

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus
Minutes of Meeting 26th September 2012

Present

Julie Smethurst; Janet Bower; Els Pierce; John Spence; Angela Argenzio; Sally Turnbull; Kate Reece; Howard Dore; Richard Salt; Jo Payne; Paul Duffield; Helen Kirk; Sue Pennington; Peter Quarrell; Kate Arrowsmith.

1. Apologies

Rachel Mallaband; Daphne Sydney; Elizabeth Charlesworth; Paul Maddox.

Three retiring committee members, Howard, Paul Duffield & Kate Reece, were thanked for their work. Paul was co-opted back onto the committee in his role as transport manager.

Julie thanked Angela for her hospitality in hosting this evening's meeting.

2. Voice Coaching & "voicing" the chorus

There was discussion of more effective ways of using Maggie's voice coaching sessions. For example, after the warm up she could work with small groups of maybe 3 or 4 people for 30 minutes.

Currently she does 10 sessions per season at £150 per session. We would like to extend this to 13 sessions.

A number of practical difficulties were identified when considering the notion of "voicing" the chorus by strategic seating of singers at concerts to aid blending. There needs to be a significant musical advantage to offset the problems.

Advice to be sought from Maggie & Darius on both of these points.

3. 2012/13 Budget for the AGM

Angela circulated draft accounts for 2011/12.

a) Alight Twilight broke even. Rachel Mallaband has generously donated to the chorus her management fee of £3,820. Julie to

ask her if she would like to accept Life Membership of the Friends.

b) It was agreed that subscription rates should remain the same as last year and also that fees for Darius & Nigel should remain the same.

c) Fees for weddings should allow for the option of charging additionally for mileage if the wedding is outside Sheffield and also if the organist requires extra payment for video rights.

d) Angela to write to the Bliss Trust re the Coventry concert.

e) The deficit on The Armed Man concert was a very manageable £727.

f) Francis Lavender has requested that her Friends for Life donation be used to support the forthcoming "Messiah." An anonymous Friend will support the Sea Symphony.

g) Angela will purchase software to aid her computation of Gift Aid.

h) Els will purchase 20 copies of Messiah for resale or for our library.

i) Future new members will be asked to pay for their folders separately from their subscription.

j) SIV to be asked for complimentary tickets for marketing purposes to be used as required. If this is refused then Angela will budget for us to buy some.

4. Financial agreement with Halle/ SIV for Messiah

Julie will soon be writing to Andrea Stafford in reply to her proposed financial arrangements for the Messiah concert. Andrea suggested that our share of the box office receipts be capped at the amount we are contributing to the concert which is £4,200. This means that there would be no prospect of any profit being returned to the chorus even if all the tickets are sold. Many committee members were most unhappy about this proposal since its acceptance in principle would indicate our

willingness always to lose money or at best to break even. Julie has been mandated to seek a compromise arrangement short of pulling out of the concert.

5. Concert on 8th March 2013

It was agreed that we should share both the financial risk and any potential profit with St Marie's. The programme to be Rachmaninov Vespers & Kodaly Misa Brevis. A site visit is required. Ticket prices need to be in line with those for the other concerts in the series.

6. Marketing & Publicity Officer

There have been no volunteers to take on this job in its entirety but bits of it need to be done urgently. Peter offered to work on parts of the role including writing advertising copy. He will work alongside Peter Miles and will meet with Rachel to discuss which parts of her job he can and will do. Peter was warmly thanked for his timely offer.

7. Workshops/ outreach/ recruitment

Sally reported that there are 20 new people already expected at the rehearsal on 16th October. Of these, 5 tenors and 1 bass wish to enrol for the workshops. 2 new first basses and 2 new second basses are also expected who judge that they do not need the workshops. Of the 10 potential new women members 7 are altos and 3 are sopranos.

Agreed to budget for more workshops for the beginning of 2013. It's possible they might be required for music reading for potential new members but otherwise they will be used for other purposes which benefit existing chorus members. Details to be discussed at Paul Maddox's subgroup and with Darius.

8. Membership Matters

John will include in his section of the annual report a request that members needing to ask Darius for permission to sing a concert when they are slightly adrift with MARs should do so in person on a Tuesday evening.

9. Minutes of meeting of 13th June

Were signed

10. Matters Arising

- a) Some or all of Rachel's donation to be ring-fenced for the Olympic Triptych recording – Julie to confirm with Rachel about her wishes on this. Darius to talk to Timothy Allen about logistics of the project.
- b) Yaron's score is now being bound and will be ready for presentation at the AGM. (approx cost £100)
- c) Julie to check with John Hide re his current position regarding the Friends initiative and its bank account signatories.
- d) It was noted that arrangements for the up-coming Leicester concert have left an unsatisfactory gap in the season for many members. There are still places left for additional singers but the extra Saturdays in addition to those needed for Coventry have made it difficult for many people. The situation is unfortunate but was probably unavoidable.

11. AOB

- a) We have been offered the opportunity to buy 100 Philharmonic concert programmes from the 1940's and 1950's for £25 before they are put onto ebay. Declined.
- b) Paul will ask at rehearsal for numbers for the Leicester coach. It may be necessary to hire an additional minibus or organise shared lifts if numbers exceed a coach load.
- c) Rehearsal intervals will not be extended but will remain at 5 minutes after the notices, which are kept as succinct as possible.
- d) It was reported that a number of audience members at last year's Christmas concert are not returning this year because they felt the chorus was under-prepared. It was also mentioned that descants are sometimes not rehearsed until the day which makes it difficult for new members.
- e) There is no budget for additional Christmas decorations this year.

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 16th November 9.15pm
at 49 Westbourne Road S10 2QT