

## Spring concert: Elgar and Saint Saëns

The Friday evening started on a high, the choir having been entertained at the warm-up by Paul knocking over and catching a vase of flowers and then a dog being chased by its owner, causing great hilarity.

There were healthy advance ticket sales (165 Friday and 140 Saturday) and record sales on the door (25 adults on Friday and 44 adults on Saturday plus some children on both nights). Whether that was due to the popularity of cellist Jacqueline Johnson, the full-page article in the Oxford Times, the chance to hear one of Elgar's neglected works, or some other factor, who knows? Here are some extracts from messages received from our soloists:

Jacqui: *"... It was such a pleasure to play with you all again. I thought the orchestra did a brilliant job - some lovely woodwind and horn solos, and the strings really found that special velvety sound. Paul was wonderful, and I felt very well supported. Do pass on my thanks and congratulations to everybody!"*

Susanna: *"...I shall encourage other choral societies I come across to consider it, though most won't have the men to cover all that divided stuff, I fear. Well done on having such good ones - their first entry really was beautiful."*

Tristan: *"...a quick message to say how much I enjoyed singing with you again last weekend with the Elgar performances. What a fantastic piece, and the choir and orchestra really were sounding wonderful."*

Quentin: *"...everyone rose to the occasion admirably - the choir sounded amazing and captured the Edwardian splendour but not in a jingoistic way!!"*

Elizabeth thanks everyone for getting all the copies back on time, and asks us to remember that we should only use a soft pencil with light pressure when marking (and no doodling!).

## Summer term 2019: Concerts Friday 12 & Saturday 13 July: Chilcott and Haydn

### First choir rehearsal Thursday 25 April

Bob Chilcott's *Requiem* has a special connection with Oxford: its first performance in 2010 was in the Sheldonian, some of us were there (including Paul), some of our Oxford Bach Choir members probably sang in it and it was conducted by our Honorary Patron, Nicholas Cleobury. The soloists are two of our favourites, Katherine Walker and Hiroshi Amako. Since last autumn, Hiroshi has been working with Hamburg Opera but is here during a summer break. They are also singing with us in Haydn's *Missa brevis in F*, and the orchestra will play Haydn's *Drum Roll Symphony* (No.103).

### Chair-moving

Rosemary and Tom are not singing with us this term, but Rosemary has already produced another excellent chair rota to keep things running smoothly on Thursdays. Thank you, everybody, for helping.

### Chamber Choir trip to Newcastle: Wednesday 31 July to Sunday 4 August

Rehearsals in Woodstock: Thursday 18 July, 7.30, Community Centre; Sunday 28 July, 3.0-5.0, St Mary Magdalene Church, and Tuesday 30 July, 7.0-9.0, Community Centre.

Please give Gilliane the balance of your payment by Thursday 6 June. (£245 per person sharing or £345 single).

Our concert in aid of the charity Marie Curie Newcastle is in the seaside town of Cullercoats on Saturday 3 August, and now there is an extra. While they were in Newcastle recently, Rosemary and Tom were asked by the Cathedral authorities if the chamber choir could give an informal lunchtime recital there on Friday 2 August at 12.30. If any of your friends or relatives live in Newcastle or the surrounding area, do encourage them to come and listen to either or both of these.

## **Tax returns**

If you are a taxpayer, you might like to look at the annual reminder from Richard Sills about Gift Aid.

### *Gift Aid rules for singers and instrumentalists:*

Under Gift Aid rules, WMS can claim tax relief on all of our members' subscriptions, except for a portion which relates to tuition (as opposed to preparation for concerts) given by the music director. The committee has deemed this tuition element to be £7.00 per annum per choir member but £0 per orchestral member. So, on your tax returns for **2018-2019**, choir members should quote a Gift Aid figure of £89.00; and orchestral members should quote a Gift Aid figure of £60. However, choir members who joined in January should quote their full part-year subscription of £64. Sorry for the complications!

### *Gift Aid rules for Patrons:*

We are very grateful to our patrons for their presence at our concerts and for their financial support. A single patron's subscription is £60. However, under the rules governing Gift Aid we can claim tax relief on just £20 of this, the remaining £40 being (approximate) ticket value and therefore ineligible for relief. The double patrons' subscription is £90, of which £80 is (approximate) ticket value and £10 donation. All patrons (single or double) should quote the £20 or £10 figure as appropriate when entering gift aid on their tax return. The business rate stays the same at £85, and is not eligible for gift aid. Those who are both members and patrons should simply aggregate the two figures.

## **Autumn term**

Xanthe Sturt-Taylor has left the choir and also the committee, which means there is a vacancy. You might like to think over the summer if you would like to be nominated for the committee, with a view to starting after the AGM in the autumn. The WMS Constitution allows for ten committee members, all of whom are elected for one year, but with the option of standing again the following year. Committee meetings take place three times a year, although much is done by email throughout the year in consultation with one another.

## **Winter concerts: Friday 13 & Saturday 14 December: Gounod, Fauré and Debussy**

### **First choir rehearsal: Thursday 12 September**

A programme of French music: Gounod's *St Cecilia Mass*, with soloists Aimee Presswood, Tom Kelly and Richard Weston, and *Méditation* (Gounod's melody sung to the words of *Ave Maria* above an orchestration of Bach's Prelude No.1 from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*). Fauré's *Pavane* and the *Berceuse* from his *Dolly Suite* will both be performed in arrangements for choir and orchestra, and for orchestra alone there is Debussy's *Marche Écossaise*.

## **Next year's concert dates**

Spring: 27 & 28 March; Summer: 10 & 11 July; Winter: 11 & 12 December.

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