



Music Director : Darius Battiwalla
Patron : Samuel West

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As preparation for writing this year's contribution to our Annual Report, I looked at the previous four, and found that every season was characterised by challenges, exciting events and times of sadness and celebration; the 2012-13 season was no exception, and quite often these themes came together in individual events.

The Chorus's most prestigious activity was its highly-acclaimed broadcast performance of Sir Arthur Bliss's cantata *The Beatitudes* in September: musically challenging, very high profile in the musical life of our country, a time of celebration when everything came together on the day, and a dimension of sadness when we discovered that our conductor for the evening, the very inspiring Paul Daniel, had conducted the performance in what turned out to be the final few hours of his mother's life. It is testament to his professionalism and commitment to the task in hand that most of the participants were unaware of this until the day after the concert.

A much more lighthearted phase of the season was around Christmas, though as always for the Chorus, it was a time of great busyness, with no fewer than ten separate singing events between 26 November and Christmas Day. This is always a time of year when we are delighted to be able to support various charities and as well as our regular commitments to St Luke's Hospice and Heart Research UK we were able to make a substantial donation to Lost Chord which was our chosen charity to benefit from proceeds from the annual Tickhill Carol Concert.

We were thrilled when our performance of Rachmaninov's *Vespers* in St Marie's Cathedral in March proved to be a sell-out. The venue and the repertoire both presented us with a massive challenge, but the resulting performance was very satisfying, if exhausting. The occasion had added poignancy as it was dedicated to the memory of our very dear Chorus colleague, Stephen Knight, who died just before Christmas. Our heartfelt thanks to his widow, Sally, who not only supported the concert financially as a Chorus "Friend For Life" but also brought a large party of audience members as well. It has been a joy to welcome Sally back to rehearsals during the Summer.

Shortly after this we were again saddened by the death of our oldest singing member, George Swindells, who died on his 94th Birthday on 28 March. George loved and lived for his singing and was able to continue with this until the very last few weeks of his life. The service of celebration of his life in the Victoria Hall was a most uplifting occasion as his many colleagues from three choirs joined together to sing him on his way. The Chorus will be commemorating him again in its concert next June for which a special piece has been commissioned – further news of this will follow.



As the new season opens we once again look forward to a full and exciting programme of performances. Thanks to a substantial sponsorship by another of our Friends for Life, Steve Terry, we shall have the honour and pleasure of performing Britten's War Requiem within days of what would have been Britten's hundredth Birthday. Within two weeks of this we shall also have the pleasure of sharing a platform with our Patron, Samuel West, when he "comes home" to Sheffield to present this year's Christmas Concerts. We have long hoped that he would be able to do this, as we always thoroughly enjoy working with him.

Spring 2014 promises to be extremely busy with concerts in Leeds and Sheffield within two weeks of one another. Following that we shall be promoting our own concert in the Victoria Hall on 7 June, and beyond that there may be some recording and/or some involvement in the Arts Festival accompanying the Tour de France Grand Depart in early July.

Members will be aware that we are now in a process of looking at the longer term future of the Chorus. In response to input from various Chorus members, it seems timely that we should look at putting in place a strategy to safeguard its existence in the long-term. This is also the appropriate time for me to indicate that 2014-15 will be my final season as Chorus Chairman, so please start thinking who might be the right person to succeed me in Autumn 2015 – two years should be long enough to twist the appropriate arm!

I continue to be overwhelmed and humbled by how hard many people work to ensure the smooth-running and forward-progression of our Chorus. Huge and heartfelt thanks, as always, to Darius, Maggie, Nigel, the staff at the City Hall and King Edward VII School, the Officers, Committee Members, Voice Reps, Friends, and all the others of you who help in all sorts of different ways to keep the show on the road. I cannot even suggest that your workloads will do anything but increase, but please know that none of you is taken for granted. Finally, also as always, the same massive thanks to every single Chorus member: your ownership of the Chorus and your hard work and enthusiasm for singing at the highest possible standard is what makes the Chorus what it is – a community characterised by excellence and a strong sense of teamwork and comradeship which I hope and trust will always be the hallmarks of Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus.

Julie Smethurst
September 2013

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Such a lot has happened this season that it seems ages since we had all the excitement and challenge of learning 'The Beatitudes' ready for its Coventry premier. As ever, Darius, with his professionalism and expertise guided us through the difficult music and enabled us to give a commendable performance. I guess the most severely challenged person was John who manfully tackled the logistics of the event and helped towards the success of the whole day. Many thanks, John.



In October many of us travelled to Leicester to join the Leicester Philharmonic Choir in an exciting programme of Russian repertoire. The Choir's Artistic Director, Hilary Davan Wetton conducted thrilling performances of Borodin's Polovtsian Dances and Prokofiev's Alexander Nevsky, and the Choir made us most welcome – a lovely opportunity to make music with fellow choristers.

Before we had time to draw breath we were pitched into rehearsals for the City Hall Carol Concert x 2 as well as a welcome return to 'Messiah'. This used to be an annual event. Indeed, I believe that for those of longer standing than me, it was routinely performed three times a year. Can you imagine?! We gave it our all and I'm sure the audience were suitably inspired by the performance.

In addition to our City Hall commitments we had our programme of smaller events leading up to Christmas.

A novel experience for a group of us was providing music for the filming of an episode of BBC's Flog It! at the Cutlers Hall in the final week of November. Our rendition of some of the "Sheffield carols", directed by Rachel Copley, was warmly received by the audience and the show's Producer was very pleased with our contribution. So far we haven't had news of when the show will be televised but I've been assured that we will be informed about a fortnight before it is aired and I will let members know when we hear anything.

We made a return visit to Kelham Island to sing at their atmospheric Victorian Market on the first Saturday in December. Donald Watts very kindly agreed to lead the singing and we are grateful to him for that. The organizers were very appreciative of our contribution and were hoping to recruit us again but unfortunately it clashes with the Britten concert.

The 'Station Carols' has become an annual event much appreciated by rail commuters on a cold winter's evening and enjoyed by a loyal group of singers led by our very own Julie.

A new event was singing at Weston Park Museum which went down well and we have already been invited back this year.

Tickhill Carols has been a favourite among Choir members and Tickhillians alike for a good many years. Rachel Copley has faithfully and tirelessly conducted us at everyone and we are immensely grateful to her. Singers have turned up in the most inclement weather - fog, snow, lashing rain, freezing cold (inside as well as out) - such is their enthusiasm for this concert. Some have been known to bring overnight bags in case the weather worsened! The evening is rounded off with a gathering singers and friends at our home, which is usually quite a melee but an enjoyable one!

After all the festivities we settled down to learn/re-learn the Rachmaninov Vespers for our self-promoted concert at St. Marie's Roman Catholic Cathedral. This proved a very challenging event for all concerned with administrative difficulties beforehand and logistical problems on the day. Many thanks for your tolerance and patience and we are especially indebted to Rachel Mallaband, Jo Briddock and John Spence (and quite a few others!) for taking on the administration in my absence. It was a sell out and there were many compliments flying around afterwards so all the angst was worthwhile.



April saw a group of Chorus members joining other singers and the City of Sheffield Youth Orchestra for a most exciting performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony conducted by Christopher Gayford. The high standard of musicianship demonstrated by this very young orchestra was quite remarkable and inspiring, and it is hoped we may be able to join them again when they opt to perform a choral piece.

We finished our season with the tremendous Sea Symphony by Ralph Vaughan Williams and it was a worthy performance under the baton of Cristian Mandeale. Helen arranged for a post concert gathering in the City Hall Bar and it was good to relax and socialise to round off the season. Thank you Helen.

Janet Bower
September 2013

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

Once again we start the new season with healthy income from another very busy year. The main streams of income came from performance fees, as we had two unexpected payments from the BBC (one for the Bliss concert and another for FlogIt) and I was quite pessimistic regarding the two concerts at City Hall; the Friends of SPC again proved very useful to help our funds; and our turnover was boosted by a very generous donation to go towards the War Requiem concert.

Despite my very conservative budget prediction, we were very fortunate to make a healthy profit from our March concert at St Marie's Cathedral, the accounts for that concert and for the Bliss concert are included for you to see. Please be ready to encourage all your friends and family to come to our self-promoted concerts as we cannot afford NOT to sell out the tickets.

Music hire is becoming more and more expensive, especially when we sing several short pieces. Unfortunately the amount we have charged members for music has not kept pace with the costs, therefore we have made a loss this year and we regret that we may have to charge more for music hire in future.

Collecting subscriptions was again very slow, but maybe that is unavoidable... Please note that as soon as the AGM is over I shall start collecting subs before and after rehearsals and I will introduce fines for late payers. Members are reminded that to be able to sing in the Christmas concert they need to have paid their subscription fee.

Having served on the committee in different roles since 1999, I intend to stand down next year, as I do believe that the Chorus would benefit from "fresh blood" and, from a personal point of view, I would like to "just sing" for a while. The Finance Officer's job may seem daunting but it is extremely rewarding and it gives you a real sense of how the SPC operates. As long as you pay the bills as they arrive and keep all the paper work in order, I



reckon the job involves one hour a week on average all year plus two full days for the accounts and one day for the gift aid in the summer. So if you are organised, have a fair understanding of basic computing and would like to shadow me this year in view to replace me next season, please do come forward. Thanks you for all your support and help this past year.

Angela Argenzio

September 2013

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus								
Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31.07.2013								
Summary			Monetary Assets					
Balance at 31.07.2012	£47,876.99		General Bank Account		£3,286.42			
			Concert Account		£586.23			
			Savings Account		£6,492.31			
			Friends of SPC		£198.50			
			Friends of SPC savings		£5,900.84			



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Profit for current year	£4,587.31				£36,000.00		
	£52,464.30				£52,464.30		
Income Categories	Actual			Budget			
Bliss	£5,000.00			£5,000.00			
Coventry tickets sale	£2,243.00			£0.00			
City hall Tickets	£1,880.00			£0.00			
Friends of SPC	£2,700.00			£2,600.00			
Folders & scarves	£109.00			£110.00			
Fund Raising	£655.00			£1,500.00			
Gifts Recieved	£10,580.66			£1,500.00			
Investment Income	£258.61			£250.00			
Performance fees	£5,959.12			£4,500.00			
Room Hire refund	£20.50			£0.00			
Sale and Hire of Music	£1,832.97			£2,500.00			
Self promoted concert	£3,528.00			£3,000.00			
Subscriptions	£19,756.89			£19,350.00			
Stairclimber fund	£0.00			£250.00			
Tax Refund	£4,457.01			£4,000.00			
Tickhill	£112.00			£0.00			
Travel	£112.50			£0.00			
Weddings & Funerals	£275.00			£0.00			
Total Income Categories	£59,480.26			£44,560.00			
Expense Categories	Actual			Budget			
Bliss	£5,000.00			£5,000.00			
Coventry ticket sale	£2,243.00			£0.00			
City Hall tickets	£1,880.00			£0.00			
Accompanist	£3,370.00			£3,430.00			
Chorus Master	£8,318.40			£8,772.20			
Complimentary tickets	£60.00			£200.00			
Coach Travel	£3,530.00			£4,050.00			
Concert contribution	£16,360.00			£5,500.00			
Scarves/folders replacement	£114.80			£0.00			
Friends admin	£4.50			£0.00			
Fund raising expence							
mugs/cards	£372.50			£600.00			
Gifts & social	£85.99			£200.00			
Insurance & Subscription	£585.00			£400.00			
Piano tuning	£0.00			£100.00			



The Budget Detail for the 2013/2014 Season

Expenditure		Unit Cost	Numl	Expenditure	Income	
Accompanist	Tuesday rehearsals	£75.00	47	£3,525.00		
Administration	stationary, postage,IT		1	£500.00		
Chorus master	Concerts Attendance	£225.00	3	£675.00		
Chorus master	Tuesday rehearsals	£150.00	49	£7,350.00		
Chorus master retainer		£800.00	1	£800.00		
Complimentary Tickets		£50.00	4	£200.00		
Coach Travel		£1,350.00	1	£1,350.00		
Concerts contributions		£2,000.00	1	£2,000.00		
Gifts for members				£200.00		
Insurance				£650.00		
Piano Tuning		£50.00	2	£100.00		
printing and publicity				£1,300.00		
Marketing	Video			£3,000.00		
Stairclimber maintenance				£300.00		
Other travel		100	3	£300.00		
Hire &Printing of Music		2500	1	£2,500.00		
Venue Sat	including men reauditions	£180.00	3	£540.00		
Venue Tues	Tuesday rehearsals	£100.00	40	£4,000.00		
Voice coaching	Maggie	£150.00	10	£1,500.00		
Voice coaching	Room	£20.00	10	£200.00		
Workshop leader	R Hunt	£25.00	10	£250.00		
Workshop room		£15.00	10	£150.00		
Fund raising expense	bags & al			£350.00		
Concert 7 June				£6,850.00		
Income						
Subscriptions	Reduced rate	£36.00	15		£540.00	
Subscriptions	Full	£120.00	160		£19,200.00	
Tax refund	Gift aid				£6,500.00	
Donations					£4,500.00	
Friends					£1,500.00	
Concert income		1200	1		£1,200.00	
Interest					£260.00	
Fund Raising					£750.00	
Hire & Printing of Music		2500	1		£2,500.00	
Replacement folders		5.5	10		£55.00	
Stairclimber fund					£300.00	
Concert 7 June					£3,740.00	
				TOT/	£38,590.00	£41,045.00
Contingency		£2,455.00				



St Marie's Cathedral concert

	Actual	budget	Difference
Income Categories			
Tickets	3462	3600	-138
Extra tickets re-sold on door	66	0	66
Programmes	0	100	-100
Total Income Categories	3528	3700	-172
Expense Categories			
Hire of St. Marie's facilities	500	400	100
Organist Fee	400	400	0
Conductor fee	900	900	0
Soloist fee (including tickets refund)	326.4	300	-26.4
Tenor Soloist	250	0	-250
Extra men (Cathedral)	400	360	-40
gifts	7	0	-7
Contingency	0	300	-300
Programmes	0	150	-150
Total Expense Categories	2783.4	2810	26.6
Grand Total	744.6	890	-145.4



PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

When last year Rachel Mallaband stepped down from the role of Marketing & Publicity Officer, which she had filled so well and indefatigably, the Chorus has somehow managed to keep its flags flying, but not always particularly well.

I offered to cover some of the basic requirements, particularly on co-ordinating the preparation of text for publicity material, programme material &c. Those who have provided raw material for this (particularly committee officers who have their own work to do) have made that part much easier. Peter Miles has continued to use his skills to deliver attractive and eye-catching designs for all our printed output, and deserves our thanks. Julie and the committee have considered and discussed options for the Chorus's future marketing and publicity effort. The workshop on 14 September carried this forward, and covered a broader range of questions which should influence the methods used for marketing and publicity.

I have occasionally tried to promote the use of statistical analysis of the City Hall database to improve the value of its direct emails, with no positive response from SIV management. I hope that future collaboration with Hallam University's Sheffield Business School may get this idea going again and enable us to focus our efforts to better effect.

Peter Quarrell
September 2013

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION OFFICER'S REPORT

2012/13 has been my second year as Outreach & Education Officer and, like the first, has been dominated by matters relating to recruitment, in particular of men.

One of my main focuses for the year has been the arrangement of three series of pre-rehearsal sight-reading workshops which very ably run by Ros Hobson from the Altos. Two of these were specifically targeted at men who had either recently joined or were interested in joining the Chorus. The first series, which took place between October and December, attracted around eight men, most of whom were new to the Chorus and a number of new members (both tenors and basses) were successfully auditioned as a result. Recruiting for the second series of men's workshops, which took place in the run up to the Sea Symphony, proved significantly more difficult and, despite coverage in the press and on Radio Sheffield, numbers taking up places were small and, as far as I am aware, no new members have yet been successfully auditioned as a result.

This points up what we all already know – that recruitment (of men in particular) is a real challenge – not just for us but for many other choirs throughout the UK. But it's something that we absolutely have to keep working at if we are to continue to develop and sing the music we'd like. The new Voice Exchange developed by Nigel Wright with the Sheffield Oratorio Chorus is a really welcome way to bring additional male voices into the SPC but it mustn't be seen as a substitute to the recruitment of new members. In my report last year, I urged you all to do all you could to point potential new tenors and basses towards the Chorus and (running the risk of sounding like a stuck record) the same still applies.



Analysing the information that John collects on new members over the past five years shows very clearly that having a friend or colleague in the Chorus is the main route by which people come to join us (bringing in more than three times as many new members as do fliers and leaflets) so it's vital that all of us do all we can to identify and bring in potential new people.

One of the more specific issues we face is in attracting those who are already more or less at an appropriate level to join the Chorus without requiring more support than we can realistically give with music reading and signing technique. As Julie put it to me so succinctly, "No-one tries to go straight from playing footy in their backyard to appearing for Manchester United, and I suppose our best investment will always be in singers who want to build on their choral experience, not start it with us." This is particularly the issue if the music we are learning at the time is on the 'challenging' side so for this reason we have decided not to run the next series of men's workshops until the New Year with the aim of bringing a new crop of men in for the Beethoven concert at the start of March. I know this seems a long way off but what I need you all to do now is to start thinking of and 'working on' potential new male Chorus members to give these workshops a go.

Also in relation to recruitment, I am currently working in a small group with Jim Monarch, Nigel Wright and Daphne Sidney to develop an online questionnaire to assess the views of members on the Chorus and its future development. We initially started by focusing on repertoire but soon realised that we needed to cover a wider range of areas, including recruitment. It will be a little while yet before this is ready but be assured, a link to it will be hitting your inboxes at some time this Autumn and we and the wider committee would urge you all to respond as we would really value your views and ideas. The plan is to then follow this up with a series of focus groups to give those that want to a chance to further discuss the development of the Chorus.

In all this I am very pleased to acknowledge the support of the other members of the Recruitment, Outreach & Education (ROE) group; Sally Turnbull, Sue Pennington, Thomas Mitchell and now Nigel Wright. Recruitment is such a key issue that the Committee agreed in the run up to last year's AGM that there is a need for a specific Recruitment Officer to work alongside me and the other members of the ROE group. So far no-one has come forward to take on this role so, if this sounds as if it might be your kind of thing, please do have a word with me or Julie.

Paul Maddox
September 2013

NEW MEMBERS OFFICER'S REPORT

Since moving to King Edward's 7th school for our rehearsal venue last September, we have had a steady influx of visitors, of whom about 16 successfully auditioned and stayed. John Spence will have an accurate record of this. Rehearsing the Messiah was a great attraction to singers, unfortunately some enjoyed our rehearsals for that then disappeared! I estimate 50 people visited us at least once, about 10 more made contact with me but didn't ever appear. These very approximate figures would indicate that we must all make efforts to welcome visitors, encourage people to stay IF it is the right choir for them and



constantly suggest to potential singers we might meet that they can at least try us out . I would like to thank the voice reps for keeping an eye on new people and for anyone I have grabbed in the foyer to show a visitor the ropes.

Sally Turnbull
September 2013

MEMBERSHIP OFFICER'S REPORT

The statistics reproduced below in this report are derived from the computerised Chorus Database.

Composition of the Chorus

As at the date of compilation of this report (September 2013) there are 181 singing members of the Chorus (August 2012 – 183) and 69 Honorary Members (2012 – 66). Of the 181 singing members 10 (2012 – 10) are on an authorised Leave of Absence.

The Chorus numbers break down as follows:

	2013	2012	(2013)
1 st Sopranos	35	37	(1 on LoA)
2 nd Sopranos	29	32	(3 on LoA)
1 st Altos	34	31	(2 on LoA)
2 nd Altos	23	22	(2 on LoA)
1 st Tenors	10	10	(0 on LoA)
2 nd Tenors	11	11	(0 on LoA)
1 st Basses	22	24	(1 on LoA)
2 nd Basses	17	16	(1 on LoA)

Resignations, Retirements and Deaths

During the year 2012/13 12 members retired or resigned or were written off the record due to unexplained absence for more than a year (2012/13 – 18) comprising:

	2012/13	2011/12
1 st Sopranos	2	2
2 nd Sopranos	1	2
1 st Altos	3	3
2 nd Altos	1	4
1 st Tenors	2	0
2 nd Tenors	0	3
1 st Basses	3	1
2 nd Basses	0	3

New Members



During the year 2012/13 14 new members (2011/12 – 11) were successfully auditioned and joined the Chorus comprising:

	2012/13	2011/12
1 st Sopranos	1	1
2 nd Sopranos	1	5
1 st Altos	4	3
2 nd Altos	2	0
1 st Tenors	2	0
2 nd Tenors	0	0
1 st Basses	2	1
2 nd Basses	2	1

Concert Attendance

A detailed breakdown of the concert attendance statistics is attached to this report as an Appendix.

Just a few points may be highlighted.

- 1 Chorus Members who have sought a formal Leave of Absence are excluded from the figures. Casual apologies are counted as absences.
- 2 The overall average Chorus attendance at Concerts for the whole season was 71.5% of those Members currently available.
(2011/12 – 64.9%)
- 3 The best attended concert was the Vaughan Williams Sea Symphony at 76.1% of those Members currently available.
(2011/12 - Faure concert on 25/2/2012 at 71.6%)
- 4 The worst attended concert was the Rachmaninov Vespers at St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield at 58.8% of those Members currently available.
(2011/12 - Alight concert on 3/3/2012 at 46.1%)
- 5 The best section attendance at a concert was the 2nd Altos at the Messiah Concert at the City Hall on 15 December 2012.
(2011/12 - 2nd Basses on 7/10/2012 at 87.5%)
- 6 The worst section attendance at a concert was 2nd Tenors at the Rachmaninov concert at St Marie's on 8 March 2013 at 36.4%.
(2011/12 - 2nd Tenors on 3/3/2012 at 9.1%)

Honorary Members

There were 2 new Honorary Members approved by the Committee during the year, one of whom has since died. (2011/12 – 0). There is one election as Honorary Member by the Committee still outstanding at the time of writing.



Automated Registration

The system now appears to be working satisfactorily and does save me some time and effort as well as reducing the number of errors. I can mention, however, that just a few members still experience a little difficulty registering their cards. This is usually caused by one of three factors:

- 1 Holding the card too close to the reader; it needs to be 6" to 8" away.
- 2 Waving the card about; it needs to be held still for a couple of seconds in order for the reader to focus on it – the red line indicates that the reader is trying to read the barcode.
- 3 Keeping a finger or thumb over one end of the bar code so as to obscure it; the reader needs to be able to 'see' both ends.

I would remind members that the registration system will always be there, whether at a rehearsal or at a concert; it will be the registration computer if the location is secure enough or manual sheets if it is not. If it's position is not immediately obvious it may have had to be moved for practical purposes – but it will be there somewhere. If you cannot see it immediately, please just ask.

I shall be printing new membership cards for 2013/14 for all Chorus members and these will be issued by the Finance Officer on receipt of the annual subscription paid at the appropriate rate. These cards now have extra information written into the bar codes which will enable the system to reject a registration where a subscription is outstanding beyond the period allowed for renewal by the Finance Officer.

Re-auditions

Re-auditions continue on the usual three yearly cycle. The Alto sections were re-auditioned over three sessions in July apart from four members and I am very pleased to be able to report that those who were re-auditioned were successful. Those four people who were not able to attend for various reasons I shall arrange to be re-auditioned before the rehearsals in the first few weeks of next season. Three other members from other sections were also re-auditioned with mixed results.

The Gentlemen's sections will be due for their triennial re-audition session in the Summer of 2014 and I shall be very grateful if section members will sign up for their slots when advertised as soon as possible in order to keep the number of 'catch up' re-auditions to the very minimum.

I would remind all members that if they have not been heard after they have been called for re-audition then they may not sing in subsequent concerts without obtaining specific permission from the Music Director.

Voice Representatives



The team of Voice Representatives is invaluable to me and I must not fail to record my annual public expression of my sincere gratitude to each and every one of them for the work they do. They are my 'eyes and ears' to the Chorus. I am very happy to note that each one of them is prepared to continue in office.

For the benefit of new members I will list them here:

1 st Sopranos	Katrina Hulse
2 nd Sopranos	Pat Hall
1 st Altos	Rachel Rowlands
2 nd Altos	Kate Reece
All Tenors	Jim Monach
1 st Basses	Richard Salt
2 nd Basses	David Mortimer

All the Voice Representatives are very happy to help all members, especially new members, with any queries they may have about the Chorus or to direct any queries to me or to the appropriate Committee member.

Concert Seating Arrangements

It has become my practice in recent times to circulate to the whole Chorus by email a copy of the seating arrangement as approved by the Music Director. It is a great help to both me and to the Chorus as a whole if members check their email inboxes shortly before a concert to download the seating arrangement (which is usually in *.pdf format) so that they can familiarise themselves with the plan before arriving at the concert venue.

Conclusion

The 2012/13 was a busy season involving 5 main concerts with their respective rehearsal schedules and attendant seating arrangements plus an additional 'guest' concert in the De Montfort Hall in Leicester. For the most part the arrangements worked smoothly enough with the possible exception of the Rachmaninov concert in St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield where there was no provision for seating for the Chorus on stage and almost no rest area off stage. At least one Chorus member was taken ill as a result and quite a number of others declined to take part. Had it not been for my Chorus responsibilities, I would have been another one of those. It would be my strong recommendation that bookings are not taken in future unless proper provision can be made for Chorus seating both on and off stage.

May I remind members that they undertake to sing in all concerts whenever possible and should attend at least three quarters of rehearsals for each. Please make concert dates a priority and let me know well in advance if you are unable to take part. In the event of an illness or other emergency please telephone me before 11:00 am on the morning of the concert or inform another Chorus member so that I can adjust the seating plan.

My telephone numbers are 0114 230 4815 and 07711 846571 and my email addresses are either john@johnspence.plus.com or membership@sheffieldphil.org. All this



information is prominently displayed on the website. For those of you who can communicate on the free BlackBerry Instant Messaging service my PIN is 25E81C1E.

Please also continue to inform me of changes of address and illness of members that come to your notice.

The arrangements for obtaining the Music Director's approval to sing have changed slightly this last season. It is perhaps disappointing to note that a disproportionately large number of members were regularly falling short of the MARs for a number of concerts and/or missing compulsory rehearsals. Leaving aside the question of whether or not some members might be taking an unfair advantage of the system, the consequence was that the Music Director was inundated with requests for approval to sing by people who were falling short of the MARs. As a result, he has now given me a VERY LIMITED discretion to approve those members who just fall short. In consequence, all requests for approval to sing where the MAR has not been achieved or compulsory rehearsals have been missed should in the first instance be addressed to me either directly or via the Voice Representatives. I will then approve those requests which fall within the scope of my discretion or pass on to the Music Director those which do not.

Please note that the singing lists (ie the numbers of those members in each section who have either completed the MAR or have otherwise obtained specific approval to sing in a concert) and the seating plans are closely related; the latter are prepared from the former. Therefore, if a member has fallen short of the MAR and has not obtained specific approval, there is no provision for him or her on the seating plan.

John M Spence
October 2013



APPENDIX

	S1	S2	A1	A2	T1	T2	B1	B2	Concert Total
22/9/2012									
The Beatitudes – Coventry Cathedral									
Attended	26	25	21	17	6	5	16	9	125
Total available	36	31	29	20	8	11	24	15	174
%age	72.2%	80.6%	72.4	85.0%	75.0%	45.5%	66.7%	60.0%	71.8%
13/10/12									
A Nevsky - Leicester									
Attended	Figures not available								
Total available	Figures not available								
%age	Figures not available								
8/12/2012									
Christmas Concerts – City Hall									
Attended	31	25	23	17	8	5	18	11	138
Total available	37	31	32	22	10	11	25	16	184
%age	83.8%	80.6%	71.9%	77.3%	80.0%	45.5%	72.0%	68.8%	75.0%
15/12/2012									
Messiah - City Hall									
Attended	25	24	24	21	9	8	17	11	139
Total available	37	31	32	22	10	11	25	16	184
%age	67.6%	77.4%	75.0%	95.5%	90.0%	72.7%	68.0%	68.8%	75.5%
8/3/2013									
Rachmaninov – St Marie’s									
Attended	18	20	18	17	6	4	14	10	107
Total available	35	30	34	21	10	11	24	17	182
%age	51.4%	66.7%	52.9%	81.0%	60.0%	36.4%	58.3%	58.9%	58.8%
2/6/2013									
V Williams – Sea Symphony									
Attended	23	25	27	17	9	9	19	11	140
Total available	36	31	33	22	10	11	24	17	184
%age	63.9%	80.6%	81.8%	77.3%	90.0%	81.8%	79.2%	64.7%	76.1%



LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

A varied programme in various venues made for an interesting year.

The challenge this year was obtaining copies, poor though they were when found, of the *Survivor of Warsaw* by Schoenberg which had to come from Germany. These were still in copy rights and only available from the publishers in Mainz, Germany.

Pleased to say that when the men sang it in Coventry Cathedral it sounded great and made it worth all the effort.

Otherwise the year was without problems as far as finding the scores was concerned. Postage costs are however rising to alarming rates. For example the War Requiem postage for the hire copies just from Leeds was well over £ 40.00 one way. Due to holidays I was not able to collect these before their Choir disappeared abroad for a tour.

I often collect scores myself from Huddersfield and when obtaining the Prokofiev and Borodin Scores from the Leicester Philharmonic Chorus I met their librarian at the Ikea store in Nottingham, a halfway point. I was to look for a chap with a red raincoat over his arm. We spotted each other, moved our cars side by side and moved boxes from his car into mine. I was rather surprised not to be pulled up by the police!!

So who thinks the life of a librarian is dull!!!

I am going to repeat the Annual reminder of last years report as a reminder to all:

Sadly it appears that if scores are handed out without numbers being taken, due to time pressure or the sheer number of different items to be handed out, the return rate is lower and slower or in some cases not at all.

This obviously makes my job less pleasant and incurs significant costs for replacement scores.

Late returns, 2 weeks or more after the concert, will be charged at £5.00 per item, as before. Replacements will be charged at cost price, plus the cost of postage.

As always my thanks go to Patricia Hall Howard Dore, and all the other members who are always there to assist in handing out the scores.

Els Pearse
September 2013

SOCIAL EVENTS OFFICER'S REPORT



2012/2013 was socially a quieter season than in recent years. At the Christmas concert we had the usual mince pies and sherry in the interval. Allocating particular tables to voice parts seemed to alleviate the problem with the queues and from my observation it didn't seem to prevent the two halves of the chorus from mingling! I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who help with the setting up and clearing away. It is much appreciated as it is a daunting prospect for one after two performances.

For the second year running, at the last concert of the season, we held a post performance get together in the City Bar. It was well attended and the City Hall staff were more prepared this time, we are all still learning. I hope that it will become a regular event as it is a pleasant conclusion to the season.

Next summer I would like to hold something in place of the Teddy Bears' picnic. I have some ideas but would welcome any suggestions. Please feel free to email or speak to me in person.

For those people who are not aware, a number of members go across the road to the Francis Newton Pub for a post rehearsal drink. Anyone is welcome and it is a great way to get to know people and to relax after Darius has put us through our paces.

Helen Kirk
September 2013