

01/02/2008 Notices

ABC Class of 2010

Week 4 of 10

Well, your attendance record is fabulous - full marks! In the words of Charlie Drake, "if you want your boomerang to come back, first you've got to throw it". To get to grips with sight-singing, commit yourselves to coming to every session, and the job's half done.

The paper trail

I'm sorry that the handouts for the first two weeks caused a bit of confusion, but I hope that, with the help of the index you received last week and some old-fashioned treasury tags, you can now number/arrange your sheets accordingly, and we will all be able to find the right page quickly. The good news is that Chris thinks you now have all you need. Probably.

BBC Radio Gloucester

Thank you for not running screaming from the building when I announced that Vere Richards would be arriving with his recording device. It's true we are obliged to co-operate because of the grant we were awarded, but Tyndale is keen to convince other choral societies to run the same sort of course, so any publicity is helpful. It isn't about banging our own drum, it's about encouraging others. You can do your bit to encourage others to have a go at choral singing with your interviews - quite a responsibility!

Messiah copies

If you ordered one, and haven't collected it yet, please bring £5.78 (correct money, please) on Monday.

The Church carpet

The Methodist Church congregation is (rightly) very proud and protective of its carpeting in the Church space. It may be a bit of a squeeze in the coffee room, but if you can refrain from taking drinks into the Church itself, we'd be grateful.

Bronwen Mills – week 7

As you know, with Chris's blessing, we have engaged Bronwen Mills, professional soprano and singing teacher, to come and take one of the sessions. In the past I've attended two of her sessions, and come away each time feeling enthused and full of good intentions to put all her advice into practice. Move over Katherine Jenkins. I thought you might like to read her bio.

Bronwen studied at the Guildhall of Music after obtaining a Bachelor of Music degree from King's College, London. She began her singing career with John Eliot Gardiner's Monteverdi Choir, singing also for the Schutz Choir with Roger Norrington, The Richard Hickox Singers and the BBC Singers ad hoc

She has sung principal roles for Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Dublin Opera, New Israeli Opera, and in Parma, Ferrara, and Reggio Emilia in Italy.

She has wide concert and oratorio repertoire and has sung with the English Chamber Orchestra, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Halle Orchestra as well as making regular appearances on the South Bank in London. She has been the soprano soloist with most of the major choral societies in the UK. She is regularly to be heard on Radio 3 and Classic FM.

Bronwen is the singing teacher of the Choristers and Choral Scholars (Academical Clerks) at New College, Oxford. She is also singing teacher at Lincoln College, Oxford and teaches the Choral Scholars at many other Oxford Colleges."

Bronwen can teach you a vast amount in just one session, so make sure you are there!

Tips of the Week

Breathing: if you are still unsure as to whether you are belly-breathing, you can check by lying flat on your back, placing a hand over your navel, and breathing in. It's almost impossible to do it incorrectly. You should feel your hand rise on the in-breath, and be aware of your ribcage expanding around your back. Note that your shoulders don't move. The air should be deep in your chest cavity. Start with in-for-5, hold-for-5, out-for-5, hissing evenly, then gradually increase the length of the out-breath to longer counts. Then try to achieve the same technique while standing. This is good for not only your singing, but also your general well-being.

Pronunciation: whether we are Midlanders, Bris'l born, or Gloucestershire yeomanry, we have to sing as if with one voice in whatever language we have in the score. Aim for good round tones and clarity – think Dame Julie Andrews, or Liza Doolittle (*after* her transformation, that is). An example for the gentlemen would be actor Simon Callow or tenor Mark Padmore.

Julia, Secretary