



### Conductor's Notes .....

Thank you for all your hard work at the Summer Concert. Taking on a series of short pieces designed for the professional resources of a cathedral choir is no mean feat, and I think we surmounted most of the hurdles they presented. The middle of 'Mandatum novum' proved the most challenging (to use the critique's euphemism) and I am sorry if I had not spent sufficient time on it; it is always difficult to schedule a large chunk designed for only part of the choir. Maybe some of our audience thought it was just John Sanders being a bit daring!

There were many other delights though, and I shall treasure the Brewer 'O Love most wonderful' despite its rather banal words! A little pearl like 'My Romance' was last year. All the Sumsion pieces were splendidly done; his music can sound a little bland at times, but I thought we gave it the necessary intensity to avoid that. We managed to sound suitably French and exultant for David Briggs, and I was pleased we brought out the best in Ian Ball's Nunc Dimittis, despite the problems he gave us in not being available. Thank goodness for Christopher Boodle's willingness to help. Finally, after

everything else, you rose to the challenges set by my Ave Maria - thank you so much for that.

Now we proceed to the Mozart Requiem, the Elgar 'For the Fallen', and the Handel Funeral Anthem. I sense already that the Handel is being appreciated for the great work that it is, certainly the opening movements. It was intriguing to find the close links it has with the opening of the Mozart, which I had not realised before. The Elgar will have that extra resonance as we sing it on November 11th. I hope the extra bits of the Mozart are not too confusing; for me, they make an already fine work even more satisfying, but it is quite difficult to relearn parts of a work so well-known to so many singers.

Are you already committed to supporting us in our fund-raising Choral Workshop on September 30th? It is important that we turn out in force to welcome those brave visitors who will come to have a good sing. The Parry 'Blest Pair of Sirens' and the Brahms Requiem are both great stalwarts of the high Romantic period of choral music, and worth a half day of any singer's time! I hope to use a couple of slots

on Monday nights to quickly revise a few key moments. Rehearsal schedules will be available when we return.

As you will have seen on the notice board, we have drafted a concert plan for the next couple of years or so. With the exception of 'King Olaf', they are all directly or indirectly included from members' suggestions. Of course, they are works I am happy to take on, and great pieces in their own right, so I hope you will all get behind them and give them your best shot. We did not need to pay any helpers this Summer, which is good, but there were too many members who chose not to sing with us for the concert. It is disappointing when you choose what you think is an interesting programme and this happens. Please everyone try to give Tyndale priority on Mondays and two Saturdays between March and November (and Amberley carols if you can)!

Ian Harrold

## **From your Secretary .....**

July already! I don't know where the time goes... evidently to the same place as my short term memory. Now, what was I going to say?

The Website: Thanks to John Hicks, we have a website which must be the envy of all choirs – it is kept up-to-the-minute with all the latest info, dates, reports, etc. We are receiving a modest quarterly income from the 'shop', but I'm sure we could do SO much better. Did you know that you can order blenders, hairdryers, electric razors and all manner of goods from 'Amazon', as well as music and books? So, if you do your

homework on prices and Amazon compares favourably, why not order from them and have the goods delivered to your door? Saves on petrol and your time, AND TCS earns a few pennies. Brilliant. Just think of the hassle you'd save on Christmas shopping... see me or John if you have any queries.

I keep revisiting the Membership Survey 2005 results, to see how many of your comments have been taken up. To please you, we have indeed asked student soloists to join us on the workshop day. Regarding the ladies' concert dress code, the committee asked any interested ladies to come forward and research the various options... we're still waiting! Fundraising: we are indeed having a workshop day. Spreading the workload: we are grateful to those who have taken on specific tasks to help the committee in its work. Communication: well, it would help if more would actually listen to announcements, and visit the noticeboard or the website!

Some of you may have noticed that I'm quite busy on rehearsal nights, and it may be difficult to get more than a grunt out of me in answer to your questions. Please do ring me at home (or email me) if there is something you need – in spite of the answering machine message, I am always pleased to hear from you – and that will relieve the pressure on Monday nights.

Please remember to encourage friends to join us for the Brahms – either as singers or audience members. We really do need this to be a raging success!

Julia O'Connor-Beach

## From the chairman....

Dear Friends,

I hope that you have all enjoyed your break and that we will have a full, refreshed and invigorated choir for our first rehearsal on September 4th. We have been concerned at the number of absences since our performance in July but have nevertheless made some inroads into our November programme. Inevitably holidays take their toll at this time of year and we have been very grateful to Miriam Salman, who has stood in during James's absence.

The social occasions and fund raising activities, for which Julia has taken the lion's share of the work, have been generally well supported, thoroughly enjoyable and productive. We have so little time on Mondays to get to know each other, and the camaraderie that springs from these occasions is invaluable.

Our next fund raising activity will be the Brahms' Requiem on 30th September and has brought in a number of outside singers, who will add to our numbers on the day, and perhaps some may decide to join us. It is up to us to make this a successful occasion. Please encourage any musical friends and family to join us as well.

We now look forward to building up the Mozart, Handel and Elgar in readiness for 11th November. This will be followed by our Carol Concert in Amberley Parish Church, which I hope will become a permanent fixture in our calendar. As well as carols we will have readings and, if you

have a favourite piece of prose or poetry that would be suitable for the occasion, please let any member of the committee have your suggestions; we would like everyone to feel that they are part of the concert.

Best wishes

John Ewer

### CONCERT INFORMATION

#### *AUTUMN CONCERT*

**Saturday 11th November** at 7.30pm  
St James' Parish Church Dursley  
with the Tyndale Sinfonia

*Mozart : Requiem*  
*Elgar: For the Fallen*  
*Handel: Funeral Anthem - The*  
*ways of Zion do mourn*

Concert rehearsal will be in St James' on Monday 6th November at 7.30pm and 2.30pm on the day of the concert.

**Dress:**

**Ladies:** Long black skirt and long-sleeved black top.

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

All to wear poppies.

**AGM:** Wed 22nd November at Dursley Parish Centre at 7.30pm.

This article was written by Ian for the Arthur Bliss Society following our performance in November last year (2005).

## Putting on *Pastoral*

or

## Naughty Naiads in Rustic Romp!

By Ian Harrold

I first encountered Arthur Bliss's *Pastoral* as a youngish tenor in the City of London Choir sometime in the late 1960s. Our conductor, Donald Cashmore, had always promoted British music alongside the standard repertoire. Occasionally this involved interpreting some abstract squiggles to make some curious sounds, though it has to be said such 'avant-gardery' was not our strong point! We were more at home in the noble world of Elgar, or the sturdy Englishness of Vaughan Williams. Certainly, the content and style of Bliss's country idyll were much more to our taste. I particularly remember what an effect that final unaccompanied coda had on us all.

I later conducted *Pastoral* during the inaugural week of a music festival I founded in Heptonstall, West Yorkshire; Pennine Spring Music is still going strong after twenty years, though without me - I passed on the baton in 2001, though I am proud to remain a Patron. Our resources in that first year were minimal. I recall a few strings (enough to cover all the parts, just) and a smattering of wind. By the day of the performance of *Pastoral* the flautist had had to cry off with some gastric problem, and, as you probably know, there is a rather important flute obbligato. My principal clarinettist had to step in and cover the part with a mixture of transposing more or less at sight on the clarinet and, as he was also an accomplished recorder player, the famous 'Pigeon Song' was amazingly done on treble recorder. Martin Cook was a dear friend before, he has been one of my great heroes since!

In 2005, the Tyndale Choral Society were looking for a piece to accompany Haydn's 'Nelson' Mass. There were lots of ideas, but inevitably costs came into the equation. The Haydn is, of course, basically strings with minimum wind (trumpets and organ) and drums. The Bliss has flute instead of trumpets, but fortuitously features the drums too. As part of my brief in taking on the choir is to enrich the range of repertoire we tackle, it seemed to fit the bill admirably, and the memories I have described only made it more inevitable. I knew that Diggory Seacombe would not let me down in providing first-class players, and I would finally conduct the piece with a proper flute; I was not disappointed.

From the start, I felt it was that final passage which needed a lot of attention. After all, it would be the last thing the audience would hear in that half of the concert, and, like me, I suspect the main memory they would take with them of the piece. As with the rest of the work, the notes are not particularly difficult, but they have to be phrased and shaped to really work. There are pieces where, if you sing the notes accurately (not always easy!) and observe markings, it works - the Verdi *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* perhaps? - and you can communicate the composer's wishes without a lot of detailed labour. On the whole, the English pastoral tradition isn't like that. It is then a fine line between getting to the familiarity you need to bring the phrasing off, and boring your members to death!

The earlier part of that last movement has its own problems. Gently-moving 9-8s and 12-8s are always (for me anyhow) a worry; it is easy for the conductor to end up looking like someone out of Harry Potter's Charms class, wafting his/her arms in vague curlicues and being no help at all. At least it got me to do my homework and find out the story of Danae and her golden shower (well, that's what she said, anyway; that's where Perseus came from).

The first movement 'The Shepherd's holyday' presented fewer difficulties, its strophic form and sturdy harmony being well-suited to our experience. When Pan enters in the second movement, all proved very straightforward until those final echoes; balancing divisi parts is rarely immediate.

It was the next choral movement 'Pan and Echo' which seemed to present more problems than I had foreseen. My ladies were fine in the echo phrases, though still with difficulties of balance, but the men found the artlessness of the simple song hard to bring off in their sections. I suppose the changing metre doesn't help. In the end, I amalgamated tenors and basses throughout, and relied on 'safety in numbers'; I imagine the second basses dropped out when the high Gs appeared!

Theocritus's handy hints about estate management, 'Song of the Reapers' isn't hard to bring off, but it is not an easy piece to rehearse as it can become just a shout. On the whole, I was inclined to make sure we knew the notes, then left it more or less to the day. Interestingly, Lady Bliss told me that Theocritus was in her late husband's hands at the time of the work's genesis.

For my money, the musical heart of the work is the Naiads' Music. It is obviously not difficult for the men, who have just a few bits and pieces to worry about, but the ladies have not only quite difficult notes, divided parts and long

phrases, but above all they have to sound sexy! We worked hard on that through familiarity of the music and some, I hope, effective phrasing. This sort of thing is always awkward at rehearsals, because the men sit doing very little, but you need them there to do the joins. I hope their forbearance paid off in the final performance.

In fact, the final performance went extremely well. I was thrilled with my orchestra, including the most wonderful flautist (Nicky King); Debra Blake was ravishing in the 'Pigeon Song'; and the choir pulled out all the stops, bringing to the work all the colouring and shading we had prepared. Many had been concerned that *Pastoral* might prove a bit 'modern' for us, but were won over. I shall treasure those final 'farewell's for many years, as they lingered on the autumnal air in Dursley.

Ian Harrold

## FundRaising

Figures for fund raising so far this year from Lorna Lane (Treasurer):

Cake Stall	£114.20
Teas Wotton under Edge	173.20
Cromhall Cinema	141.35
Quizzes (Julia's & Ian's)	37.00
Mugs	8.00
Web Page sales commission	57.15
Weekly Sales stall	110.00
Rehearsal Refreshments	<u>175.14</u>
sub total	£816.04
Gift Aid Tax Refund	<u>673.51</u>
sub total	£1489.55

Tribute to Cathedral is a treat

Review by Julie Phillips

A TRIBUTE to Gloucestershire Cathedral was the apt title of this concert at St. Mary's Church, Wotton-under-Edge.

The programme was dedicated to the distinguished organist composers of the cathedral and reflected the immense talent and creativity of these eminent musicians. The concert began with two pieces by Herbert Brewer written for the Three Choirs Festival. In both cases the clarity of diction and expressive phrasing of the sopranos was well supported by the rich tone of the basses.

Christopher Boodle, who had stepped in at the last moment, provided sensitive support on the organ and piano as well as demonstrating his musicality in a shortened arrangement of *The Marriage of Figaro Overture* and his own composition, *Scherzo*.

In two anthems by Herbert Sumsion, with difficult key changes, the choir responded confidently, maintaining the rhythmic complexities of both pieces through expressive singing.

Many of those present in the Church will remember with affection the contribution made to music in the cathedral and in Gloucestershire by John Sanders. His anthem, *My Beloved Spake*, proved to be a challenge for the choir in maintaining pitch and intonation. *Mandatum Novum* was written for the Royal Maundy Service and incorporates references to another Gloucestershire composer, Hubert Parry. Here the unison plainsong singing was particularly well performed.

The final pieces, *Jubilate Deo* by David Briggs and Ian Ball's *Nunc Dimittis*, produced some rich blending of the voices and expressive unison singing. An additional *Ave Maria* concluded the concert, which was well directed by Ian Harrold who provided additional commentary throughout.

***'Sing! Brahms Requiem'***

**Choral Workshop**

at St James the Great, Dursley on Saturday  
30th September with Ian Harrold and  
Christopher Boodle.

An update on the workshop - Julia.

So far, I have received 12 bookings from 'outsiders' - so some of you have been spreading the word successfully - keep up the good work! 10 TCS members have already paid. A further 28 of you promised to support the day, so when these promises are converted to registrations, we should be at 'break-even' on the day. Eight people have booked in for the supper

I think the day will be a good and worthwhile event in its own right, but it would be icing on the cake if we can turn a profit for our funds. We ALL need to make a great effort to increase the number of participating singers and (equally importantly in my view) also to encourage audience for the evening performance.

Although we sent promotional material out with our concert mailing, and I have now followed this up with a wider mailshot in August, NOTHING beats word of mouth or the application of gentle persuasion on friends to join in the fun.

Two enquiries have come from sightings of posters - so it is imperative that we put these in the usual strategic spots. You may already have some printed material, but there will be more available when we get back in September.

**Members**

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**

Fiona Chandler  
 Mavis Church  
 Jenni Culverwell  
 Glenis Ewer  
 Anne Glanville  
 Clare Harrison  
 Marjorie Harrison  
 Diana Hobbs  
 Lynette Magnone  
*Doreen Manning L*  
 Marion Miller  
 Kathryn Palmer  
 Angela Pendlebury  
 Anne Shipton  
 Valerie Skinner  
 Judith Taylor  
 Joyce Theaker  
 Lesley Townsend  
 Sandra Tucker  
 Ros Wakefield  
 Elaine White  
 Vanessa Weaver  
 Elizabeth Young

**Altos**

Catherine Bennett  
 Jill Brown  
 Jenny Coles  
 Shelagh Fitzarthur  
 Betty Hebditch  
 Jacquelin Hill  
 Estelle James  
 Sally Lamerton  
*Lorna Lane Tr*  
 Caroline Marshall  
 Frances Neale  
 Anne Nuttall  
*Julia O'Connor Beach Sec*  
 Lisa Randell  
 Kate Reeves  
 Helen Roberts  
 Wendy Richardson  
 Miriam Salman  
 Wendy Thomas  
 Eve Tudgay  
 Sue Walshaw  
 Lesley Wrangmore

**Tenors**

Philip Butcher  
 Jean Dabinett  
*John Ewer Ch*  
 Peter Harney  
 Audrey Sewell  
 Andrew Young

**Basses**

Brian Bolsher  
 Mike Chambers  
 John Hicks  
 Brian Kitching  
 Derek Manning  
 Brian Neale  
 Tim Page  
 John Palmer  
*Dick Skinner \**  
 Geoff Whiley

Names in *italics* - committee members:

*Ch* - Chairman: *Sec* - Secretary: *Tr* - Treasurer: *L* - Librarian : \* - Editor

<b>Committee members:</b>		
John Ewer	....	Chairman
Lorna Lane	....	Treasurer
Julia O'Connor-Beach	....	Secretary
Catherine Bennett	....	Concert Manager
Lynette Magnone	....	Concert Secretary
Sandra Tucker	....	Fundraising Coordinator
Jill Brown	....	Publicity and Printing
Frances Neale	....	Friends Secretary
Ian Harrold	....	Conductor
Doreen Manning	....	Librarian
Audrey Sewell	....	NFMS Secretary

## **Diary Dates and Other Matters ...**

### **Committee Meetings**

A meeting is planned for 5th September. If there are matters which you want to be considered or raised, please see members of the committee in good time.

**Subscriptions:** The subscription is now £41.00, or £20.50 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,

### **Open Rehearsal**

*There will be another "Come along and sing taster session" for singers wanting to see us in action at the rehearsal on the 4th September. Please bring friends or acquaintances who might be interested and do make them feel welcome, and make sure you introduce them to the Secretary, Julia O'Connor Beach, so that she can welcome them and take their details.*

Lorna Lane (alto) will be happy to provide details.

### **Fund Raising:**

There will be a further fundraising Christmas concert at Amberley Parish Church on Thursday 7th December (Rehearsals Monday 27th November at Dursley Methodist Church, Tues 5th and prior to the Concert on the 7th at Amberley). More information to come.

### **Donation**

The Society has received another donation from Renishaw - this time for £250. This will be a great help in supporting our Winter Concert - our thanks to them.

**Sales Stall:** The stall will again be in operation throughout the rest 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 11th November:**

Don't forget that help will be needed to erect and dismantle staging so please contact the Concert Manager (Catherine Bennett) with offers of assistance - *they need your help once again!*

### ***John Hicks' August sing.***

This has got off to a great start with nearly 24 singers from Tyndale and around the region. To date, there have been two rehearsals of the Byrd '*Mass for four voices*'. The follow-up to the serious work is a more relaxed discussion of the finer points at the Black Horse!