



FROM THE CO- CHAIRS

Dear Friends

A Happy New Year to all our Friends and to all our supporters.

We are now in the second term of our David Lawrence's tenure of the position of Music Director and we singers have enjoyed enormously the musicality, the wealth of experience and wisdom, the energy and perhaps most of all the sheer fun that David injects into rehearsals and performances.

Word seems to be getting round and we are attracting increased numbers of new membership enquiries. The choir is growing in numbers, to the point where we are considering the introduction of waiting lists, certainly for the Alto and Soprano voice parts. We have now some 40 or so Tenors and Basses. We still need more Tenors, albeit that they are already 15 in number.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining our Tenor, or indeed our Bass section please don't hesitate to refer them to us. We still, despite the limitations imposed by Covid, endeavour to provide as warm a welcome as possible and we are sure that any men who do join will enjoy David's leadership.

We are still, on the advice of Making Music, our professional body, keeping in place sensible Covid precautions and we intend to carry on attempting to create as safe a rehearsal and performance space as possible.

We hope to be able to introduce David to you at some point, when life gets back to normal, hopefully at a Friends reception prior to one of our concerts.

In the meantime, we hope to see you at our Rossini/Puccini concert on 19th March and our summer concert in St. Wilfrid's. David is working on the programme for the latter. It will be the first HCS concert that he himself will have put together, rehearsed and conducted. The first, we hope, of many. HCS, and you our audience, are in very good hands.

Best Wishes
Amy and Paul



This Newsletter

Just a reminder that this newsletter now goes out three times a year – an Autumn edition in October, Winter edition in January/February and a Spring/Summer edition in May. If there is more you would like to read in this newsletter, or if you have a contribution then do let us know by getting in touch with Carolyn, the Friends Secretary – email friends@harrogatechoral.org.uk

OUR NEXT CONCERT

Saturday 19th March 2022, Royal Hall at 7 pm

Rossini – Stabat Mater
Puccini – Messa di Gloria

For this concert we will be accompanied by Manchester Camerata. The soloists for Puccini are Austin Gunn, Tenor and Stephen Gadd, Bass. They will be joined for the Rossini by Sarah Power, Soprano and Clare McCaldin, Mezzo. The concert will be conducted by Guest Conductor Andrew Padmore.

Tickets are £25 and are on sale from the Harrogate Box Office in person, online at www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk or by phone 01423 502116

Date for your Diary

25 June 2022 at St Wilfrids Church, more information to follow!

 HARROGATE CHORAL SOCIETY

**ROSSINI
STABAT MATER
&
PUCCINI
MESSA DI GLORIA**

Manchester Camerata
Sarah Power, Soprano
Clare McCaldin, Mezzo
Austin Gunn, Tenor
Stephen Gadd, Bass

Andrew Padmore, Guest Conductor

**Royal Hall, Harrogate
19 March 2022, 7 pm**

Tickets £25

Students, under 16s or IBA £5
from Harrogate Box Office 01423 502116
or online at www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk

www.harrogatechoral.org.uk | Registered Charity 1164776 | [Twitter.com/HgateChoralSoc](https://twitter.com/HgateChoralSoc)

COMMITTEE REPORT

Admin Matters

The action plan was reviewed and it was noted that as well as making sure all our policies match the Making Music templates the two safeguarding policies were due their annual review and this is underway. A member of the choir had offered to help with some of the core secretarial work and this offer was welcomed by the committee

Membership Matters

We continue to receive applications for membership but have now reached the point where we may have to start putting new sopranos on a waiting list, and possibly new altos as we must ensure we have room to seat everyone safely at our concerts and rehearsals.

Marketing and Publicity

Now that things are looking more normal we definitely need to be more active in marketing HCS and our concerts. It was agreed to do another talent trawl to see if any of our newer members have skills in this area.

Concerts

The choir have been pleasantly surprised by how much of the Rossini and Puccini they remember after two years. Hopefully this is helping new members to learn the music as so many correct notes are sung around them!!

The concert date for June has been changed to June 25th as - due to Covid – the Proms concert has once again been postponed - this time until 2023 – and David was not available to conduct on our original date.

Concert Programmes

It was noted that the current format of programmes – smaller and free for covid reasons to avoid the front of house team having to sell them and thus avoiding close contact with others and cash handling – might not be liked by all.

Finance matters

Various budget issues were discussed as we look forward to a longer term working relationship with our new Music Director

REVIEW OF CONCERT HELD 13 NOVEMBER 2021

(for those who could not attend)



Brahms and Elgar

Two musical giants of their time brought Harrogate Choral Society back to the stage after their long-enforced absence, with a first appearance of their new Music Director / Conductor David Lawrence and accompanied by the brothers Thomas and Stephen Moore on two pianos.

First up were two anthems by Elgar – the gentle *Ave Verum* and the more robust and varied *Give unto the Lord*. They were well executed by the choir with admirable attention to detail and responsiveness to Elgar’s trademark demands for dynamic flexibility.

I was initially uncertain as to how Elgar’s quintessentially orchestral *Enigma Variations* would work in an arrangement for two pianos – albeit by the composer himself. I need not have worried, since a scintillating performance by the two pianists revealed a new perspective on this captivating work.

The second half was devoted to Brahms’s very personal and much loved *Ein Deutsches Requiem* in a two piano version prepared by Brahms himself. Joining the choir were soprano Laurie Ashworth and baritone Adam Green, whose contributions were excellent. The lyrical soprano passage “Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit” (and ye therefore now have sorrow), and the atmospheric baritone section “Herr, lehre doch mich” (Lord make me to know mine end) being particularly notable. The choir interpreted well the emotional impact of Brahms’s score – from the meditative opening “Selig sind die da Leid tragen” (Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted), through the gracious “Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen” (How amiable are thy dwellings O Lord) to the triumphant fugal “Die Erloseten des Herrn” (And the ransomed of the Lord) in the second movement and the defiant, explosive, “Der Tod ist verschlungen” (Death is swallowed up in victory) in the sixth. Some slight lapse of tuning towards the end of the work can be forgiven in a vocal tour de force when the choir is seldom off its feet, having no chance properly to gather breath.

Altogether a satisfying return for the Choral Society – it’s great to see them back in business with a performance of their usual high quality.

Iain Ward Campbell

REVIEW OF CONCERT HELD 11 DECEMBER 2021

(for those who could not attend)



Handel – Messiah

How wonderful it was to be back in the Royal Hall, with a near capacity audience, listening live to the wonderful music of Handel's 'Messiah' performed by the Harrogate Choral Society, soloists, and Manchester Camarata all guided by the chorus's President, Brian Kay.

Although often associated with Christmas, the musical texts in 'Messiah' describe the prophecies of the Coming of the Saviour, Christ's Passion and Second Coming and the role of the resurrected Christ as Saviour. First performed in Dublin in April 1742, this substantial work was completed in only three weeks and remains, to this day, one of the most respected, admired and hugely loved oratorios.

It was a poignant evening for the chorus with this performance being dedicated to the memory of Peter Thompson, a well loved and cherished member of the chorus who gave over 40 years service, in a number of roles, to the Society and who died one year to the day of this performance. This was a performance that Peter would have approved of, I'm sure.

Brian Kay thanked the choir for their gloriously heartfelt singing, in this very special concert. The chorus excelled particularly in Part Two of the work, where 'Behold the Lamb of God' and the 'Hallelujah Chorus' were choral highlights.

The soloists were also in good form. James Micklethwaite, tenor, had a light and unforced sound which he exploited well in 'Thy rebuke hath broken his heart'. Jerome Knox, Baritone, had a rich and vibrant sound and was suitably dramatic when needed, particularly in the aria 'Why do the nations so furiously rage together'. The mezzo soprano Angharad Lyddon's rendition of 'He was despised' was beautifully measured and sung with feeling. Sarah Fox, soprano was excellent. Her singing was effortless and her clear understanding of the texts allowed her to provide the listener with a range of vocal colours and timbres throughout. 'How beautiful are the feet' and 'I know that my redeemer liveth' were highlights of the whole performance.

Manchester Camerata, provided a balanced sound accompanying both chorus and soloists perfectly, not always an easy feat in such an acoustic as the Hall.

Brian Kay's direction of the music was sensitive, controlled and unfussy bringing out the best in all forces. Well done to him and to all on such a fine performance.

Paul Dutton

Harrogate Choral Society Concert Programme Survey

When HCS resumed concerts in November 2021 we considered how we might continue to have a concert programme but avoid putting the front of house team at risk as selling programmes involves close contact with others, possibly causes congestion and involves cash handling – all things that we have been told to avoid. As a result it was decided that we could produce a much reduced concert programmes which could be given away free to anyone attending the concert. This programme would contain key information such as biographies for all the performers and brief information about the repertoire being performed. The committee are looking forward to a covid free world and welcome your views on what concert programmes could look like in the future.

Please could you reply to the following questions – ideally sending your reply by email to secretary@harrogatechoral.org.uk but if you do not do email then please feel free to post them to Harrogate Choral Society, c/o Christ Church, Church Square, Harrogate HG1 4SW

1 Do you normally buy a concert programme for each concert?

Yes No

2 If no, then what prompts you to buy one every now and then?

3 Considering programme from recent years what size do you prefer?

A4 (ie large) A5 (more compact)

4 How much would you be willing to pay for an A4 programme which includes biographies for all performers, info about HCS, full repertoire notes including the words (and translations if applicable) for the works being performed?

More than £5 £5 less than £5 (please say how much)

5 Similarly how much would you be willing to pay for an A5 programme with the content as above?

More than £5 £5 £4 £3 less than £3 (please say how much)

6 Would you be happy to continue to receive a free programme in the format currently being used? ie 4 sides of A5 with short biogs for performers and consice info about the works being performed

Yes No

7 Do you have any further comments?

8 Would you be interested in being programmed editor, responsible for compiling the content in accordance with layout guidelines given by the Committee?

Yes No

Comments on this
