

2017 October BEXHILL CHORAL SOCIETY

We have just held a concert of music by Purcell, Vivaldi and Monteverdi. We had a good sized-audience who seemed to enjoy the performance.

In June our Director of Music Ken Roberts gave a lecture recital on 'Music from the dance'; he generously donates these very popular events as fundraisers for the Society. We are also holding a fund-raising Quiz evening on October 20th.

We have just started rehearsing for our Christmas concert on 9th December – carols and Christmas music accompanied by a brass ensemble.

*** CONCENTUS - NO REPORTS FOR 2017**

2017 October DOWNLAND SINGERS

The Downland Singers held a successful summer concert at Trinity Church which formed part of the church's "Weekend of Culture". £100 was raised for the Friends of Eastbourne Hospital and the audience was numerically one of the best that we have had on such occasions.

The summer season continued with some members taking part in the recording of "Songs of Praise" from Eastbourne Bandstand. Several also thoroughly enjoyed participating in the Rutter "Come and Sing" day organised by the Phoenix Choir.

Our Autumn session began with an open workshop. While seven new voices joined us for this, sadly none have returned so we are still on the hunt for additional men in particular!

We have persuaded one new member to take on the role of Publicity and she is already proving a real asset. We thought it would be worthwhile investing in some new publicity materials and so our second rehearsal was given over to recording, videoing and photography.

It is now time to start learning a new repertoire ready for the Christmas season.

2017 October EASTBOURNE CHORAL SOCIETY

Since our last meeting Eastbourne Choral Society gave their summer concert. We sang Rutter – Sprig of Thyme and some songs from the shows, including Les Miserables and West Side Story. We often have a slightly smaller choir in the summer, and there is always someone who says they don't like Rutter or won't sing songs from stage and screen, but nevertheless we performed with a choir of 75 members of ECS. We were accompanied by Nick Houghton, our resident accompanist, who is excellent. The concert also featured two of John Hancorn's students, both of whom could have probably done with a microphone, but they so enjoyed performing with us. Ali, our young alto soloist for Les Miserables was in raptures about the sound of the choir – she had never heard anything like it. If only we could reach more young people, but it's getting them there in the first place. Summer audiences are never huge – about 150 whatever we perform – unless we have children with us – that usually brings quite a few more. Generally, there is so much on in Eastbourne in July!

Our new term has started well with 90 plus on roll. We are singing Haydn Seasons which seems relatively unknown in Eastbourne, we certainly haven't sung it before. It had a mixed reception by choir, but since our great workshop day with Richard Wigmore and John, people seem more inspired. It is quite tricky in places so with that and the

inevitable carols we are having a busy term.

It was interesting to note that at our recent AGM the two items brought up by members of the choir were – too much chatting during rehearsals and some people not adhering to our concert dress code. At least I felt we were not alone as these challenges have been aired at EADCA meetings! There are no easy answers but our committee are taking on the challenge to see what we can do to improve things in this respect!

EASTBOURNE SYMPHONY CHORUS - no reports for 2017

2017 October HAILSHAM CHORAL

Our Summer concert, on 1 July 2017, was a pleasant occasion and well attended, with slightly higher numbers than for our Christmas concert. We sang 'The Whispering Mass' by Marcus Haddow, one of our members, which was fun to learn and perform and well received. We also sang Rutter's Magnificat, and a variety of light music.

Sadly Brian Maskell, our Secretary, passed away on 14 July, and a large contingent from HCS sang at his Memorial Service in Laughton on 31 July, together with members from the Laughton Village Choir and other local choirs, which Brian was involved in. It was an emotional and memorable occasion and the sound of the Hallelujah Chorus and Vivaldi's Domini Fili Unigenite from his Gloria, raised the roof. Nathan Waring accompanied. Brian will be missed.

More recently we were invited to sing at the Hailsham Festival Mayor's Opening Concert, at St Mary's Church, Hailsham, on Saturday, 16 September. We sang a lovely selection of music, showcasing the variety of our repertoire. As I write, we are looking forward to visiting the choir in Hailsham's twin town, Gournay en Bray, Normandy, France, on the weekend of 6-8 October. Their choir visited Hailsham in 2015, so it will be a meeting of old friends for some. We are rehearsing the wonderful Brahms German Requiem this term, which we sing in German. We will be accompanied as Brahms intended, by two pianos, at the concert at All Saints' Church on 11 November at 7.30pm. This will be good practice for the St John's Passion, which we will also sing in German, in Spring 2018. Our Christmas concert will be on Thursday, 21 December, 7.30pm. Unfortunately the EADCA AGM clashed with our workshop, so I am sending

2017 Oct HEATHFIELD CHORAL SOCIETY No report here

LAUGHTON VILLAGE CHOIR- NO REPORTS FOR 2017

2017 October PELHAM CHOIR

The Pelham choir is much diminished in numbers through natural attrition and people moving out of the area. We have sung two evensongs during September one at Ripe and one at Hellingly, together with the Hellingly church choir, and will be joined by extra singers for Christmas carol services on 10th and 17th December. The singers will join with the Laughton Village Choir and Clockhouse Singers, conducted by Linda Glenn, for a programme of Bach, including Jesu Meine Freude, at Laughton church on 21st April 2018.

The Villages Music Festival, now a registered charity, runs from 23rd June-1st July 2018. There will be a choral concert including Pelham choir, Laughton Village choir and friends, on 1st July also in Laughton church. There will be a choral workshop on Bach's Christmas oratorio on 13th October 2018, with the City Chamber Choir, conducted by Stephen Jones, at Ripe church.

2017 October PHOENIX CHOIR

We were very pleased with the outcome of our summer concert. Our audience numbers were a little lower than we'd have hoped but the audience there (apart from the very odd one or two of course) were wowed by the Gjeilo and the doubters amongst the choir had to admit they'd been wrong in thinking we shouldn't do it. All of those there have said they want to sing it again – praise indeed. The Corelli Ensemble accompaniment and solo items really added to proceedings and the entire programme provided a varied and extremely enjoyable concert.

The next big event was the Rutter Come and Sing Day in September, the success of which surpassed anything we could have imagined and was a thoroughly enjoyable day. There was the odd hiccup of course but John Rutter is so entertaining and everyone was enjoying the day so much nobody seemed to mind!

Our autumn season and the St Matthew Passion is going well so far. Everyone who wasn't initially put off by the thought of singing in German has been very game and our two native German speakers have been enormously helpful. We hoped that we would have an influx of new singers, and while there are several, again we have very few tenors. We know more will join us after Christmas (we'll have the Dutch Contingent, late joiners and occasionally the odd bought in singer), which will secure the concert but it doesn't help with rehearsing for those there during the rest of the term.

Interestingly the balance in voice sections for the Rutter Day reflected the general break down of numbers – tenors were the smallest section and the chaps who pulled out – mostly due to work commitments – were by and large tenors. Could many tenors be younger working professionals who can't make the regular commitment to singing in a choir?? Just a thought!

We were fortunate last year in having a willing volunteer design us a lovely new website. This year control of it was passed to us and it has been rather neglected ever since as there has been no-one under the age of 35 with the knowledge and time to deal with it. So a big plus for the choir this term and a major achievement for me personally has been my finally getting to grips with managing and updating the choir's website –

2017 October SEAFORD 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 sang 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.

* SOUTH DOWNS SINGERS - NO REPORTS FOR 2017

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