

Monday 12 April 2010.

FREE

# London Evening Standard

standard.co.uk

Arts

## POP

### ENNIO MORRICONE

Albert Hall, SW7

★★★★☆

### ANDRE PAINE

**MAESTRO** Morricone's return to the Albert Hall was a classy occasion. Prosperous-looking couples with European accents snapped up the £55 limited-edition print at the merchandise stand, writer Sir Christopher Frayling gave a laudatory introduction, and the Roma Sinfonietta joined the 110-member Crouch End Festival Chorus for the performance. You half expected Clint Eastwood to be serving drinks during the interval.

The 81-year-old film composer is best known for Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns starring Eastwood, but Morricone's output is prodigious – around 450 film scores – and this show drew upon familiar as

well as more obscure elements of his canon.

Morricone's arrangements have clearly influenced plenty of rock bands. The Sicilian Clan was driven by sinuous guitar playing alongside sweeping strings, while the funky bass and electronic textures of *Come Maddalena* swelled into something strange and memorable.

The clanging and howling of the orchestra combined spectacularly with the choir on *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly's* title music, and soprano Susanna Rigacci's voice had all the drama of a Mexican stand-off during this Leone section.

The second half was always going to struggle to top those timeless compositions, although *On Earth As It Is In Heaven* from *The Mission* was a euphoric highlight.

Witnessing Morricone conducting the orchestra was uplifting, too, and the noisy standing ovation was for his extraordinary career as well as this emotive performance.