

18/02/2008 ABC Notices

Class of 2008

Week 6 of the course.

Over half way! Well done to you all for keeping with the programme.

Has anyone lost a pair of black ladies' gloves? See me.

There aren't any useful notices, as such, so I'll just witter away for a while.

It might be a good time to test yourselves in the peace, quiet, and privacy of your own homes, as to how much of Bethan's very useful information you have managed to assimilate. For example:

Can you picture in your mind's eye a piano keyboard, with the notes from one C to the C an octave above? And where all the black notes are?

Can you name the notes on the treble and bass clef staves?

Can you remember the sequence for a major scale in tones and semitones?

Can you work out how many semitones there are between F sharp and B flat?

Can you remember the examples Bethan gave us to help us sing an interval of, let's say, 5 semitones? 11 semitones? Up and down?

If not, you might benefit from a bit of diligent homework!

I'm working on Brahms Requiem with Cirencester Choral Society at the moment, and the ABC course is helping me enormously. As per usual, I'm using every tool at my disposal to get the thing into my head (it's a beast of a stunning work) – a CD recording, midi files, making notes (in pencil!) on the score to remind me where I can get my note from; and if there is no clue in the score, then I mark down the interval from the last note I sang... whatever gets the job done. I also read through the text so that it becomes familiar and easier to fit with the music. And when all that is done, then I can start paying more attention to phrasing, breathing, dynamics... everything the conductor's little heart desires. I've a long way to go. But it's worth it.

Some people can do all this without any apparent effort – but not me; I have to slog. I hope you find it easier!

I don't know if any of you are following Gareth Malone and the boys of Lancaster School in the BBC 'Choir' programme; I watched Friday's instalment and my eyes kept filling with dampness. More and more boys came out of the closet and declared themselves to be singers, overcoming their shyness, fear of bullies, fear of the scorn of their so-called 'peers'. They found a new community to belong to in the form of the school choir, they found self-confidence, fun, a sense of achievement, and the sheer buzz of performing. Amen.

Julia, Secretary