

"The Messiah" Presented at Pelham, N. H., Congregational

BY ALFRED W. BURKE

PELHAM, N. H.—The largest audience ever to attend the annual presentation of Handel's "The Messiah" completely filled the Congregational church last evening. Such an attendance was a most worthy response to the reading of this magnificent score that was in the full sense superbly rendered.

It was truly wonderful that a nearby church is capable of giving this work each holiday season with such authority and musical excellence. Actually, it is an accepted fact that this presentation ranks among the finest anywhere in New England.

On this inspiring occasion those present gained an experience long to be remembered. They were witnesses to a musical setting in the finest tradition of choral writing, and one fully endowed with those elements that speak of great happenings and learning.

The choral portions of the oratorio were moments long to be remembered and absorbed. There was singing fine and fluent in sound and interpretative depth. There was understanding and a development of mood in the themes of "For Unto Us a Child Is Born" and the moving passages of "Glory to God."

It has been several seasons since the chorus "His Yoke Is

Easy and His Burthen Is Light," has been performed. There proved to be understanding and vocal balance during these moments.

Naturally the chorus came into its greatest moments in the final "Hallelujah." The full blending of parts, both tonal and rhythmic, added a brilliant climax to the program.

The soloists were capable and proved familiar in every sense with the music. Theirs was a well rounded and finished performance.

Olive Appleton is one of the leading soprano soloists in the world of oratorio today. Her beautiful voice, carefully set off with a flawless musicianship, was among the highlights of the presentation.

Ruth Perkins, contralto, sang with interpretative authority. Her voice is tonally full and fluent in expressive color.

Donald R. Pearson, tenor, sang clearly and with noticeable feeling. He is well suited to music such as this.

Blair Benner, baritone, making his first appearance here, was effective throughout. His voice is well suited to dramatic music. He showed definite promise as a singer of oratorio.

Richard G. Chadwick was excellent at the organ. He supported the chorus and soloists with musical magnificence.

Mrs. Bernice R. Bigelow is a splendid and gifted director. Much of the evening's success was due to her knowledge of sacred music, as well as her understanding of ensemble singing.