



# FRIENDS NEWS



Issue 3 April 2018

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Since I wrote my piece for the last newsletter, all the singing members of the Choral Society had been working extremely hard in preparing for the Elijah performance which took place last month – and what a success that turned out to be!

Leading up to the concert the ticket sales were very sluggish, but on the night many more than we had expected turned out, and what a treat they had with our choice of soloists, the magnificent orchestral forces and (dare I say) some extra special singing. I consider it to have been in the top bracket of my choral experiences with HCS and certainly the very top during Andrew's tenure with us, and he is to be congratulated enormously on the achievement.

Luckily it was our VIP guest night and we couldn't have chosen a better occasion on which to invite them all. How appropriate it was to celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in that way and we continued in the George Hotel afterwards when over one hundred of us convened to celebrate further and enjoy some wonderful birthday cake!

And so to our final concert of the 2017/2018 season - although there is a lot more to come in our anniversary year as you will see elsewhere - and we visit St Wilfrid's in June for a programme with an American flavour. This year is the one hundredth anniversary of Leonard Bernstein's birth and so an obvious choice to make was his 'Chichester Psalms' composition. The rest of the programme, entitled 'A Nightingale Sang', comprises some very memorable pieces – and we will certainly be singing about Berkeley Square! So please do come along and I gather the church is now up and running with a new heating system. I hope to see you there.

Peter Thompson

## PLANNED CONCERT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Season	Date	Venue	Works
2017-2018	9 June 18	St Wilfrid's Church	A Nightingale Sang Music composed by / loved by Americans
2018-2019	20 Oct 18	Royal Hall	The Magic of Mozart (incl 'Requiem') Conducted by Brian Kay
	14 or 15 Nov	Royal Hall	Participation in concert celebrating the 10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Royal Hall Re-opening (date still tbc)
	7 Dec 18	St Aidans Leeds	Handel - Messiah
	8 Dec 18	Royal Hall	Handel – Messiah
	15 Dec 18	Harrogate Convention Centre	The Harrogate Christmas Concert
	23 March 19	Royal Hall	Haydn – Creation
	7 June 19	Ripon Cathedral	Faure – Requiem & Rutter – Feel the Spirit

# CELEBRATING OUR 70<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

After the Elijah concert, even though it didn't finish until nearly 10.30 (!) most of the choir joined some of our Friends, Music Director Andrew Padmore, soloists and "other halves" at the George Hotel to celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with a glass (or two) of wine, canapés and a magnificent birthday cake kindly donated by Marilynne Davies. The party was such a success it has been agreed to postpone plans for the Anniversary dinner. There were so many fantastic photos thanks to our resident photographer Ernesto Rogata (husband of second soprano Kate) that it has been hard to pick a few for this newsletter – hope you like those selected!



Membership Trustee Paul leading .....



... the singing of Happy Birthday!



Chairman Peter Thompson giving the toast



The Cake



Jenny (our longest serving member at 51½ years!) cutting the cake with Marilynne looking on



Chairman Peter cracks a joke!



Food!



Food!



Treasurer Gill and Deputy Chair Amy



Amy topping everyone up!



Soloist Gaynor Keeble with Andrew Padmore



Reviewer Adrian with his wife Celia and alto Anne



Alto voice rep Dawn and accompanist Beryl



Friends Denise and Paul



Catriona and Heather



Having a well earned sit down!



And a chat



Sally and Louise



Such a lovely venue



Some Goodwins



Andrew having a few words with the wise



And finally ... was there dancing?

## COMMITTEE REPORT

The following is a summary of items discussed at the meeting held on 19 March 2018

### **Budgets**

Although there was a good audience for Elijah it was not quite as large had been hoped for. There have been a number of items to pay for which were not in the original budget for the current season but even so we should still end the season with a small surplus. The final accounts for the 2016-17 season have been completed and an EGM has been agreed for 25<sup>th</sup> April (to which Friends are invited).

### **Concert Planning**

The Artistic Planning team are due to meet again soon to consider plans beyond the 2018-19 season.

### **Membership Matters**

We continue to receive new member enquiries from the new website, Paul is looking into a recruitment campaign aimed at tenors and basses using facebook. He has also enlisted the help of one or two other people to see if we can recruit any NHS worker, teacher and/or people working for the local council.

### **Policies etc on Website**

We continue to keep the society's policies up to date on the members page of the website

### **Marketing & Publicity**

We need to make sure we market the concert in St Wilfrid's throughout Harrogate, Members are encouraged to take the flyers and make sure we have visibility everywhere.

### **Halcyon and Beati**

The young Halcyon singers are now part of the main choir and it was agreed that we should use any remaining funds to support them with vocal training, summer schools and masterclasses to enhance their learning. New young singers will continue to be welcomed but it was agreed that the age range would now be more appropriate if it was 14 – 18 years.

### **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The party after the Elijah concert was such a huge success it was agreed that there will probably be no need for the anniversary dinner.

## REVIEW OF ELIJAH

When the last newsletter went out we were in the middle of learning Elijah. What an enjoyable time we had! In case you missed the review in the paper here it is – accompanied by a photo of us at the end of the concert (in blue this time!) just before Andrew brought the soloists back for their bow. The Harrogate Ladies College Chapel choir are to the left of the photo - sorry that they are not all shown.



Harrogate Choral Society marks a huge milestone this year having presented concerts to the people of Harrogate and the surrounding district for 70 years. During this time, it has performed under many conductors who have contributed the talents of their professional work to furthering the important work of this most noble musical organization.

To begin the celebrations this year, the Society, under its Conductor, Andrew Padmore together with the Chapel Choir of Harrogate Ladies College with the Amici Ensemble presented a fine performance of Mendelssohn's great oratorio, Elijah. A superb quartet of soloists graced the stage, Samantha Hay, soprano, filled the Royal Hall with most wonderful and expressive sound, her voice rising through and riding on the canvas of orchestral sound provided by the composer. This was just beautiful. Her rendering of 'Hear ye, Israel' for example, was just superb. Gaynor Keeble, mezzo soprano, sang with a voice full of the most delicious richness whatever the dynamic level. Her portrayal of Queen Jezebel was excellent, dark, sinister and vaguely unsettling, perfect for the character. Luke Sinclair, tenor sang with ease and great sincerity in his role as Obadiah, the servant of Ahab. His lyrical tenor voice was ideal for the Hall, floating with gentle but insistent intensity. Alex Ashworth, bass was a splendid choice for the role of Elijah. A demanding sing with much work to do throughout the evening. Alex did an excellent job maintaining the continuity of the story and portrayal of the character. Anna Staveley beautifully sang the part of the youth, looking out to sea awaiting the sign from God.

'Lift thine eyes' was beautifully sung by the Chapel Choir from Harrogate Ladies College, Director of Music, Kate Morgan who formed an important addition to the Choral Society for the evening. The Choir were simply splendid, supported by the Amici Ensemble who themselves were on top form with excellent playing in every respect. The Choir, and the all-important Semi-Chorus, sang with verve, passion and endless amounts of energy and they deserve tremendous praise for their efforts. Andrew Padmore, who conducted the evening with great energy and yet great sensitivity is to be thanked for this great evening of music from a composer who is arguably one of the greatest composers in this genre from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Adrian Selway

## HCS CONTINUING TO HELP OTHERS

We have continued our Anniversary pledge – made at our committee meeting in July - to pass on some of our good fortune and offer support to some local charities by donating £1 for each ticket sold to a charity per concert and also working with them on publicity to help raise awareness of what they do for the local community. Each charity will also be able to hold a bucket collection at the end of their concert and use the interval to raise awareness / hold tombolas etc etc.



At a recent rehearsal in early January our Membership Trustee Paul Jackson presented a cheque for £350 from the Elijah concert to Emma Lofthouse from Our Angels who were the nominated charity for the concert. Our Angels are a registered charity with three overarching purposes - to provide comfort and support to families who have suffered an early pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or neonatal death; to work in partnership with health professionals to ensure that bereaved parents and families receive the best possible care and support; and to raise awareness of the tragedy of baby loss and to promote research and activity that could help to reduce this.

They are currently planning a refurbishment of the Ferndale Suite, the bereavement suite in the delivery unit at Harrogate District Hospital. This suite is the starting point for this most tragic of journeys for so many parents in our area, so it's vital that it is kept modern and a gentle and safe location for these parents to spend time with their baby. This is a major refurbishment project so much of our current fundraising is being steered in this direction, including the money from HCS.

The Charity for "A Nightingale Sang" in June is local charity Crossroads who provide home based, direct support services to unpaid carers and the people they care for.

### This Newsletter

If there is more you would like to read in the newsletter then do let us know by getting in touch with Carolyn the Friends Secretary – email [friends@harrogatechoral.org.uk](mailto:friends@harrogatechoral.org.uk), phone 01937 584897 Perhaps a Friend might even like to take over as editor!

### Concert Booking for Mozart and Messiah

Just a quick note to let you know that tickets are available now for the Mozart concert on 20<sup>th</sup> October and Messiah in Harrogate on 8<sup>th</sup> December. The box office for both these concerts will open to the public on 1<sup>st</sup> May ([www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk](http://www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk)) - but we have kept back the seats which our excellent ticket sales team know members and friends prefer. Booking forms are being sent with this newsletter or you can just email [tickets@harrogatechoral.org.uk](mailto:tickets@harrogatechoral.org.uk) for your bookings.

Norman also has tickets for the Messiah concert in Leeds at St Aidans, home to the magnificent Brangwyn Mosaics, these will only be sold via Norman or on the door so do get in touch.