

10 May 2003

Handel's ever-popular Arrival of the Queen of Sheba was delivered in sparkling style, the difficult arpeggios handled efficiently and with relish.

The lively mood continued with William Boyce's Symphony No. 4, which lucidly displays the composer's roots in English choral music and country dance, the two elements neatly fused together to form a delightful whole. This was taken at a brisk pace but never rushed, every note allowed its own brief moment of glory before gracefully giving way to the next.

In contrast, the little known Czech composer Zelenka was given a rare outing with his Trio Sonata No. 5 in F major for two oboes, bassoon, and continuo, and here the players rose admirably to the challenges of his prancing chromatics and syncopations.

Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 took us back to more familiar territory, and was handled again with aplomb.

After a brief fanfare by Dukas, the second half was devoted to Mussorgsky's vivid and innovative Pictures at an Exhibition, performed here by a brass ensemble and conducted with precision by Catherine Underwood.