

2018 June BEXHILL CHORAL SOCIETY

Our most recent concert was Brahms' *Requiem*. This was held at the De La Warr Pavilion after we received some sponsorship money tied to using this venue. The acoustic at the Pavilion is not ideal for choral concerts and it is an expensive venue, but we had an audience of around 200 who seemed to enjoy the concert.

We are now rehearsing for our next concert on 6th October at St Augustine's church in Bexhill. This includes Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Franck's setting of *Psalm 150*, Schubert's *Tantum Ergo* and Puccini's *Requiem Aeternam*.

On a more mundane note I have been busy producing/updating all the Data Protection stuff required by the new regulations!

2018 June DOWNLAND SINGERS

Our main performance was on Maundy Thursday at Trinity Church when we presented a miscellany of suitable music, alongside readings depicting the story of Holy Week. The audience was good and those attending appreciated the event. A collection was made for "People Matter – Eastbourne".

While it is sad to report that Wannock Singers have closed, on the other hand, a number of their former members have now joined us taking our role to over 30 – the largest we have ever been. It is interesting that we now have the decision of exactly how big we wish the choir to become in order to maintain our small choir ethos. Unfortunately, although 3 sections are now flourishing, we still lack Bass voices.

We are taking part in the 80th Anniversary Concert at Trinity this month and end our season on June 30th with our Summer Concert "A Choral Tapestry" – if anyone knows of one or two Bass who would like to join us for this we would be delighted to hear from them.

2018 June EASTBOURNE CHORAL SOCIETY

Since our last meeting, ECS rehearsed and performed Vaughan Williams Sea Symphony. The concert was in All Saints' church Eastbourne and we were accompanied by a 34 piece orchestra. We were joined by two excellent soloists, soprano Catrin Woodruff and tenor Adam Marsden. Catrin has performed with us several times now, each time delighting choir and audience and each time showing that she is developing into a truly wonderful soprano. Adam is a fine young tenor and we were very pleased to welcome him to sing with ECS for the first time. Sea Symphony had its challenges for us, not least adjusting to singing with the large orchestra, but, according to audience feedback, the concert was a great success. The choir felt a great sense of achievement at the end of the evening as well as being moved and inspired by the music.

This term we are now rehearsing for the first of two concerts to commemorate the end of the first world war. - Goodall "Eternal Light" and Rutter "Requiem", the latter brought forward from the autumn concert as we could not find a school to sing Rutter Mass of the Children with us this summer! They are all busy making their own music which, although, sad for us, is encouraging that the musical traditions are still surviving amongst the young.

2018 June HAILSHAM CHORAL

This Spring saw us performing Bach's St John's Passion in German. This was one of our largest concerts, (and most expensive!), for a while, and it was a real privilege to sing. Although we only had 11 rehearsals before the day of the concert, Jozik performed miracles preparing the choir to sing in German, as well as all the thrillingly tricky pieces. We lost quite a number of singers for this concert, for various reasons, so in the end we only had some 45 people who rose to the challenge. However, we were beautifully and sensitively accompanied by the Baroque Orchestra, with Julia Bishop as the leader, and the soloists were just outstanding. John Hancorn was sonorous as Christus, Daniel Jordan sang baritone and Rebecca Leggett was a soaring mezzo-soprano and Bethany Partridge a warm alto. But the tenor, Nick Pritchard, who sang the Evangelist, was the star. As Paul Austin Kelly was ill, Nick sang his part as well, distinguishing the parts by moving from the middle of the 'stage' to the side, where the soloists sang their arias. His voice was amazing, his interpretation insightful and he sang it all without the need for a score. It was an absolute joy to be part of this evening.

After such an intense few months practising and fundraising, Jozik decided it was time for a lighter concert in the Summer and we invested in the Novello Book of British Folksongs, which we are currently learning a selection from. We were invited by the London Korean Choral Society to take part in their Korean Festival on 7 July, in the Eastbourne Town Hall, which will see us learning Korean folksongs as well!

2018 June HEATHFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY

What should have been a quiet, consolidating term turned out to be very active and rather exciting! Three concerts in 7 weeks was always going to be challenging and was not planned for when we were thinking about this season, but responding to others somehow changed our plans.

At the beginning of April we hosted two choirs from Normandy and put on a joint concert and a social event, hosting them overnight. This is the 7th exchange visit and always great fun, although not easy to organise – we had hoped that their visit would happen in June, but that wasn't possible for them.

Then at the end of April, we put on a concert of L'Estrange's 'Ahoy', with two local school choirs, and using the composer's own group of players. Again, we were hoping this would be after our main concert but the schools gave us the date. Although very different from our usual repertoire, Ahoy proved very popular with the choirs and the audience, and it was good to see members of Heathfield choir loosening up, both physically and musically and it made us feel ready to maybe take on less serious works in future, and to put a bit of fun into our main work of the season.

On 20 May we performed Haydn's 'Creation', using a slightly reduced orchestra with a score provided by 'Musickle', but losing none of its colour and power. This was a huge success, though the afternoon rehearsal was challenging - with 110 minutes of music to be rehearsed in 165 minutes! I'm not sure why it is not heard more frequently.....

So, then thinking that would be it for the season, we were then invited to take part in a concert at the Hippodrome in July... that is still to come!

2018 June LAUGHTON VILLAGE CHOIR

The choir now has approximately 50 members, and has participated in a Bach programme, singing the two choruses and final chorale from the St John Passion in Laughton church, accompanied by string quartet, oboe, flute and continuo. The concert included Jesu Meine Freude and instrumental music and was a great success.

Future plans:

July 1st Beethoven, Ode to Joy, with string quartet, trumpet and continuo, in Laughton church, as the Finale of the Villages Music Festival 2018

October 28th A concert of light a cappella music at All saints Centre, Lewes, in aid of the Lewes Lions
June 2019 Selections from the Brahms Requiem
October 2019 A further concert for the Lewes Lions
July 2020 Mozart Requiem

2018 June PELHAM CHOIR

We have sung for the induction of a new priest and will sing evensong at Chalvington church in September. Members sing with the Laughton Village Choir. I have been busy organising the Villages Music Festival, 8 days of music from 23rd June-1st July 2018.

2018 June PHOENIX CHOIR

Our performance back in February (just after the last EDCA meeting) was we felt a great success. The German rolled off our tongues and everyone enjoyed the performance - audience and choir alike – and we felt a great sense of achievement. Daniel Ochoa, our Christus, was fabulous and gave an amazing and very emotional and engaging performance which bowled everyone over.

Our Rossini Petite Messe Solonnelle rehearsals have proved very different of course. Most members have sung this before so it has been much more in our comfort zone. Everyone has thoroughly enjoyed the rehearsals and they've proved a good work out as well as a lot of fun. ('Amen, Amen, and Amen' to that!) We've been able to fine tune our performance more as a result with the concert still two weeks away which is very satisfying. Just hope we remember it all on the night!

We've also had meetings to address the implications of the new DPR and have had all of our members sign new consent forms. As well as a policy for this we're in the process of putting a Safeguarding Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Health and Safety Policy in place (or in formal writing as we address many of the issues regularly in normal 'business' anyway), and any other policies that manifest themselves in the meantime.

Later in the year we plan to do a Remembrance Concert with the Faure Requiem and another piece on the day itself – 11th November - and are hoping singers from around the locality will join us. The next project after that will be the Mozart Requiem.

2018 June SEAFORD CHORAL SOCIETY

Our first concert (24 March) under the direction of Colin Hughes was a delight. We started with Mozart's Ave Verum. Many of us had sung it scores of times but never like this. It felt like Ave Verum as it was meant to be sung. It was an awesome start to the concert. We sang *Insanae et Vanae Curae* in memoriam of our much-loved accompanist, Nick Milner-Gulland, and then made not such a great job of Bruckner's *Locus Iste*. Mendelssohn's Hymn of Praise (*Lobsegang*) was the main piece, and a great success. The concert helped the singers to rebuild their confidence.

This was followed very quickly by our "Almost Instant" rendition of Fauré's Requiem, joined by a few other voices from the town. It's always a surprise to find how many bits of a well-known piece you have forgotten when there is only one or two rehearsals. The choir did it justice though and the plate collected another £230 for the church's charities.

True to our decision to work towards three concerts per year we are currently rehearsing for our Summer concert on 23 June. It will include a range of choral songs from Parry and Rachmaninov to Leonard Bernstein and Lionel Bart. No theme, just great songs and an opportunity for the singers to demonstrate their versatility. We are singing in a new venue, Seaford Baptist Church, where we will be rehearsing after Summer. It provides more space as both rehearsal and concert venue.

Our Autumn concert will also be in the Baptist church, at about the time of the celebrations of the end of WW1. We will be joined once again by singers from Seaford Primary School, and the first half of the programme will contain multi-media memories of the war, including a selection from *The Armed Man* by Karl Jenkins. The second half of the programme will move the focus to Christmas. It will be another different and exciting concert, which, we hope, will be of interest to people of all ages.

We are gradually getting nearer to our ambitions of planning 5 years ahead. Spring will see us singing Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and next Christmas (probably) Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, followed in Spring by *Elijah* – which the society hasn't sung for quite a few years. It is an exciting time for us as we move into our second century and try to build foundations to ensure it is as strong as its first.

There's little to report yet on this occasion. We're nearing our concert date for the *St. Matthew Passion* on 17th February. We have had several new members join us for this programme but had hoped for more. Singing in German is a very controversial decision it seems when deciding how to go about a piece even though choral singers regularly sing in Latin, French etc. Rehearsals have gone well, despite the German and our numbers, but we're very aware of the number of illnesses/ bugs going round and I always open my inbox with slight trepidation as we near a concert in case another has been struck down. We've had a number of altos pull out for health/ medical reasons which has been a worry. The tenors – or lack of them – continue to be a problem and we have bought in the services of two tenors to give the section a much needed boost. Our sponsored charity for this year is *Medical Detection dogs* and we have *Ralph* - a Labrador with a diabetic owner attending the concert so we are likely to be upstaged in any case!

We had several enquiries in the New Year from prospective members but it was too late to join so late in rehearsals. I hope they'll still be interested at the start of next season's rehearsals.

We did the usual round of carol singing in December and are pleased to have some bookings for next year already.

For our summer concert we're singing *Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle* which will offer some fun and light relief after this season as well as being a low budget concert. Marvellous!