

Whitehall Choir

Minutes of Committee Meeting, 11 October 2018, 6.30pm,
8-10 Great George Street (with thanks to Philip Pratley for hosting), London SW1P 3AE

Present: Philip Pratley (Chairman), Ruth Eastman (Secretary), Joanna Tomlinson (Music Director), Kate Goulden (Soprano Rep), Sarah Rollinson (Alto Rep), Simon Hunter (Tenor Rep), Ian Williamson (Bass Rep), Martin Humphreys (Publicity Manager), Richard Grafen (Webmaster), Alison Williams (Librarian), Laura Lowenthal (Business Manager), Daniel Lambauer (former Bass Rep, helping with Cantus Novus Wien visit)

Apologies: Patrick Houghton (Treasurer)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Introduction	Meeting will be kept short. Some of the detail will not be covered in committee. An outline of agenda items was presented (as below). Aiming to finish at 8. Daniel welcomed to the meeting and thanked for his work organising Cantus Novus social.	
Hosting Cantus Novus Wien , 23/24 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friday's rehearsal (23 November, 5.45 for 6-8pm) will be first time we all meet. Rehearsal that day will probably be joint items. • Friday's social Doggett's Coat & Badge pub on the river (1 Blackfriars Bridge Road, SE1 9LX) south of Blackfriars Tube has been booked for 8.30pm. DL and PP will write a paragraph for Part Reps to distribute. Room booked; holds 60-70 people. We're hoping for 40 from our choir. Buffet at £20 a head, drinks extra (ticket price helps defray £200 room charge). LL will produce tickets and sell to interested choir members (post meeting: ongoing; PH requests that 'meal' is written against payment if making a bank transfer to avoid confusion with £20 concert tickets; choir's bank account is: 09-07-25 42335808). Would be nice (sociable) if WHC members offered to buy CNW members the odd drink. (Post meeting: RE has sent CNW a map with timings and arrangements for both days; travel by tube from Victoria to Blackfriars then walk across the bridge. • Saturday's rehearsal (24 November): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) WHC arrive at 2.45pm for 3.00-4.15pm rehearsal (just us); 2) Joint rehearsal 4.30-5.30pm then Whitehall Choir break; 3) 5.30pm CNW rehearse on their own. 	DL/PP/ Part Reps
Music Director's perspective, presented by JT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer 2019 term includes <i>Songs and Sonnets</i> (Shearing), <i>Shakespeare Songs</i> (Mathias), <i>Birthday Madrigals</i> (Rutter – written in honour of Shearing's 75th birthday and recorded with <i>Songs and Sonnets</i>) and <i>Three Madrigals</i> by American composer Emma Lou Diemer. The Shearing and Rutter both call for a bass player. RE offered to send details of Paul Spicer's nephew, James Opstad, to JT (post meeting: done) who played so well in 2013 when we sang another Shearing work. Alison can start ordering music/see what's available to hire. Given the theme, maybe we could have an actor to intersperse the music with readings. No obvious names yet but can everyone try to think of someone? We can also ask the choir in notices. • Next two seasons 	AW All

<p>Music Director's perspective (cont'd)</p>	<p>The following repertoire ideas stem from a meeting earlier in the summer of JT, PP, PH and RE. JT has put the notes together and invites contributions from the committee. Included are her ambitions for the choir and how we achieve them musically, and in terms of administration and membership!</p> <p>1) Autumn 2019: Messiah. We're good at Handel and we could give a superb performance. Would be good as a Come & Sing – JT suggested Church of the Holy Spirit in Clapham again – followed by a concert, ideally at St John's Smith Square if they'll have us. (Post meeting: both available and have been booked for Saturday 7 Sept 2019 for <i>Messiah</i> C&S; Thursday 28 Novemer 2019, for <i>Messiah</i> concert. Forms emailed to RE and to be filled in when convenient by PH.</p> <p>2) Rest of season based largely on October 2017 survey (asking for repertoire suggestions). <i>All still at ideas stage.</i></p> <p>March 2020: Rachmaninov Vespers. St Alban's Holborn is available and affordable. (Post-meeting: JT suggests we book it for one of the last two Thursdays in March. TBC).</p> <p>June 2020: Northern Lights: Music from Scandanavia and Baltic countries (St Peter's ES?) To include Pärt, Vasks, Gjeilo, Miškinis as well as women composers from the region (tbc). A cappella/with organ.</p> <p>September 2020: Choir reauditions. Some members to be put on 1-year reaudition notice, with advice that lessons should be sought to improve. After a year, any members not up to standard will be asked to leave.</p> <p>November 2020: Monteverdi Vespers. Holy Trinity Sloane Square would be perfect. (Post meeting: find a date and book?)</p> <p>December 2020: Carols – date and venue tbc.</p> <p>March 2021: Music tbc Suggests an imaginative way to link in with another discipline such as art (pictures being projected?) or dance/movement to engage the audience in a different way. Maybe explore backdrops with Jane Mackay (artist and choir member – off this term). No urgency at the moment. Could be of interest to a sponsor. Maybe a commission as a collaboration? One objection to dance idea.</p> <p>June 2021: RVW Mass in G; Byrd Mass for Four Voices; a British woman composer Renaissance inspired? Hilary Campbell's Ave Maria perhaps? This a cappella programme could be toured summer '21?</p> <p>3) Membership looking healthy but lack of tenors is a problem.</p> <p>4) Choir going in right direction for sound but people need to be encouraged to do more regular homework.</p> <p>5) Next challenge is sight reading. Jo can help with intervals, rhythms. Could we consider sight reading workshops? Working more at home? Those who do work at home take the lead in rehearsals. 4 and 5 to be discussed at greater length in next meeting.</p> <p>6) Open rehearsal First rehearsal of next term (8 Jan '19). Publicise through part reps and social media.</p>	<p>RE/PH</p> <p>RE to add to 24 Nov programme)/ MH, back of Xmas flyer)</p>
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<p>Publicity approach, presented by MH</p>	<p>Heroines – 900 Years of Women in Song – St Peter’s 24 November 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ads and editorial in</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is London (events magazine for visitors arriving in London for the weekend looking for entertainment, going to all 4- and 5-star hotels in London, usually £270 – with discount). Will appear 9/16 November and ad only (free of charge) in 23 November. • National press dropped – too expensive. • <u>Promotional video</u> Facebook and link from choir web site. Distribution by choir members and soloists. • <u>Other Social media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook event. • Instagram. • Twitter. • <u>Distribution of 1,500 fliers</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via choir members. • Morley College. • Westminster Music Library. • Chimes Music store. • Jo sending Martin other ideas. • <u>Websites</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All in London.co.uk. • The Belgravia Society (online) Newsletter (post meeting). • Classical Events. • British Choirs on the net/Concert finder. • Concert diary (£7). • Press Assoc (for national press listings). • Time Out London (but can’t guarantee listing). • Bachtrack. • <u>Poster</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside St Peter’s (close to concert date) • <u>Other activity</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emails to BBC3 <i>Breakfast</i>, <i>The Choir</i> and <i>In Tune</i>. • Women’s Institute to be raised at WI senior committee meeting w/c 8.10. (Post meeting: proposal unsuccessful.) <p>Christmas concert, 18.12.18 and <i>The Creation</i>, 28.3.19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a new person, former colleague of RE’s who was a senior designer for companies such as Dorling Kindersley, who has volunteered to design flyers, and will be briefed by MH in next few weeks. (Post meeting: designing in progress.) <p>Other comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Making Music</u> is a good website for Come & Sings and first rehearsals. 	<p>JT/MH</p> <p>MH</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Bachtrack</u> also has ticket link but you have to pay. £40 agreed for four concert listings. • <u>Social media generally</u> What can choir do to support social media? An online team would be good. Set of guidelines needed, e.g. posts should not express political views [and of course should be factually accurate and correctly spelt]. Fun, quirky posts are good, e.g. sparkly shoes surrounding Mozart Requiem score pic taken at September Come & Sing and posted on FB by Gemma Steel. Promotional video of people talking about the choir – ‘talking heads’ – are good. Maybe we could record a video and stream, e.g. sound bites from our Come & Sing? Luminosa Choir cited as having good social media. (Post meeting: Call out for social media volunteers in notices resulted in one pair of hands but so far nothing has been posted by their owners!) Maybe we could do a competitive analysis on other choirs’ social media? • Should we be looking for a different kind of audience, e.g. younger people, people near St Peter’s? • LL asked about AdWords and FB ads. AdWords are short, targeted promo messages – £50 – but we’ve tried and it didn’t generate much activity. Maybe look again? 	MH
<p>Accounts, presented on behalf of PH by PP</p> <p>(Flag B will be circulated with minutes)</p>	<p>Four of the accounts PH produced are with the committee. Flags A-C refer to the year that has finished (2017-18) and go to the Charity Commission. Flag D is our current working management income and expenditure sheet, which has some figures we need to explore in more detail.</p> <p>Flag A: Public Accounts: Income & Expenditure 2017-18 tells everything you need to know for last year and gives a historic perspective going back to 2011. (Flags B&C we are also required to publish to the Charity Commission but are just different takes on Flag A.) Flag A shows a balance carried forward of £3,667, even with the money (£2,175 – shown on Flag C) that we managed to pay back to the Jubilee Fund for our last CD. We hit the financial projection for concerts because the ticket sales came in; we raised money from the weekly refreshments; the programme sales came in and we had a small income from the Friends. Through Gift Aid we were able to claim roughly the same amount (£3,934) that we carry forward; in other words, thanks to Gift Aid we take a surplus into the current year.</p> <p>Flag B: Public Events 2017-18 [<i>Concerts heading needs amending from 2016-17 to 2017-18</i>] In charity jargon concerts are known as public events. Because of the accuracy of the financial projection that PH produced for the choir and the fact that the choir went and sold those concerts adequately, we hit the projection. This is where we need to be careful for the coming year because those projections are necessarily challenging because of the costs incurred, especially for the spring concert. Last season’s concerts were not without costs and it’s encouraging that the choir threw themselves into the task of selling tickets, and raising the ancillary money through programmes and refreshments. The chairman would like to record his gratitude to Patrick for doing the detailed work that goes into the accounts; his diligence of putting</p>	

	<p>the financial forecast together produced a forecast that was pretty close to being met.</p> <p>Flag C: for publication Balance Sheet 2017-18 The right-hand column shows a year-on-year change including a substantial amount which is an increase in our net assets because of the careful stewarding of last year, the accurate forecasting and the value of raising money through those extra tickets! Nothing more to point out. Ian Williamson (trustee of the Jubilee Fund) pointed out that the end-of-year figure for the Jubilee Fund is £22 different from his, but Patrick will probably know the reason.</p> <p>Flag D: internal review Management I&E 2018-19 The column highlighted in light beige represents a new projected budget. Six lines down is the biggest figure of all: £20,000+. That is the more accurate prediction we now have for Concerts, because of the Haydn concert in particular; the original figure was £15,000. We project that as income in order to cover the costs of the concert. If we have underestimated the costs – and there is a concern that we might have – then we would find that the cushion (of £4,000+) is what would have been the second half of the Jubilee Fund repayment. If it is an accurate estimate then we would hope to pay the Jubilee Fund. That is why we went for the higher ticket prices we did (£35, £25, £20, £10). We have not factored in sponsorship into our projected income. (MH reports that Bridget is not hopeful about sponsorship.) Flag D also shows only £65 raised from CD sales last season which isn't very much. RE suggested a very simple audience questionnaire at our November concert to find out where people heard about us – the findings might help us market the March concert more effectively. Martin said he would create one. RG suggested he and MH would identify a way of asking questions. Come & Sing events projection significantly higher. We were budgeting for 30 outside singers and we got 90! But we haven't managed to collect money from all choir members. AW kindly offered to run this in Patrick's absence but she'll need a list from him.</p>	<p>PH</p> <p>MH/RG</p> <p>AW/PH</p>
Views on future agenda items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IW has initiated our 75th season draw. Rejuvenating our fundraising efforts in order to top up the Jubilee Fund (without which we would not be the ambitious choir we are) will be an agenda item next time; we owe it to the choir to give that a boost. • Other agenda ideas welcome - from committee members or via part reps. Patrons and new president will be taken as a 'package'. Major spadework has been done by PH and others on Friends document but still not finalised. If another committee member able to take Friends it would be extremely helpful; it doesn't need to be the Treasurer doing that although we've been fortunate in the diligence shown. Committee members asked to consider this and to speak to PP if interested in taking it on. 	<p>All</p> <p>All/PP</p>
Future committee meetings (all in Committee Room, St Peter's	<p>This season Friday 9 November 2018 Thursday 17 January 2019 Friday 15 March 2019</p>	

Eaton Square; AGM in Parish Hall)	Thursday 9 May 2019 Thursday 6 June 2019 AGM: Tuesday 2 July 2019	
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The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.