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Society finds harmony with German choir

THE ROYAL Tunbridge Wells Choral Society received an overwhelmingly kind welcome when they performed in Wiesbaden, Germany, in a joint concert with the Lutherkirke Bach Choir and Orchestra.

The concert at the Whitsun weekend opened the International Organ Festival of Wiesbaden with music by Bach and Handel to celebrate the composers' tricentenaries.

The Society sang *The King Shall Rejoice*, and *O Praise the Lord with One Consent*, by Handel.

The King Shall Rejoice, with its combination of slowness, dotted rhythms and contrasts was sung entirely by the choir. *O Praise the Lord*, a Chandos Anthem, required four soloists and the choir was fortunate in the choice of local German singers. Both items came under the expert baton of Derek Watmough, who had been quickly adopted by the Bach Orchestra.

The Wiesbaden Bach Choir then sang *O Ewiges Feuer*, or *Ursprung der Liebe*, by Bach, under their own conductor, Klaus Uwe Ludwig.

Finally, both choirs joined for the final cantata by Handel, *Zadok the Priest*, again conducted by Derek Watmough. For this work, both choirs intermingled in a friendly and informal manner so that it was a true joining of choirs.

The architecture of the Lutherkirke is such that the final "Allelujah" echoed for several seconds — to the delight of participants and audience alike. The audience was most appreciative and Derek Watmough had to take several bows.

Each member of the choral society stayed with a member of the Wiesbaden choir and orchestra and enjoyed a full programme of events, which included a tour of the city, a trip to Frankfurt, and a reception with the Oberburgmeister.

It is hoped that the choir will be able to visit Tunbridge Wells next year, with a return visit by the choral society in the late 1980s.

CONTRIBUTED