

09/11/2009 Choir Notices

Rehearsal 15 of 15

Sits. Seemingly Eternally Vac.

Treasurer (2010), Concert Secretary (2010), Publicity (2010) - your last opportunity to volunteer before we break up for the Winter.

Bach Ticket Sales

It may not have been purr-fect, but I thought we sounded pretty good last week in rehearsal. Must be because we were standing up or because we've been working like demons on it. With a great orchestra, excellent soloists, and our lovely sound (if we are zipped up and standing like prize-fighters) the audience is in for a treat. You can sell a ticket with a good conscience!

And for the last time... On the pink sheet on the noticeboard, please do cross off a number for every ticket you have already sold - we'd like to know how we are doing. Some have obviously made a fantastic effort under the circumstances (ie with competition) ... keep up the good work to the LAST MINUTE!

TICKETS, PLEASE: Your envelopes, stuffed with cash/cheques, with details entered on the front, and any unsold tickets, MUST be handed in this week at rehearsal to JENNI CULVERWELL. It just isn't fair to expect Jenni to sort out returns on concert day.

50th Birthday lunch

Last call for bookings / deposits ... Don't even think of giving me paperwork on concert day!

Concert Stuff

Please see the concert day notes on separate sheet.

My personal thanks to those who stepped up to help with cakes and kitchen. Much appreciated. Good eggs, one and all.
Thanks also to all who have volunteered to help with the concert day work in any way.

Those not singing – return your scores

If perchance you are reading this, but are not singing with us, make sure you have handed in your score to Lynette Magnone. The scores go back to the library next week, and if yours is missing, Lynette will require you to drop it round to her home in Wotton.

ABC promotion

Please take some flyers and do the usual distribution. If you sing with other choirs, or are attending concerts, do take some with you and leave them scattered about.

In the new year, I hope that some of you will again be willing to attend a few of the sessions, to help the new guys.

Also, if you feel you might benefit from actually taking the course, don't be shy about registering even if you already sing with us; it never does any harm to revisit theory in any discipline.

Other concerts in the offing

Do remember to support our sister societies, all of which have concerts over the coming weeks. Thornbury has the Messiah, as does Wycliffe, Cirencester has Bach Christmas Oratorio, and Stroud/Monmouth has Beethoven Missa Solemnis. Check your group calendars or our website for details.

It's quite good fun to see how others stage their concerts... really quite educative!

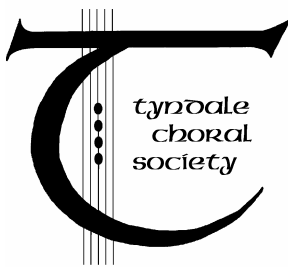
And finally...looking ahead

It's been a funny old year, one way and another. What with recessions, moneygrubbing cheating MPs in parliament, war and conflict and cruelty seemingly everywhere, and mud in supermarket carparks to catch you out and bring you down, what a joy it is to get together with good people and sing once a week!

In 2010, we have the ABC, Durufle, Ireland, the birthday lunch, the Perrin come-and-sing 'Elijah', and the Messiah to look forward to.

We must also start the clock ticking on the process of finding Ian's successor.

I just hope that we have volunteers for the 2010 committee vacancies in time for the AGM in March – it would be such a shame to wind up the society because we couldn't function legally...



Notes for Winter Concert Day 2009

Please have a quick read of the following – old hands and new members alike!

Your **Concert Manager is MARION MILLER** (soprano).
Marion deals with all staging matters.

Your **Concert Secretary is LISA RANDELL** (alto).
Lisa will be in charge of 'front of house', including the interval bar.

Please address all your questions to Marion or Lisa.

Morning of Concert: Staging riggers and other helpers – 10am, please.

REHEARSAL

1. **Venue:** St James', Dursley. There are WCs in the parish centre behind the Church.
2. **Be a good sport:** We have a lot on our plate again this year; staging, new orchestra partnership, and Bournville College doing a recording. It is always exciting on concert day, but we beg you to be at all times co-operative and professional.
3. **Bring with you:** bottled water; perhaps a cushion (in case you are on the staging or benches – and that will be the majority), and perhaps a flask of hot drink for the rehearsal break. Wear comfy shoes (it'll be a long day) and wear layers of clothing (we never know how the heating will cope with the weather).
4. **Parking:** please car-share as much as possible. Do **not** park at the Church as the limited space is needed by those with deliveries to make. With Sainsbury's taking up our parking, remember that there is long term parking signposted down Long Street - quite a stroll back up, so allow enough time.
5. **Rehearsal arrival:** Please be in the church for **2.00pm** without fail; Marion will be sorting out our seating arrangements. This is an horrendously difficult task; there is balance of sound to consider, the look of the choir (ie our heights), and the comfort of some of our members who have mobility issues. It may not be possible to sit next to your bestest friend. Take it on the chin. The orchestra will be arriving in dribs and drabs at the same time. It will be just this side of organised chaos. You are asked to comply with all Marion's requests with a gracious smile, patience, and the minimum of fuss and blether.
6. **Rehearsal etiquette:** The baton will drop at 2.30pm for the rehearsal with orchestra. This rehearsal isn't just about us; it's about our conductor's first sight and hearing of the orchestra and soloists, and his sole opportunity to achieve the sound he wishes in the venue. Be courteous and professional; when not singing, maintain **silence** to allow Ian to communicate with the orchestra. The better we behave, the quicker we'll be done. We have a short break (about 3.45) to comply with musicians' union rules, but no refreshments will be provided. Bring a flask of hot coffee if you think you'll need it.

When Ian has checked our sound levels, he will tell you to pedal back on the volume and save your voices, but use the rehearsal to get used to the orchestra, paying particular attention to tempi, entrances, finishes.

7. **Choir dismissed** at about 4.30-4.45pm, all being well. Leave quickly and silently (not like last year), as the rehearsal continues with the soloists. We are paying for all this, so don't waste their time and our money.
8. The orchestra and students will have supper between the rehearsal and concert in the Parish Centre. This is being prepared by a kind friend of mine. If you get back early, by all means see if you can help with the tidying up in the parish centre.
9. The church will be locked from the end of the rehearsal until 6.30pm.

As mentioned above, Marion/Lisa will give you your instructions. However, it may help you to know our **USUAL CONCERT PROCEDURE** (all of this is offered as a guide only – Marion/Lisa's word is law):

10. **Dress code:**
No buttonholes or poppies this time.
Men – DJ or dark suit, white shirt, black bow tie.
Ladies – all black: full length skirt or evening trousers, long sleeved blouse (wear over a T-shirt or jumper for extra warmth), black jacket if wished.
11. **Programmes** are free of charge. We print lots and usually have plenty left. However, you are asked to allow distribution to the audience first, before grabbing a copy. If we run out, which is highly unlikely, I promise I will run off some extras after the event.
12. **Friends and Punters**
Official paid-up Friends have vouchers allowing them entry to the concert. Direct them to the Friends' section (rear of the Church) where Kate Reeves (very tall alto) will welcome and seat them, and take their interval drinks order. There are a couple of comps issued (to Carole and Sandy McDonald, who store our staging) and they are to be treated as Friends.

Those who have bought their ticket in advance must present the ticket, which will be torn in two, and half kept for our Treasurer (the tickets are numbered at each end, so either end will do). Tickets can be purchased on the door – one half of each of these tickets must also be retained for our audit trail.
13. **Meet 'n' greet:** This is so close to my heart. I have been a volunteer steward at St George's Bristol for 8 years, and know EXACTLY what this means to audience members, in particular those on their own or at their first choral concert. We must make the concert evening as pleasant and enjoyable as possible for our audience. They have paid for their tickets and left their sofas; the least we can do is our very best to give them a warm welcome. We may be dressed in black, but it's not a sombre evening. Dot yourselves around the aisles, smile and say 'Good evening', usher to seats (squish them in – no handbags and coats taking up space), make sure they have a free programme, answer questions about where the loos are, urge people to buy their interval drink ticket... that sort of thing.
14. **So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye...** - as people leave at the end of the evening, a smile, 'good night', 'safe home', 'thank you', always brings a smile to the face of a departing audience member.
15. **Timetable overview:** On concert day, arrive no later than 2pm; we rehearse from 2.30pm-4.30pm (-ish). We then go home to have a light bite (no dairy! No chocolate for sopranos!), change, and arrive back for no later than 7.15pm. If you wish to be helpful and do some 'meet and greet', then arrive earlier (any time from 6.45pm).

If the weather allows, those not working in the church usually meet in the Parish Centre by 7.15pm, and have a brief team pep talk from Ian. (If it is tipping down, then just make your way to your seat.)

We don't usually aim to process formally en masse to take our seats; it isn't practicable in bad weather, and many of us are working with the audience. Just ensure that you are in your place for 7.25pm. Smiling, of course. Keep the volume of chatter down.

16. **Health and safety:** PLEASE DO NOT try to weave your way through the orchestra from the main aisle - there will be disasters... feet through cellos, trumpets clattering to the floor, scores and music stands sent flying... Every year, some eejit tries it. Find your way round the sides. Beware of cables on the floor.

17. **Interval:** go and mingle. If you have no-one in the audience, then do try and chat to audience members who look as though they are on their own; make them feel welcome. Help with glass collecting if you can.

If you are staying in your seat during the interval, then please ensure that those with jobs to do are able to make a quick descent from the staging (anyone involved with the bar or Friends).

18. **Standing/sitting/smiling/clapping/chatting:**

- You will already have your scores annotated with stand/sit instructions. In addition, Lisa will organise when we stand and sit before/after the performance, so listen carefully to instructions.
- Remember, when we are in our performance positions, EYES AND TEETH. Lift your eyebrows and smile. No scowling. People have paid good money to see you - it may as well be a pleasing prospect. Don't turn your back on the audience.
- The golden rule regarding clapping soloists/orchestra etc is, if you are standing DON'T CLAP. When sitting, clap like a seal on happy pills.
- If you **must** say something to your neighbour, please let it be *ppp* SOTTO VOCE. Keep the noise to an absolute minimum. Just soak up the atmosphere!

19. **Singing:**

- WATCH OUR CONDUCTOR
- Maintain excellent singing posture, head up, eyebrows up, hold up your copy so that you can read it and see Ian easily, and so that the audience can see your fizzog and hopefully hear the beautiful sound you are producing.
- Concentrate like your life depends on it.
- Page turning – beware!!! At the end of a piece, do not shatter the magic moment with a crackling page turn; wait for Ian's baton to relax.
- Lost the plot? MIME. Keep your mouth moving and a carefree expression until you can find your notes again. Otherwise, you'll stick out like a sore thumb.
- WATCH OUR CONDUCTOR
- Got to cough? Sit down, clamp your hand (and chunks of clothing) over your mouth to stifle the noise and do what you have to. Only stand up again at the start of the next piece. Otherwise you'll be too distracting or look like a Jack-in-the-Box.
- Be expressive; think about what you are singing, and *project*.
- Above all else, enjoy yourselves. It will be infectious.
- WATCH OUR CONDUCTOR. He's the one facing you, in a posh suit, atop a podium, gesturing with a stick, with a pleading expression.

20. **After the ball is over...**

- Please help clear away chairs, bottles, glasses (which have to be washed and dried), any litter, etc. Marion has a list of jobs. Having a friend in the audience doesn't give you a get-out-of-jail-free card. We could all make that claim.
- LEAVE YOUR SCORES with Lynette, our esteemed Librarian.

21. **When shall we meet again?**

We are running an ABC with Chris Swain at the helm starting Monday 11 January. Do promote it amongst your friends. We hope that you will do exactly as you did last time, and turn up to support the newbies. If you could manage 2 or 3 out of the 10, that would be grand.

You will receive your 2010 newsletter sometime in early March, and we re-start 22 March on Duruffe and Ireland.

May I wish you a very happy Christmas, and health and happiness for you and yours in 2010.

A la Bruce Forsyth,

Kee-ee-ee-eeep Singing!