

Songs paint a broad floral tapestry A99

By Malcolm Tapscott

Flower Power, The Llewellyn Choir. Conductor Richard McIntyre. Llewellyn Hall, October 16 at 8.15pm.

THE Llewellyn Choir presented this tribute to Floriade. The choir, under the direction of conductor Richard McIntyre, was joined by vocal soloists Sharon Olde and Thomas Layton, with accompanists Susanne Powell, Gabor Rosza and Carolyn Hill.

The program opened with *Five Flower Songs for Mixed Chorus* by Benjamin Britten. The words of these songs, sung a capella with assurance and control, are by Robert Herrick, George Crabbe, John Clare and the redoubtable Anon.

Two solo songs followed. Alessandro Scarlatti's *Le Violette (The Violets)* and *Silent Noon* by Ralph Vaughan Williams were sung by soprano Sharon Olde, with Carolyn Hill at piano. The former is light and breezy and

almost folk-like in style. The latter is one of the greatest love songs of the repertoire and expresses intense desires.

Bass-baritone Thomas Layton followed with two more solo songs. *Down by the Sally Gardens*, arranged by Cecil Sharp, and *Palm Sunday* by Owen Williams preceded the final choral group in the first half. Robert Lucas Pearsall's *Lay a Garland* and an arrangement of Joe Burke's *Tip Toe Through the Tulips* by Richard McIntyre were

performed a capella. This arrangement was catchy and was obviously enjoyed immensely by choir and audience alike.

Olde and Hill performed Roger Quilter's *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *It Was a Lover and His Lass*. Quilter's version of this latter song was set against Gerald Finzi's version of the same words by William Shakespeare, performed by Layton and Hill.

Both solo singers performed Mozart's *La ci darem la mano (There we'll take each other's*

hand) from *Don Giovanni*, acting out the scene. The final choral offering was *Neue Liebeslieder Walzer (New Love Song Waltzes)*, Op 65, by Johannes Brahms.

This is the composer's second set of waltzes for choir and piano duet, written in 1874. Here the various sections of the choir were both exposed and combined with the effective piano parts.

This concert was well-balanced between choral and solo vocal items. The piano accompaniments were all well performed.