

Concert of warmth and promise

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The Llewellyn Choir share a little winter warming yesterday. Photo by Peter Hislop

IN the warm and comfortable environment of the Overture Hall at Weston’s Orana School, the Llewellyn Choir presented a nicely balanced program of music about winter, warming food and the promise of spring – something all Canberrans are no doubt looking forward to.

Classical songs by Mendelssohn and Haydn were presented as well as contemporary works by John Purifoy, Eric Whitacre, Australia’s Dan Walker, Paul Simon and others. The conductor, Matthew Stuckey, provided a humorous and informative commentary between songs. The fine piano accompaniment was by Anthony Smith.

The program commenced with three part-songs by Felix Mendelssohn which celebrated nature. They were well sung by the choir, especially the second song, “Farewell to the Forest”, where the choir produced a rich sound in the grander sections of the work.

We were warned by Matthew Stuckey that the setting by American, John Purefoy, for Shakespeare’s opening to “Twelfth Night” — “If Music Be The Food of Love” – was rather sugary but it was delicately sung by the choir and very enjoyable.

The part-songs by Joseph Haydn were good fun with their witty rhythms and the songs about the approach of spring by Mendelssohn were sung with great feeling by the choir, especially "Song of the Lark" and "Morning Prayer".

"Glow" by Eric Whitacre, which originated as a virtual choral work performed over the internet in 2013, was a haunting and memorable work nicely sung by the choir.

The choir was a bit tentative in their singing of the Paul Simon-Art Garfunkel work, "Scarborough Fair" and the two works by Dan Walker. More rehearsal seemed to be required for these items.

Two popular songs, "Fascination" and "Fly Me to the Moon", were enjoyable, with the arrangement of the second work particularly appealing. The concert concluded with the amusing "The Banquet Fugue" by John Rutter.