



FRIENDS NEWS



Issue 9 November 2019

FROM THE CO- CHAIRS

Dear Friends

Our Elgar concert on Saturday evening was a joy to sing in.

We had experienced a challenging Saturday afternoon pre-concert rehearsal. The transition to orchestral accompaniment from Tom's ever-supportive piano left more than a few of us some distance away from our comfort zones. Andrew, as ever, pulled us through and we felt that we peaked just in time. We hope that those of you who were in the audience agree!



Messiah rehearsals begin this week. We shall be joined by yet another batch of new singers, and recruitment is a continuing, successful theme of this season. On 18th January we shall be holding an open rehearsal for Tenors and Basses at Harrogate Cricket Club. If readers are able to identify any potential new singers in these voice parts then please do mention this event to them.

Our visit to Tennants' splendid premises at Leyburn to perform Messiah will provide an opportunity for us to showcase our choir in a different part of the county. We hope however that as many Friends as are able to do so will be travelling with us. Your support is, as always, valued.

Very best wishes
Paul and Amy

PLANNED CONCERT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

| Date | Venue | Work / notes |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Sunday (!) 8 December 19 | Tennants Garden Rooms, Leyburn | Handel – <i>Messiah</i> |
| 14 December 19 | Harrogate Convention Centre | The Harrogate Christmas Concert |
| 28 March 20 | Royal Hall | Rossini – <i>Stabat Mater</i> and Puccini – <i>Messa di Gloria</i> |
| 27 June 20 | Harrogate Convention Centre | Collaborative Gala Proms concert with HSO and other local singers |
| 31 October 20 | Royal Hall | Brahms – <i>Ave Maria, Alto Rhapsody and Ein Deutsches Requiem</i> |
| 5 December 20 | Harrogate Convention Centre | The Harrogate Christmas Concert |
| 12 December 20 | Royal Hall | Handel - <i>Messiah</i> |
| 6 March 21 | Royal Hall | An Evening of Schubert and Haydn |
| 19 June 21 | Royal Hall | Will Todd – <i>Mass in Blue</i> & Chilcott – <i>Little Jazz Mass</i> |

COMMITTEE REPORT

The following is a summary of items discussed by the Executive and full Committee - the last full Committee meeting took place on 30 September 2019, we will next meet early in 2020, if there is anything you think we should be discussing please let Ruth know.

Mens Open Rehearsal

This will take place on Saturday 18 January 2020 in the function room at Harrogate Cricket Club. More information will follow from Paul and Dee.

Artistic and Concert Planning

All is in hand for the Elgar concert. Ruth will be selling tickets soon for the coaches to Leyburn for Messiah. She will also be resolving with Tennants what food options will be available.

More meetings have taken place in respect of the Gala Proms concert on 27th June with HSO. Emma is now set up to deal with enquiries from non HCS singers. The flyer advertising for singers has now been published on our website and via facebook and twitter. Rehearsal dates for all singers are still to be confirmed.

For 2021/2022 season unfortunately Ripon is not available for the planned Bach & Britten concert on 13th November 2021, which requires an ecclesiastical setting. The concert will therefore take place in the Royal Hall and Andrew will rethink the concert content. Other concerts being planned include:

| | | | |
|-----------|---------|---|----------------|
| 2020/2021 | 31 Oct | Brahms – Alto Rhapsody, Ave Verum and Ein Deutsches Requiem | |
| | 5 Dec | Christmas Concert | 12 Dec Messiah |
| | 6 March | Haydn & Schubert, to include Nelson Mass & Intende Voci Orationis | |
| | 19 June | Chilcott – Little Jazz Mass & Will Todd – Mass in Blue | |
| 2021/2022 | 13 Nov | tbc | |
| | 4 Dec | Christmas Concert | 11 Dec Messiah |

and looking ahead we are trying to fit Jenkins – The Armed Man into the schedule somewhere!

Beati

Beati will be performing in concerts on 3rd April 2020 in St Roberts Church and on 12th June 2020 in Darley. Both concerts will raise money for charity.

Halcyon Singers

Three of our original Halcyon singers have this summer enjoyed a week long music course, they have sent a report (which is featured further on in this newsletter). The course was paid for from the earmarked Halcyon funds which came from the Bramall Trust sponsorship.

Montecatini Trip

After consideration of various factors – ie needing to have a balanced choir; advice from officials from Montecatini that the best times of year are May or October; availability of accompanist Tom; and most importantly availability of Andrew; it was agreed that Kate will make enquires re flight costs and accommodation for either half term October 2020 or May 2021, a date will then be picked and members will be presented with a package and encouraged to join in.

Website

During the summer Ruth and Dee had met and had agreed some changes to the HCS website to make it more “friendly”, the members page in particular has been re-arranged and a new section under “Who’s Who” lists the membership team with new photos.

Invitations

We have been invited to send a small choir to sing carols at Harewood house on 24th November and also a small choir to sing carols at Bettys on 13th December. Marilynne is co-ordinating these. These are both excellent opportunities to showcase HCS.

INTRODUCING TWO PEOPLE WHO YOU MIGHT ALREADY KNOW!

I met Dawn and Brian in the Lime Tree Cafe at the garden centre on Forest Moor Road. Dawn, as current choir members will be aware, is voice rep for the first altos. Brian was originally a tenor, then sang in 1st basses and was choir librarian for a few years but had to leave the choir due to a medical problem with eyesight. Focus on acting and writing followed recovery. He is now one of our loyal friends.



Brian has lived and worked in all ridings of Yorkshire, from Bradford to across to Filey, and Dawn has lived and worked in areas of the country from Midlands to Wycombe and Yorkshire. They met in Knaresborough as members of Knaresborough Musical Society.

Now their activities range widely across the Harrogate area : Dawn is group leader of Harrogate U3A Croquet Group based at Bishop Monkton and Brian is preparing to take the lead role in the Woodlands Drama Group performance of Moliere's 'The Imaginary Invalid' at Harrogate theatre. He is a member of the U3A Writing for Pleasure group and has had stories published in 'Kaleidoscope. An Anthology'.

Both sing in St Mark's church choir. All this, with grandparent duties and swimming make for a full diary.

Dawn and Brian have both sung in a wide range of choirs and that led us to talk about what makes for a really good choral experience. Dawn says she feels blessed to be able to sing with HCS and Brian feels that the best performance the choir has given in his time as an audience member was the heartfelt performance of Haydn's Creation sung from memory.

From the perspective of an actor focusing on performance, Brian believes that commitment and team work is key. Actors have to put in the work needed to commit the lines to memory before the process of putting the performance together can even begin. The actors can then begin to work together as a team , supporting and relying on one another to create the performance. Everyone is important and must play their part, and beware of not letting each other down by being under prepared. He likes to quote Terry Pratchett: 'There are no small parts, only small actors'. Brian feels that the choir is so fortunate to have a musical director of the calibre of Andrew Padmore and wonders if the choir is really matching his level of preparation, attention to detail and commitment. In Brian and Dawn's experience they have yet to experience an MD who works towards what he requires of a choir with such tact and humour.

Both think that the social side of the choir is really important to develop this team spirit and mutual commitment. We reminisced about the wonderful trip to Lincoln arranged by Chris and Ann Shovelton and Dawn and Brian recalled the trips to Cartmel and Alnwick. We wondered why the choir was still perceived as elitist by some members of other local choirs. Do singers who leave the choir pass on thoughts which help to perpetuate this? Dawn felt that new members do feel included and welcomed whatever their background and experience.

Looking to the future, Dawn hopes that we can tackle some modern repertoire such as Karl Jenkins' Stabat Mater and definitely commit to singing much more from memory. Brian, as an audience member, agrees wholeheartedly. He feels the choir will only achieve its best if like actors we commit to learning the pieces from memory as much as possible, and then singing from our hearts to our audience under Andrew's direction.

Brian says "the choir is so lucky to have Andrew. Let's give him the level of preparation and commitment he deserves!" Dawn thinks we could all aim to be more positive, and avoid rushing off before the final feedback of the rehearsal. And if that seems a bit too serious, come along to see the hilarious 'The Imaginary Invalid' by Woodlands Drama Group on Thursday 28 to Saturday 30 November at Harrogate theatre.

CONCERT BOOKING FOR FUTURE CONCERTS

Tickets for Handel - Messiah
in the Garden Rooms, Tennants of Leyburn
at 6pm on 8th December 2019
are on sale from Tennants tel 01969 621146
or online at

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/thegardenrooms/294357>

or by contacting the HCS ticket team
at tickets@harrogatechoral.org.uk

**Coach travel to Leyburn from Harrogate is available at £10 per person,
please contact the HCS ticket team**



Tickets for
The Harrogate Christmas Concert
which takes place in the Harrogate Convention Centre
with HSO and hundreds of primary school children
at 6.00pm on 14th December 2019

are on sale from the Harrogate Box Office
tel 01423 502116
or online at

<https://www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk/whats-on/The-Harrogate-Christmas-Concert>

Tickets for Rossini *Stabat Mater*
& Puccini *Messa di Gloria*
In the Royal Hall
at 7.30pm on 28th March 2020

are on sale from the Harrogate Box Office tel 01423 502116
or online at

<https://www.harrogatetheatre.co.uk/whats-on/Rossini-and-Puccini>

or by contacting the HCS ticket team
at tickets@harrogatechoral.org.uk



CHARITY OF THE YEAR

At the start of our 70th Year the Trustees of HCS decided that we would support a local charity at each of our concerts by donating £1 for each ticket sold to that charity. Representatives from the charity were also encouraged to attend the concert with information, to hold a bucket collection at the end of the concert and possibly a tombola.

To date we have offered this opportunity to eight local charities and have donated a total of £3295 from ticket sales alone.



For the 2019-20 season HCS Trustees have agreed to partner with Harrogate Symphony Orchestra and support one charity for the entire season. The chosen charity is the Harrogate Hospital and Community Charity. The Gala Proms concert in June 2020 will be the climax of the season. We are hoping to raise a significant amount of money over the season so do come along to our concerts (every little bit helps!)

REVIEW OF “AN EVENING OF ELGAR”

Harrogate Choral Society with the Amici Ensemble under the baton of Andrew Padmore, with soloists Samantha Hay and Gaynor Keeble, gave us a wonderful evening of music by one of Britain’s most famous and well liked composers, Edward Elgar: a well chosen, often poignant programme of three of his now lesser performed but challenging works.

The Spirit of England was composed at a time when Elgar was greatly affected by suffering caused by the First World War. In this piece he captures the sadness of that time without the music ever becoming oversentimental. Elgar intended originally to have two solo singers for this cantata, by the first performance he suggested one soloist could sing all three settings of Laurence Binyon’s poems and so the practice continued. The choral singing here was clear and of a pure tone with beautifully placed and balanced harmonies across the vocal forces. The hushed tones towards the end of the first section, ‘The Fourth of August’ were particularly lovely. Special mention goes to the tenors who, though fewer in number than the rest of the chorus sections, were particularly good. The orchestra accompanied sympathetically throughout. Soprano, Samantha Hay, was magnificent in her delivery and understanding of the text with a beautiful effortless tone. This is a stunning voice.



Sea Pictures, Elgar’s only orchestral song-cycle, is a work which embraces a myriad of moods from the simple nature of *Sea Slumber-Song* to the intimate music of *In Haven* and the noble, heroic strains in *The Swimmer*. Amongst the songs are lyrics by his wife, Alice. This work requires a soloist with a wide expressive and dynamic tone and range and in Gaynor Keeble we had one of the country’s leading Mezzo-Sopranos delivering this challenging score. Her beautifully paced singing captured the atmosphere and mood of each of the five songs. Miss Keeble depicted wonderfully the almost supernatural imagery of the music in *Where Corals Lie*, perhaps the most famous of all the songs in the cycle; and sufficiently heroic in the taxing and vigorous final movement, *The Swimmer*. The Amici Ensemble once again rose to the challenge of accompanying a solo singer and were equal partners in providing a rich backdrop of sound which enhanced the performance yet further.

The Music Makers is the Elgarian equivalent of Bach’s Magnificat. It is not too long but does everything that you expect from Elgar’s pen with its lush harmonic content and beautifully woven melodic lines, many of which are references to previous works including a quote from *Nimrod* and *The Dream of Gerontius* which links the moment of Gerontius’s death with the final words of the work ‘and a singer sings no more’. This was Elgar’s last substantial work for choir and orchestra, penned at the twilight of his long life. The opening orchestral strains of the music were beautifully played by the Amici Ensemble. They were superb throughout the evening.



The unaccompanied choral opening to the work was stunning with delightfully evocative, well-matched tones, hard to achieve with larger ensembles. The soprano section were particularly in fine voice in the climatic moments of the work. Here also, Gaynor Keeble was able to unleash a fresh palate of vocal tone and colour with some stylish and suitably sensitive singing.

Well done to Andrew Padmore, Music Director of the Harrogate Choral Society, for his sympathetic and sensitive directions to both orchestra and choir. No easy feat given the complexity of the programme in front of him. A thoroughly impressive evening of music making. It was a pity that there were not more people there to witness this.

Paul Dutton

RUTTER SINGING DAY WITH ANDREW'S "OTHER CHOIR"

The John Rutter Singing Day was eagerly anticipated by HCS members: Dee Walsh, Sally Jackson and Paul Jackson. Dee's father Tony Walsh also flew over from Ireland to attend the day as he enjoys Rutter's choral and flute music. The day did not disappoint. It was a pleasure to listen to Rutter's fascinating stories about his career journey, musical creations and influential mentor Sir David Willcocks. There were 400 singers in attendance and everyone savoured the opportunity to sing Rutter's beloved music under his musical guidance. A particular treat was the opportunity to sing 'Christ our Emmanuel' which is Rutter's newest composition due to be published shortly. A great day was had by all. Dee was thrilled to obtain his autograph in her favourite choral book (pictured) whilst Tony was delighted to hear Rutter admit that the 'Suite Antique' flute piece was challenging ... particularly after hours of practice to master the piece (pictured)!



This is Dee getting JR's autograph



and this is Tony with JR

TALES OF A SUMMER MUSIC SCHOOL

Harrogate Choral Society Sponsors Young Members

This Summer, Harrogate choral society sponsored 3 young singers(Ed, Niamh and Fran) to attend a 9 day choral residential at Queens College Oxford. The course was part of the Eton choral courses .

The course runs each summer and offers vocal training and the experience of choral singing to aspiring young singers (usually between 16 and 20 years old).

Each course comprises of classes in sight-singing,aural tests and consort singing (close harmony). Learning Choral music was central to the course and course members had the opportunity to sing Choral Evensong at Christchurch cathedral and Merton, Queens and Exeter college chapels. In addition all singers are also given 1 to 1 tuition by some of the country's leading vocal coaches.



The repertoire was challenging and the timetable very extensive. The singers all sang to a very high standard and new lifelong friendships with likeminded people were made. Ed and Niamh have since gone on to attend a course reunion in September at St.John's college,Cambridge.

A highlight for Niamh was being selected for the masterclass with renowned tenor, John Graham Hall. She has also accepted the offer to sing with the Rudolfus choir.

The **Rodolfus Choir** was founded by Ralph Allwood in 1984. It is a choir of singers aged 16 to 25 , selected from members of *The Choral Course* .It has toured extensively in the UK and abroad, and on top of performances in some of the U.Ks top venues they have produced a considerable discography of music ranging from Monteverdi to Grieg.

Ed, Niamh and Fran would like to thank Harrogate choral society, in particular Marilynne Davies and Andrew Padmore for giving them such an amazing opportunity .

This Newsletter

If there is more you would like to read in this newsletter, or you would like to tell us a bit about yourself then do let us know by getting in touch with Carolyn, the Friends Secretary – email

friends@harrogatechoral.org.uk

LAST BUT NOT LEAST – reminder about subscriptions!

A reminder that as we have now held our AGM subscriptions for the 2019-2020 season are now due.

Friends subs remain unchanged at £15 single, £20 household. If you haven't yet paid yours (thanks to those who have) please get in touch with Carolyn to make sure you have rejoined for the new season.