

Music

'Vespers' pleasing in every aspect

By MALCOLM TAPSCOTT

Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, The Llewellyn Choir. St Christopher's Cathedral, Manuka, June 19.

THE LLEWELLYN Choir's presentation of the *Vespers of 1610* by Claudio Monteverdi was pleasing in giving Canberra music lovers the opportunity to hear this rarely performed and beautiful early baroque work.

It was also pleasing in giving opportunities for some of Canberra's leading young singers to perform a work of such importance and magnitude in the sacred repertoire.

The work was conducted by Richard McIntyre, with all vocal soloists from the studios of Anthea Moller and Angela Giblin in the voice department of the Canberra School of Music.

These soloists were sopranos Susan Ellis and Lorina Gore, mezzo soprano Katherine Foster, tenors Paul McLeod and Kent McIntosh, and basses Kenneth Mattice and Thomas Layton. All projected clear, well-controlled vocal lines throughout the work and balanced well against the large choir that was assembled.

The contribution of solo organist Jessica Cottis, who is studying with Dr Barbara McRae at the Canberra School of Music, was particularly impressive.

Cottis provided the interpolations between the main, sung, sections of the work on the cathedral organ: two *Toccatas* by Girolamo Frescobaldi, the first of which demonstrated considerable technical prowess.

She also performed *Dialogo* by Adriano Banchieri and *Canzona* by Domenico Zipoli. Cottis's playing was accurate and used imaginative registration to evoke the style of this early and mid-baroque keyboard music.

Despite some disparity in ensemble between the choir, the group of vocal soloists and the two electronic organs imported to accompany the work in place of an orchestra, tenors Paul McLeod and Kent McIntosh stood out in their contributions.

While each singer has his own unique style and vocal colour, both projected vocal lines of character that complemented each other, especially in the echo duet of the *Gloria* section of the final *Magnificat*.

Here McLeod sang from the altar while McIntosh replied from the organ loft in authentic antiphonal practice.

The Llewellyn Choir projected its sound convincingly in an acoustic that was both sympathetic and supportive to the texture. All members sang with commitment and conviction.