

Roquiem and Roll Back the Stone – photos and a review of the Easter production by the St John Fisher Community, Harrogate



Andrew Jones MP joins Cllr Bill Hoult to watch Roquiem/Roll Back the Stone by the St John Fisher High School community

On 6th April, Andrew Jones MP and Councillor Bill Hoult, Mayor of Harrogate joined an audience of several hundred at St Roberts RC Church in Harrogate, to enjoy a modern, musical interpretation of the Easter story performed by students from St John Fisher Catholic High School and its associated primary schools.

The Roquiem and Roll Back the Stone concert was a joint venture by St John Fisher's Music and Performing Arts Department and Fisher Arts, the school's community outreach programme. It featured dramatic choral, orchestral, dance and drama presentations from 300 of the St John Fisher community, with choral support from associated primary schools in Harrogate, Wetherby, Barkston Ash, Knaresborough, Tadcaster, Ripon and Bishop Thornton.

Talking about the show, Cllr Bill Hoult, Mayor of Harrogate, said, "It was an extremely professional and emotionally uplifting production, which brought together hundreds of

people from the St John Fisher and St Roberts communities. The Mayoress and I were inspired to see so much talent in the young people who performed and we thoroughly enjoyed the show.”

Andrew Jones MP added, “It was a pleasure to attend the performance at St Robert’s Church and to see so many of the children from the school taking part. Easter is a time of celebration and a time for family. The performance brought the school community together and as I am sure those who attended will agree, was a great way to start the countdown to Easter.”



A portrayal of the crucifixion

A REVIEW

Jo Dommett and Maggie Atkinson, who attended the performances, wrote: “From the moment the massed choir of all the feeder primaries of St. John Fishers primary school bounced into the opening number, *Hosanna*, I tingled all over. The students threw themselves heart and soul into belting out the words and performing every action in impressive unison. The confidence of all the soloists – Judas, Jesus and Pilate – from such young students (Jesus was only a Year 5!) was testament both to the huge amount of talent inherent in the primary schools of Harrogate and hard work of Community Arts Director Darren Roberts. In between the music, the story was told by an assortment of readers from the various primary schools. Again, the clarity of diction was excellent. Perhaps the most moving moment was Jesus’ journey to Calvary as he zig zagged through the choir, now playing the hostile crowd. There were tears in the eyes of many audience members as he was pushed and shoved to the ground. As the students sang their final number – *Roll Back the Stone*- the mood in St. Robert’s church was joyful.



An uplifting show

Then it was time for St. John Fisher High School students to take over. There were some moving solos from the Sixth Form Choir, accompanied by elegant interpretative dance from

the talented Year 10 dance group. The Year 9 drama students who performed the crucifixion scene carried off this dramatic climax with the suitable gravitas and solemnity. When the St. John Fisher school choir and band moved into 'Roquiem' itself they proved to be in their usual excellent form, with the musicians well balanced to the sound of the vast school choir, performing in Latin with subtitles in English on the video screens. A mention must go to the hard work of those involved in the camera work and editing which allowed the audience to follow every word in English and see every face – no matter where they were sitting. As the performance reached its finale the roof of St. Robert's must nearly have come off as the primary schools joined in for 'In Paradisim,' and the combined voices of all the schools filled the church. The entire event was a very moving experience for all those present and was a wonderful advert for our present young people, and for the promise the future holds.



A full congregation watches the Easter production by the St John Fisher community