

## CHOIR REPORTS FOR EADCA MEETING: 3.9.22

Bexhill Choral Society	<p>In May 2022 we held a concert of 'Great Choral Classics' (ranging from classical through light opera to Rodgers &amp; Hammerstein) which was originally planned for May 2020! This was at the De La Warr Pavilion and we sold 289 tickets. This was still a loss as it's a large and expensive venue, but the concert was very warmly received and concerts there do raise our profile in the area.</p> <p>We've had a summer break, and start back to rehearsals this week (31<sup>st</sup> August) for a concert on 8<sup>th</sup> October: Schubert <i>Mass in A flat</i>, and Bizet <i>Te Deum</i> - which most of us hadn't heard of but our conductor has always wanted to do apparently!</p> <p>A new member suggested applying for a grant to the Williams Church Music Trust for this concert and this was successful – we asked for and got £1000 to cover soloists. We emphasised in the application that it was church music and that the Bizet is rarely performed, and that we would be employing local musicians and soloists. The Trustees meet quarterly so we applied at the end of May for their meeting at the beginning of June. I can supply more details if anyone's interested.</p> <p>After that it will be a Christmas concert in December, all being well.</p> <p>We're back to 2-hour rehearsals with a short break, no masks. A lot of us had Covid in Spring when numbers were high, but we think from the timings etc that we got it elsewhere, not in choir, and that the precautions we then had in place were successful. We will keep a firm eye on things as it's still around. The removal of general Covid restrictions has had a bit of a negative effect for us in some ways, as people have taken the opportunity to go away on holidays, visit family or have family visit and so on, and therefore miss rehearsals. We are also very short of basses which is worrying – we are getting new members in the sopranos and altos, and have 7-8 tenors (2 are ladies), but we've lost a few basses who haven't been replaced and one has had the temerity to be away for the concert!</p> <p>It's too early to tell how the cost of living crisis will affect us but it seems likely costs will rise, for instance venues will probably have to raise charges, and we may have to dig into our reserves. Fortunately we do have some reserves.</p> <p>We have decided to move our website to the Making Music Platform, which provides a website with integrated database and a lot of support. This should also enable us to have everything in one place. We have started setting this up but what with summer holidays and hot weather haven't got very far yet!</p> <p>Apologies for absence. Jenny Meteyard</p>
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<p>Concentus</p>	<p>While a few members were still reluctant to return to rehearsals last term, (though several are looking forward to rejoining us in September), we were pleased to welcome some new members in January.</p> <p>In April we were pleased to be invited to sing with Lesley Garrett at the charity concert at the Hippodrome Theatre in aid of St Wilfrid's Hospice.</p> <p>We were delighted to once again hold our Summer concerts in Seaford and Eastbourne in June after the long break. Our programme included our tribute to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and, by singing their National Anthem, a recognition of the war in Ukraine. Both concerts attracted a good attendance and were very well received.</p> <p>In August we have enjoyed our summer barbecue once again and we look forward to the start of the new term on 5<sup>th</sup> September at Willingdon Community School at 7.15pm.</p> <p>Our Christmas Concerts this year will be on 10<sup>th</sup> December at Seaford Baptist Church and on 17<sup>th</sup> December at St Saviour's Church, Eastbourne, both at 4pm.</p> <p>Sue Dickinson</p>
<p>Downland Singers</p>	<p>We spent the time from last April practising songs from Sunset Boulevard and also songs for the Jubilee – so a varied repertoire. The highlight for us was learning and then performing the Jubilee Anthem at the Willingdon Community Jubilee Celebration at Willingdon Community School over the Jubilee Bank Holiday Weekend. We sang other songs as well, many well known, but this was our first performance of this new Anthem and has become a Choir favourite.</p> <p>Later in the term we had a Summer Open Evening where we performed to an audience, performing the Jubilee Anthem, a few familiar Jubilee songs and parts of our Sunset Boulevard repertoire, and a Social Evening</p> <p>All this gave us a real boost after what has been a very difficult time.</p> <p>Number-wise there are currently 13 of us on the books, with one not expected to return. Sadly one of our number, Evelyn Rees, died very suddenly towards the end of term and she will be sorely missed.</p> <p>Part of the purpose of the Summer Open Evening and the consequent Social Evening was to recruit more members. 4 possible recruits came forward. In addition, 2 former members have approached me, one of who will be rejoining and the other is considering it.</p>

	<p>As we currently only have two tenors and no bass, it is hoped that we will recruit more in those voice areas.</p> <p>At least 3 of our members are helping man our stall at the forthcoming Willingdon Community Morning to be held at Trinity Church on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September between 10 am and 12 noon.</p> <p>We return to rehearsals on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September and will be holding our AGM on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September.</p> <p>We have taken a booking to sing at Signature Care Home in early December. As Covid restrictions are lifted, we look forward to more performing both at Trinity Church and at Signature and maybe other Care Homes.</p> <p>Rosemary Rowett</p>
<p>Eastbourne Choral Society</p>	<p>Since our last meeting in February, ECS have given two concerts – Bach St John Passion in April and our summer Jubilee concert in July. We also were asked by the Mayor to sing at Eastbourne’s Civic Jubilee Service on 2<sup>nd</sup> June which were delighted to do. All three events were very enjoyable for the choir and much appreciated by the audience /congregation.</p> <p>However, as for many choirs, this year has not been without its challenges. Having kept Covid at bay for some months, several choir members caught this, not through choir, and this and other health or family issues meant our St John Passion concert was a challenge. Thankfully a few singers from East Sussex Bach choir were able to come to our aid and, after a two year postponement, we performed this glorious piece.</p> <p>Challenges continued in the summer term with various health issues within the choir, but membership remained steady from the Spring term with about 60 singers. Our biggest challenge of all was the fact that six days before our Jubilee concert in July I had a call to say that our MD, John, had had a stroke. This thankfully turned out to be minor and he soon recovered from the initial “damage”. However, we were all obviously shocked and saddened by this. Nick Houghton, our accompanist, himself an experienced choral conductor, was brilliant and immediately rose to the challenge of taking over, but as the concert was with organ and piano accompaniment, we needed to find another accompanist who would be free at relatively short notice and be happy to take on the challenge of Rutter Gloria on piano and Handel Coronation Anthems on the church organ. Nick found us Hamish Dustagheer, organist at St Bartholomew’s Church Brighton. He is absolutely brilliant. For a young man who had not accompanied us</p>

	<p>previously, was not familiar with the music we were singing or the organ at All Saints, he was amazing. His sightreading of the accompaniment to the Rutter Gloria at our final Tuesday rehearsal got an ovation from the choir!! I can supply his contact details if in future anyone finds themselves needing an accompanist. He is happy to “hop along the coast” as he puts it.</p> <p>So, although we missed John, our summer Jubilee concert was a great success and, despite the fact that it was very warm and there was lots on for people to do in Eastbourne that evening, we had a great audience.</p> <p>We now look forward to rehearsals resuming after the summer break when we will be rehearsing for our Autumn Advent concert with music to include Britten St Nicolas. There is a good deal of interest in the choir, and we have more people returning after Covid and several new members. If everyone turns up our number will be in the seventies – a far cry from the thirty plus of last January.</p> <p>I am sorry not to be at the EADCA meetings and wish everyone good luck for a happy term singing with their choirs.</p> <p>Liz Barker. Chair Eastbourne Choral Society.</p>
<p>Eastbourne Symphony Chorus</p>	<p>Email sent to singers on ESO database; Huge thanks for the Creation. It was a most memorable concert and thank you for the many emails I received afterwards. I know how much many of you over the years (the ESO annual choral concert started in 1983!) have appreciated the chance to sing with a full orchestra. Some of you have been part of that experience for many years, and in various venues</p> <p>At an ESO committee meeting this week, and after making various enquiries about choral works which would be suitable / affordable (eg hiring the orchestra parts for Duruflé Requiem is £450), and considering the need to attract a large enough choir which will feel confident to perform on the fewer rehearsals we can schedule these days, we’ve decided that we will take a year off from performing a choral concert in 2023.</p> <p>As we know, the post-Covid climate sees a reduced number of singers attending choirs locally, and the commitment of many of you to your own regular choirs mean that we can’t be sure of making the number or strength we’ll need for whatever work we would have chosen. And choral concerts with an orchestra are not inexpensive to mount, as you all know (the Creation lost £1,000). Among other things, soloists need a professional fee, the staging is a key expenditure, and there are other</p>

	<p>costs to the orchestra which add up in spite of the best housekeeping. (Though the ESO is especially fortunate in that Graham, since he helped found the orchestra in 1980, has never asked for a fee for any of the 100 plus concerts he has conducted, which he won't thank me for telling you!)</p> <p>We'll take a view on what happens in 2024 as 2023 unfurls and I'll let you know.</p> <p>The ESO is always hugely grateful for your support at other concerts, and so we hope to see many of you at these. (There will be an orchestra concert in May 2023 in place of the choral concert.) And your support for the ESO's annual Young Soloist of the Year competition in January and February each year is also much appreciated.</p> <p>I thought it best to let you know this as soon as the decision was made. It was a decision which wasn't taken lightly.</p> <p>Don't forget that you can see latest ESO updates on <a href="http://www.eso.org.uk">www.eso.org.uk</a> where there are details of past concerts (a work in progress).</p> <p>John Thornley</p>
Hailsham Choral	<p>Our 60th Anniversary concert in March was a huge success. We sang Messiah and started with the Ukrainian National Anthem; we also had a retiring collection for their appeal. Record numbers were in the audience (over 360) and there was a fabulous atmosphere. It was good to be back.</p> <p>We decided to sing music from the Coronation for our Summer concert, as well as lighter music from the seven decades of Her Majesty's reign. It was a much more challenging concert than we anticipated, as we also sang some of the lesser known, but beautiful anthems. It's always amazing to realise the Westminster choirboys sang them all during the three hour service, with minimal practice! We worked hard and pulled it off, despite a lot of last minute Covid casualties. This seemed to have originated at a funeral at which many of our members sang. We came close to cancelling when our accompanist was bitten on the finger by a ferret, but I'm glad we didn't as it was a lovely evening. All went quite smoothly, and Will played brilliantly. Having a visual display of the coronation during the first half of the concert was much enjoyed by the audience. We were sad Colin Hughes, who was originally booked to play the organ for us, couldn't do the concert in the end, because of a clash of dates, but our substitute, Andrew Wilson, who lives locally, was amazing and to be recommended!</p>

	<p>We will sing, as usual, at the Mayor's concert for the Hailsham Festival, next week, 10 September, and our Autumn concert will be Haydn's Nelson Mass and Purcell's Te Deum and Jubilate on 12 November.</p> <p>Milly Clark</p>
Heathfield Choral Society	
Noteworthy	
Phoenix	<p>Phoenix enjoyed what many called a 'triumphant' concert in June when we finally performed the Bach B Minor Mass after two years. It was hugely challenging, but we cracked it ably assisted by our Dutch friends. Amazingly we were not affected by summer absence or illness for the concert and performed with a full contingent of singers.</p> <p>Moving our rehearsals to the church worked well last year despite our initial concerns and proved reassuring as a safe venue in these covid times. So we are staying put in church. We will no longer require negative covid tests before attending rehearsals from this term. We have asked members to stay away if they are ill with <i>anything</i> contagious, however.</p> <p>During the lockdown we sang the Vivaldi <i>Gloria</i> on zoom but have not performed it for several years. We will again be performing it along with the Pergolesi <i>Laudate Pueri Dominum</i> in February along with something new for us - the Bach Magnificat. After the B Minor Mass many of our members have now got the Bach bug!</p> <p>With the rising cost of church fees for rehearsals and concerts, we reluctantly increased our Subs at our AGM in June. Members felt strongly that they wanted to continue to stage quality concerts with an orchestra.</p> <p>After much discussion we have decided to push through the £20 ticket price barrier for our next concert. We're keen to price ourselves appropriately and hope that audiences will recognise this, although the rising cost of living may be a critical factor of course.</p> <p>Christmas is back properly on the itinerary for this year and we're looking forward to some carolling. We hope nothing happens to change that!</p> <p>Fiona Evans</p>
Seaford Choral Society	<p>After zooming our way through 2020/21 we were at last able to get together in person from September, and what a joyous and emotional occasion it was! We had been rehearsing Vivaldi's Gloria on zoom and</p>

decided that our first rehearsal back together would be a 'performance' of this to ourselves! Of course our MD decided that some parts weren't up to scratch and made us sing them again, but who cared!

We had decided to perform the Gloria and also Haydn's St Nicholas mass for our autumn concert at St Leonard's church but, as the time grew near, and with covid still very prevalent, this was deemed too risky and the concert was, reluctantly, cancelled. We did, however, decide to use what would have been our dress rehearsal to perform to selected friends and family, so all was not lost.

Spring term started cautiously and we decided not to embark on a major work, just in case. Our MD put together a concert of sacred songs and other miscellaneous tunes which we performed to a very small and select (!) audience at the Baptist church. We decided not to charge for tickets but to have a retiring collection for the Seaford Ukraine charity, and a surprisingly large sum was raised. Following this was our 'almost instant' concert on Good Friday where we were joined by others for a performance of Stainer's Crucifixion. This also raised a good sum for the Vicar's nominated charity.

By summer things were looking brighter and we rehearsed Zimbe!, a joyous and fun piece to sing. We were joined by children from the local primary school's choir and the concert was a sellout! A wonderful evening enjoyed by the audience and the choirs, and a never to be forgotten experience for the children.

So, what's happening this coming year? Most importantly we will have a change of Chairman as Steve has completed the five years allowed by our constitution. Other people are also leaving, or changing roles on the committee, so things will be different. Hopefully we can persuade some of our members that it's now safe to come back, and we'll see some people we haven't seen for a while. Next up is Brahms Requiem. Should be fun!

Carole Josey
