



Patron: Samuel West  
Music Director: Darius Battiwalla  
Registered Charity No. 518073

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2013

I hope you are all enjoying the lovely summer weather and are having a relaxing break from Choir.

You will notice a new look to the Newsletter this year: we've decided to avoid duplication and put all the news of last season into the Annual Report, leaving the Newsletter for forthcoming events and general notices and information. We hope this will result in a shorter and more focused document that members will feel they can read and digest easily. The Honorary Members will receive a dedicated newsletter with their Christmas card.

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

***Please note that the 2013 AGM will follow the rehearsal on Tuesday 15 October.***

So far as I am aware, all Officers and eligible Committee members are willing to stand for re-election, though Angela would really appreciate someone to help/shadow her in her role as Finance Officer. There are vacancies for up to three new Committee members, for which any Chorus member can be nominated provided they have been in the Chorus for a minimum of one full season.

We also still have vacancies for a Marketing and Publicity Officer and a Recruitment Officer if anyone feels able to stand for these.

Janet will have nomination forms available in September and papers for the meeting, including the Annual Report, annual accounts and next season's budget, will be available online prior to the meeting.



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## DIARY 2013

Tuesday 3 September	First rehearsal of new season
Saturday 14 September	Workshop on future of the Chorus - details below
Tuesday 15 October	Annual General Meeting after rehearsal
Tuesday 29 October	Compulsory piano rehearsal for Britten concert*
Sunday 1 December Concert:	Britten: War Requiem
Sunday 8 December	St Luke's Carol Service
Saturday 14 December	Two Christmas Concerts at City Hall
Thursday 19 December	Tickhill Carol Concert
Saturday 21 December Afternoon	Weston Park Museum Carols
Tuesday 24 December	BBC Radio Sheffield carols (lunchtime) TBC

\* There will be a second piano rehearsal for the Britten concert at a date TBC

## DIARY 2014

Saturday 18 January All day rehearsal	Dream of Gerontius
Saturday 15 February Concert:	Dream of Gerontius, Leeds
Saturday 1 March Concert:	Beethoven - Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage
Saturday 7 June	Concert in memory of George Swindells : Victoria Hall, programme TBC (this will include filming some video footage for Chorus promotional purposes)

There are also various possibilities of projects for June and early July 2014 so please keep alert for further announcements

Diary alert

Tickhill Carols, Thursday 19 December this year, in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care. It's not just for those who have always sung in this concert. New members are most welcome too, including to the post concert bash *chez nous*.

Do remember that we resume rehearsals on Tuesday 3 September 2013 at 7.00pm in the Main Hall at the King Edward School and I look forward to seeing you then.

Many thanks to all of you who have enquired after my Jeff. After a lengthy period in hospital he is now being safely looked after in a specialist nursing home in Rotherham. Your care and concern are such a valuable support and I am very grateful to you.



Those of you who went to Bochum in 2009 will be interested to learn that the Chorus Master of the Bochum Phil, Harry Curtis, has now moved on to a new post in Berlin. On behalf of SPC we have sent a card and letter to him with our best wishes for his new life in Berlin.

## **VOICE COACHING**

A reminder that our voice-coaching sessions with Maggie, including warming up, are a crucial and integral part of Chorus activities. Last season I had to apologise to Maggie on two occasions when latecomers made a noisy entry after warm-up had begun. Please make sure you are in your place ready to start rehearsal promptly at 7pm on all rehearsal nights unless there are really good reasons for being late – having a chat and a coffee doesn't count as a good reason. It is appreciated that not everyone likes the warm-up but the bottom line is that it reflects badly on us all and creates a terrible impression of the Chorus if we treat our paid professionals, and indeed one another, with disrespect and discourtesy like this. We pay a lot for Maggie's time and expertise, and we rely on her training sessions to maintain and improve the overall musical standard of the Chorus, so please try not to be late, and, if you really can't be on time, come in quietly and make sure the doors don't slam behind you!

## **HELP NEEDED - FUNERALS**

We would like to gather a pool of members who could, at short notice, sing two or three hymns for funerals, for which the Chorus would receive a payment. There is no pressure to provide a 'balanced choir' for these events as what is needed is vocal leadership at a time when hymns are wanted but singers are few and lack confidence. If you would like to volunteer to be in the pool for this scheme then please let Janet know as soon as possible so that we can decide whether this is a viable service that we can advertise to the funeral directors.

## **REPERTOIRE SELECTION**

Now we are promoting more concerts ourselves it would help us to plan if we could form a small group with enough knowledge of a wide repertoire to suggest programming ideas to Darius and the Committee. Of course, general repertoire suggestions can be made by any member at any time, but the group would be approached for specific ideas about individual programmes, such as, for example, our June 2014 concert. If you feel you have the repertoire knowledge to help with this please let Janet know.



## FUTURE OF THE CHORUS

Invitation: You are invited to an independently facilitated workshop to:

- Discuss the future of the Chorus,
- Gather and stimulate a wide range of views, and
- Tackle some very tricky 'big' questions.

Date/venue: Saturday 14 September, Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University.  
Approx. 3 hours, from c.10am

Booking: Places are free but limited. Please email [chorusfuture@sheffieldphil.org](mailto:chorusfuture@sheffieldphil.org) for a place. You can also use this email address to comment / ask questions about this initiative. Further details are also available in the Members' password protected area of [www.sheffieldphil.org](http://www.sheffieldphil.org).

Why discuss 'the future'? Are you aware that:

- If Local Authority funding of the Sheffield International Concert Series was cut/severely reduced, or 'Chorus' concerts were reduced/cut, we would need to self finance more, if not all of our concerts;
- Financially we have reserves to mount just two concerts in the City Hall of the kind we are accustomed to performing;
- We would have just one concert season between an announcement of any such cut and the point at which the Chorus could no longer survive in its present form.

It's important to stress that the Chorus is fine. We have a season ahead planned and this is not intended to scare monger. Clearly, however, if the Chorus were to cease it would be a sad outcome for the city and for those of us who love, and have had the privilege of, performing the "major" classical works since the Chorus's formation in 1935. It is obviously better for us to think about these issues now, and to put some measures in place to secure our future.

It is of vital importance that we gather comments from all perspectives – not just the 'usual suspects', committee members, etc. Everyone's views are valuable. This is our Chorus and it is our responsibility to do what we can to safeguard its future. The committee cannot know everyone personally and are aware that there may be members with experience and knowledge which would be especially valuable in this process. Whereas ideas that are 'new', 'fresh', 'innovative' and all those other words are needed. It is also the come-once-a-week-to-sing person that will probably be most grounded in what we do, so please don't feel you have nothing to say. A few hours to secure the future for the next 20 years – we hope you want to be involved.

Not available or a workshop 'not your thing'? Please contribute your views and ideas via email, or in person (confidentially if wished) at rehearsals – a list of liaison people is available on the website.



## **PROMOTING THE CHORUS**

Whilst members of the Committee have been doing their best, we are still without a Marketing and Publicity Officer and are therefore missing numerous opportunities to promote the Chorus via events, the media and social/digital networking. If anyone is interested in taking this on please let Julie or Janet know. It is a team role so you will have plenty of help and support around you – it could even perhaps be covered by a “job share” for anyone interested but busy!

We would also really appreciate someone standing as Recruitment Officer to join our Recruitment, Education and Outreach team. If you have ideas about how we might strengthen our recruitment efforts please have a word with Janet or Julie.

## **FRIENDS SCHEME**

We are not looking after our "Friends" as we should be - we need to provide them with some "treats" such as a dinner or reception, and perhaps programme vouchers or the odd free or concessionary concert ticket. If anyone would like to help with arranging some of this we'd really love to hear from you, since the Friends have given us a lot of money in the past three years or so and it's bad to neglect them. Please let Janet or me know if you could help.

## **OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE MUSIC AND GET FREE CONCERT TICKETS**

Here's an opportunity I'm definitely going to take up. If anyone else would like to, please let me know:

From Marketing Executive Rebecca at the City Hall:

“This year following customer feedback, we are trying to create a space in the City Bar where patrons can meet fellow concert goers. The idea is that it will be quite informal giving customers the opportunity to meet one another, particularly for those that come to concerts on their own. In order to do this, we would like to have some representatives for City Hall and the season available before concerts from 5.30pm to create a welcoming atmosphere for people that wish to attend. I wondered whether someone in the choir who is a fan of the season would be happy to share their enthusiasm for the concerts.”

Rebecca is willing to arrange refreshments and complimentary tickets (if you don't already have one) for any of us who want to help with this – it sounds good to me!

Julie Smethurst  
Chairman