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Church choir in fine form

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World Aids Day occasioned an eve-of performance on Friday by the 44-voice choir of the Church of St. Andrew and St. Paul under its music director, Julian Wachner. It remains a robust ensemble, to judge by Zadok the Priest, Worthy is the Lamb and other full-hearted Handel hits. Sing Ye to the Lord was perfectly balanced with the soaring soprano of Marie-Ève Munger.

John Tavener's Song for Athene (of Princess Diana funeral fame) made an appropriately solemn start to this program. I have my doubts about minimalist mumbo-jumbo of this type, but it can be made to sound like good music by a doubt-free ensemble.

There was reliable support from MSO musicians, including Russell DeVuyst, the brilliant trumpeter in the opening of Bach's Cantata No. 51. While Wachner identifies himself with period practice, he can adopt the old choral-society approach with conviction.

Witness the red-blooded and stately Dona Nobis Pacem from Bach's B Minor Mass. It was all a benefit for La Maison du Parc, supported by the Bank of Montreal.

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