

REVIEW

A Summer Serenade, with the Academy of St Olave's, St Olave's Church,

ON Saturday evening, the Academy of St Olave's played a programme led by their now firmly established conductor Alan George.

He played a special part in the evening, making an impassioned and personal appeal on behalf of the Martin House Children's Hospice, for whom the concert was in aid.

Since starting in 2009, George has had a remarkable effect on the quality of the orchestra and on Saturday the strings played with remarkable precision and expression, coping beautifully with an exciting tempo in Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream Opus 21. The ensemble was particularly together for this piece and the balance between the shimmering strings and slower wind material was particularly good.

A wind octet followed, performing Mozart's Serenade for Wind Quintet K.375. There was some clarinet tuning required and a tendency to rush; however, some very tight and expressive playing especially from the double reed instruments, and a fantastic job by the young Billy Marshall on horn.

The concert ended with Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings Opus 48, another fitting piece to display the good form of the strings, admirably led by Claire Jowett. The simplicity and clarity of Tchaikovsky's writing brought to mind a deep Russian choir sound, and the lower strings did not disappoint in adding weight. During the waltz, the upper strings played expressively and the tempi and pause sections were well timed and sensitive.

More donations can be made to the Martin House Children's Hospital appeal at martinhouse.org.uk/fundraising/Good+Nights+Sleep+Appeal/Donation

Edward Caine

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