The Tech Performing Arts Series presents...

PRO ARTE

The sweet-voiced Jayne West will join Frank Kelley, Larry Hill, the Back Bay Chorale and the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra for what promises to be a joyous performance of Haydn's The Creation. Sanders Theatre, December 13 at 3pm. MIT price: $6.

Tickets are on sale at the Technology Community Association, W20-450 in the Student Center. Office hours posted on the door. Call x-4981 for further information.

The Tech Performing Arts Series, a service for the entire MIT community, from The Tech, MIT's student newspaper, in conjunction with the Technology Community Association, MIT's student community service organization.

A cerebral Christmas Oratorio

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notably during the sustained Schlaget, mein Liedchen, a cradle song to the baby Jesus. Westbrook-Geha's breathing was almost as loud as her singing; the might beead from a longer pause between phrases.

Baritone Paul Houglanding did not have the vocal range for Bach's writing. Low passages, especially the aria with trumpet accompaniment, simply disappeared. The high passages sounded better, but constricted. (The highest of passages would have presented a challenge for many competent voices, incidentally.) Nell Nudd's performance as soprano was the worst of the trio. Section was slightly better than Westbrook-Geha's, but with a tone color lacking in warmth and bordering on the shrill. Nudd is not the sort of performer who elicits the comment "She has a nice voice," a creditable singer, but like more than a few prominent women singers, not necessarily pleasant to listen to.

While Adams' entrancing hand did quiet the battle-field intensity of the trumpet and timpani lines, he gave them a new elegance in return. Very hard baroque sticks kept the boom out of the timpani; instead, the timpani were heard as just another part of the harmonic texture, a not unpleasant effect. The trumpets were played with a clear, focused tone and without any degree of harshness - the trick of baroque playing is to sound the high notes without them sounding like the highest notes on the instrument - and the Pre- 2

more Ensemble's players did this nicely.

The orchestra had a mixture of vices and virtues. Intonation remained good, perhaps accelerated by frequent retuning of the solos during the recitative, but was inconsistent during ensemble playing. (Some productions of the oratorio alternate harp-orchestra and organ continuo.) The violin playing, especially during solo passages, was fluid and free of Italian influence, but was sometimes overpowered by the chorus and oboes. A brief appearance of horn players during the fourth cantata, however, was a definite liability - they did not play with focus or precision.

The chorus produced a lot of sound for their eight members, but not enough to fill Emmanuel. Adding another four singers would have preserved the balance between chorus and orchestra, and at the same time would have made it easier for each singer to preserve his voice throughout the performance. (Saturday's chorus can hardly be criticized for losing pitch after several hours of singing.)

A student of the last Nudd Boulanger, herself hardly known for excess, Adams is well qualified to produce a cerebral (or shall we say dry?) Christmas Oratorio. Perhaps this Saturday's performance was just an experiment. Adams has demonstrated that Bach's oratorio can be performed with elegance. The result is certain to please, but hardly grand or spine-stirring.