



WHITEHALL CHOIR

Dear Whitehall Choir members,

Summer Newsletter 2006.

Hi! While it seems mere moments ago that we were all singing our hearts out in the amazing heat of St John's Smith Square, and then having our very business-like AGM, there has been a lot of activity over the summer by the Committee, and others, and a Newsletter seems to be the order of the day. If you couldn't make the AGM, then the draft Minutes will be available very shortly on the Members page of the Choir's Website (see below for details).

Now read on!

Come and sing the Mozart Requiem

Plans are well advanced for this event, and full details/booking forms will be available on the Website very soon. We will gather on Saturday 4th November in Clapham at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Narbonne Avenue, SW4. This is a beautiful venue, very easy to get to and very close to local bars, restaurants and cafes. It also has a splendid, restored, Hunter organ dating from 1921, which we will be making full use of! The day will start at about 10.30am (registration and coffee), and we will sing an informal concert at 5pm.

All singers, not just Choir members, are invited to this event (there is no audition or anything!), so please do start to publicise this to your family and friends. Flyers will be available on the first day of term, and music will be available to hire if required.

In order to cover some of the costs for this event, we are proposing to make a small charge for Choir members of £5. Those who are not members of the Choir will be asked to pay around £10, and anyone wishing to attend the concert only will be charged £5.

This event will only run successfully on the day if we have a **large** number of Choir Members willing to help out. For example, we will need a gang to help move chairs around etc, people to serve tea/coffee etc to guests (optimistically 200+ people), ushers/stewards (to carry a torch around and know where the fire exits are etc), members of the concert "audience" to usher in late comers etc. Could I ask you to be prepared to volunteer to help out, in however small a way? I will ask formally for volunteers as we get closer to November. Thanks in advance!

Website

Please remember that the new website is there for us all to use (www.whitehallchoir.org.uk). It's pretty up to date at the moment, and will be even more so before we start the new term. It's proving a good way of getting interest in the Choir, and has been optimised for internet Search Engines so that anyone searching for a Choir in London should find us pretty easily.

Can I specifically remind you of the **Amazon link?** Remember that whenever you and your friends/family are going to shop on Amazon, if you access the Amazon site **VIA** our website (logo is on the front page – just click on it and you will be redirected as if by magic!) then the Choir gets a small percentage from Amazon for all purchases made. With the Christmas shopping season approaching (groan!) this could provide a welcome source of extra income for the Choir with very little effort from us all. Please make a mental note now to try and use this option regularly.

Ritz dates

As in previous years, we have been invited to sing carols in the Palm Court at the Ritz hotel. The hotel makes a significant contribution to Choir funds for these appearances, and we really do need to ask all



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Choir members to volunteer to sing on as many nights as they can. This is also a great social occasion – and you get a free Ritz afternoon tea!

The dates this year are:

Sunday 17 to Sunday 24 December, except Tuesday 19 (6 nights)

Once we are settled into the routine of next term I will be asking for volunteers for each of these nights. Please pencil in a couple of these dates to your diary now, to ensure that you are available, given that it will be the party season.

Tour

A great deal of progress has been made on arranging our Tour to Toulouse, France, in May 2007. We have secured the domestic arrangements, including BA flights and hotels etc. Arrangements for individual Concerts are well advanced. We are still aiming to keep the costs to around £500 - £520 per person (plus £100 for a single room), but as ever the final cost will depend on the numbers who finally sign up to go.

A few things to note:

- There is still time to sign up for the Tour! While we can't guarantee that the cost will be the same as for those who are already committed, you can still join us and we will do what we can to secure a good price for you with the Travel Company. Full details of the Tour itinerary etc are on the Members page of the website. If you wish to sign up, please contact your part rep in the first instance.
- We have agreed with the Tour Company that there will be a phased payment of the remaining balance. We will need to collect the funds as follows – and have tried to phase these sympathetically around the expensive Christmas period:
 - £150 per person in early November 2006
 - £150 per person in early February 2007
 - c£100/£120 per person (i.e. final balance, PLUS any single supplement payable) in mid March 2007.
- We have allocated people onto the outgoing flights to France, taking account as far as possible of any preference stated for which flight you wanted to travel on (you will recall we have to split the group on the flights on the way out, c30 people on the early morning flight, and 20 on the lunchtime flight). Full details will be available at the start of next term.
- Extra Rehearsals for the Tour group will be a full day on Saturday 21st April 2007, and then Thursday 26th April. Please put both of these essential dates in your diary now, as there will be a lot of revision to get through, and some new pieces to learn.

Songs of Praise

In case you are not aware, we will no longer be taking part in the Songs of Praise recording that was scheduled for October 2006. The commitment required for this event increased dramatically as we were discussing details with the BBC (3-4 long evenings), and would have necessitated our cancelling a Tuesday rehearsal for very little financial recompense.

However, we remain on good terms with the BBC and have put into their minds the idea of them doing a programme focussed on us/Whitehall generally...! Whether anything will come of this I don't know, but I thought it was worth a try!

New Members

We are in the excellent position of having new members wishing to join us in all 4 parts when we start the new term. I'm sure you will make all efforts to make these new faces welcome.



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On the current reckoning we don't have sufficient "places"* for more than about a quarter of these people to join us, should they wish to (and pass the audition of course!). It would be very helpful if you could let your part rep know if you won't be able to make a full commitment to the Choir going forward, as it is likely that we will have a waiting list of people wishing to join the Choir.

* In order to sing at the venues which we use, we can't field more than about 70 singers for any single concert, therefore must have a limit on numbers in the Choir

Publicity and Audiences

The publicity team will be working as hard as ever to produce fliers and publicise our concerts over the season. But we rely on you to help with distribution of fliers and sell tickets, so please start to think about how you can help. You could even start getting dates in your friend's diaries now. We are always open to ideas of how we can improve the size of our audience, so please don't hesitate to contact Ruth Eastman or Martin Humphreys if you have any thoughts or contacts that might be helpful.

Subscriptions

As confirmed at the AGM in July, all Subscription rates for the 2006/07 Season have been frozen at their 2005/06 levels. Ken (Hon Treasurer) will distribute the appropriate paperwork in the first weeks of term regarding your membership. Prompt payment - i.e. by the third week of term – would be much appreciated!

Music

The Librarians have been working hard to secure the large volume of music required for next term. The cost to purchase the music (necessary if you are going on the Tour, as next term's music will mostly be sung again in France, augmented by music from the European Sacred Music book, which you will also need to take along on tour) will be £17, and to hire will be £7 (a couple of the smaller pieces are now only available to purchase).

Please try to arrive early at the first rehearsal of term to collect your music.

The Librarians will also be offering copies of the Mozart Requiem for hire in advance of the Come and Sing event (we will be using the Novello version).

Committee Meeting

The Committee will next meet on Thursday 7th September 2006. Please do let us know if there are any items you would like to be covered.

Forthcoming Concert details – for your diary

We have a great programme for the coming Season. As ever, there will be an afternoon rehearsal on the day of each main concert (please put this commitment in your diary NOW!):

- **Saturday 4th November** – Come and Sing the Mozart Requiem
- **Thursday 23 November 2006**
Bach *Jesu meine Freude*
Elgar *Give unto the Lord*
Mendelssohn *Psalm 2*
Brahms *Motets*
Parry *The Wanderer (organ); Hear My Words, Ye People*
St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge
- **Tuesday 12 December 2006**
Christmas Concert - a seasonal programme of music
St Stephen's Church, Rochester Row
(NB – pre concert rehearsal at about 6pm)



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- **Sunday 17 to Sunday 24 December, except Tuesday 19 (6 nights) – Carols at the Ritz hotel**
(Starting at 5.45pm - for a warm up - each night)
- **Friday 30 March 2007**
JS Bach *St Mark Passion*
St John's Smith Square
- **Saturday 7 July 2007**
Mozart *Vesperae solennes de confessore (K339); Mass in C (K427)*
St John's, Smith Square

And remember, new term starts on **Tuesday 5th September** (please remember you need to arrive in plenty of time to collect your new music, and to be ready to start the warm up at 6.30pm PROMPT!)....see you then!

Cheers

Sam

Chair, Whitehall Choir.

August 2006