



**VERDI REQUIEM
GRAND CHORUS NEWSLETTER No. 4
29 MAY 2011**

Please take a few moments (probably longer - you may need a pot of tea) to read through what follows; it will be impossible to answer individual questions about concert arrangements from nearly 200 singers.

There is a lot to digest - but bear with us; it is a big event, with around 900 people in the Abbey on the night, at a venue unfamiliar to most of us, and we haven't worked together before. You have been very generous with your appreciative comments regarding the organisation so far, so please now play your part in making this a concert with a truly professional polish - PLEASE read on!

Contacts

If you have any queries at all, would members of the four partner choirs please try their liaison person in the first instance, thereafter contact either:

Jos Gregson (01454-411652, email jos@josgregson.plus.com) or

Julia O'Connor Beach (01454-260877, email secretary.sccg@gmail.com).

who will be pleased to help. Jos and Julia attend all rehearsals.

DAVID JOYCE is your Concert Manager - davidjoyce@doctors.org.uk - you'll find him in the bass section.

Practice makes perfect

If the Nigel Perrin Workshop and third week rehearsals exposed any weaknesses in your knowledge of the score, then you know what must be done. Get together with friends for an additional sing-through, sing along to a recording, use cyberbass.com for your voice part, use Choraline rehearsal CDs, keep at it till it sinks in. Only then will you be able to watch Nigel Perrin and respond to his direction, and contribute to the success of the performance.

The piece truly is NOT that tough - not too many notes at all! You've had the scores long enough to have got to grips with it. We don't want the final week's rehearsals to be swallowed up with tedious note-bashing of some voice sections. Be good eggs and do your homework. You know it's the right thing to do. Then we can all look forward to a fantastic, dramatic, and tightly controlled performance.

Audience Tickets

The 462 nave tickets have all gone. (Hallelujah!) Aisle tickets are available at £8 (£2 Under 16). Aisle seats do have restricted view due to the pillars holding up the magnificent edifice, but we understand that the seats are fine acoustically. There are just 148 of these in total; some are with the Abbey shop for sale, the rest are with Julia, and they are selling. If you need a ticket, don't delay. See Julia, with the correct cash in hand or a cheque made in favour of Thornbury Choral Society.

Wheelchairs

If you are bringing a guest who is in a wheelchair, or who has other special requirements, please let us know. We have to advise the Abbey in advance.

The Recording and CDs

We are having a professional quality cd made of your brilliant performance. Even ladylike coughs register like noon-day guns and are the bane of the recordist's art. So, if you absolutely must cough,

clamp your hand over your mouth to stifle it, and pick a loud orchestral moment. If you save it for the end of a chorus, leave a couple of seconds for the music to die away before coughing. It would be such a shame to ruin the recording.

If you want a copy of the CD and have not booked one through the blue forms that were on seats at the Workshop, contact Jos (01454-411652, email jos@josgregson.plus.com) with a cheque for £8 made out to Thornbury Choral Society. His address is 18 Willoughby Close, Alveston, Bristol BS35 3RW. Orders will close a week after the concert.

Friday June 3rd Rehearsal

Attendance at this rehearsal (Catholic Church Thornbury - see previous newsletters) with Nigel Perrin is absolutely essential, as is the Saturday Abbey concert day rehearsal. The Abbey rehearsal is more for the orchestra/soloists than for us, so Nigel will be putting us through our paces on the Friday evening. If you have any problems with this, please contact Julia.

SEATING The seating for our final joint rehearsal at Thornbury (Christ the King Roman Catholic Church) on Friday 3rd June will be identical to that at the performance at Tewkesbury (for directions to the rehearsal church see Newsletter No. 2). There have been some slight changes from the workshop plan enforced by our recruitment of some more tenors. We will now have 4 rows of basses with 8 per row and 4 rows of tenors with 6 per row. Please refer to the diagrams that will be on show as you enter the church.

For those of you who have missed previous announcements, please note that the front 5 rows are all standing on the floor, so shorter singers should sit towards the front of these rows. Also please note that the back rows of the staging are fairly high off the ground so that anyone with a poor head for heights should gravitate forwards (& downwards!). If you have serious problems with climbing the staging please discuss this with David Joyce, the Concert Manager.

CONCERT DAY

Timetable:

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|--------|--|
| 1.00pm | Green room open for you to leave your change of clothes etc. |
| 1.15pm | Orchestra arrives. Please keep out of their way while they attend to their instruments and seating arrangements. |
| 1.45pm | Be in Abbey at the far East end (behind staging), in your rows, no later than 1.45pm to allow us to do a trial procession into our places. |
| 2.00pm | Rehearsal starts

A short comfort break at Nigel Perrin's timing.
There may be a procession practice (off/onto the array) |
| 5.00pm | Rehearsal ends. Vacate the Abbey. Have your picnics.
Be aware that a service will be held in a side chapel at 5pm-5.20pm and the Abbey have requested our silence so that this may take place.

Use green room to change.
Please can some change early; don't all leave it to the last minute. |
| 7.00pm | Abbey North doors open for audience .
Singers PLEASE USE SMALL SIDE ENTRANCE (to left of the main North door) as the ushers will be very busy, and don't need us to make things more difficult.
There are too many singers for us to mingle in the nave with friends and family. |
| 7.15pm | Line up at East end of Abbey according to Concert Manager's instruction, ready to process to performance positions. |
| 7.30pm | All eyes on the man on the podium.
If you don't know it now, it's too late! If in doubt, be a goldfish! |

Interval	After the Lacrymosa.
9.30pm	approx - thunderous applause. We need to clear the Abbey promptly as the staging will be struck after the concert.

Time to pitch in and help

We will have to get some large jobs done quickly at the Abbey in a short space of time; such as, putting the free programmes on seats after rehearsal, and clearing up dropped tickets, programmes, gift aid envelopes etc when the audience has left. Please respond to any requests for assistance. It's your gig too! (There are sufficient programmes for all audience, orchestra and choir, so don't panic. You will be given your own copy at rehearsal.)

Stewards and Ushers

The Abbey has its own team of stewards, who man the fire exits in case of emergency. St John's Ambulance will also be in attendance.

We have arranged for a team of experienced volunteer stewards from St George's Bristol, a busy and prestigious concert venue, to help us with front-of-house matters, such as ticket tearing, seating the audience, dealing with latecomers (there are always one or two). They will have SCCG Usher badges, so that you can recognise them. They are doing what we usually ask our spouses and friends to do; we thought it would be nice to allow our long-suffering supporters to relax and enjoy the concert for once!

Concert Dress - Lest there be any lingering doubt!

Ladies: black top with three-quarter or longer sleeves, black full length skirt or black evening trousers. That's black, and black. No white. Just black. If you need to layer-up, keep it black.

Gentlemen: black bow tie, white shirt, dinner jacket (and trousers, please). If you haven't a DJ left over from a cruise you took in 1973, then a very dark suit will suffice (with a WHITE shirt and a black bow tie, please) If in doubt, check with the concert manager, David Joyce.

Footwear: we have been warned - more than once - that even in summer months the Abbey fabric can drain the life warmth from you, starting from the toes. Our Abbey contact is a singer, and says she wears woolly socks and crocs under her posh skirt. Skimpy sandals will result in your teeth adding to the already well-manned percussion section and probably frostbite.

On the staging

We will be a snug fit both on the staging and on the rows of chairs in front. Just you, your score, and water in a small plastic bottle. Perhaps a hankie. There is no room for clutter, handbags, etc., which may be a trip hazard, or get kicked over and lost under the staging, or look unsightly from the audience point of view.

Changing facilities/Choir green room

We have the use of a large room on the ground floor of the cafe building - on the left as you enter (cafe to right, loos straight ahead). We all have to muck in and get on with it. There will be screens to separate the men from the ladies. If you think ahead, and keep the costume change to a minimum, it will make your life easier. If we stagger our changing times, all will be well - so don't leave it to the last minute.

As there aren't a huge number of loos, a Very Dim View Indeed will be taken if ladies hog the stalls to get changed. Find your Blitz spirit, and make do with communal living.

Loos

These are in the cafe building. There are not many.

Valuables

The changing room will be locked while we are rehearsing and during the concert. Concert Manager David Joyce will hold the key during the day. However, we cannot take responsibility for valuables left in the changing room. You are responsible for your own property.

Catering - ie, self-catering

DO remember to bring water in plastic bottles to keep your whistle wet during the rehearsal and concert. No other liquids allowed, as the floor of the Abbey stains and costs a fortune to clean.

If you arrive early for the afternoon rehearsal you can eat at the Abbey cafe (run by MNDA for the day for funds), or indeed anywhere else in Tewkesbury. Or bring a picnic to have by the river or in the grounds of the Abbey.

For the gap between rehearsal and concert, you can either bring your own picnic, or order something from the cafe (be advised they are catering for a party of Thornbury U3A around the same time), or find something in Tewkesbury (but some establishments may be shutting down at that time of day). Safest bet is to bring your own.

Photographer

We have an official photographer who will be taking pictures throughout the day, to record the event in full. Emma Dale-Thomas will be roaming the venue, so be warned!

Covering Scores

Please ensure that you have covered your score. We know some are similar in colour to the wrapping paper we are providing, but it is important that we match. There will be supplies of the burgundy wrapping paper at all the rehearsals in the final week. You will all be asked to hold up your scores at rehearsals to show your conformity - be warned, your Chairman spent the last 34 years of his working life involved in precise descriptions of colours so don't get his back up!

Returning Scores

After the performance PLEASE make sure that you put your hired Ricordi score in the boxes provided. We very much hope to get back every one of the 200 scores that were hired this way and do not want the two good ladies from Yate who have sorted all the scores for us to have to spend hours on the phone chasing up singers who have gone away on holiday etc.

If you can remove your own pencil markings before catching your bus this would, of course, be appreciated, but we do realise that this is probably asking the impossible. Please carefully remove the burgundy covering and place it in the rubbish sacks provided.

There will be an erasing party in Thornbury after the concert to clean up the scores that we have used. If you fancy joining in the "Rubber Party", please tell Jos or Julia. Excellent Costa Rican coffee at the Chairman's house flown in especially for the event and a good natter to tell each other how brilliant we were! 10am at 18 Willoughby Close, Alveston, BS35 3RW on Monday June 6th.

We are planning to have a couple of stewards at the exits so if you are in singer's garb you may be asked whether you have handed in your score.

Charities

There is a retiring collection for the Jessie May Trust and Motor Neurone Disease Association. There will be gift aid envelopes in your programmes should you wish to donate to one or other. Any cash collected in the buckets will be divided equally between the two.

Both are excellent charities and both will have information tables in the porch. In addition there will be a number of MNDA display panels both in the porch and the cafe.

Buses from Stonehouse and Thornbury

Stonehouse

The Stonehouse coach leaves at 12.30 on June 4th from the bus stop outside the High Street health clinic, by Hurn's Hardware (which is at the entrance to the main car park, where parking is free. Rosemary Robinson has three spare spaces on the bus. If you want a seat please contact Rosemary at rosemaryhome@arcenergy.co.uk phone 01453 834356

Thornbury

The Thornbury coaches (from Mike's Travel) will depart from outside Aldi, opposite the Rock Street Car Park, at 12.30pm on Saturday 4th June. In charge of the two 53-seater coaches are Alison Makepeace and Ruth Piolle. If you arrive after this time you will find that the coach has departed as it is vital to get the singers on the coach to Tewkesbury!

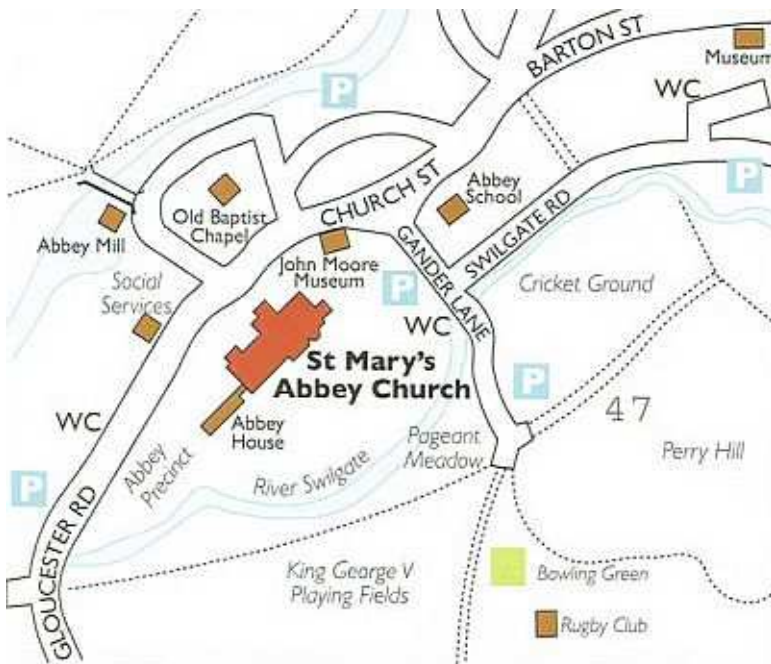
There are just 3 places remaining on these coaches, if you want a place contact Jos Gregson on 01454 411652, the cost of the coach is £8.

And finally

We thank everyone for their support, their help, their kind words of appreciation. We hope you have enjoyed the experience, that you have made new friends, and that you will store up happy memories of performing the Verdi Requiem in the Abbey. Watch this space for an exciting 2013 event in which you will be invited to participate!

To mangle a quote, "Keep your faith in the conductor, and keep your throat moistened!"

Parking



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