

Kritika aug. 23-i esztergomi koncertünkről

Kőry Ágnes angol nyelvű kritikája a *MusicalCriticism.com*-on (a <http://www.musicalcriticism.com/opera/budapest-agnes-0912.shtml> címen), amely klasszikus zenei eseményekről közöl részletes írásokat, kritikákat, és beszélgetéseket előadóművészekkel, karmesterekkel:

Thursday, 23rd August, Choir of the National Széchényi Library, Liszt Week, Esztergom

This concert formed part of a week of celebrations of Liszt in the Esztergom 'Vatican' – that is in the seat of the Archbishop of Esztergom – and it was organised for the fifth year by the Liszt Society. Liszt is mainly known by music lovers for his piano pieces and by few of his orchestral compositions. Yet his choral works, songs and liturgical compositions form an integral part of Liszt's compositional output. The Liszt Society strives to address this imbalance in appreciation for Liszt and promotes lesser known Liszt compositions.

This particular concert focused on religious works, presented with loving care and innate musicality by the Choir of the National Széchényi Library and their excellent conductor Mária Eckhardt (and by their skilled second conductor Ágnes Gupcsó). In their opening *In domum Domini ibimus* they were very gentle, almost slightly underpowered but in *Der Kirchensegen* they seemed to have gained confidence and projection: their presentation was disciplined as well as radiant. The men of the choir, all twelve of them without the female section of the choir, sang *Pax vobiscum* with clarity and respect while the twenty-six ladies of the choir sounded angelic in *Tantum ergo*. They kept their pitch admirably in spite of singing a capella, yet this would be no mean feat even by professionals, let alone by an amateur choir. In the full choral works (for mixed voices) of *Ave verum corpus* and *Salve Regina* Eckhardt gave the starting pitches vocally to all sections: no tuning folk or the like was needed, Eckhardt was rock solid in pitching as well as in coaxing intelligent and musical performances from her choir (founded by herself some forty years ago). Polyphony was transparent and the phrases had lovely shapes. The *Pater noster* from the oratorio *Christ* produced huge sounds from the chorus, and *Stabat Mater speciosa* was telling a story with appropriate dramatic outbursts. The twelve men of the choir impressed with their confident and powerful introduction to *Tu es Petrus*. In between the choral numbers organist Péter Sirák played organ transcriptions of various Liszt compositions. Sirák performed with virtuosity yet with humility. However, I would have preferred to hear Liszt (rather than transcriptions of Liszt by István Koloss and Bernhard Sulze respectively). But the virtuoso organ introduction in Liszt's grand choral treatment of *Nun danket alle Gott* gave us some insight into Liszt's own writing for the organ and it showed Sirák's considerable skills. This concert must be regarded as a triumph for all

participants. Indeed, Eckhardt should be a role model for musicologists: at an age when most people would take it easy, she continues with her distinguished scholarly work as well as with her beloved choir. There is clearly no division between musician and musicologist in Eckhardt: she is the embodiment of the whole.