

Waltham Singers newsletter

Issue No 46
August 2011

From the Chair...

I hope you have all had a good and restful summer break and feel refreshed and ready to return to singing for another season.

We finished last year on such a high with Victoria, Mantra and the Orlando Consort that I have been grateful for the break to allow the sounds to continue to echo in my mind and savour the quality of both the music and the musicmaking. As a reminder, we have included Michael Gray's review in this newsletter together with an alternative perspective from our own Foureyes.

It was good to see many of you at the Annual Review meeting and those who came or who have read the leaflets for the 2011/12 season will already know that there is an enticing programme of music in store. Our first concert is on 12th November in Chelmsford Cathedral with Poulenc's Gloria and Stabat Mater working again in collaboration with the Salomon Orchestra. Snow permitting, we return to the Cathedral on 7th December for the Macmillan Carol Concert. On 24th March we perform for the first time in King Edward VI School Hall, joined by the school trebles, in Orff's Carmina Burana. The season concludes on 16th June at Great Waltham with a programme mainly of English music by Bob Chilcott, Alan Bullard and Benjamin Britten, for which we are to be accompanied by Tim Carey.

The first rehearsal of term at 8pm on Thursday, 8th September at St Cedd's School is our Open Rehearsal where we issue an invitation to anyone to come and join us for the evening, with no obligation, to see if they enjoy singing with us. Do take the opportunity to bring along friends, family and anyone who may wish to join the choir.

Subscriptions for the new season remain unchanged at £115 with the option of paying in two instalments of £60 each in September and January. As a result of changes in the Revenue's approach to Gift Aid on subscriptions, only £100 of the total (or £105 if you pay in instalments) is eligible for Gift Aid this year. The remaining £15 is deemed to be a service of tuition received from the choir and therefore ineligible. It's a crazy world!

Annabel Malton is again leading three workshop sessions this term at 7pm prior to our rehearsals on 22nd & 29th September and 6th October. These will be based on the Poulenc works and designed to help with singing from the score. A separate leaflet is being circulated with further details. Also this term we shall be asking you to nominate works you would like to see included in future seasons' programming and progressing our arrangements for a tour to Venice in 2013.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday, 6th October as part of our rehearsal that evening. There will be a number of vacancies on the committee this year, as current members retire or move away, and I should ask you all to consider whether you would wish to play a part in the running of the choir. There is work to be done, but there is also great satisfaction from being involved in determining and making happen our programme of events. If you may be interested, please speak with me or any other member of the committee to learn more. Similarly, if you do not feel able to join the committee, but would like to help in another capacity, do let us know, as there are many opportunities to assist in other ways.

So, I look forward to seeing you all on 8th September for the first "popocatepetl" of the new season.

Best wishes
Gerald Malton

50:50 Club Winners:

£50 Ros Brian £25 Martin Holmes £25 Linda Neilson £20 Janis Croom £15 Sheila Bearman



VIEW FROM BEHIND THE DRUMMER'S LEFT EAR - *A perspective of the June concert*

That was different, wasn't it? The ghosts of those who have worshipped in Great Waltham church down the ages must have wondered what on earth was going on. Nothing in the first half of the concert could possibly have prepared them for what was to come. As for Tomas Luis Victoria, did not that man know how to write choral music. It was a wonderful sing. One of our groupies said to me at half time "That was real church music." Some of those who only attend performances of Messiah should have come and discovered that there is music beyond the Hallelujah Chorus.

The half time interval was spent putting on the bling. There were ear rings, necklaces, brooches and bracelets. There might have been an ankle band for all I know. And the ladies wore.....(yes, the old ones are always the best). Seriously, the men were a big disappointment in the bling stakes. A discreet ear ring would have gone down well. Perhaps an eyebrow stud would have lightened the occasion. All I noticed was Roger wearing his armed forces veteran badge. How sad is that? Shahid showed us all up sartorially. He deserved every bit of bling we could display. And what a mover! Do not attempt to copy some of his moves at home. If we did we would need the full time attention of the medics in the choir for a decade.

Foureyes

VICTORIA & MANTRA

Waltham Singers at Great Waltham Parish Church
18.6.2011

The Waltham Singers began with Victoria's Te Deum – a liturgical dialogue with a lone voice at the back of the church. Then the Missa Gaudeamus, a musical high point of the Spanish Renaissance, sung here with purity and precision. The Singers were on superb form, for this is complex writing; I particularly admired the triumphant optimism of the closing bars of the Credo, the crisply rhythmic approach to the climax of the Agnus Dei, and the richly glowing textures of the Gloria, with Andrew Fardell's sweeping gestures urging the singers to even greater eloquence.

The Mass was interspersed, not with organ solos or Plainchant, but with short works for four voices by other Iberian masters, performed by the gentlemen of the Orlando Consort, no less.

A wonderful tribute, and many groups would happily have left it there. But not the Waltham Singers; after the interval they brought us the amazing fusion sound of the Mantra project, in which the Orlando Consort are joined by tabla, sitar and the voice of Shahid Khan. One of the happiest outcomes was that Indian music seemed much less hermetically mysterious by the end of the evening, thanks to the witty and informative introductions by the performers.

All inspired by 16th century musical missionaries who incorporated the traditions of Goa into their worship. I loved Encounter, with plainchant embroidered with an improvised alap, Tabla Talam, weaving the drums into melodic structure, and the summation of the sequence, Henna Night, blending polyphony, Arabic and an Indian wedding in a glorious celebration of music making. Though these cultural barriers were easier to break down than the traditional reserve of the British concert audience ...

Michael Gray

----Stop Press---- Anne Cowlin has 2 tickets for the Tallis Scholars concert at Chelmsford Cathedral on Saturday 1 October 2011 which she is now unable to use. They are excellent seats priced at £25 each. If you would like the tickets please contact Anne on 01787 229955 or 07770 550570. ---

Waltham Singers

Dates for your Diary

Autumn Term 2011			
Thursday 8 September	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	First rehearsal of term (Open Rehearsal)
Thursday 6 October	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Rehearsal & AGM
Sunday 6 November	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Gt Waltham Church	Pre-concert rehearsal
Saturday 12 November	1.00 – 4.00 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Rehearsal
Saturday 12 November	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Concert (Poulenc)
Thursday 1 December	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term
Wednesday 7 December	6.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Macmillan Carols Rehearsal
Wednesday 7 December	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Macmillan Carol Concert
Thursday 8, 15, 22, 29 December	-	No rehearsals	Christmas Holiday
Spring Term 2012			
Thursday 5 January	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	First rehearsal of term
Saturday 4 February	7.30 pm	Hulton Hall, Gt Waltham	Quiz night
Sunday 18 March	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Gt Waltham Church	Pre-concert rehearsal
Thursday 22 March	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Last rehearsal of term
Saturday 24 March	1.00 – 4.00 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Rehearsal
Saturday 24 March	7.30 pm	Chelmsford Cathedral	Concert (Carmina Burana)
Thursdays 29 March, 5 & 12 April		No rehearsals	Easter Holiday
Summer Term 2012			
Thursday 19 April	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	First rehearsal of term
Sunday 10 June	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Gt Waltham Church	Pre-concert rehearsal
Saturday 16 June	1.00 – 4.00 pm	Gt Waltham Church	Rehearsal
Saturday 16 June	7.30 pm	Gt Waltham Church	Summer Concert
Thursday 21 June	8.00 pm	St Cedd's School	Annual Review Meeting