

# Sorrow and cackling witches from Vivace

*All The World's A Stage*

G Live

Rating: ★★★★★

THE Vivace Chorus and the Brandenburg Sinfonia, directed by Jeremy Backhouse, joined forces with members of the Guildford Shakespeare Company to present an evening of Shakespearian delight at G Live on Saturday November 12.

The works of Shakespeare have influenced composers from his own time until the present day and this concert brought us a well-selected programme of orchestral and choral pieces interspersed with excerpts from the plays that inspired them.

We were introduced to the actors in a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. Tchaikovsky's overture *Romeo and Juliet* suffered a little from the wide

spread of the orchestra but the tutti sections, especially the 'love theme' were rich and cohesive. The orchestra played with tremendous verve and great sensitivity throughout the evening but especially in Walton's *Henry V Symphonic Suite*.

The Vivace Chorus showed us just how well the singers adapt to a wide variety of music. They began with a soulful chorus of refugees

from Verdi's *Macbeth* and followed it with the witches' chorus from the same opera; a switch from plangent sorrow to cackling witchery!

They showed us their fun side in the first and last of Vaughan Williams' Shakespeare songs and in contrast, a quietly serious second song *The Cloud-Capp'd Towers*.

*Tristia* by Berlioz was composed with *Hamlet* in mind,

and was introduced by 'To be or not to be', strongly portrayed, as were all the acted excerpts. This was beautifully sung - a perfect balance between orchestra and chorus.

There was light relief in an excerpt from *The Comedy of Errors* followed by Vaughan Williams' *Serenade to Music*. The opening orchestral section was exquisitely played and the choral sound had a truly ethereal texture.

The concert ended with Walton's film score for *Henry V*, arranged as a suite by Sir Malcolm Sargent.

Each of the five movements has its own character and these were skilfully portrayed by chorus and orchestra, accentuated by fiery speeches and culminating in the rousing *Agincourt Song*; a fitting end to a splendid tribute to Shakespeare.

*Gillian Brierley*