

CHORAL DREAM COMES TRUE

EVERY organising secretary of a provincial choral society must have dreamt that one day he might be able to put on Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius," conducted by the man who knows it best—Sir Adrian Boult—and before a house where, of course, every seat would be sold in advance.

The fulfilment of this dream fell to the Tunbridge Wells Choral Society on Sunday when they performed the work at the Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells.

The "Dream," which is scored for a very large orchestra, is a mystical work based on a poem by Newman about the feelings of the dying Gerontius who, through his dream sees his soul's transportation into the unseen world.

It is a very difficult piece for a choir really to get hold of, and through great success is the measure of the value of Sir Adrian's conducting.

Irresistible

Sir Adrian knew Elgar at the time he was writing "Gerontius" and one had the feeling throughout Sunday's performance of being in the hands of the great composer himself.

Sir Adrian was ably backed by fine singing by his soloists and the huge choir.

I particularly liked the performance of the young tenor David Galliver as Gerontius. His voice has a stimulating and wide range.

Marjorie Thomas, contralto, who made a recording of this work with Sir Malcolm Sargent on the conductor's 60th birthday, was also admirable in her treatment of the angel's encouragement and consolation of the passing soul, as was Nowakowski, the Polish bass, in his sonorous and irresistible pleading for its forgiveness.

The concert which was attended by the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells, Cr. Donald Savage, was immensely appreciated, and was a tribute to the work that Dr. Harold May has put into his choir.

Not only were all the seats sold but there were also many people who had paid 3/6 to stand.