



Choral Notes September 2016

Welcome to the 2016-17 Season!

A warm welcome back to all members at the start of our new season's programme.

We particularly welcome new members to the Society, and very much hope you will enjoy singing with us, performing in concert with professional musicians and developing your singing skills. Choir members, particularly those on the committee, will be very happy to help with any questions you may have.

If you know anyone who might wish to join us, do encourage them to contact our Secretary Judy Hutchings (01206 382921, *email judy.hutchings@gmail.com*). We have an exciting and enjoyable musical programme lined up, and the Society needs new members to remain vibrant and successful.

Summer Concert 25th June 2016 - The Fairy Queen

On 25th June we returned to the beautiful Dedham Church for our Summer Concert, a performance of Purcell's *Fairy Queen*, as arranged by Benjamin Britten and Imogen Holst and first performed at the Aldeburgh Festival in 1967. Our soloists, drawn from within the choir, performed magnificently, and with great style and wit. We were accompanied with verve and charm by the Colchester Sinfonietta. It was a very happy occasion for our President Gordon Kuphal to present Ian with a vase and CD voucher to recognise his fortieth inspiring year as Director of the Society.

Summer Barbeque Monday 27th June

We are grateful to Louise Brooks for allowing us to hold our end of season Summer Barbeque in her spacious and lovely garden in Great Bromley. Thanks also to Barbeque master Mike Pluck, and to all those who helped with catering and other arrangements for the party. Ian thanked us for his 40th anniversary gift, sharing some very fond memories of leading the Choir, and looking forward to the next season.

Annual General Meeting 28th September

Our AGM will be held on Wednesday 28th September, followed by a slightly shorter rehearsal so that we finish at the normal time. We also plan to hold a 'bring and buy' sale.

Committee members for the coming year will be proposed and elected. If you might possibly be interested, please contact Nigel or Judy (contact details below) who will be happy to explain what is involved. New enthusiasm and ideas are always needed and it need not be a very heavy commitment!

Saturday 19th November - Tippett and Vaughan Williams

For our Autumn Concert we will be performing two popular pieces written in the first half of the twentieth century by British composers, Sir Michael Tippett and Ralph Vaughan-Williams. Tippett's secular oratorio, *A Child of our Time*, was first performed in London in 1944. He used both Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's Passions as his models, but wanted his work to speak to those of all religions and none. After hearing an African American spiritual on the radio, Tippett chose five spirituals to provide moments of reflection and repose to the work, and to enhance its universal message of reconciliation and its emotional appeal. Vaughan Williams' beautiful *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* was first performed in 1912, and is based on four English folk carols which Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp had collected, interspersed by brief orchestral quotations from other carols.

Sunday 11th December Concert - Here Comes Christmas!

Our annual celebration of Christmas music takes place in the elegant Edwardian surroundings of Colchester's Moot Hall, and includes plenty of opportunities for the audience to join in singing some favourite carols. We will be joined again by local schoolchildren, and accompanied by our usual excellent brass quintet and the splendidly refurbished Moot Hall organ. After the concert we join the audience to enjoy a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie in the Mayor's Parlour.

Saturday 18th March 2017 - Bach's St John Passion

Bach's *St John Passion* is the shorter and more intense of his two Passion settings. Central to the work is a dramatic account of the arrest and trial of Jesus, culminating in the story of the crucifixion and burial of Christ, with the choir

alternating between participants in the drama and reflective commentators. It was probably first performed on Good Friday 1724, but Bach tinkered with it for the rest of his life, and at least five versions of it are known to exist. We will be singing it in the original German, accompanied by Peter Holman (continuo) and the John Jenkins Consort, playing period instruments.

Saturday 24th June 2017 - Summer Concert - An Elgar Evening

Elgar's engaging choral suite *From the Bavarian Highlands* (1896) derived from what was probably the happiest period of his life. Alice and Edward Elgar spent several holidays in Southern Germany, and the result was a set of six warm and lively 'choral songs' loosely inspired by the folk music of Bavaria, with the texts written by Alice. We will also be singing a selection of his part songs, and there will be a chance to hear his bittersweet, intimate *Violin Sonata Op.82*, which was written during his last great creative flowering at the end of the First World War, when his better known *Cello Concerto* was composed.

Can't make a rehearsal?

The choir relies on regular attendance at rehearsals by all members to ensure we can meet concert performance standards. But if you can't attend due to illness or for some other reason, please let our Secretary Judy Hutchings know (01206 382921 *email judy.hutchings@gmail.com*).

Ticket Sales

We need good audiences to make our concerts worthwhile, and to maintain a healthy financial position for the Choir so that we can continue to offer a high quality programme. Please therefore do all you can to promote our concerts and to sell tickets to your friends and contacts.

Corporate Patrons

Our Corporate Patrons support the Society financially by giving us an annual donation of £120, in return for which they are credited on our 3 main concert programmes, and kept informed of our concerts and activities.

If you have any contacts with firms or businesses who you think might be happy to support us in this way (perhaps your own business or employer) please contact Chairman Nigel Humphreys (01206 579379 *email Humphreyswan@btinternet.com*).

Friends

Our "Friends" are an invaluable source of support for the choir, and I am keen to add to our list of much valued Friends. If anyone you know may be interested in joining the scheme, please speak to me at rehearsal for more information, or contact friendsofccc@hotmail.com.

Steph Say

Subscriptions

The Committee propose that we should cease to offer a discounted annual subscription rate for those aged over 60 (this is currently £75). Over the years this has become our standard rate as we all enjoy longer life spans, so that the Society's finances have become unbalanced, requiring additional fund raising. The concession also no longer reflects any general imbalance in financial circumstances between those under and those over 60, and has been discontinued in most choirs so that they can continue to survive financially. We do not propose to increase our other subscription rates. If members approve this proposal at the AGM, this year's subs will be:

Standard	£105 per annum
Under 25	£35 per annum
Friends	£35 per annum

As in previous years, you can pay your subscription in one lump sum at the start of the Autumn term, or in three termly instalments, or monthly by standing order. However, the full annual subscription is due even if you are unable to sing with us for part of the year, so if you are going to miss a term (and haven't already paid in full) please let me have payment before you go or let me know when I will receive it. Anyone who drops out without making an arrangement about subs will be regarded as having let their membership lapse, and will have to re-audition with Ian before re-joining.

If anyone is having particular difficulty with paying subs when they're due, please come and see me with your proposals - no reasonable offer refused! And if anyone would like to pay via online banking, please see me to arrange this.

Gift Aid

As a Registered Charity, we can claim tax refunds under Gift Aid, which are an important source of income for the Society. If you are a UK taxpayer, please make sure you ask me for a Gift Aid declaration form to complete, so that we can maximise our tax refund. It's also really important that you keep us up to date with any changes to your name, address or tax status - again, please see me.

As in previous years, we have to divide our subscription into two separate elements: a membership element and a tuition element. We can claim Gift Aid on the membership element only. I'm required to notify you that the tuition element for 2016-17 has been fixed as £12.50 for the full year, the balance being the membership element. If you are a higher rate taxpayer or have to complete a tax return for any other reason, please note that you can only include the membership element as a donation under Gift Aid.

If anyone has any questions about subscriptions or Gift Aid, please come and ask me.

Jane Askew (Treasurer)

Important Dates 2016/17

Wednesday 7th September - Rehearsals resume at Lion Walk Church, 7.30 pm

Wednesday 28th September - Annual General Meeting Lion Walk, 7.30 pm
(followed by rehearsal)

Friday 18th November - evening rehearsal at St Botolphs

Saturday 19th November - afternoon rehearsal

- evening concert at St Botolphs 7.30 pm
Tippett and Vaughan Williams

Sunday 11th December - 1 pm rehearsal at Colchester Moot Hall

- 4pm *Here Comes Christmas!* concert

Friday 17th March 2017 - evening rehearsal at St Botolphs

Saturday 18th March 2017 - afternoon rehearsal with orchestra and soloists

- evening concert at St Botolphs 7.30pm
Bach - St John Passion

Friday 23rd June 2017 - evening rehearsal at St Botolphs

Saturday 24th June 2017 - afternoon rehearsal

- evening concert at St Botolphs 7.30pm
An Elgar Evening

Saturday 18th November - 2017 Autumn Concert

Sunday 10th December - 2017 Christmas Concert