

WHITEHALL CHOIR

MINUTES of the COMMITTEE MEETING held on 15th November 2010

Attendees

Rose Chandler, Kate Goulden, Laurie Grace, Richard Grafen, Patrick Haighton, Graham Hand (chairman), Martin Humphreys, Ben Nicholls (secretary), Paul Spicer (music director), Malcolm Todd, Liz Walton

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received in advance from Penny Prior, Ruth Eastman, Katherine Hertzberg, Ken Holmes and Tamsin Cousins. Paul Spicer arrived late due to transport problems.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The CHAIRMAN noted that Jonathan Williams had politely declined the offer to project manage the proposed performance of Tallis' *Spem in alium*, due to other commitments. However, the continued appetite to perform this work was noted, and discussed later in the meeting (see below).

MARTIN HUMPHREYS reported that we should assume there would be no replacement for the Ritz in 2010. His hard work to find such a replacement was noted gratefully. It was agreed to seek a replacement venue for Christmas 2011.

MALCOLM TODD had e-mailed the Secretary noting a desire within the Committee to perform a piece of Paul Spicer's in the Spring 2011 concert. After a brief discussion, The MUSIC DIRECTOR suggested this was not practical this time round, but was very grateful for the generous sentiment.

Otherwise, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Financial update

In the Treasurer's absence, THE COMMITTEE considered the financial update provided by him in advance. There were no issues or question arising from what was a very clear update. The potentially dangerous position of the choir's finances was noted, as was the need for active recruitment of new members where spaces arose. It was agreed that a note should be circulated to choirs existing in Government Departments, and that text would be provided before or at the next meeting. (**ACTION: THE SECRETARY**)

Committee members were asked to place any remaining flyers for the next concert in hotel lobbies, shops and so on.

4. Final details for the November concert (Leighton and Bach)

The programme had been agreed and had gone to print. The CHAIRMAN said he would ask for volunteers to sell programmes, and also CDs, at the next rehearsal. MARTIN HUMPHREYS would hunt out the sign used at the CD table on previous occasions. (**ACTION: CHAIRMAN/MARTIN HUMPHREYS**)

The CHAIRMAN would also speak to Philip Pratley and confirm that he would act as Concert Manager. It was noted that we need to check whether or not Jo Leighton (widow of Kenneth) still planned to attend the concert. (**ACTION: MARTIN HUMPHREYS**)

5. Christmas concert

The programme was broadly agreed, although the Howells was removed, along with *Lo, He comes with clouds descending*.

There will be five readings. Our guest reader, writer Elizabeth Buchan, will go third, preceded by the Vicar of St Stephen's Church (Philip Welsh) and the Chairman. The Music Director will read the final piece. The SECRETARY suggested that a lady volunteer be sought from the choir to take on the fourth reading, and this was agreed.

The CHAIRMAN said he would explain the protocols for food and drink provision at the next rehearsal. (**ACTION: The CHAIRMAN**).

6. Next season's music

The view was put by The SECRETARY, and supported the majority of the Committee, that, wonderful though the music in the proposed November 2011 programme was, it was undeniable that exclusively modern or lesser-known programmes attracted smaller audiences, and it might therefore be wise to balance the programme differently. The MUSIC DIRECTOR agreed with this, and the programmed for 2011-12 was therefore agreed as follows:

November 2011: the early music initially planned for summer 2012

March 2012: first choice a Bach Passion, second choice *Alexander's Feast*

July 2012: one of the two "Romantic" programmes proposed by the Music Director (Brahms/Mendelssohn/Sieber/Bennett or Rossini)

It was agreed that St Alban's, Holborn, might be a nice venue for the early music concert. (**ACTION: The SECRETARY / ROSE CHANDLER**)

It was acknowledged that the March 2012 programme would be dictated somewhat by the other Easter music being performed at St John's, Smith Square. The SECRETARY agreed to follow this up with SJSS colleagues. **(ACTION: The SECRETARY)**

The continued appetite for a choir "weekend away" to look at *Spem in alium* was noted. July 2012 is the most likely date for this.

7. Update on marketing

MARTIN HUMPHREYS reported that 13,500 advertisements had appeared on Google through our new marketing efforts, and that there was early evidence of this translating directly into sales – and at very minimal cost. It was agreed that this was splendid progress, and must continue, and Martin was duly thanked.

8. Any other business

The next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 10th February 2011. The agenda for that meeting should include the "Come and Sing" event. Richard Grafen was thanked for finding the room for today's meeting.

It was noted that an extra rehearsal would take place on 18th June 2011.

It was noted that, on 7th April 2011, a committed choir is needed to sing at St Martin in the Fields with Bob Porter's Brandenburg Sinfonia. The CHAIRMAN agreed to raise this with choir members. There will be two rehearsals for the concert: 31st March and 4th April 2011. **(ACTION: The CHAIRMAN)**

The MUSIC DIRECTOR's new purchase, John Bawden's *Directory of Choral Music*, was much admired, with several committee members interested in getting a copy – hence the details provided here.