the antique trombones was really very pleasing indeed, and perhaps a genuine revelation to those less familiar with the trombone.

This collaboration between the Newcastle upon Tyne Bach Choir and The Concert Trombone Quartette generated a concert that was as enjoyable as it was distinctive and it was much appreciated by the audience. The Concert Trombone Quartette, with their very special sound, can look forward to consolidating their special place in the trombone world. ■

