

Feedback - 2014-15 James Lobban Conducting Scholar Erik Andreas Stensholt

In general the thoughts I expressed in my feedback before Christmas have been confirmed. That goes when it comes, to both the singers, the conductor and the fact that I like working with you all.

This term I got the opportunity to sing and rehearse the St. John Passion. I have not sung this piece before so I was really looking forward to it beforehand and it did not disappoint. Peter was kind enough to let me sit and listen at the last run through before the concert. I think the choir sounded good, and I think the concert went well as well. The soloists impressed me, especially the Evangelist. I also think the choir got a real boost when we put it all together with soloists and orchestra.

I got my fair share of conducting this term too, through two full rehearsals. The challenge with both of them is that since this at the end is not my piece to conduct some decisions must be left to Peter. Luckily he had provided me and the choir with most of the details beforehand. Another challenge is that for both rehearsals I had to go through a lot of music and the amount of preparation time was limited. Therefore I had to trust my own musical abilities and decisions to an even bigger extent. For many of the songs I did not really know what I would have to say to help the singers before we started singing it, and I had to trust that I located something I wanted to improve during the singthrough. Luckily it worked. I think this way of working has been a very valuable lesson for me.

When it comes to Peter as the conductor I can confirm everything I said before Christmas. Another thing I really like is that he is always on time. I have experienced too many conductors who have the habit of going overtime and I find it annoying and destructive. Two thumbs up for that.

Some conclusive thoughts about the scholarship and what it has given me:

1. It has given me more conducting time, which you can't get enough of as a conducting student.
2. The amount of work the scholarship requires is enough that you feel like you really learn something from it, yet not too much. I have not had any problems finishing my other courses.
3. It has given me the opportunity to learn from watching another conductor, which should not be underestimated.
4. I feel it has benefitted the choir as well as me. I think, and certainly hope, that they have learned something from me as well, and this is very important for me.

I hope you find a good candidate for next term, and give the Bach Choir my best wishes.

Andreas