

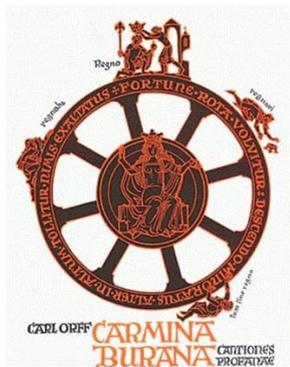


# The Stray Stave

March 2017

Newsletter of the Harrogate Choral Society

## “Sparkling” Chilcott, “Masterful” Orff



... the words of the reviewer after last month’s concert. And read more about it in our Chairman’s reflections on the next page.

We drew a good and enthusiastic audience although, at under 400, we still fell significantly short of target.



*In performance above: the Chilcott mass.  
Left and below: some of the projections which John Raho assembled for Carmina Burana*



Earlier this season, we had a disappointingly small audience for the October concert, but were in line with expectations for the *Messiah*. And the Christmas concert drew perhaps the largest numbers in memory.

*Belshazzar* is a hugely exciting work both to perform and to listen to. We need to drag people away from their musical comfort zone to come and hear us.



Details of our concerts for the next year or so are beginning to be firmed up and are listed, so far as currently agreed, at the end of this issue. Please note the dates for your diaries.



## Some notes from our Chairman

I am still humming 'In Taberna' et al following the recent performances in the Royal Hall of Carmina Burana and, of course, the Little Jazz Mass. It was to me a terrific night, and unbeknown to us our good friend Sarah Fox was in the audience. She told us that, surprisingly, she had never been to a live performance of the Orff piece before. She was full of praise and wishes her congratulations to be passed on to everyone involved.

Apart from the singing there was, as ever, a lot of involvement by members on the day and beforehand in preparation for the concert, and I can only endorse the thanks Ruth has already conveyed. And of course special thanks to Andrew for his usual thorough rehearsing which enabled us to sing with such (apparent!) confidence. And wasn't it nice to see Beryl for once 'exposed' (sorry Beryl!) in public where her extraordinary talents could be fully appreciated – and the other pianist wasn't too bad either, was he?! As for the soprano

and bass – well, we've booked them for Elijah already.

There were also two 'firsts' on the night - both thanks to John Raho - namely the multi-coloured programme and the even more multi-coloured back projections. John spent many hours compiling both and we owe him a huge thanks for taking us into this new territory. The technician we had lined up from the Hall was in fact not up to it and consequently John himself was 'behind the scenes' for the whole evening.

This coming October's performance will be an Opera Gala Night with Sarah Fox and she will be joined by John Cunningham (bass with Opera North and local events). John was a very dear friend of Elaine Howarth who was a staunch HCS alto for many years and, indeed, our Making Music rep for a long time. Elaine bequeathed us a sum of money in her will, and knowing how much she loved opera it is only appropriate that we remember her this way.

We should also attract a good audience – on the last occasion we performed a similar concert the Royal Hall staff had to bring in extra seats. Something to live up to!

I have already mentioned to you that 2018 is our 70th Anniversary year and to celebrate we have chosen to perform Elijah. The date (March 10th) will almost coincide with the date when the same work was chosen as HCS's opening performance, which was Wednesday(!) April 28th 1948 at Victoria Park Methodist Church.

Further ahead, Brian Kay will join us once again in October 2018 (programme under discussion) and I really think that we must arrange a special dinner to celebrate the Anniversary – committee please note!

In the meantime, onwards to the rivers of Babylon and Belshazzar – a very different experience from February!

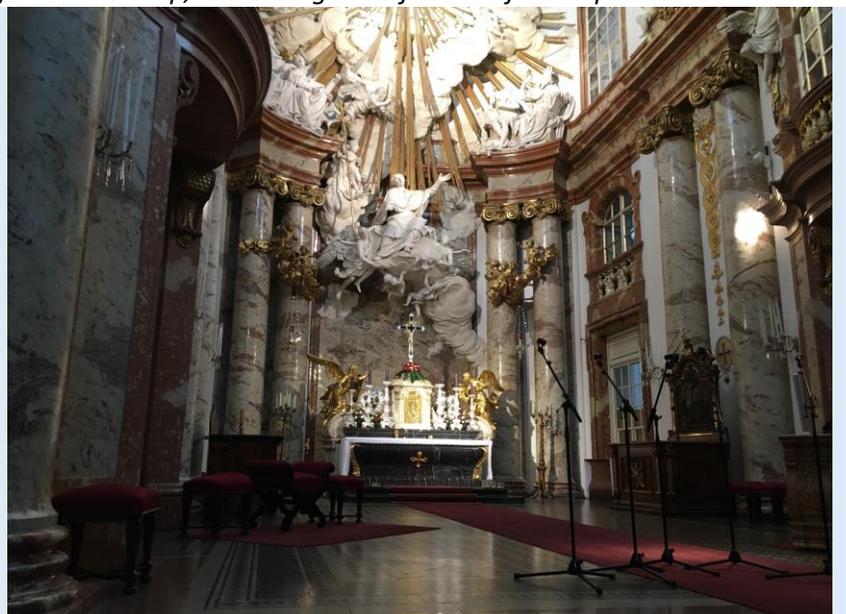
*Peter Thompson*

## Singing Mozart in Vienna

*Readers may have heard of Runbysingers – a group of singers which organises holidays for its members to perform in all sorts of places. **Monika Sabor** joined them for a recent trip, and here gives a flavour of the experience.*

In December I went to Vienna with RunbySingers to sing Mozart's Requiem on the 225th anniversary of his death at the church where he worked and on the exact day and at the exact time of his death - 5th December at 1am.

We were a choir of about 50 and had several rehearsals prior to the performance with our musical director, Jeremy Jackman. We arrived at 11.30pm for our performance in the Karlskirche. The church was packed out. It was bitterly cold. The audience were all in their winter coats and some even got tucked into sleeping bags to keep warm! The orchestra and soloists all kept their coats on. The choir



*The Karlskirche in Vienna*

did not. We wore our black concert attire with several layers underneath - in fact the topic of conversation second only to the music was how many layers of underwear we had on!

The concert was amazing. I can't even begin to describe it. Singing in that church which Mozart himself used to frequent was really something. I could almost feel his presence and the experience touched my soul. The sound of this wonderful music in the acoustics of the massive dome above us was amazing.

Keeping emotionally involved and yet detached enough to sing was not easy. I was expecting to struggle with this the most in the Lachrymosa section, but when we sang the magnificent opening chords of the Sanctus, I almost dissolved!

Jeremy Jackman was a fabulous director and his delight in our responsive singing was so evident. He took the final Cum Sanctis Tuis at a cracking pace which highlighted, by contrast, the slowdown for the magnificent final notes - Qui a pius est.

It was one of the most memorable moments of my life.

## Halcyon and Beati

*Marilynne updates us on their activities*

**The Halcyon Singers** made their second appearance with HCS when some of them sang in our Carmina concert. This was their first appearance in the Royal Hall.

The original intention was that they would only join us for Carmina, but they were so enthused by being part of an HCS concert that they asked if they could sing in the whole concert.

They thoroughly enjoyed the whole evening and some of them will be joining us for the Walton and Poulenc concert too. Which is GREAT!

I am very grateful to all those in HCS who have made them feel so welcome. It is quite daunting to walk into a rehearsal of an established choir and it was important that they felt comfortable and accepted. Thank you.

Apart from the Walton and the Poulenc, Halcyon are busy preparing their own repertoire for their June Concert with Beati.

Since the last Newsletter **Beati** gave a concert on 13th January at St Roberts Church in Pannal in aid of Wellspring, the Harrogate based counselling service.

It was a very happy evening with a varied programme of music from Eva Cassidy to Ola Geilo. The programme began with a lovely gentle song with flute obligato serenely played by Claire Hannam.

Our soloist on this occasion was Anna Staveley – Soprano. Many of you will remember her for she sang in the Soprano section for the Missa Solemnis. She sang pieces by Faure, McConchy and Bantock with a lovely pure tone and with great understanding.

Beryl Pankhurst and Pam Jolly delighted us with some very jolly(!), jazzy piano duets by Mike Cornick. They provided a lovely contrast in the programme

So many of Beati concerts have benefitted from performances by Christine Littlewood and this was no exception. It was lovely to hear poetry by Walter de la Mare and musings on Gervaise Phinn.

We had a really good audience and raised £1,000 for Wellspring.

### Next concert

**Halcyon Singers and Beati together on June 16th at 7.30 in St Roberts RC Church - in aid of Carers Resource.  
Do put the date in your diary and come and join us.**

## Notes from Trustees and Committee Meetings

For the record, Ruth Pridmore gives a summary of key points from meetings held since the last Newsletter, noting that the next Committee Meeting will be held on 20th March

### *Budget / Finances*

The outturn for Messiah proved better than budget, and although the final figures were not yet all resolved for the Christmas concert there had been a good sized audience for that too, so things are looking more positive. We are still enjoying the Bramall Foundation sponsorship but this terminates at the end of 2017. Peter and Nick have met with them recently.

### *Role Vacancies*

Following the resignation of Tom the roles document needs considerable amendments which will be sorted as soon as possible. A list of vacant roles has been circulated to the choir and some have been filled – notably the New Members Mentor (Monika Sabor) and Online Listings (Val Kaye with backup from Vicky Brewer). In addition we now also have voice reps for the second sopranos and second altos. It is hoped that members will take some of the other roles on. The most important vacancies to fill are the Child Licensing Administrator, Halcyon Choir Chair and the Concert Manager role, and helpers for the marketing team. Two of the existing trustees have indicated their intention to step down at the end of the present season.

### *Open Rehearsals*

We held an open rehearsal on 4th January but sadly this did not produce any new members. The next one is planned for May, after the concert, when the music we will be singing will be more friendly!

### *Governance*

The Action plan was again updated, the new contract style for soloists will be used from the start of the 2017-18 season and we now almost have a full complement of policies which will be added to the website in due course.

### *Artistic Ambition*

At the time of the Committee meetings the consultation process was still underway. Since the meetings the summary report has been sent to all

those who took part for comment and it will be discussed at the Committee meeting in March and then acted on! In addition a small group of non committee members are working on recruitment and retention of members.

### *Concert Planning*

As a result of Tom's resignation it had been agreed to cancel the proposed concert in St Aidans on 18th March as none of the trustees had the time required to organize it. Some decisions have to be made in respect of the 2017-18 season now so that soloists can be contracted and publicity can get underway. It was decided that the October concert would be an Opera Gala featuring Sarah Fox. Such a concert can be expensive in terms of hire fees for orchestral scores but it will be supported by the bequest we received from the estate of former Alto (and opera singer) Elaine Howarth. As Messiah had been such a success in 2016 we will sing it again in December 2017 even though we will once again clash with Ripon Choral (due to the Royal Hall being unavailable for us on the first Saturday in December and RCS not wanting to move to that date). During 2018 HCS will celebrate its 70th Anniversary so for March 2018 we will sing Elijah which was the first work performed by the choir when it was formally formed. The final concert of the year (May or June 2018) is at present still in the planning stages.

### *Pastoral and Social Issues*

Interval drinks seem to be going well and most members are remembering to wear their name badges. We still need to sort out the possibility of social events for the choir.

### *Marketing*

We used banners for the Carmina & Chilcott Concert on the railings outside the hospital and also on Kings Road. They were not expensive and these sites will be used again. For the Opera Gala we are planning to have a banner in the town centre as well if planning permission can be obtained.

## Dates for the diary

13 May 2017

Royal Hall. Walton *Belshazzar's Feast* and Poulenc *Gloria*.

16 June 2017

St Robert's Roman Catholic Church. Halcyon and Beati joint concert.

14 October 2017

Royal Hall. Opera Gala Night with Sarah Fox, John Cunningham and the Amici Ensemble. Content to be confirmed.

9 December 2017

Royal Hall. *Messiah* with Manchester Camerata (soloists not yet confirmed).

16 December 2017

HICC. Harrogate Christmas Concert.

10 March 2018

Royal Hall. Mendelssohn *Elijah*, prospectively with Samantha Hay (Sop), Gaynor Keeble (Alto), ? (Tenor) and Alex Ashworth (Bass) and probably Amici Ensemble.

May/June 2018

Under discussion

20 October 2018

Royal Hall. Brian Kay to conduct. Programme to be decided.

8 December 2018

Royal Hall. Possibly *Messiah*, but awaiting final outcome of artistic ambition review.

15 December 2018

HICC. Harrogate Christmas Concert – to be confirmed.

We welcome offers of material for *The Stray Stave*, in person or to [newsletter@harrogatechoral.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@harrogatechoral.org.uk) Next issue mid-May. It would be appreciated if any items could be submitted by end-April. **Tony Latter, Editor**