

Soprano compared to legendary Jenny Lind

By **PETER STEWARD**

THE voice of Hethersett soprano Elizabeth Watts is the modern day equivalent to that of legendary Swedish songstress Jenny Lind, according to the conductor of the Norwich Pops Orchestra.

Geoff Davidson was speaking during the orchestra's fourth annual Viennese New Year's Day concert in St Andrew's Hall, Norwich.

Elizabeth was the guest soloist for the concert and immediately made herself a firm favourite with what was referred to as her "home crowd."

Mr Davidson reminisced about a performance by Jenny Lind the Swedish Nightingale at St Andrew's Hall in the 1849. She loved the city so much that she gave two free concerts which raised enough money to buy a house in Pottergate which was converted and opened as a 20 bed infirmary for sick children in 1854. Today her legacy continues. A new Jenny Lind Infirmary for Sick Children was built in Unthank Road, which opened in 1900 and closed in 1975 with the children's services transferred to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital in St Stephen's Road where, in 1982 a wing of the hospital was named the Jenny Lind Children's Department. When the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital was



MODERN DAY EQUIVALENT: Hethersett opera singer Elizabeth Watts and, right, Jenny Lind.



Pictures: LIBRARY

established in 2001, the Jenny Lind Children's Department moved with it, where it remains today.

The 2010 concert saw Elizabeth sing Morgen by Richard Strauss, Song to the Moon by Dvorak, Musetta's Waltz from La Boheme by Puccini and O Luce di Quest'anima from Linda di Chimonix by Donizetti. Her vocal acrobatics earned her a standing ovation from a packed hall and cries

from the audience for her to return for next year's concert.

Her stunning voice continues to gain a richness that has made her one of the top sopranos in the world.

The orchestra evoked the feel of New Year in Vienna with items by Johann Strauss, Ziehrer, Tchaikovsky, Waldteufel and they encored with the Redetzky March.



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