



Tyndale Choral Society

Newsletter

No.22

Autumn
2004

Conductor's Notes

Thank you all so much for the Summer Concert on July 3rd. I can do no better in summing it up than in the words (slightly edited) I wrote to our new President:

"[The concert] was very successful from my viewpoint, and, judging by comments from the choir and the audience on the night, was well received. Certainly, the whole programme seemed well-prepared in the sense that I felt I could simply enjoy the music while conducting.

Naturally, I was thrilled to hear my own piece (the 'Gloucester' Jubilate). It is not big on innovation, but some of the quick modulations took a little getting used to! Many members of the choir have asked if we can fit it in again so I must have done something right in it. Ian Ball was splendid in a pretty difficult organ part.

For me the highlight was the Handel Chandos anthem. Many of the choir, brought up on a diet of Messiah and Zadok the Priest, were delighted with the great fugal choruses (I had chosen the grandest of the many versions Handel made!), and I must say I feel there aren't many greater than that final Amen (taken over

into Athalia). For the splendid alto duet just before that, I joined young Benjamin myself. Perhaps one day we could have President and Conductor doing it!

The Vivaldi Gloria was its usual success. It is difficult to say much new in it, but at least I kept it bowling along at a Roy Goodman-style tempo. I was pretty satisfied too with the quiet singing in the 'Et in terra pax', though rhythmic quiet singing is something the choir and I can work on in general. (I should add that Tina and Anne were lovely in the all-too-short soprano bits. IH)

We have started work on Coleridge-Taylor's Hiawatha for mid-November. It is very much of its time, and somewhat unfashionable these days, but it has a sturdiness and breadth which I think will work well with our resources. ... to sing the final line in the Wedding Feast: 'and the wedding guests departed, leaving Hiawatha happy with the night and Minnehaha' with a straight face is currently beyond us, but we shall triumph!"

I hope you agree about *Hiawatha*. I genuinely feel it has a real nobility in places, and a catching lightness in others, well-suited to Tyndale's capabilities.

From the chairman....

Dear Friends,

Following the enormous success of the first half of the season, here we are working towards our November concert with great anticipation. I have heard nothing but good comments about our summer concert and I am sure that conductor, choir and audience alike enjoyed it.

Our performance of *Hiawatha* is, I am sure, going to be a very exciting one. But it is also going to be quite an expensive one and so I urge you to support as many fund raising initiatives as you can. There will be continued monthly raffles, a cake stall in Dursley and other ventures. Although the money raised from these things is not great, put together it can make a difference. It is also very important that you start telling people about the concert now so that when the tickets are available every member of the choir will be able to sell some. The number of tickets sold by the choir for the summer concert was very disappointing and had it not been for the people who turned up on the day and paid on the door things could have been very different.

I would like to tell you about a newspaper review of a reality TV show which, in their words, "helps people realize their dreams." The programme, which was recorded over eight weeks, took a group of people who had not sung in a choir before to prepare for a concert in Lichfield Cathedral. The reporter says, 'although I didn't see anyone consuming alcohol during rehearsals their systematic inability to follow a very clear downbeat made me wonder if they had all been on a pub crawl!' He ends his report by saying that the choir's performance was described by experts as 'sounding like a cat being strangled.' However, the experience seems to have been enjoyed by all those who participated!

CONCERT INFORMATION

AUTUMN CONCERT

Saturday 13th November at 7.30pm
St James' Parish Church Dursley
with the Tyndale Sinfonia

Orchestral Overture
Coleridge-Taylor: *Hiawatha's
Wedding and Hiawatha's Departure*

Concert rehearsals will be on the two Mondays before the concert, 1st and 8th November in Dursley Parish Church at 7.30pm. The rehearsal on the 13th November will be at 2.30pm.

Dress:

Ladies: Long black skirt and long-sleeved white blouse (black blouse for Winter concert).

Men: DJ or dark suit, white shirt and black bow tie.

AGM: Wed 17th November at Dursley Parish Centre at 7.30pm.

I hope that all our dreams of another very exciting concert will be realized in November and I look forward to the remaining rehearsals with anticipation. I promise to follow the downbeat very carefully and only consume alcohol AFTER the rehearsal!

Anne Shipton

We have provisionally agreed the music for next year. For the Summer Concert, 'A Grand Night for Singing', a choral selection of the music of Richard Rodgers, preceded by John Rutter's *Elizabethan Lyrics* and some Percy Grainger. For the Winter Concert, *Pastoral* by Sir Arthur Bliss and Haydn's Nelson Mass.

Thank you all again for welcoming me so warmly and singing so well.

Ian

An occasional acquaintance

I am delighted that James Bowman has agreed to be our President. He has great standing internationally, whatever you may think of the countertenor voice. In fact, he has done much to establish it as a regular opera and concert feature, in the generation following the great Alfred Deller and Grayston Burgess (I have met him again recently, but that is another story)

In fact, James and I have only met on four occasions, though I have seen him on-stage on others. Our first was a performance of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* at Oxford in the summer of 1963. We were the alto section, mildly unusual in those days outside the great cathedral foundations - certainly in the performance of secular music. Of course, *Acis* is not the best work for altos as Handel did not write a part for them: we have to manage with the top of three tenor parts, as so often in the works written for the Duke of Chandos. But we made a pretty good noise I think, he more than me naturally. The fact that it was summer is significant, because the day of the performance was very hot and sultry, which took its toll on the bass soloist (Anthony Holt) who fainted in the middle of *O ruddier than*

the cherry. He and James were close friends, so James went to his aid, leaving me to keep the alto line going until the very final chorus when he returned. Tony Holt was fine, and went on to become one of the founder members of the Kings Singers.

James went on to become one of the Early Music Consort of London, working with David Munrow. I had been at school with David - in fact, our birthdays were just one day apart and we often celebrated together - and our friendship had been maintained, as school friendships are, on an occasional basis. One of those occasions was a concert the Consort gave at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, when I plucked up courage to go backstage to see David; James was there too (for the second of our meetings), and there were many school and university reminiscences. That must have been about 1970. David went on to even greater fame with his *Pied Piper* programme on Radio 3, and I have a certain smug pride that a couple of my ideas at a dinner party at my house featured in future editions! His suicide in 1976 came as a huge shock, although maybe there were incipient signs at that dinner party.

The last two occasions have been at Gloucester Cathedral. A quick few words exchanged when he sang in the previous Gloucester Three Choirs Festival in 2001, when James was the soloist in John Sanders *Urbs Beata* (now there's a thought for a future Tyndale concert!). Finally, we met again when the Queen came to disburse the Royal Maundy in Gloucester Cathedral last year (2003). It is the tradition that the host cathedral entertain the Children and Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, and in a sense that is James's 'day job'. We had lunch together the preceding day, revived a few old memories, and found that we were having to

sit a little apart from the rest of the choir because of the other extras there. This meant a grand entrance from both of us each time we moved into place! For the service James was resplendent in his OBE and Chapel Royal robes, I in my Gloucester Cathedral red. We both bowed as Her Majesty passed, according to protocol - and both promptly lost our place in the Guerrero *O sacrum convivium* we were singing! It took a few bars improvising to get back again. I hope you can't tell on the recording.

So there it is, a few occasions over a long time. As I said, I am thrilled that James has found time to be our President, and - who knows? - our future meetings may not be so far apart.

Ian

JAMES BOWMAN - our President

One of the world's leading countertenors for nearly 30 years; James Bowman's career spans Opera, Oratorio, Contemporary music and Solo recitals. He was born in Oxford in 1941 and began singing as a boy chorister at Ely Cathedral. He later went to New College, Oxford. He was a member of the New College and Christ Church choirs.

In 1967 he auditioned for Benjamin Britten's English Opera Group and was cast as Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a work he has subsequently had a long and distinguished association with.

James made his London debut at the opening concert of the Queen Elizabeth Hall and was soon in demand on both the opera stage and concert platform. He appeared at Glyndebourne in 1970 *La Calisto* (the first countertenor to sing there), English National Opera in 1971 *Semele* and the

Royal Opera House Covent Garden 1972 *Taverner*.

At the same time James met David Munrow and was invited to join the Early Music Consort of London. The ensemble made numerous recordings and toured extensively, inspiring many to explore and join the revival in early music and period performance.

During his career James Bowman has appeared at almost every major opera house. His concert career is equally wide ranging:: in Europe he is well known as a recitalist, with a large following particularly in France. In 1992 the French Government honoured him with admission to "L'ordre des Arts et des Lettres" and he was also awarded the Medal of Honour of the City of Paris, in recognition of his long-standing contribution to the musical life of that City.

James has made many recordings and has worked with all the major directors. Most of his recent recordings have been with *The Kings Consort* and Robert King on Hyperion. These include the complete Purcell odes, secular songs and church music and two stunning discs of Handel arias.

His work is not confined to 'early music', he has given the world premieres of many contemporary compositions by composers such as Burgon, Ridout and Richard Rodney Bennett.

In May 1996 James Bowman received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. James is also President of the Holst Singers.. He was made a CBE in the Queen's birthday honours list in June 1997. In November 1998 James was made an Honorary Fellow of New College Oxford.

This 'humorous' article was supplied by Brian Neale (bass).
The editor accepts no responsibility for the views expressed !
(Any complaints should be directed to Brian)

THE YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE SATB CHOIR

In any chorus, there are four voice parts: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. Sometimes these are divided into first and second within each part, prompting endless jokes about first and second basses. There are also various other parts such as baritone, countertenor, contralto, mezzo soprano, etc., but these are mostly used by people who are either soloists, or belong to some excessively hotshot classical a cappella group (this applies especially to countertenors), or are trying to make excuses for not really fitting into any of the regular voice parts, so we will ignore them for now.

Each voice part sings in a different range, and each one has a very different personality. You may ask, "Why should singing different notes make people act differently?", and indeed this is a mysterious question and has not been adequately studied, especially since scientists who study musicians tend to be musicians themselves and have all the peculiar complexes that go with being tenors, french-horn players, timpanists, or whatever. However, this is beside the point; the fact remains that the four voice parts can be easily distinguished, and I will now explain how.

THE SOPRANOS are the ones who sing the highest, and because of this they think they rule the world. They have longer hair, fancier jewelry, and swishier skirts than anyone else, and they consider themselves insulted if they

are not allowed to go at least to a high F in every movement of any given piece. When they reach the high notes, they hold them for at least half again as long as the composer and/or conductor requires, and then complain that their throats are killing them and that the composer and conductor are sadists. Sopranos have varied attitudes toward the other sections of the chorus, though they consider all of them inferior. Altos are to sopranos rather like second violins to first violins - nice to harmonize with, but not really necessary. All sopranos have a secret feeling that the altos could drop out and the piece would sound essentially the same, and they don't understand why anybody would sing in that range in the first place - it's so boring. Tenors, on the other hand, can be very nice to have around; besides their flirtation possibilities (it is a well-known fact that sopranos never flirt with basses), sopranos like to sing duets with tenors because all the tenors are doing is working very hard to sing in a low-to-medium soprano range, while the sopranos are up there in the stratosphere showing off. To sopranos, basses are the scum of the earth - they sing too damn loud, are useless to tune to because they're down in that low, low range - and there has to be something wrong with anyone who sings in the F clef, anyway.

Editor: Further descriptions of the voice parts will be included from time to time as space permits.

Critique of the
**Summer Concert in Wotton Parish Church
on 3rd July 2004**

'New Conductor acquits with enjoyable concert'

This was a most enjoyable concert held in a well-filled church on a lovely summer's evening.

For the choir's new conductor this was a special occasion as it was his first concert for the Society - and the premiere of his own choral work. He acquitted himself well. The weeks of rehearsal produced a well-disciplined choir with a pleasing quality of sound and the appearance of thoroughly enjoying their singing. The audience certainly shared this enjoyment.

The main work was Vivaldi's radiant *Gloria* which, for the most part, is a joyful proclamation of belief and worship, well varied and with some telling solo contributions from two sopranos (Tina Power and society chairman Anne Shipton) whose 'Laudamus Te' duet was beautifully sung - and a young counter-tenor, Benjamin Williamson, whose voice has already an enviable depth. The contrasting mood of 'Et in terra pax' was marked with its long sustained notes well realised by the choir.

The accompaniment to Handel's Chandos Anthem number six was appropriately performed by Ian Ball on the organ that was once played by the great composer himself! The organist's accompaniment in this and the other two works was most impressive. It was a delight to listen to such lovely music so well sung and accompanied.

The concert had opened with a premiere performance of a short three-section *Jubilata Deo* (Gloucester) Op 21 by conductor Ian Harrold. On a first hearing a critical appraisal is difficult. Suffice it to say that there seemed much to admire and enjoy, not least the organ's full partnership with the choir and the extraordinary variety and changes of mood - discords alongside tonal calmness. One critical note: what a pity that the men were almost totally hidden away at the back. Few in the audience could see them!

Donald Hollins

On a less serious note

Church Bulletins:-

1. Don't let worry kill you - let the church help
2. Thursday night - Potluck Supper. Prayer and medication to follow.
3. This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the church. Children will be baptised at both ends.
4. At the evening service tonight, the sermon will be "What is Hell"? Come early and listen to our choir practice.
5. On Thursday there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All ladies wishing to be Little Mothers should meet with the pastor in his study.

Diary Dates and Other Matters ...

Committee Meetings

There have been a number of meetings during the first half of the season with another due on 16th September. If there are matters which you want to be considered or raised, please see members of the committee in good time.

New Members

Please encourage potential new members to come along to rehearsals at the start of thesecond session in September and make sure you introduce them to the Secretary or the Chairman so that they

New Members

John Hicks produced a leaflet at the start of the season designed to attract new members. Would you please pass it onto prospective members or find somewhere to display it; church, village hall or shop etc. If you need further copies, please ask John or Anne Shipton

can welcome them and take their details.

Subscriptions: If there are any outstanding subscriptions, they will now be £39 (see card), and £20.00 for full-time students. If you yourself pay tax, you can Gift Aid your subscriptions very simply so that the Society can reclaim the tax paid - a free bonus to the funds! The Treasurer, Kate Reeves (alto) will be happy to provide details.

Fund Raising:

Principal events will be:

2nd October: Cake Stall, Dursley
9 - 11a.m.

A further fundraising Christmas concert is also planned.

Bear these in mind. More information will come later.

Sales Stall: The stall will continue through the remainder of the season. It makes an important contribution to the funds, so bring along books, plants and other produce, records, tapes and anything else that is saleable, and in any case visit the stall and buy.

Saturday 13th November - help will be needed to erect and dismantle staging after the concert so please contact the Concert Manager (John Ewer) and Assistant (Jacquelin Hill) with offers of assistance - *they need your help once again!*.

Wednesday 27th November - **Annual General Meeting** in the Parish Centre, Dursley at 7.30pm.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Tim Page (bass) has produced a leaflet about Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, the composer of two works for the Autumn Concert, and is happy to make it available to members at £1 each to go towards the society's funds. If you would like a copy please speak to him.

Membership

This is the current membership list held by the Secretary.
If your name does not appear below, please advise the Secretary of your details
so that our records can be kept up to date.

Sopranos

Rev Janet Bromley
Mrs F Chandler
Mrs Mavis Church
Mrs Glenys Ewer
Mrs B Garnham
Mrs A Glanville
Ms C Harrison
Mrs Lynette Magnone
Mrs Doreen Manning L
Mrs Marion Miller
Mrs K Palmer
Mrs Angela Pendlebury
Mrs Anne Shipton Ch
Mrs Valerie Skinner
Mrs J Taylor
Mrs J Theaker
Mrs L Townsend
Mrs Sandra Tucker
Miss Ros Wakefield
Mrs V Weaver
Mrs Elaine White
Mrs Elizabeth Young

Altos

Mrs C Bennett
Mrs P Brice
Mrs Jill Brown
Mrs Jenny Coles

Mrs G Dickinson
Miss K Emsley
Ms S Fitzarthur
Mrs Amanda Hicks
Dr Jacquelin Hill
Mrs W Hills
Mrs Elspeth James
Mrs L Lane
Mrs Jennie Leighton
Mrs Francis Neale
Mrs Anne Nuttall
Mrs J O'Connor Beach A.Sec
Mrs Kate Reeves Tr
Mrs Wendy Richardson
Mrs Miriam Salman
Mrs Angela Sinton Sec
Mrs Joyce Sirett
Mrs Mandy Troxler
Mrs Eve Tudgay
Mrs Sue Wagner
Mrs Sue Walshaw
Mrs Leslie Wrangmore

Tenors

Rev Phil Butcher
Brian Davies
John Ewer
Dr Peter Harney
H Richards
Audrey Sewell
John Taylor
Andrew Telford
Andrew Young

Basses

Frank Andoh
Brian Bolsher
Mike Chambers
Alan Garnham
John Hicks
D Hillen
J Hilton
Brian Kitching
Derek Manning
Brian Neale
Tim Page
John Palmer
Dick Skinner*
Geoff Whiley

Names in *italics* - committee members:

Ch - Chairman: *Sec* - Secretary: *A.Sec* - Acting Sec

L - Librarian * Editor

Tr - Treasurer: