

Waltham Singers newsletter

Issue No 60
April 2016

From the Chair...

As I write with the rain and wind lashing the windows, I hope you are enjoying the Easter break and the seasonal weather!

Well I think in the end, the consensus was that we had a marvellous concert in March! After a slow start when perhaps many people found the music inaccessible and unappealing, the programme came to life in the last few rehearsals and the concert proved to be exciting and quite different. It was tremendous to sing with the excellent longfordbrown piano duo and the Percussion Ensemble of London who also contributed engaging, unusual solo items to the programme. *Arion* went down a storm and the audience feedback was very positive indeed. I hope you all feel it was worth those first few weeks of difficulty. I was amused to see Lindy Tennent-Brown at the Sunday rehearsal playing the piano with her seven month old baby sleeping in a sling: I never managed anything like that with my children!

Looking back, we had another successful Quiz Night in February which was well supported and raised £860 for choir funds. Many thanks to Mike Wall for organising this, setting the questions and being Quizmaster again for the evening. Thanks also to everyone who helped in the kitchen.

We said good bye to Laurence in March and hope to appoint his successor to start in September when we will be preparing a programme of Mozart and Haydn, including Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*, for the Cathedral in November.

Closer to hand, this term we are singing unaccompanied music from the 16th century to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of Cipriano de Rore, a highly regarded composer who became Maestro di Capella at St Marks, Venice. We had a taster of this at our last rehearsal which I hope has whetted your appetites for more. The programme takes de Rore's life and travels as a starting point, examining the influences on him, those musicians he would have met and/or worked with, and those he influenced. It will be a combination of spoken material and music and Annabel Malton has worked very hard to put this programme together; sourcing and editing the music, producing PDFs for our use and writing the script. She has also identified YouTube recordings of the works and embedded links to these in the script circulated before Easter. This should be an invaluable resource for us in preparing for the concert. Huge thanks to Annabel, without whom none of this would have been achieved! The concert is on Saturday 18th June, 7.30pm at Great Waltham Church. Please note that the 'Sunday' rehearsal for this concert is on **MONDAY** 13th June 8pm at Great Waltham Church.

On the Thursday following the concert (26th June, 8pm, venue to be confirmed) is our AGM where we will elect the trustees who form the committee for the next season and discuss how the season has gone with reports from the Chair, the Musical Director and the Treasurer. Please take this opportunity to express your views about the choir, as it is only by receiving wide opinion that the committee can appropriately reflect the membership's views in future planning. Perhaps you would like to become more involved with the organisation of the choir? There are plenty of ways to contribute without the commitment of being a committee member and help is always needed. If so, do let me or another committee member know.

To round off the season, we are planning a Strawberry Tea at The Barn, New Hall School on the afternoon of Sunday 10th July. This attractive venue will allow us to be outside if the weather is good and I hope lots of you will come along so we can have a pleasant, social afternoon. The more, the merrier!

The first rehearsal of the summer term is on 7th April, 8pm at St Cedd's as usual. Hope to see you all there.

Best wishes.

Kate

DOVE, STRAVINSKY, ARNOLD
Waltham Singers at King Edward VI School
12.03.16

Dove, Stravinsky, Arnold.

Names not often seen headlining a choral concert.

The Jonathan Dove was a world première, commissioned by Making Music. A lovely work, accessible for choirs and their audiences, it will surely prove lastingly popular, not least because it uses forces similar to those required by Orff's old war-horse *Carmina Burana*, including here the superb longfordbrown piano duo and the Percussion Ensemble of London.

It tells the ancient legend of Arion, the Voice winner who is saved from drowning by a passing Dolphin. The women are the chorus, the men the "manly shanty singing" sailors, the children [New Hall's Fibre Optic Choir] are the school of dolphins. Arion himself was sung by counter-tenor Benjamin Williamson; his first swan-song an exquisite duet with the xylophone. The percussion paints pictures together with Alasdair Middleton's witty, literate verse libretto – the sacred silver bell, the prize money, the splash as Arion leaps.

This new piece sounded comfortingly traditional after the other works: Malcolm Arnold's *John Clare Cantata* a revelation, a dark picture of the natural cycle of the year. Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, in an arrangement – not the recently recorded Shostakovich – for two pianos. The choir, conducted by Andrew Fardell, much more prominent – outstanding in the sinewy setting of Psalm 38, and in the Slavic sound of Psalm 150, with its exciting rhythms, its great bell, and some spectacular pianism.

Pianists and percussionists were given solo spots: Michael Parsons' minimalist *Rhythm Studies II*, and movements from Salzedo's spectacular *Concerto for Percussion*.

I understand that the Dove was given a simultaneous première down in Dulwich, where they had Robin Blaze and *Carmina Burana* ...

<http://michaelgray.blogspot.co.uk/2016/03/dove-stravinsky-arnold.html>

50:50 Club News:

Winners for Draw 72 are:-

£50: Christine Eason (23) £30: Lynda Stapleton (18)
£25: Sylvia Craig (97) £25: Annabel Malton (41) £20: Gwyneth Currie (37)

If you would like a number (or numbers, max 5) they cost £12 and we have three prize draws a year.

Half the income is returned in prizes and the other half helps to support our concert programme.

Please see Mike Wall for an application form, or pick one up at rehearsals from near the notice board.

Committee meetings:

The Committee members for 2016 are

Ian Aim, Sarah Bakewell, Mike Catterall, Bill Gray, Kate Hanson, Gerald Malton,
Sabine Nussey, Jemma Parker, Nadia Smart, Jenny Tait, Mike Wall and Julie Warner.

Our next committee meetings are on 13th April and 25th May. Please let Kate Hanson or Nadia Smart know if you wish anything to be raised at that meeting.

Dates for your Diary

Summer Term 2016

Thursday, 7 April	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	First rehearsal of term
Monday, 13 June	8.00 pm	Gt Waltham Church	Pre-concert 'Sunday' rehearsal
Thursday, 16 June	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term
Saturday, 18 June	1.00 - 4.00 pm	Gt Waltham Church	Concert day rehearsal
Saturday, 18 June	7.30 pm	Gt t Waltham Church	Cipriano de Rore concert
Thursday, 23 June	8.00 pm	TBC	AGM
Sunday, 10 July	2.00 pm	The Barn, New Hall	Strawberry Tea

Autumn Term 2016

Thursday, 8 September	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Open rehearsal
Sunday, 13 November	2.00 - 4.00 pm	TBC	Pre-concert Sunday rehearsal
Saturday, 19 November	1.00 - 4.00 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Concert day rehearsal
Saturday, 19 November	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Mozart C minor Mass, Sinfonia Concertante

Future Concert Dates

Saturday, 19 November 2016	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Mozart C minor Mass, Sinfonia Concertante
Saturday, 18 March 2017	7.30 pm	KEGS	Allegri <i>Miserere</i> ; Faure <i>Requiem</i> ; Alan Bullard
31 March - 4 April 2017		Bruges	Choir tour: repertoire to include the Allegri <i>Miserere</i> and Faure <i>Requiem</i> and an Alan Bullard commission.
Saturday, 17 June 2017	7.30 pm	Gt Waltham Church	'At the Opera'