

CHOIR REPORTS FOR EADCA MEETING: 12.2.22

<p>Bexhill Choral Society</p>	<p>Since the last meeting in September we have continued in-person rehearsals and have held two concerts: 16th October Fauré <i>Requiem</i>, Vivaldi <i>Credo</i> and Corrette <i>Laudate Dominum</i>, which is a setting of Vivaldi's 'Spring', and 11th December Carols and Christmas music. Both were in St Barnabas Church, Bexhill, which is a very large draughty church with a high ceiling, enabling good spacing and ventilation! Both concerts were well-attended, and people were clearly very pleased to attend a live music event. The Christmas concert was held just as the Omicron variation was causing concern, and masks were again a legal requirement. This was a worry, but we felt we could just manage it safely, with various precautions – although the week before was quite stressful wondering if someone was going to phone to say they had Covid! The legal requirement for masks was a help because it was not a choice (although we didn't wear them to sing), and we had stewards politely enforcing spacing. Because of fears of Omicron, and possibly also because of cold rainy weather, some people who had bought tickets decided not to come, while we also had fewer buying on the door than in October, but even so we somewhat exceeded the limit of 180 requested by the church (it can hold at least 300 in normal times). Despite the choir having dwindled to 34 singers by the concert, we put on what our MD described as a heroic performance and it was very well received and thoroughly enjoyed by choir and audience.</p> <p>After a well-earned break over Christmas, we are back to rehearsals, still 1 ½ hours without a break, spacing chairs, a couple of windows open a little, and asking people to wear masks except when actually rehearsing (since this is no longer a legal requirement). We also ask people to do lateral flow tests on the day of the rehearsal, but don't require proof. We hope to put on a concert of 'Great Choral Classics' (short classical and light opera choruses and some Rodgers & Hammerstein songs) originally planned for May 2020, on 7th May in the De La Warr Pavilion. We have several new members which is encouraging, and numbers are almost back up to pre-pandemic levels, although with fewer basses, alas.</p> <p>Jenny Meteyard</p>
<p>Concentus</p>	<p>We have continued rehearsals since September both in person, following all the required guidelines - and via zoom for those members who are not quite ready to meet in person.</p> <p>Because of the rise of the new Omicron variant, we reluctantly cancelled both our Christmas Concerts and the opportunity to sing at other events. We now look forward to singing with Lesley Garrett at the charity concert for St Wilfrid's Hospice on 28th April and at our Summer concerts in June on 11th in Seaford and on 18th in Eastbourne.</p> <p>Sue Dickinson</p>
<p>Downland Singers</p>	<p>Our Christmas Gala on 4th December was very successful, in spite of smaller numbers because of Covid. We then took our Christmas break and resume on 3rd February.</p>

	<p>Another new member joined us just before the Gala so it looks as though we are slowly growing again.</p> <p>I am pleased to report we found someone to independently examine our Accounts for this year, in line with the Making Music recommendations for our very small Choir. We will officially appoint him very soon.</p> <p>Our Risk Assessment remains cautious on Covid measures than some, because of the vulnerability of our members and also of Trinity Church, where we rehearse.</p> <p>This term we are starting on songs from Sunset Boulevard and also a piece commissioned for the Platinum Jubilee. Our next concert is on Saturday 4th June</p> <p>Rosemary Rowett Chairman 27th January 2022</p>
<p>Eastbourne Choral Society</p>	<p>Our November concert, the run up to which was certainly fraught with challenges, proved in the end to be a great success. We sang with a smaller choir than we were certainly used to, forty nine singers, (because of illness and Covid worries), a conductor who was far from well (not Covid related) and who had missed our final rehearsal, and an accompanist who had not long recovered from Covid, to a large audience of well over 200 people who were very appreciative.</p> <p>Our carol singing events continued the challenge, especially when Boris decided that face masks must be worn at all times in shopping malls. After much negotiation with the managers of the Beacon Centre we cancelled our planned carol sing there, which was to be in aid of the Samaritans. Sixteen of us did however manage to sing at the Hawthorns Retirement Village in early December albeit in a glass “cage”. This was a new venue for us, the link being a new member of choir who was living there. We enjoyed the event very much. It was lovely to be singing carols together again in their lovely atrium. Thirty of us also sang for the lunch time carol service at All Souls, which we have done for many years, apart from 2020. We did have to wear masks all the time, except for singing – a dispensation for churches from the C of E. Again, this was much enjoyed and appreciated by choir and congregation.</p> <p>This term started off rather tentatively with just over thirty choir members coming to rehearsal thanks to Omicron making some rather wary of singing. However, we now have fifty eight people on board and are very much enjoying rehearsing Bach St John Passion for our concert with Baroque orchestra in All Saints’ Eastbourne on 2nd April.</p> <p>Liz Barker</p>

Eastbourne Symphony Chorus	John Thornley
Hailsham Choral	<p>It's been a rollercoaster since my last report! In person rehearsals started in September and were initially welcomed by most choir members, but the double whammy of a new MD and the break caused by the lockdown, plus the reluctance of some members to fully participate in indoor rehearsals again, especially as winter approached, meant our numbers were declining fast. We were then told that Rosie was resigning as she would be taking on a new choir closer to home. We were very fortunate that our assistant MD, Barbara Edwards, agreed to take the Christmas concert, and it was with great delight that Jozik Kotz agreed to return to HCS as our MD again. We had a very enjoyable Christmas concert, attended by 42 choir members, with some 55 people in the audience, and our charity appeal raised £460 for Warming up the Homeless. Best result ever, I think! We also sang outside at a local pub in Upper Dicker, which was good fun.</p> <p>The Committee, under the guidance of our accompanist Will Hancox, explored finding sponsorship for the choir and we were delighted that a local estate agents, Crane & Co, agreed to become our sponsors. They donated sufficient funds this year to cover the shortfall usually experienced with large concerts with professional soloists and orchestra.</p> <p>We started 2022 rehearsing Messiah for our much delayed 60th Anniversary concert, which will take place on 26 March at All Saints Church. At rehearsals we still have our 'normal' Covid rules in place and during January the hall insisted a maximum of 50 people could attend at any one time, so we had to manage that. That has now been increased to 75, which is fine for us. We wear masks except when singing and ask people to take LFTs beforehand. Jozik has had Covid in the last month (picked up elsewhere) but did not spread it at choir and we seem to have escaped choir infections so far.</p> <p>It has been such a joy to sing with Jozik again and our numbers have now increased to over 60 members, and our 'three tenors' are doing a sterling job of keeping the tenor line going. We hope to have some more tenors helping out for the concert. Happy days!</p> <p>Milly Clark</p>
Heathfield Choral Society	<p>Heathfield held a successful concert in December at which we performed Messiah. This was well received, although the audience was well down on what we would have got pre-pandemic. Rehearsals are still spaced and ventilated, with Lateral Flow tests expected and masks worn by most. We hope to bring back our tea break next week. Numbers have settled at 3/4 of what we have before, although we still have a small number of long-term recluses. This is having an impact on our ambitions - a drop of 25% in subscription income is significant. We need to see what we can do to reverse this and build back. A recent Come and Sing day was very well attended, and we hope to gain some members this way. Rehearsals are now under way for a May concert of English music, with works by Paul Carr, Ralph Vaughan-Williams and Frank Bridge.</p> <p>Chris Thompson</p>

<p>Phoenix</p>	<p>All has been going well since we returned to singing in September, even with Omicron to contend with. A good number of our members have returned keenly to singing together again, about 46 in all, but we're averaging 35~40 in attendance each week. A few members have put their scores away permanently and some are waiting until September to return. We have also had some new members join us.</p> <p>After having to relocate to the church, our rehearsals have gone surprisingly well and, while not ideal, it has even proved advantageous when implementing Covid safety measures.</p> <p>As for the music, we have been persevering with the Bach B Minor Mass with pleasing results and many converts. We invested in the learning mp3s by Matthew Curtis. Each part is sung brilliantly by him in the right register and everyone is finding them very helpful. Fuelled with trepidation and with the mp3s to hand, we have had more practising going on than ever before! I can thoroughly recommend.</p> <p>Unfortunately, a few of our most challenged section (First Sopranos) find they're unable to sing in the concert. We'd be very happy(!) to welcome any who've sung the mass before or who are fast, competent learners, to come and join us. If you could advertise this amongst your members, we would be very grateful. All parts welcome.</p> <p>We are looking forward to performing the mass in mid-June and are happy to learn from everyone else's experiences with staging concerts amidst Covid. We updated our Covid policy in the New Year but have erred on the side of caution regarding attending rehearsals due to the vulnerability and circumstances of many of our members. We now request that all members have a negative Lateral Flow Test on the day of the rehearsal.</p> <p>The demographic of our membership will become a real issue in the not too distant future – we're all aging! What do we do to attract younger singers? Perhaps a subject for a forum at a future meeting?</p> <p>Fiona Evans</p>
<p>Seaford Choral Society</p>	<p>We rehearsed, using our previously published Covid protocol, for our concert in November. We had decided on Vivaldi's Gloria (why wouldn't you?) and Haydn's Missa Sancti Nicholai. Just over half the choir attended rehearsals, with a few more joining in on Zoom. By November it became obvious that a concert would not be sensible so we downgraded our expectations. We used our dress rehearsal evening in the parish church to perform for ourselves and family and friends. We positioned ourselves in alternate rows in the nave and the small audience sat in the chancel and at the back of the church. We dressed in all our finery just for the hell of it and made a wonderful sound (I have listened to the recording!) Who says you can't sing a concert in a mask?</p> <p>This term we decided not to invest in a big oratorio because we couldn't predict what was going to happen. Our MD, Colin, has chosen a number of pieces from our (rather sad) library and we are having fun singing a variety of genres with a concert on 2 April as a possible end point. We have continued</p>

	<p>with the full Covid protocol, including masks and this has given many the confidence to join in. One person has walked out rather than wear a mask. Another moans but overall people appreciate it. We discussed starting up teas and coffees during the break this week but members voted against it. A step too far at the moment.</p> <p>We have had two people reporting that they have tested positive in the last two weeks. They are from different sections and there have been (so far) no bubbles. This may say something about the protocol. We have just written out adding to the protocol what members should do in case of a positive LFT.</p> <p>Steve Machan</p>
Spencer Freeman (Methodist church)	Spencer Freeman