

Impressionistic music making

MENDELSSOHN'S Overture: *The Hebrides*, Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2, and Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*, made a most melodious and attractive programme for Guildford Philharmonic Choir's concert at the cathedral on Saturday.

The whole effect was impressionistic, because however precise the articulation of vocals and instruments, the acoustic of the cathedral with its towering chancel arch and nave softens the sound, eddying it around and subtly changing the feel of a performance.

String detail was lost in

the overture, but the woodwind came across with bell-like clarity and the piece worked well, the descriptive writing for the swell of the sea fitting in nicely with the atmosphere.

The Rachmaninov was a strange choice for the cathedral, and the logic only clicked when the programme notes revealed that it was included in the programme for the premier of *A Sea Symphony* in 1910.

It was impossible to tell how well Jeremy Filsell interpreted the work because again the definition was lost in the orchestra and cathedral

vastness. But the piano role here is orchestral rather than solo, so this is probably the best choice of piano concerto for the cathedral. It was a different sound from a normal concert hall performance, but the music was still wonderful.

A Sea Symphony is magical too, and it was great to hear the philharmonic produce a really fine soprano line, with excellent intonation. Diction was hazy, but the tone was sweet and soloists Caroline Lenton-Ward and Robert Rice had nicely complementary voices.

Jane Garrett