

2017 January

BEXHILL CHORAL SOCIETY

Since the last meeting Bexhill Choral has had 3 events:

A singing workshop 'Have a Hallelujah Morning' where participants were invited to come and try singing 2 Messiah choruses (Hallelujah and For Unto Us a Child is Born). We approached local groups, musical and non-musical, and advertised in the community, with the aim of attracting people who don't currently sing in a 'classical' choral choir. We hoped from this to increase awareness of the choir locally, and possibly attract a few new members and new audience, particularly for our Messiah concert in May. The event was extremely popular and participants ranged from people who didn't read music and had never sung this kind of music, to people who had sung Messiah before. From the feedback, people had clearly enjoyed it very much, and a few people have expressed interest in joining the choir.

A fundraising Quiz

Christmas concert which included Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols', with a harpist. We had a larger audience than previously. Audience reaction to the Britten was rather mixed and the choir did find it quite tricky but it went well with a very positive review from Brian Hick of Lark Reviews.

Our next concert is Messiah at the De La Warr Pavilion and we are happy to invite extra singers from local choral societies, who know Messiah, to join us for this. For further information contact through www.bexhillchoral.org.uk

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DOWNLAND SINGERS

The Downland Singers have just completed their autumn season with Christmas performances at Trinity Church, Willingdon Golf Club and Bernhard Baron Cottage Homes, plus carol singing at Stone Cross Nurseries and the Freedom Leisure Centre in Hailsham.

The Christmas Gala at Trinity got the audience well-and-truly into the spirit of the season alongside Wealden Brass, who added a selection of their own pieces which were performed in a very professional manner.

Each event was in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support and those attending were most generous in their donations, raising a grand total of £225. Macmillan was chosen as the choir learned and performed a new carol written by Jamie Hall who generously waived his Performing Right dues, in favour of contributions to this charity.

We are now working on a programme of sacred music for Holy Week.

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EASTBOURNE CHORAL SOCIETY

2016/17 was our centenary year so it was time to pull out a few stops. The previous year had done little for our confidence so we settled for some favourites. Our Autumn concert was a great success and included support by "The Semiquavers" from Seaford County Primary School and solos by Dame Felicity Lott. The church bulged. The programme included Zadok, Jean Racine, Hear My Prayer/O for the Wings, Brahms' How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place and Vivaldi's Gloria (and a glossy centenary programme).

The Spring concert was Messiah. It doesn't matter how many times you do it, new choruses seem to sneak in from nowhere. It took all the rehearsal time, but was as rousing and popular as ever. Rehearsal was interrupted for a short time as we sung our "Almost Instant" Stainer's Crucifixion on Good Friday.

Summer brought elections for the whole committee and I was elected a chair. We decided to continue into Summer and a smaller choir rehearsed an eclectic mix of songs including Blue Skies (smiling at me!), Brightly Dawns our

Wedding Day, The Bluebird and My Love Dwelt in a Northern land (Elgar). Rebecca Anstey (as usual) sang beautifully. Erika Schilsky played a wonderful oboe solo. The concert was an informal one, open to the members who hadn't joined in, family and friends, for a donation if we deserved it. It was fun.

We are rehearsing a hectic set of pieces for our November concert. These include Nelson Mass (another old favourite), Insanae et Vanae Curae and Chilcott's Little Jazz Mass (to name a few). The primary school choir will be singing with us.

Our greatest problem this year (apart from me and tight budgets) is getting hold of sufficient scores. The library had started to charge £30 for every batch they have had to get from every library, so 30 Nelson Masses came from Oxford (£30) some from Hampshire (£30) and others locally (£30). With so many pieces that mounts up quickly. We have some music stored in various places around Seaford (I've started hunting). I wonder if it's worth us all sharing our treasures and saving ourselves a fortune.

2017 January HEATHFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY

In November a group from the choir went to New York to sing in a concert at the Carnegie Hall, organised by 'Distinguished Concerts in New York'. It was extremely well organised and we got a standing ovation for the performance. We were among 250 other singers but made up the biggest single group. It was expensive, but a very worthwhile experience.

Our Christmas concert included two relatively unknown works: Geoffrey Bush 'Christmas Cantata' and Bob Chilcott 'Wenceslas'. The Bush is a collection of traditional carols but with an interesting accompaniment for piano and oboe....very beautiful and not expensive.

The Chilcott should be included in more Christmas programmes – it is very listenable to and rewarding for the choir. It calls for a King and a Page (wonderfully sung by Ansy Boothroyd) and the audience join in the last verse. Members of the choir sang carols at a reception for local council staff and managers, and at a retirement home. The term ahead is quite busy too: our twinned French choir visit in early April, we are joining forces with two primary schools for a performance of Ahoy, and then there is a performance of Creation in May.....

2017 January PHOENIX CHOIR

Since the last EADCA meeting rehearsals of Elijah at Phoenix have continued to go well with an encouraging number of new members joining the choir.

For the first time this season we had a co-ordinator for our Christmas events. She organised our bookings with hotels and residential/care homes for December as well as singing in the Arndale and at the bandstand where we raised funds for the Alzheimer's Society – our nominated charity for this year. It was a struggle at times to ensure we had enough singers across the 4 voices what with Christmas pressures and the amount of illness going around but we managed. It proved to be a very enjoyable and successful time for all involved and raised some very useful funds.

We are now in the final stages of rehearsing for Elijah on February 4th and are looking forward to a great concert as well as hoping that we've seen the worst of the winter's bugs and the added worries they bring.

After that our next project for the summer will have a Scandinavian feel with Ola Gjeilo's Sunrise Mass and some Morten Lauridsen.

