

Folk carols steal the limelight

DON'T be afraid of your neighbour; if he can hear you, he won't be doing his job." Dr. Harold May, conducting the Tunbridge Wells Choral Society, introduced Sunday's carol concert in the Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells, with these words. He encouraged the audience to participate in as lively and uninhibited a way as it could.

The concert was a mixture of the oldest of old favourites and some carols slightly further from the beaten track: and the better for it.

Sam Pakenham Walsh rather ran away with the show with his delightful 16th century American folk carols from Kentucky and Carolina; and most particularly too, with his singing of the Cherry Tree carol which was specially requested.

These lilting melodies, seemingly so improvised that one can almost feel them being made up as the singer goes along, were captivating and intriguing; "See Jesus the Saviour," "Down in Yon Forest," "Jesus, Jesus, rest your head"—there was something very special about all of them.

Two pianos

The society's choir had some very fine pieces, too, in the afternoon's repertoire, particularly the madrigal "Lute Book Lullaby," the traditional carol "What is this Scent," and the Bartok "Our Old Shepherd Smiles." They sang with great control and feeling, and have good reason to be pleased with their performance.

Two other interludes of special note were the pieces for two pianos, played by Mr. Walter Neal and Miss Marjorie Vinali—Ross's arrangement of Bach's Gigue in "C" was a delight—and the Boar's Head carol, sung by the members of the choir with Mr. Cyril Wood as soloist.

Mr. Wood looked an impressive chef as he made his solemn way into the hall with a real boar's head on a salver. We held our breath in case he tripped, but fortunately all was well, and he gave a stirring recommendation of "The boar's head, as I understand, is the best dish in the land."

It was a most enjoyable concert.—**B.K.P.**