

# Phoenix give it some oompah

RESPLENDENT in their uniforms and conducted at short notice with vigour and humour by Anthony 'Tug' Palmer, Phoenix Brass produced a cheery, vibrant start to this fundraising concert with Leo Stanley's *The Contemptibles*, in strong march tempo, with a good variety of instrumental sounds, including some lovely mellow tones.

The turquoise-topped Cromwell Singers joined the band for a rousing arrangement by Ray Steadman-Allen of Holst's *I Vow to Thee My Country* for which participation was invited and readily accepted by the large audience, as was *Jerusalem* at the end of the concert.

Lots of 'oompah' and some fruity sounds from Phoenix Brass were appropriately used for an arrangement of Bernaerts' *Mack the Knife* and after a bit of a shaky start, a change of mood with an arrangement of Puccini's *Nessun Dorma*. Owing to the last-minute illness of the band's MD David Watson, the brass contribution to Robin Highcock's *This Sceptred Isle* was replaced by Cromwell Singers' regular piano accompanist Daphne George, a substitution courageously and successfully achieved, as we were treated to Haycock's suite of English, Welsh and Scottish folk songs (I counted at least 12).

Organiser Chris Buck, director of music at St Lawrence, with support from some of her church musicians, provided an interval treat of delicious food, before Vivian Dunn's

## Music

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Spring Cromwell Singers and Phoenix Brass Spring Concert, at St Lawrence Church, Hungerford, on March 31

*Cockleshell Heroes*, before more items by Phoenix Brass. Things rapidly took off when *Queen Rules*, arranged by Steve Sykes, took us into the world of *Bohemian Rhapsody* – what it lacked in some accuracy of note, it made up for in spirit.

The singers then performed a clever arrangement by Mark Brymer from *The Wizard of Oz*. This was dramatic, very musical, with brief spoken sections from the choir, thoroughly enjoyed by singers and audience and deserving of the applause it received.

Cromwell Singers' MD Sarah Cope explained that in a departure from their normal scheme of things, women-only part-singing of unaccompanied *Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair*; followed by a men-only unaccompanied version of *Danny Boy* were being trialled. These worked well, giving us a different aspect of this choir's versatility.

Congratulations to everyone involved. Together with raffle takings, £900 was raised for St Lawrence Church Fabric Fund, Cromwell Singers and Phoenix Brass.

CAROLYN GREENWOOD