

# Angmering Chorale at Covent Garden

By Jim Hurdwell



**On Saturday February 4, Angmering Chorale journeyed to London's Covent Garden to perform, once again, in the prestigious Brandenburg Choral Festival of London.**

Since its inception in 2010, this celebration of amateur choral music has grown to include over a hundred concerts per annum in various historic churches and other notable venues centred upon St Martins-in-the-Fields where it began. The Chorale has been taking part since 2011 and this year's concert, entitled All Time Greatest Choral Classics, was performed in St Paul's Church, Covent Garden. This magnificent 17th Century building was designed by the great Inigo Jones (could he be a forebear of the Chorale's George, as ever the architect of a very fine performance?) is also known as "The Actors' Church" because of its long association with Theatre-land. Many famous thespians and musicians are buried there and one may see also memorials to numerous 20th Century icons including Sir Charlie Chaplin, Gracie Fields and Ivor Novello – well worth a visit as you can

also enjoy the unique atmosphere and cultural diversity of the former vegetable market.

Unlike many of the Chorale's concerts, this one was entirely home-grown without guest soloists and accompanied, with customary aplomb, by their own pianist, Alison Manton. The programme fully lived up to its billing and we heard 19 of the "Greatest Choral Classics" all of which were sung with great conviction by some 70 members of the Choir. Our "architect" had carefully designed a blend of excerpts from major choral works, motets and anthems which clearly delighted a very appreciative audience. Rousing items such as Parry's I was glad and Handel's Zadok the Priest were interspersed with choruses of a more reflective nature such as Mozart's Ave Verum and Faure's Cantique de Jean Racine and each was stylishly delivered. Inevitably the grand finale chosen for this evening was Handel's Hallelujah Chorus and, in a delightful gesture, George Jones invited other choral singers from the audience to join with them in a magnificent rendition. As is the established tradition, the audience was invited to stand for this which, of course, guaranteed a fully justified standing ovation.

Concerts such as this one are, of course, very much concerned with one's own personal tastes and, for me, the beautiful harmonies and sounds of Stainer's God so loved the World and a Sanctus by Schubert really showed the Choir at its very best. Others in the audience obviously had their own favourites but, after a show of hands, Zadok proved to be a clear winner thereby being used as a well-deserved encore.