

## **The Commercial Appeal (Memphis, TN)**

### **Symphony's 'Messiah' precise and inspiring**

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**Memo: Concert review**

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**Friday night's concert of Handel's "Messiah" by the Memphis Symphony Orchestra was as beautiful and satisfying a presentation of the oratorio as could be imagined.**

**One of the most familiar classical works ever, "Messiah" was presented at The Cannon Center for the Performing Arts with dignity and precision by four vocal soloists, a small orchestra and nearly 100 singers.**

**The orchestra was clean and precise, led by an assured James Feddeck - the guest conductor who until recently served as the MSO's assistant conductor.**

**Among the soloists was Sharla Nafziger, whose bright and exquisite soprano voice was gorgeous. Mezzo-soprano Barbara Rearick and baritone Sidney Outlaw also provided splendid work, and tenor Randal Rushing from the University of Memphis gave a vivid and emotional performance.**

**The chorus was the combined members of the Gary Beard Chorale and the Independent Presbyterian Church Choir. The balance of the singers with soloists and orchestra was precise, lovely and even inspirational.**

**It serves to remind us that certain traditions are worth experiencing without tinkering and excessive ornamentation. Friday night's performance was solid, a straightforward interpretation of Handel's devotion. Flashiness was minimal, excellence suffused the hall.**

**It also speaks well of the locally based Orphanos Foundation, which has been the beneficiary of this concert for four years. The organization works with missions worldwide to meet the needs of orphans. The "Messiah" effort includes not only the full performance at the Cannon but special presentations for school kids earlier in the week.**

**It is fitting, since the 1742 premiere of "Messiah" in Dublin was a benefit for orphans, a charity hospital and those in debtors prison.**