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.