



Newsletter

No.32

Autumn
2009

Conductor's Notes ...

"Someone to watch over me".
I don't know about the "over", but thank you all who did watch me in July's successful *Berkshire to Broadway* concert. You can hear the results on our web site in Christopher Boodle's Gloria. The composer was rightly pleased and it made a fine start to the concert. I was staying on Broadway as part of my recent trip, and I thought of you as I looked down on that vibrant thoroughfare from my hotel.

"In Windsor Forest" had lovely delicate passages in the opening ladies' chorus, a good blend in most of "See the chariot at hand", as well as a suitably bucolic drinking song. If the final Epilogue lacked focus occasionally in the middle, it certainly girded itself up to a fine conclusion. The Gershwin songs needed much concentration to bring off, embracing as they did jazzy bits and choral bits, wordy bits and some quite difficult harmonies. I was delighted with the way we approached them, and I think our audience certainly appreciated the work we had put in.

There were a lot of notes in the Gershwin; there are many more in the Bach B minor Mass! I hope you are enjoying working on this great masterwork, despite the hard graft involved. You may have realised that, for most of us, it really is not the sort of piece you can just turn up on Monday and sing through. Please try to do your homework on what is scheduled. I know there are times when it seems it will never come together, but it will, and you will be able to appreciate fully what a joy it is to sing in a choir. Honest.

Over the page you will find a short article about the difference between written and performed rhythms in Bach's music. The whole business is a bit of a minefield, but the extract shows where my thinking comes from.

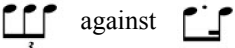

I look forward to seeing you all back for the autumn. Oh, if there were any who did not watch [over] me, do try it sometime; it can help!

Ian

'I Dot Rhythm'

I know some of you are a bit concerned at my cavalier approach to the way I ask you to sing a dotted rhythm against triplets in the Bach. It is something I learned when I used to do a lot of continuo playing. I couldn't remember the exact references, so I have looked it up online, in one of the current authorities on music of this period; from 'Bach and the Baroque' by Anthony Newman.

"Another problematic situation occurs in

the figure  against 

According to J.S. Bach, as related by Löwlein, in slow-to-moderate tempi, the sixteenth [i.e. semi-quaver] will follow the last note of the triplet, as if it were the last note of a group of six sixteenths. In faster tempi, the sixteenth will be played with the last note of the triplet assimilated into the rhythm.

In this example (fast tempo) from the Toccata in G Minor the figures in



question are [even] beamed together.

The issue of duple vs. triple continued well past the Baroque, notably in the music of Schubert, Chopin, and Verdi[*]. Sometimes the quick notes are located where they should be played as in the Prelude in E Major by Chopin. Sometimes we must guess at their positions".

[* So, Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves!]

In either case the music is not sung as written, though, in a sense, we are both right! The semi-quaver can come after the final triplet note. It rather depends on how fast you consider 'fast'. To my hearing, the triplets in the Sanctus are fast enough to sound awkward with a further sextuplet semi-quaver, hence my request to 'assimilate into the rhythm'.

Thank you for humouring me.

Ian

TCS Website - Shop

This Christmas, avoid the traffic jams at Cribbs Causeway, and let your fingers do the walking. You can order goods or vouchers for delivery to your home and TCS will receive a small commission on your purchase **at no extra cost to you.**

Sales have (not unexpectedly) been slow this year, and this is a valuable fund raiser, so please do make good use of it!

Remember always to start your shopping session from the TCS website or your purchases won't count! Stores accessible are: M&S, John Lewis, Amazon, Musicroom, HMV, Red Letter Days to name but a few.

From the Chairman

Dear Friends,

It seems only a short time ago that our season commenced, but we have accomplished a great deal in that period. Bach is a great challenge for us, but the extra rehearsals in July and August have enabled us to make inroads into its complexities.

Glenis and I had a great holiday on the Isle of Mull and I hope that you, too, have had a well earned rest, whether at home or away and will return in September knowing more of the B Minor Mass and full of energy.

The plans for our 50th Anniversary are now taking shape and we shall, in the next few weeks, have to commit ourselves firmly to participating, and marking the date in next year's diary*. Since the suggestions seem to favour the date close to our summer concert, the maximum number of our members should have the opportunity to attend and make the event go with a swing.

Here's to Bach.

Best wishes,
John Ewer

PS *See also Julia's notes on this.

CONCERT INFORMATION

Winter Concert

Saturday 14th November at 7.30pm
St James' Parish Church Dursley with
the Amadeus Orchestra.

Bach ~ B minor Mass with Amadeus Orchestra

There will be a rehearsal in the church
on the afternoon of the concert at
2.30pm

Dress:

Ladies: Long black skirt or evening
trousers and long-sleeved black
blouse, and black jackets if desired.

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

From your Secretary

Committee vacancies to be filled at AGM next year:

It is the final stretch for Lisa Randell – Concert Secretary, and Wendy Thomas – Publicity. They will step down at the AGM early next year. Well done to them both for sterling work over their 3 year tenure.

Their successors would be wise to ‘shadow’ Lisa and Wendy for their last hurrah. All members are asked to think carefully and consider whether they might be willing to take on one of these positions for a three year term. If so, please speak to any committee member.

Apart from the obvious fact that these functions are critical to our success and the smooth running of the concerts, there is an absolute requirement to fill these slots; we currently have 3 officers and 6 members serving on the committee, which is the minimum we can function with. These vacancies must be filled, otherwise we will be in breach of our rules and fall foul of the charities commission requirements. We’d prefer to avoid shotgun weddings at the AGM.

What is involved? There are four main committee meetings each year. Every committee member is a charity trustee with responsibility for the general business of the society. There is no ‘dead weight’ on our committee - each trustee has their own job to do. The publicity and concert secretary jobs are focussed on the two concerts, so the activity involved is

concentrated around concert time. The retiring members hand over up-to-date ‘job descriptions’ to ensure a smooth transition. No-one will be left to sink or swim!

One would think only a nitwit would clamour to serve on committees. We all have other (and no doubt more fun) things we’d prefer to do. All current serving members came forward with the noble view that they should take their turn – they weren’t seeking the perks of high office and the opportunity to indulge in residence-flipping. Every society member who enjoys the benefits of the society’s existence should perhaps ask themselves, “Why should others do the work on my behalf, if I am not prepared to take a turn?”

So then, over to you!

Coffee room sales table

Elizabeth Young and Ros Wakefield are retiring from this very important fund raising activity in November. Elizabeth has organised the table for about 20 years, helped by Ros for about 9 years; we thank them for their dedication and hard work from the bottom of Tyndale’s heart. The table has been a great fundraiser, a good way to recycle books, a source of excellent marmalade, and somewhere to off-load your glut of runner beans. Absolutely indispensable. We must ensure the table continues. Perhaps a group of 3 or 4 members could do it on a rota basis? Please speak to Elizabeth or Ros, or a committee member, if you would be willing to help out.

Cancellation of the 'come and sing'

In previous years, we have been able to count on nearly 40 of our (then) 65 members supporting our big annual fundraiser, the 'come and sing' (or workshop). With about the same number from other societies, we have had events which were successful musically, socially, and financially. This year, for the proposed Haydn Seasons, we had just 25 of our now 85 members on board. This just wasn't viable. Too risky. Also, a lot of work for some members, and not justified by the projected income.

Those entrusted with balancing the books and creating a lively calendar for the society on behalf of all members need your active support. We don't know why the Haydn sing was unpopular; was it the piece? was it the format? was it simple lack of interest? If you can think of a different style of event to raise considerable funds, please tell any committee member.

Ebb and flow

The size of the membership roll, ie all who have paid annual subscriptions in any given year, does not reflect the numbers either at rehearsal or in concert as the membership is always in flux for a variety of reasons.

In 2007 the membership roll stood at 65, with about 58 singing in concert. We ended 2008 with 96 members on the books but only 80 singing the concert. The main reason for the sudden increase was, of course, the ABC initiative - 22 graduates joined us. There is no doubt that

the publicity we attracted brought in additional members. Two other singers joined us just for the chance to sing the St Paul.

We have at the moment 88 members, but the net drop of 8 members compared with 2008 hides a larger rate of change of personnel. In total, 13 have not returned. There was the usual attrition due to house moves and pressure of work, and we mourned the untimely death of Lesley Wrangmore. Five ABCs have not come back this year due to pressure of work (some hope to return at a later date), but we are thrilled that the other 17 are still with us; what is more, ABC graduate Monica is now our Treasurer, which contribution really is wonderful, as she is only in her second year with us. All but one of the new members this year have been attracted by the Bach *B Minor Mass*; they are all very welcome indeed and we hope they will consider continuing with us next year!

So there you have it. We cannot rest on our laurels. To safeguard the future of the TCS, we must always strive to recruit new members. Each year will see a considerable percentage of the membership drop out for divers reasons; and to be frank, our average age isn't in the first flush of youth, so 'Anno Domini' takes its toll one way or another!

The committee is therefore planning to repeat the ABC project in our 50th anniversary year. If we don't enable people to sing with us, where will our future new, and hopefully younger, members come from? We hope that we can count on your support.

Second Sopranos in Secret Session!

The Soprano 2 section has been very enterprising - the girls organised a private practice session for themselves during the summer break. They note-bashed the Sanctus and the Kyrie for an evening. Rumour has it that they had Tesco Finest All Butter Grande Gallettes - probably a million calories each! - with their coffee. There's posh.

Full marks to Vanessa Weaver, who was the driving force behind this initiative.

The gauntlet has flopped to the floor for the other sections...

Rehearsal attendance

Attendance hovers between 75-80% most weeks, but dips dramatically on occasions to 60%. In some sections, this leaves the few attendees grievously exposed and looking pretty glum! Sickness, working away, or holidays away should be the main reasons for being absent.

Babysitting, having visitors, or a night out are usually elective dates, and alternative nights should be possible.

All members are asked to keep absences to an absolute minimum to reduce the disruption to our concert build-up, particularly with the Bach to tackle. Each time you miss a rehearsal, you are effectively missing a workshop on a chorus and on your return you may act like a drogue parachute on the choir until you catch up. Equally, if you are a strong/experienced singer, the less confident members will miss your lead.

To mitigate the effect if you have to skip a rehearsal, please do look at the schedule and work on the choruses you will miss.

Membership and Subscriptions

Tyndale's policy is to have annual membership by the calendar year, subscriptions payable in full at the start of the Summer rehearsal season. If any member can only attend for part of the season, the full annual subscription is still payable.

With the lowest subscription rate around, we cannot afford to offer the option of 'cherry-picking' particular concerts to existing members. Consequently, returning past members are not entitled to any discount at all.

The only concession is for new members joining after the Summer concert, who are asked to pay two-thirds of the annual fee. This to reflect the fact that the Winter concert is our expensive gig.

Ticket sales

As if you need reminding, the budget for the Winter concert makes ugly reading. With a fair wind behind us, we will still make a loss of £2600. Ticket sales were down on the previous year for the Summer concert, and we have lost the revenue from the 'Come and Sing', so it is imperative that we fill St James' Church to the gunwales. We will be singing perhaps the finest choral work ever penned, have a wonderful orchestra, a top-notch line-up of soloists (Tina Power, Debra Blake, Martha McLorinan, Chris Monk, and Simon Andrew), and last, not least, we Tyndalers will be giving it all

we've got... so at £10 a ticket, it's a STEAL. We need every pew bulging with rapt audience.

South Cotswold Choral Group

We now liaise regularly with our 'sister societies' (Thornbury, Cirencester, Wycliffe, Stroud, Yate) over coffee in the Hare & Hounds, Westonbirt, twice a year. Information and ideas are swapped and aired, and if nothing else it is good to know that other societies face more or less the same challenges as Tyndale does!

An example of the benefits of this co-operation is that Thornbury picked up our ABC idea and ran their own this year, with great success. Having made such good contacts with these other societies, we were able to secure Chris Swain's services for the additional rehearsals we held for the Bach. We were very grateful to Chris for helping us out.

We are also trying to organise a 'Big Sing' event at Tewkesbury Abbey in 2011, performing the Verdi Requiem – it is in the early stages of planning, but it would entail several rehearsals, a top-class conductor for a workshop and the concert itself, and an amateur orchestra such as the Bristol Concert Orchestra or Stroud Symphony Orchestra. Participation would of course involve a fee... Nothing is for nothing!

Some are sending members to the ***Making Music*** conference and AGM this year, which is focussing on the relationship between conductors and their choirs, so car-pooling is another side-benefit. All good stuff.

Friends of Tyndale Choral Society

'The perfect Christmas present...'

Do remember the 'Tyndale Friends Package' is a wonderful gift to anyone who loves the great choral tradition. It includes:

- a reserved seat (in the best acoustic position) at both the summer concert in St Mary's Church, Wotton-under-Edge, and the winter concert held at St James' Church, Dursley.
- a free programme and a complimentary interval drink.
- the right to participate in any Society fundraising events which may be organised from time to time, on the same basis as full members.
- the Society newsletter

For further details, please contact Kate Reeves.

Looking forward to Winter 2010

You will recall that the first performance organised by Mollie Neale was of Handel's *Messiah*, in 1959. It was such a success that all concerned decided to put the choir on a formal footing, creating the Tyndale Choral Society – technically, this was in 1960, when the newly formed TCS sang Haydn's *Creation*. So the choice of the *Messiah* for our 50th anniversary year was a bit of a cheat and a fudge, but it was felt that the work was more appropriate for the party! This will be the 10th TCS performance of the *Messiah*, the most recent one being in 2001. They sang it 5 times in 11 years (1959-1970), so you can't complain at revisiting it after 9 years! Although some of you know it very well, some of our newer members have never tackled it – everyone should have the chance to learn it.

We are thrilled that James Bowman has agreed to participate, singing an aria for us. It is indeed very exciting and a privilege to have a countertenor of such reputation and standing joining us, and we are sure that James' presence will help make the concert a very special occasion.

The 50th birthday celebration

We have booked the Hare and Hounds at Westonbirt for Sunday lunch on 4 July next year. Cost will be £20 per person for a welcoming drink, a three course lunch, and coffee. Start saving your pennies! The H&H has been refurbished recently and the room is very pleasant, with a small bar just outside, and good access from the bar to the lawns and garden. From the survey sheets you returned earlier in the year, we think we should be able to muster 70 attendees. The room can take up to 120.

The committee has yet to consider the finer details, so listen out for announcements in due course and book early to avoid disappointment.

If any members have any fond or funny memories of their time with Tyndale, then do write them down and give them to the committee.

Ian's second retirement

At our AGM this year, Ian announced that he felt it right to retire as our conductor when we have completed the currently arranged programme in November 2011, so that he can then move to the Midlands to be nearer his family. Leaving all expressions of gratitude to Ian for a later more appropriate date, we must start thinking about finding Ian's successor.

The committee is working on creating a formal procedure for this most difficult task (no doubt the most critical decision the Society has to make), and is reviewing the position regarding contracts etc. We hope that these will be in place for the start of next year, when our search will begin in earnest. To this end, we trust that Julie and Julia will bring back all sorts of helpful information from the Making Music conference in September.

There is probably nothing more effective than the grapevine. ALL members are asked to keep their ears to the ground – if anyone hears of a potential candidate, please do let the committee know. Equally, there is no harm in letting it be known at every opportunity that we have a vacancy to fill by 2012. It will be a long process, and one which we HAVE to get right. We can't start soon enough.

Now for a couple of items in a more general, but very interesting, vein.

1. Something to sing about - or a lesson for us all !

Janine Roebuck is a successful professional mezzo-soprano working in opera. What is surprising is that she has an inherited gene which has resulted in incurable progressive nerve deafness, causing increasing hearing loss from her late teens.

Janine studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, the Paris Conservatoire, and National Opera Studio, keeping quiet about her developing problem as she wished to avoid the 'sympathy vote', and was convinced that her deafness would blight her career. She struggled to cope with the challenges of different venue acoustics, noisy rehearsal rooms, not always hearing the orchestra and last, not least, not hearing her own voice.

Unsurprisingly, all these challenges took their toll of her nerves. Finally she sought help, was diagnosed severely deaf, and over the years Janine has been fitted with every new type of hearing aid from behind-the-ear analogue devices to the newest in-cey-wincey digital wireless in-the-ear widgets.

Janine speaks of the many tricks she employs to help her perform; her singing teacher taught her to trust her

technique, to sing on the breath and from the heart. She learns her pieces to perhaps a greater degree than hearing singers, watches her colleagues' breathing to help her cue, tries to stand near an instrument which is giving her her note, and of course keeps her eye trained firmly on the conductor's baton. Her only panic is if the conductor is in white DJ and wielding a white baton!

Over the years, Janine continued to keep her deafness a secret, only confiding in trusted colleagues, which of course meant that word spread, resulting in astonishment and admiration. Janine's most treasured memory is of when a conductor informed the orchestra of her deafness only after the first rehearsal, and they rose as one to give her a standing ovation.

Finally, in 2007, with her voice at its peak, Janine decided to come out of the deaf closet and made her condition public, with the help and support of the RNID. She works to involve young deaf people in music.

It would appear there is little to stop any of us enjoying our music, and some of us already use Janine's tricks not to compensate for deafness, but for lousy sight-singing! She is truly an inspiration.

Taken from a Radio 4 interview and transcribed in Julia's inimitable style.

2. *The Sixteen.*

It is a choir specialising in early English polyphony and Renaissance masterpieces through the Baroque to modern music, and celebrates its 30th birthday this year. Conductor Harry Christophers was interviewed at the Albert Hall for the Sixteen's recent Handel prom.

HC: "Choirs are full of personalities, you can't cram them or dictate, but you can blend them into something special. We enjoy ourselves, we love our work, and love our social life."

Interviewer: "In performance, there's a distinguishing feature, you're not just fixated on the purity of sound, the clarity and textures, which of course you always deliver; there's an extra dimension of pure entertainment and fun and enjoyment."

HC: "It's making the words live. So much of choral music is dotting i's and crossing t's, getting the tuning right, but it's all about the words, relating the words, sing as you speak, make it natural, make it live. I keep saying, "use your eyes", because to an audience the face is so important. You can't be just hidden in your copy. You have to be out of it. It's about character and personalities."

Harry also confessed that he likes singing along to the Rolling Stones in the car after a Sixteen concert; "Let's not be prissy, we're musicians, let's be normal and enjoy good music in whatever form!"

Hear, hear.

Forthcoming Concert Programmes

Winter 2009: November 14th:
Bach 'Mass in B Minor'

Summer 2010: July 3rd:
Duruflé Requiem
Ireland 'These Things Shall be'

Winter 2010: November 13th
Handel's 'Messiah'

Summer 2011:
Pergolesi 'Magnificat'
Monteverdi 'Beatus Vir'
'In the Mood'

Winter 2011:
Verdi 'Four Sacred Pieces'
Puccini 'Messa di Gloria'

WHERE ARE YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER?

We really would like to have pieces from you! If you have anything to offer or would like to discuss any ideas, please contact the Editor, Dick Skinner (bass) or the Secretary Julia. You need not be too restricted in your suggestions so long as you think other choir members would be interested. Think about what you could contribute over the Winter and let me have something early in the New Year.

Looking forward to hearing from you!!

Dick

TYNDALE CHORAL SOCIETY – DIARY OF EVENTS 2009

Month	Day/Date	Time	Venue	Activity	Notes
Sept	Mon 07	7.30pm	DMC	Open Rehearsal	Taster Evening
	Mon 14	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
	Mon 21	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
	Mon 28	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
Oct	Mon 05	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
	Mon 12	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
	Mon 19	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
	Mon 26	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
Nov	Mon 02	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
	Mon 09	7.30pm	DMC	Rehearsal	
	Sat 14	2.30pm	St James' Dursley		Rehearsal: Arrive early, please
	Sat 14	7.30pm	St James' Dursley		Performance Arrive 7.10pm please

Committee members for 2009:

John Ewer	Chairman	01453 xxxxxx
Monica James	Treasurer	01454 xxxxxx
Julia O'Connor-Beach	Secretary	01454 xxxxxx
Lisa Randell	Concert Secretary	01453 xxxxxx
Wendy Thomas	Publicity and Printing	01453 xxxxxx
Kate Reeves	Friends Secretary	01453 xxxxxx
John Hicks	Website Manager	01453 xxxxxx
Lynette Magnone	Librarian	01453 xxxxxx
Julie Phillips	MM Secretary	01453 xxxxxx
Vacancy	Fundraising Coordinator	

Other positions:

Ian Harrold	Conductor	01452 xxxxxx
Anne Shipton	Concert Manager	01453 xxxxxx

Choir Members

Sopranos

Liz Barnes
Fiona Chandler
Mavis Church
Jenni Culverwell
Glenis Ewer
Diane Freeland
Anne Glanville
Christine Gourd
Joy Green
Jenni Hamley
Claire Harrison
Marjorie Harrison
Diana Hobbs
Sheelagh Hudleston
Maggie Jordan
Rosemary Lea
Margaret Lloyd
Lynette Magnone *L*
Doreen Manning
Marion Miller
Victoria Osborne
Angela Pendlebury
Julie Phillips
Barbara Sanderson
Anne Shipton
Valerie Skinner
Joyce Theaker
Sandra Tucker
Ros Wakefield
Vanessa Weaver
Elaine White
Mary Wright
Elizabeth Young

Altos

Catherine Bennett
Jill Brown
Jenny Coles
Sophie Cox
Pam Davis
Colleen Dunmall
Shelagh Fitzarthur
Betty Hebditch
Annette Heylings
Angie Hill
Jacquelin Hill
Estelle James
Monica James *Tr*
Sally Lamerton
Lorna Lane
Christine Leeding
Angela MacNair
Frances Neale
Anne Nuttall
Julia O'Connor Beach *Sec*
Lisa Randell
Kate Reeves
Wendy Richardson
Rosemary Robinson
Elizabeth Rymer
Miriam Salman
Wendy Thomas
Eve Tudgay
Edwina Walton
Sue Walshaw

Tenors

Niall Bird
Jean Dabinett
Sue Davies
John Ewer *Ch*
Peter Harney
Alastair MacLeod
Len Miller
Kathie Rebbeck
Audrey Sewell
Mark Wright-Davies
Andrew Young

Basses

Frank Andoh
Jim Austin
Brian Bolsher
Mike Chambers
John Hicks *WS*
Max Holland
Brian Kitching
Colin Levine
Derek Manning
Brian Neale
John Palmer
Dick Skinner *Ed*
Geoff Whiley

Titles in italics :

Ch - Chairman: Sec - Secretary: Tr - Treasurer: L - Librarian
WS - Web Site Ed - Editor