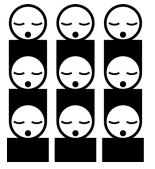


Whitehall Choir



Members' Newsletter

April 2013

From the Chairman

The spring term begins next week so, before we meet again at our first rehearsal, a look back to last term and a preview of future plans
Page 1

Dates for your diary

All choir dates can be found on our website but here they are again for your convenience
Page 1



Verdi Requiem

Our Come and Sing with the Whitehall Orchestra is on Saturday 18 May. This is a good event for promoting the choir to potential new members
Page 2

Le Manoir

A chance to sing some Christmas music in a new venue
Page 2



Young composers

Next week we plan to announce a nationwide competition for young composers to write a short piece for the choir

CD recording

Our plans to record the winning entry from the competition along with other works
Page 2

Committee members

A directory of who's who on the committee
Page 2



From the Chairman

When I put so many pictures of snow in the January newsletter, I didn't expect to be forecasting the weather for the UK. As I write the April edition, there's no sign of warmer weather but I hope the pictures of spring flowers will be an encouragement.

Our Bach *B minor Mass* concert on Maundy Thursday will certainly be remembered for its record audience. On the day before the concert, the box office had already sold 250 tickets which, with our own sales of 160 meant that we were going to exceed 400, not counting sales on the door. It's fantastic to sing to a nearly full house and we certainly rose to the occasion. Paul said that we sang with 'skill, enthusiasm, real technical assurance and musicianship'. Comments from the audience included: 'The whole performance was completely exhilarating' and 'I am glad that it was well received as I found it so moving and uplifting.' I am not sure it's the Chairman's place to comment on our musical achievement but, for me, the sopranos took the prize this time. I was constantly aware of their soaring phrases coming up to us on the back row. A defining moment was the opening of the *Crucifixus* where they cut through the auditorium like a knife, which I guess is how Bach intended it to be.

The Banqueting House anniversary concert

The programme for our celebration of 70 years of the Whitehall Choir at The Banqueting House could not be much more different from the Bach. A varied programme is always more difficult to rehearse, with its mixture of composers and styles. However, we have both the resources and the technical ability to master the music and I am sure we can take our positive mood and recent success at St John's forward to rise to this new challenge.



Dress rehearsal of the Bach B minor Mass

Competition and CD project

The committee are pleased to bring to you their proposal for a composition competition for young composers. We have now appointed judges and drafted the rules of the competition. It is our intention to record the winning piece as part of a CD of music for the Easter season. This project is clearly a large financial commitment for the choir

and more details are set out overleaf. The committee have applied to the Jubilee Fund and asked them to support the project by providing a loan over a three-year period. This requires the consent of the choir membership, so we will be asking for your approval at the first rehearsal of the new term. Everything is ready for the launch of the competition if we agree to go ahead.

Looking forward

Our new season opens with Handel's *Jephtha* on Friday 15 November. This will be our next big event at St John's Smith Square and new to us. How concert programmes are chosen is a subject I am sometimes asked about by choir members. The committee works with Paul to select material, taking account of what is suitable for our forces, our budget, the venue, whether the scores can be sourced and variety of repertoire. Suggestions are always welcome either to me or via part reps.

New term

We meet again on **Tuesday 16 April**. Please arrive a little earlier, if you can, to collect your hired or purchased music from Mark. We have just 11 rehearsals before the concert so please do your best not to miss any. Our term will end with the choir AGM on Tuesday 2 July, the day after the concert. Please attend - it's an open invitation to air your views about the choir and share any special concerns or aspirations you may have.

Jonathan

chairman@whitehallchoir.org.uk

Key dates for 2013 / 2014

Tuesday 16 April, summer term starts

Saturday 18 May, Verdi Requiem Come and Sing day

Monday 1 July, anniversary concert, The Banqueting House

Tuesday 2 July, choir AGM

Tuesday 3 September, autumn term starts

Friday 15 November, Handel's Jephtha, St John's Smith Square

Friday 4 April 2014, Passiontide to Ascension, St Alban the Martyr

Saturday 3 & Sunday 4 May 2014, recording project

Verdi Come and Sing

With the Bach B minor Mass behind us, now is a good time to promote the Come and Sing day to your singing friends.



VERDI
REQUIEM

WORKSHOP DAY

Come and join Paul Spicer and the Whitehall Choir with Michael Nebe and the Whitehall Orchestra for a workshop on the Verdi Requiem followed by a performance at the Musicians' Church.

Saturday 18 May 2015

St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate
Giltspur Street, London EC1A 2DQ

With only just over a month to go before our Verdi Requiem workshop with the Whitehall Orchestra, it's important to have another push with our publicity. As well as a chance to sing this great work with an orchestra, it's a fun way to raise money for the choir.

Le Manoir

On Monday 9 December we will be making our first appearance at the renowned Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons.

We have been asked to provide a programme of approximately ten carols, interspersed with four readings by a celebrity. We will hire a coach to pick us up from the

Victoria area at around lunchtime so as to arrive in Great Milton outside Oxford in time for an afternoon rehearsal at the venue. The coach will also bring us back afterwards, arriving in London to catch the last trains. Unfortunately we will not be able to take all choir members as the concert is in a small church adjacent to *Le Manoir*. There will be at least one extra Saturday rehearsal; more about the arrangements at the start of the autumn term.

Composition and Recording Project

As part of our 70th anniversary celebrations we propose to hold a competition for young composers.

Entries must be original and especially created for the competition. They are to be set for SATB, to be of between four and seven minutes' duration and can be either a capella or with organ accompaniment. In addition to Paul, who will chair the evaluation process, we are pleased to welcome renowned composers Judith Weir and Robert Saxton as judges for the

competition. The closing date is 31 August 2013. In addition to a cash prize of £1,000, the winner will also have the piece performed by the choir in the April concert at St Alban the Martyr and the work will be included in our CD of music for Passiontide to Ascension.

The competition and the recording of a CD are thus bound together and the committee has been planning them as one project. We are now ready to present the project to choir members. There will be an extended break during the first rehearsal of term on 16 April to consider comments and seek approval to go ahead. Please send your comments and in particular any questions in advance to the Chairman's email address on the website. In the meantime, some key points:

Why make a CD?

The process of recording a CD, scheduled to take two days over a weekend, is a very motivating and uplifting experience for the choir. This would be our third disc and on both previous occasions, after a weekend of singing together, we had noticeably improved as a choir. It represents a milestone in the choir's history and a marker for what we can achieve. It's a personal memento

for ourselves and a great gift to give to friends and relations. We also use our CDs as promotional material and to sell at concerts. One track from the Christmas disc was featured on Classic FM.

How much will it cost?

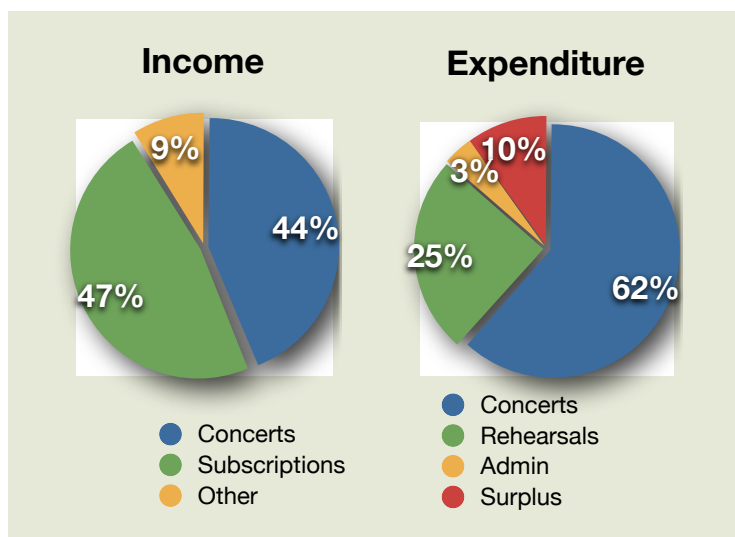
Our current budget for the next CD is £12,000, made up of recording engineer's and producer's fees, venue hire, conductor and accompanist remuneration, production costs and royalties due.

Choir CDs should not be seen as a commercial venture. We recover some costs through sales but we would need to sell all the 1,000 discs, typically produced for at least £10 each, to come close to breaking even.

How will it be funded?

The majority of the cost will have to be supported by choir funds. The graphic below is a simplified presentation of how our income and expenditure are broken down for the last season, ending July 2012. Our annual subscription is set so that it covers our weekly rehearsals plus the shortfall on our concerts, typically 18% of our turnover. Thanks to careful cost control and above-average ticket sales, we had a 10% surplus for the last season, corresponding to about £3,000. This surplus is for re-investment in choir activities such as the proposed recording project.

We have asked the trustees of the choir's Jubilee Fund to support the venture with a grant to fund the project to be repaid over three years. In order to be able to repay the loan in this timescale we need both to maintain the annual 10% surplus and to ask all choir members to contribute £50 to the cost of the project. In exchange for this contribution you would not only receive the benefits of participating in the recording but also five copies of the disc.



The committee

Chairman: Jonathan Williams

Secretary: Liz Walton

Treasurer: Patrick Haighton

Business Managers: Penny Prior & Katherine Herzberg

Librarian: Mark Graver

Publicity: Martin Humphreys & Ruth Eastman

Webmaster: Richard Grafen

Soprano Rep: Kate Goulden

Alto Rep: Alison Williams

Tenor Rep: Alastair Tolley

Bass Rep: Daniel Lambauer