

## Music



### **Plymouth Philharmonic Choir & the Orchestra of the Royal Marines in Plymouth (review)**

*09th March 2009*

Classical concerts sometimes get standing ovations and are occasionally complete sell-outs.

This quite magnificent collaboration between Plymouth Philharmonic Choir and the Orchestra of the Royal Marines thoroughly deserved the tumultuous applause from a packed Guildhall, for this special charity concert in aid of Combat Stress, the inaugural event of the British Armed Forces Celebrations.

Major Andy Thornhill drew an inspired performance of Rutter's Requiem, which clearly reflected the meticulous preparation by the Philharmonic's own conductor, Christopher Fletcher, who then wielded the baton in Karl Jenkins's The Armed Man.

This was a truly tour de force virtuoso reading from the choir, again benefitting from the superb contribution of soprano soloist, Rachel Nicholls, who soared so effortlessly to her top notes, but who also had great projection in the lower register.

Special praise must go to the Marine musicians, here not in their regular band set-up.

Equally well-rehearsed, the players accompanied most sympathetically throughout, though never holding back when appropriate, and where the impressive string sound, bolstered by Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra cello soloist, Calum Cook, and expressive oboe playing deserve particular mention.

Plymouth might have missed out to Chatham to host the first-ever National Armed Forces Day in June, but the Medway town could surely never come up with anything even half as impressive as this, an event, in fact, of which every Plymothian should be supremely proud.

PHILIP R BUTTALL