

KENDAL SOUTH CHOIR

Newsletter 4 – May 2012



Brahms concert

Ian says:

“The Brahms Requiem was a resounding success. The singers (as was to be expected) excelled themselves and it was only in the final chorus (as was to be expected, but entirely understandable) where stamina ran out and some strain was evident. I blame the composer for this! I have to say that, all things considered, the work is not well balanced; there are undoubtedly some most beautiful moments but personally I find the louder bits less than inspired and somewhat relentless. More solo writing would have made for greater interest and lightened the load placed on the chorus.

“Unexpectedly (on my part at least) the opera choruses presented some problems, some members still showing uncertainty at the concert, but by and large I think they were enjoyed, certainly by the audience, and made a suitable foil for the Requiem.

“We were rewarded with some superb solo singing, particularly from Laurie Ashworth, who in spite of a recent cold produced not just ravishingly beautiful tone, but sincerity and commitment to her various offerings. David Rees-Jones offered some noble singing, but slightly lacking in the required weight and timbre for the Requiem; I wondered if there is really a tenor lurking inside him! The duet from the Magic Flute was exquisite, and enthusiastically received.

“At this point, an assessment of what I perceive to be The current state of the choir would seem to be appropriate:

“We have together presented two fine concerts and there has been a steady improvement, both in

sound quality and choral discipline; I would have preferred a less taxing programme in order to have had more time for voice training, but our plans for next season should allow this.

“As to the various sections, the most improved are the tenors (with a little help from guests), who produced some lovely, controlled tone, proof, I think, that my exercises are having an effect. The sopranos are working much better as a team, rather than the group of feisty individuals I was confronted with in the Autumn! The principle of ‘floating’ the tone in the higher register shows signs of working (it does take years to perfect this) and the power is certainly there when required. Some swooping still needs to be addressed. Having had considerable success with the higher voices, I should start to spend more time with the lower ones, whom I have largely left to their own perfectly adequate devices. We should however look for a richer sound from both sections and I am longing for the day when more basses will simply open their mouths and let it out! They could also try to bring some friends along to help balance our numbers.

“So to the future. My suggestions for next season (Purcell, Handel and Pergolesi and some still to be chosen modern pieces) should allow more time for vocal development in the first term, which can then be put to full use in Rossini’s *Petite Messe Solennelle*, possibly coupled with more operatic excerpts. Both these programmes are compiled from suggestions received from the membership, so I hope they will be wholeheartedly accepted.

“It remains to request that singers try to give priority to our Tuesday rehearsals (some recent attendances have been discouragingly sparse) and that we can

continue to enjoy choral singing not just for our individual pleasure, but as a corporate activity, and move forward as a team. I am particularly keen that we demonstrate ourselves as 'Best in Show' at next year's Mary Wakefield do."

You can read Margaret Pattinson's review which appeared in the *Westmorland Gazette* on 10th May on the Reviews section of our website <http://kendalsouthchoir.btck.co.uk>.

Future Concerts

Our **Christmas concert** this year will be on Saturday 8th December, again in St Thomas's Church, Kendal, and entitled "Baroquefest". The programme will comprise:

- Handel: *Zadok the Priest* and *The King Shall Rejoice*
- Purcell: *Te Deum in D* and *The Bell Anthem*
- Pergolesi: *Magnificat*

plus a Vivaldi double trumpet concerto and a Bach cantata *Jauchzet Gott* for solo soprano, and some modern pieces by local composers.

The programme for our **Spring Concert** on 13th April next year will be Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* and more opera choruses. In December 2013 we will have a guest slot at Westmorland Orchestra's December concert at the Leisure Centre. On 25th January 2014 we will perform our own "**Christmas**" **Concert** at St Thomas's Church, which will comprise Fauré's *Requiem* and Poulenc's *Gloria*, and our **Spring Concert** on Saturday 10th May at the Parish Church will possibly be Haydn's *The Seasons*.

As Ian has asked, please make rehearsals your priority for Tuesday evenings and attend as many as you possibly can. If you are unable to attend for any reason, please let your Section Rep know, or, if you know well in advance, mark the register with an A for that date. The Section Reps are:

Soprano:	Jean Robinson (01539 725955)
Alto:	Lara Clahane (01539 737090)
Tenor:	Moira Greenhalgh (01524 761269)
Bass:	Arthur Robinson (01539 725955)

Because it is Ian's custom to conduct warm-up exercises and voice training at 7.30pm prompt, it is vital that everyone is in their seats and ready to start by that time. Late arrivals cause disruption, particularly when they have to walk across the front or find their place in their row. Please avoid chatter

during rehearsal – the time for this is during the half-time break.

Harmonium

Does anyone know of a good harmonium which we can borrow or hire for our performance of Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*? If you do, please let Ian know.

Money Matters

Brahms

A paying audience of 108 (less than Messiah as expected but comfortably more than the previous two concerts) kept the loss down to about £500 – so a financial "success" as well as a great musical one.

Accompanist

We had an accompanist this year for the last few rehearsals before concerts. This made such an improvement to the running of rehearsals that the Committee has decided to introduce it on a permanent basis next year.

Subscriptions

Having being unchanged for two years these were increased by £5 this year. After considerable thought the Committee has decided on an increase of £10 – to £75 – for the coming year, which you will surely agree still represents extremely good value for money and it will help offset the additional cost of the accompanist. It is good that we are no longer faced with a parking fee of £1 an evening. For those of you who find it easier to pay by instalments, these will be £40 due at the beginning of the September term followed by £35 at the first rehearsal in January. (Just for comparison, Eversley's subs have gone up from £60 to £80 a year with effect from September.)

Gift Aid

A reminder for those who have had self assessment tax returns for 2011/12 dropping through their letterbox, that the amount of subscription to include as gift aid payment on page TR4 is £59.

Future concerts

To maintain our standing and continue to provide quality concerts with appropriate soloists and musicians will of course cost money. The price of concert tickets has been unchanged at £10 for many years, and the Committee has decided that there should now be an increase to £12 to reflect rising costs while still remaining very good value for money. It has also been agreed that there should be

a modest charge of £1 for programmes in line with common practice.

Looking forward

A good result this year, largely due to increased audience numbers, has enabled us to be a bit more ambitious with numbers of musicians and soloists for the coming year. This together with other expenses and allowing for other changes will use up this year's surplus, but still leave a sensible balance.

Summer Barbecue

Our Family Summer Barbecue takes place this year on Sunday 1st July from 3.30pm onwards at Eileen Robinson's home, High Bracken Hall, Gatebeck LA8 0HS. Tickets (£7.50 for adults, £3.50 for children) are available from the Section Reps (phone numbers below). There will be very good food and drink! This is an event for all the family – please try to encourage friends to come along too.

Fund Raising

The book-and-everything-else-stall has raised more than £75 this term. Thank you all for your support – keep it up! Not only books, but garden produce and plants, jam and small cakes all sell well.

The Quiz made £273, and the March Coffee Morning around £185.

The Choir has now been registered with the Easy Fundraising website. If you shop online the Choir can benefit from a donation from the retailer of around 2.5 to 5% of your spend, at no cost to the Choir or yourself. The retailer makes the donation from savings made by being an online presence and having no overheads.

Among the hundreds of retailers registered for this scheme are Amazon (for music and Kindle downloads as well as for physical goods – though not for gift vouchers), Argos, Boots, Waterstones, Holland & Barrett, Interflora, John Lewis, Hotel Chocolat, Viking, Comet, Currys and M&S, and there are holiday companies and carriers such as Marriott Hotels, Best Western, Holiday Inn, Virgin Trains, Brittany Ferries. Insurance companies and energy suppliers are also listed.

To help in this way, simply go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk and register as a supporter, with Kendal South Choir as your chosen charity. When you next shop online, go to your retailer **via the Easy Fundraising website**, as this records your transaction, and the retailer will

automatically donate a percentage of your spend to the Choir.

Jean has prepared a "How to" sheet, which accompanies this newsletter.

Diary Dates

Also accompanying this newsletter is a list of dates for the next few terms.

New Members

are welcome in all sections, and more tenors and basses of our own are of course urgently needed. If you know of anyone who is interested please have a word with them and try to get them to join us. Husband and wife teams are particularly useful!

More Music

More opportunities to sing!

1. Saturday 20th October 2012, afternoon and evening

"Come and Sing" with Levens Choir at Cartmel Priory – preliminary programme:

- Vivaldi *Gloria*
- a Handel *Coronation Anthem*
- Parry *Blest Pair of Sirens*

and some Levens Choir items. More details later.

2. New Year's Eve 2012

"Sing Out for Marie Curie" in Cartmel Priory, with a Jacob's Join Supper.

3. Sunday 10th March 2013, afternoon

Mary Wakefield Festival "Come and Sing" in Kendal Parish Church – Purcell *Come, Ye Sons of Art* and Britten *Rejoice in the Lamb*.

4. Saturday 16th March 2013, 7.30pm

Mary Wakefield Festival, final Festival Concert in Kendal Parish Church – Mozart *Mass in C minor* and Britten *Cantata Misericordium*. Please sign up for this event as soon as you can. A registration form is attached.

5. September 2013

CCI Choral Day.

6. Saturday 8th November 2014!

CCI event – Britten *War Requiem*.

Concerts

1. Saturday 9th June 2012, 7.30pm

Lonsdale Music's 10th Anniversary Concert at Holy Trinity Church, Casterton. With Lonsdale Chamber Orchestra, director Ian Thompson (harpsichord), Jacqueline Pischorn (soprano), Ian Caddy (bass), John Turner (recorder), Richard Simpson (oboe). Music by Vivaldi, Bach, Mozart, Bellini, Roger Cann, David Ellis, Elis Pehkonen. Tickets £15 (students £7), to include post-concert reception, from Lonsdale Music 015242 72694.

2. 3rd to 17th June 2012

Sedbergh's Diamond Jubilee Music Festival – see <http://www.sedbergh.org.uk/musicfestival/>. Among the extremely varied events, you will find Mark Swinton performing at 1pm on Thursday 7th June on the organ of St Andrew's Church, Sedbergh, playing works by Bairstow, Langlais, Mozart, Saint-Saëns and Bach. (A pre-performance lunch will be available in the Parish Room at 12 noon.)

Mark will also provide the organ continuo for Sedbergh Summer Singers in Mozart's *Requiem* at 7.30pm on Saturday 16th June, in St Andrew's Church, under the direction of Jeremy Jackman (for 10 years counter-tenor with the King's Singers and now Director of the English Baroque Choir). The performance will also include Ave Maris Stella from Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers*. Tickets for both events are £5, and children are admitted free.

3. Thursday 28th June 2012, 8pm

Music for a Midsummer Evening - A recital by the choir of Somerville College, Oxford, at Crosscrake Church. Programme to include music from the Renaissance to the present day, from Tallis and Mozart to Tavener and Bernstein. Free admission, donations invited. Refreshments. Details 015395 61257.

4. Sunday 17th June 2012, 4-5pm

Levens Choir sing **Music in Quiet Places** at Field Broughton Church. Followed by tea and cakes.

5. Saturday 30th June 2012, 7.30pm

at Christ Church, Cockermouth. **Cockermouth Harmonic Society** conducted by Ian Thompson sing Carissimi's *Jephthah*, Purcell's *Ode to St Cecilia*, Walter Carroll's *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* and Philip Wood's *Look Up Sweet Babe*. Lonsdale Baroque Ensemble, with soloists Fiona Weakley, Julie Leavett, Robert Thompson, Jonathan Millican and countertenor, Timothy Penrose. Organist Hugh Davies. Tickets £12 (children £4).

6. Saturday 30th June 2012, 7.30pm

Brahms: A German Requiem (sung in German – two-piano version) at Ulverston Parish Church. Part of Ulverston Music Festival – see

<http://www.ulverstonmusicfestival.co.uk/>.

Ulverston Festival Chorus conducted by John Gibbons, soloists Anna Gorbachyova and Andrew Jarvis. Anthony Hewitt and Sam Haywood (pianos). Adults £13, 16-18s £4, children £1.

7. Tuesday 3rd July 2012, 7.30pm

Levens Choir Summer Concert at St Mary's Church, Kirkby Lonsdale, in aid of Freedom from Torture.

8. Saturday 7th July 2012, 7.30pm

Levens Choir at St Thomas's Church, Kendal (as above)

As 7 and 8 are charity concerts they are not free to Friends.

9. Saturday 28th July 2012, 7.15pm

"Song of Hiawatha" – a CCI collaboration with Lake District Summer Music Festival, at the Coronation Hall, Ulverston. Northern Chamber Orchestra and soloists Nicholas Hurndall Smith, Nigel Dempster and Lesley Jane Rogers. There may still be places for singers – contact Ian Jones on 01539 720168 or ik_kg@btinternet.com. See

<http://www.cumbriachoralinitiative.org.uk/projects.htm>.

The Committee would like to wish you all a very good summer, and we look forward to seeing many of you at the Barbecue on 1st July and at some of the concerts listed above.

STOP PRESS!

And congratulations to John McCreesh on being elected Cumbria County Councillor for Kendal Strickland & Fell.

<http://kendalsouthchoir.btck.co.uk>

