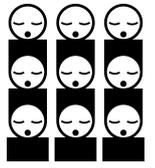


Whitehall Choir



Members Newsletter

August 2014

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From the Chairman

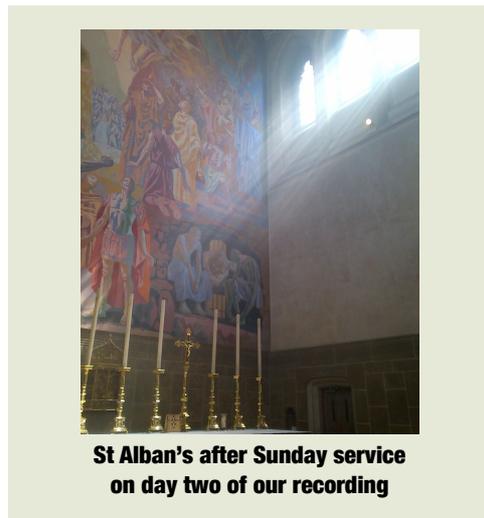
As the end of August approaches it's time to turn our thoughts to a new choir season.

I hope that everyone has had time to have a break and enjoy the nice weather we have had this summer. We ended the season with our concert at Holy Trinity Sloane Square. It was good to go there again and we were able to benefit from its refurbished organ for our performance of the Kodály so expertly played by Ian. It wasn't one of our largest audiences but those who came enjoyed the programme. With just two weeks to go before we meet again at the start of the new term, here's an update on how things have progressed during the break and a preview of what's to come.

CD recording

This turned into a bigger exercise than was originally intended. It was always going to be a challenge to record the complete programme in one weekend and, in the event an extra evening session meant that we could do justice to the Parsons *Christ on the Cross*. A big thank you to Paul, Neil, Ian and Tony in the recording room for their sustained effort, concentration and expertise in helping us deliver this difficult project.

Congratulations to all of you for achieving a very successful outcome. Tony, Paul and Neil have worked over the summer to produce the final version of the CD and I am sure that you will be very pleased with the result. In parallel, Ruth Soroko (a former choir member) and Ruth Eastman have been working together on the content and design of the CD booklet. This time it will include all the words and translations as well as a foreword by Paul and biographies at the end. I am very grateful for their hard work and attention to detail. The booklet complements the recording very well and makes it a professional product. The disc and booklet will be sent off for manufacture and printing at the end of the month and will be ready soon after the start of term.



St Alban's after Sunday service on day two of our recording

Choir AGM

The choir AGM was well attended and the elections returned the existing choir officers and committee unopposed. I am very grateful to everyone for agreeing to carry on the work of running the choir. There are many tasks to do and the committee work willingly and cooperatively, largely behind the scenes, to achieve the smooth management of our concerts and other activities. After discussion and a vote, it was agreed that the full rate subscriptions would increase by £20 at the start of the new season. This will compensate for the rate of inflation increases over the last few years and will also give us a bit more flexibility on how we prepare for our concerts.

New term

Our new term starts on **Tuesday 2 September**. We will be working on settings of the Magnificat by both J S Bach and C P E Bach for our concert at St John's Smith Square on Monday 24 November. Mark will have hire copies of the music available for you so please arrive a little earlier than usual, if you can, to collect your scores. Please also encourage new members to come and sing with us from the start of term - the autumn term is normally our best time of the year for recruitment. Our Bach workshop on Saturday 20 September also offers us the chance to recruit new members, more details overleaf.

Jonathan

chairman@whitehallchoir.org.uk

Key dates for 2014/2015

Tuesday 2 September, Autumn term starts

Saturday 20 September, Bach workshop

Monday 24 November, Autumn concert, St John's Smith Square

Tuesday 15 December, Christmas concert, Rochester Row

Maudy Thursday, 2 April 2015, Spring concert, St John's Smith Square

Thursday 9 July 2015, Summer concert, St Peter's, Eaton Square

Bach workshop

We are trying a new idea with our Bach 2 Basics workshop on Saturday 20 September.



Bach 2 Basics
Choral workshop day on the Magnificats of J S Bach and C P E Bach with the Whitehall Choir

When and where 20 September 2014, 10am registration for a 10.30 am start to 5.30 pm with an hour's break for lunch, at St Stephen's, Rochester Row, London SW1P 1LE, a 10-minute walk from St James's Park and Victoria stations.

Why For the fun of it and to get to know these two beautiful works by father and son better under the expert tuition of the choir's guest conductor, Benjamin Goodson (benjamin.goodson.com).

Who can take part and can I join the choir? Any singer who would like to come along as the Whitehall Choir begins work on these pieces two months before its concert of the Bach Magnificats on 24 November at St John's Smith Square is welcome. If you want to join the choir this term after taking part in the workshop, come to our rehearsal for a 6.50 pm start on Tuesday 23 September and you will be able to audition immediately following. More details will be provided on the 20th and visit whitehallchoir.org.uk

How much and who do I contact? \$5, payable on the day, but please email events@whitehallchoir.org.uk to let us know if you can make it so that we can ensure there is music for you.

At the AGM there was some discussion on how we can familiarise ourselves with the term's music more quickly and have some idea of the scale and content of the works we are studying. It was agreed we would aim to run termly workshops on a Saturday early in the rehearsal schedule to help with this.

Our Bach 2 Basics workshop is the first of these and will be run by Ben Goodson who has taken some of our rehearsals in the past. In addition to the workshop being a study day for the choir, we have opened it up to outside singers who would like to join us for the day to sing the works. This is an opportunity for us to recruit new members to the choir and to maintain our profile generally. If, at the end of the workshop, visitors would like to join the choir for this term, they will be able to come and audition the following week.

Please come and support the workshop and advertise it to friends and other choirs with members who might be interested in attending.

We are asking for £5 towards the cost of running the workshop, from choir members and visitors alike. More details are on the choir website. Visitors are asked to send us an email via the website so that we can reserve a hire copy for them. There is no need for anyone to pay in advance.

The workshop is not part of our termly quota of rehearsals but if you already know that you are unable to attend more than two Tuesday evenings, the workshop would be an ideal way to compensate for lost rehearsal time.

Concert planning

What is the niche for our concerts?

The competition for performances of classical music is ever increasing and, almost weekly, emails come to us via our website advertising concerts similar to ours by other choirs who are clearly struggling to sell their tickets. At the AGM, Paul reiterated that our specialism is to perform some of the less standard choral repertoire with a focus from time to time on English choral music, his own forte. With our present financial

resources, we aim to stage at least one performance with an orchestra and soloists per season, normally at a prestigious venue like St John's Smith Square. We also sing with the Brandenburg Sinfonia for one of their concerts from time to time. In planning our concerts we review:

- the novelty of the programme, both in terms of what else is being performed by other groups and what we have sung recently
- the affordability of the concert including the cost of the venue and the fees for soloists and orchestra
- the appeal of the programme and venue to our audience including the location, the day of the week for the performance and the ticket prices
- whether the concert material is a suitable match to the available rehearsal time.

All of these factors are constantly under review by the committee. Last season we had a run of Fridays for our concerts so we have deliberately chosen a different day for this season. In the past we have scheduled concerts on a Saturday or Sunday but tend to avoid the weekends as most

choir members work in London during the week and are further away at weekends or have audience members who don't necessarily want to come into London for a weekend performance. Please continue to communicate your thoughts with the part reps on this topic including new ideas for venues or opportunities for staging and promoting concerts.

Unfinished Remembering

A reminder that the first performance of Paul's new work is a few weeks away.



The Birmingham Bach Choir, together with the orchestra of the Swan, a semi-chorus from the Birmingham Conservatoire and soloists Johane Ansell and William Dazeley will give the first performance of *Unfinished Remembering* at Symphony Hall in Birmingham on Saturday 13 September.

The work is a collaboration between the poet Euan Tait as librettist and Paul as composer and has been specially written to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

For anyone interested in going, it will be a wonderful opportunity for Whitehall Choir singers to experience Paul's music as audience members rather than performers! Tickets are available [here](#).



Neil and Paul reviewing our progress during the recording (photo: Monica Darnbrough)

The committee

- Chairman:** Jonathan Williams
- Secretary:** Joanna Tomlinson
- Treasurer:** Patrick Haighton
- Business Manager:** Penny Prior
- Librarian:** Mark Graver

- Publicity:** Martin Humphreys & Ruth Eastman
- Soprano Rep:** Kate Goulden
- Alto Rep:** Alison Williams
- Tenor Rep:** Alastair Tolley
- Bass Rep:** Daniel Lambauer
- Webmaster:** Richard Grafen