

FLANDERS & SWANN CONCERT REVIEW 2019



Oliver Hancock (left) and Samuel Hancock (right) presenting an evening of Flanders & Swann

The highly personable and musically talented Oliver and Samuel Hancock delighted a very appreciative audience in the church with 'An Evening of Flanders and Swann' on Saturday 8th February. Flanders and Swann's songs are characterised by wit, gentle satire, complex rhyming schemes, linguistic play and memorable choruses.

Their work has been a feature of the Hancock brothers' family life for decades. Their father and uncles performed their songs and their grandparents had a famous meeting at a Flanders and Swann concert. Samuel Hancock, a music graduate specialising in performance and with an impressive record as a solo performer of operatic and other classical works did most of the singing. His brother Oliver, a former organ scholar at Jesus College Oxford and now with multiple music roles in Warwick did most of the piano playing, though they did swop roles once!

Their programme of more than 20 songs included well known favourites and some less well-known delights as well. The programme began and ended with 'The Gasman cometh' whilst assorted animals kept us amused. There was the Armadillo and its attempts to woo an armour-plated tank. We had the 'Introverted, elephocentric, hypochondriac who will stay in the elephant's nursing home till he gets his memory back'. We said, "How do you do?" to the gnu and learnt how sweet it was to be a sloth. We heard the moving tale of the unloved warthog who arrived overdressed at the ball, but left as, 'the sweetest little, dearest and completest little warthog – underneath'! The audience joined the hippopotamus in wallowing in glorious mud, or at least singing about it. We also heard about the man whose blood runs cold to meet, in pyjamas and bare feet, with a great big hairy spider in the bath.

There was the sinister, "Have some Madeira my dear!"; the very contempor-ar-or-y home whose 'boudoir on the plan had been a great success, though everywhere's so open, there's nowhere safe to dress! And no Flanders and Swann evening would be complete without its 'big six-wheeler, scarlet painted, London transport, diesel engine, ninety-seven horsepower omnibus.'

The evening was well summed up by two concert goers writing to Derrick Matthews, the church Music Director and event organiser, when they said, "Thanks very much for a really delightful evening at the Methodist Church. It was like a breath of fresh air to hear good well thought out humour which is so typical of Flanders & Swann... we enjoyed the performance of Oliver & Samuel... It was a joy and a memorable evening."

On top of all that, the event raised £890 for the church welcome project. So, thank you Oliver and Samuel and thank you Derrick (and Janice).

Peter Green