

1973

24th March – Selections from 'The Gondoliers' & Fauré's 'Requiem'

Conductor – S. Gaynor (standing in for the unwell D. Parkyn Marshall)

Soloists for the Requiem– Brian Scraton (baritone) and Gerard and Daniel Goulé (boy trebles - who are two of triplets)

Soloists for 'The Gondoliers' included Colin Smith (tenor) who is a member of today's Society. He is described as "a frequent winner at Ryton Music Festival before he left England in 1966, to take up an appointment as Head of Music at Queen's College, Nassau". Welcome back, Colin!

The programme says: "The two works being given on this occasion could be considered to form a strange mixture" – who are we to disagree!

The local press gave a pretty good review:

"The Sullivan was provided in generous measure, but bereft of dialogue and action, something of the genial quality of this joyous and exuberant opera seemed to be missing. It had its moments however, in the solos, the choruses and the ensembles where a fine blend was achieved. There was the exhilarating Cachucha, some fine musical enunciation by Howard Taylor in Don Alhambra's songs, an assurance born of experience with a clear vocal line by Margaret Jones singing Gianetta and a beautifully poised piece of singing by Colin Smith in that gem 'Take a pair of sparkling eyes' - tender, fresh and unhackneyed. (*Just how the current choir would describe Colin!*).

But for me, the serenely level **Requiem** was the feature of the evening. Here was some beautifully controlled and positive singing, well integrated, of a work scored with great gentleness....the solo, Pie Jesu, was entrusted to two trebles (who) had a beautiful unified vocal line and a wonderful purity of tone and their solo was one of the highlights of the evening. Altogether the Requiem was sensitively handled, the chorus singing with sincerity, Brian Scraton using his attractive baritone voice to good effect. There was disappointment that Derrick Parkyn Marshall was prevented by illness from conducting, but Stan Gaynor took over the baton at short notice and handled his choral forces with great skill, also stepping from the rostrum to sing Giuseppe in the quartets and quintets."