



Chorister *Col Canto Associates*

September 2012

Welcome to the September 2012 'Chorister' Newsletter

British Choirs on the Net is supported by advertising subscriptions from the following



This newsletter has been sent to you as you or your choir are currently listed on one of the sites, or because the services you provide may be suitable for our website. In some cases it is sent to you as you have specifically requested a mailing. Whatever the reason, you are very welcome.

Editorial

As we enter the last quarter of the year, Choir Music continues to enjoy a renaissance both in terms of its performance and in the quality of choral music being written. The likes of composers John Rutter, Paul Mealer, Patrick Hawes, Eric Whitacre, Jonathon Dove, James Whitbourn, Bob Chilcott, Will Todd, Gabriel Jackson, Cecilia McDowall and Deborah Mason (to name a few) continue to provide both modern, challenging and beautiful choral works. In addition new choirs continue to be formed across a range of singing styles, and more importantly flourish, both on the amateur and professional scene. Television and Radio continue to do their bit to encourage an interest in singing be it Gareth Malone's various series, Glee or choral involvement on Britain's got Talent. The success of Gareth's latest series "Sing while you Work" will be measured in two very different ways. The first is the popularity of the series. Bearing in mind the end result is a highly edited version of events, with the onus on the 'back story' or 'the journey' that may be fairly transient. What is more important is the legacy of the series as epitomised by the success of the Military Wives Choir, whose network continues to flourish.

To help with the legacy of "The Choir: Sing While You Work", BBC Learning has produced a website providing information on how to set up a choir at work, listing the benefits to both staff and employers and providing downloadable resources such as posters and a singing guide to help anyone who's interested in singing at work. The website www.bbc.co.uk/thechoir went live on 18th September in time for the launch of the BBC 2 Series on 20th September 2012. The website rightly highlights the work of 'Music in Offices', the UK's leading provider of workplace choirs and instrumental tuition programmes. Founded in 2006, by Tessa Marchington, they currently run 22 choirs and also the prestigious Office Choir of the Year competition, presented in partnership with Classic FM. More details can be found at <http://www.musicinoffices.com/services/choirs/> Sing for Pleasure, ABCD and British Choirs on the Net also have a link on the website.

British Choirs on the Net and this newsletter have, over the last few years, advertised a number of Choral Composition Competitions. An unfortunate trend is that they generally practice 'positive discrimination' - that is they are only open to a certain age group. The latest example comes from the Incorporated Society of Musicians who's 2013 Composition Competition is restricted to composers aged from 23—35. It does make it clear in its paperwork that this competition is aimed at inspiring a new generation of composers but it does also send out a message to other choral composers outside this age range that their work may be considered less inspired and of lesser value. While there is a need to refresh the choral gene pool we also need to ensure that opportunities continue to exist to enable older composers, whether established or novices, to have access to open competition and I hope the ISM will lead on that. At the end of the day talent and art should out.

Another worrying occurrence, which I hope will not become a trend, is the request from some choirs to ask potential new members to provide not just a musical CV but also a photo!. While the general appearance of a choir can add to the performance, this smacks of pandering to the tele-visual and could leave any unsuccessful auditionee wondering on what basis they may have been rejected. One of the great strengths of choir singing is that it is open to all regardless of age, religious persuasion, ethnic background, sexual or political preference, disability and appearance. (For choirs whose main aim is to have fun even singing ability is discretionary).

Finally as we enter 'Messiah' season may I wish you all a wonderfully musical and emotionally satisfying end to the year, and where it matters, a financially successful season.

British Choirs on the Net The site continues to grow and reached the landmark of 3000 UK choirs during May 2012. We continue to welcome new choirs both UK based and internationally. We continue to successful place musical directors and accompanists with choral societies and choruses across the UK and also increasingly internationally. www.choirs.org.uk

Additions and Amendments British Choirs on the Net is only as useful as the information held on it. Please email me with any corrections and omissions to choir information, email addresses or website choir addresses. Please email any corrections and amendments to philliptolley@colcanto.co.uk

British Choirs on the Net Mailing Services British Choirs on the Net holds a database of over 2000 choir email contacts as a result of its business with these choirs. While the site has no intention of selling this it can provide a mailing service to choirs and businesses to help promote events and services of interest to the choral community. Recent mailings have been sent out on behalf of the The Sixteen, Cork International Choral Festival and Disneyland Paris. It is accepted that not everything that is mailed out is of interest to every choir, the mailing is for the choir members as a whole rather than just the email recipient. You can of course unsubscribe form the mailing list if you wish, I would just point out that it is an all or nothing option.

Concertfinder & British Choirs on the Net Concertfinder is a free online concert diary. It is part of British Choirs on the Net under www.choirs.org.uk and also a standalone website under www.concertfinder.co.uk.

Each concert is listed with the same prominence and for this reason I do not include the orchestra, conductors or soloists details. Additionally non choral works are omitted from the listing even when they form part of the concert programme.

Please submit your concert details via email in text format. Please do not send pdf or html posters which require the salient points to be extracted and can delay posting the concert. Also do not forget to let me know the date of the concert as well as the who, where, what and ticket information.

www.concertfinder.co.uk

Choirsites They say every picture tells a story and the same rule applies with choirs. The choir that has a website where potential members can see pictures of the choir, their future concerts and repertoire is likely to prove more attractive than simply a listed choir with a text description and an e-mail contact. Choirsites provides low cost website hosting and design for choirs. Some of the choirs using this service include:

Balsham Singers, Cambridge

Clarkson Singers, Wisbech

Holymoorside Choral Society, Derbyshire

Leominster Choral Society, Herefordshire

The Thames Head Singers, Gloucestershire

www.choirsites.co.uk

VocalBroker This is a site which lists vocal soloists seeking work with Choral Societies and Choruses on the Oratorio or concert platform. It is not an agency and the Societies negotiate directly with singers with Vocalbroker taking no commission. They are all experienced singers and choral societies, and choruses

are asked to consider these singers when selecting voices for concerts. www.vocalbroker.co.uk

WeddingSingers This is a site which lists soloists, choirs, barbershop and gospel groups who are looking for work performing at weddings www.weddingsingers.org.uk

British Choirs on the Net Choral Conductors Forum This is a new group set up on Facebook to enable Choral Directors, Choirs Secretaries and Choir members to informally discuss issues of performance practice, request new music and music exchanges, and discuss other choral related issues.

www.facebook.com We also have a presence on Twitter at www.twitter.com/britishchoirs with over 400 followers.

Concert Programme Notes British Choirs on the Net hosts a library of Choral repertoire programme notes which are available for the free use of Choral Societies. We do ask however that you acknowledge in your concerts the authorship of these programme notes, as appropriate.

New website Australian choirs on the Net www.ozchoirs.org and American Choirs on the Net www.choirsinamerica.org continue to grow. To advertise on these sites please email philliptolley@colcanto.co.uk Twitter accounts www.twitter.com/choirsinamerica and www.twitter.com/ozchoirs Choral Concert online diaries are now also available on these sites.



Marie Curie Cancer Care is inviting you to hold a Sing Out event and support people with terminal illnesses this Christmas.

If you love singing and you're part of a choir at school, at church, in a choral group or you sing in your local community, please lend your voices this Christmas to support Marie Curie Nurses.

Every Sing Out event will make a real difference to families affected by terminal illness this Christmas. Your support will help Marie Curie Nurses provide more free nursing care to people in their own homes or at one of our nine Marie Curie Hospices during the festive season.

Sign up today to receive your free fundraising pack full of ideas, advice and support materials to make your event a success. Register by visiting www.mariecurie.org.uk/singout.

Small Choir Music Series

To cover the demand for pieces for the 'smaller choir' and average accompanist, the New 'accessible choral library' is about to be launched in the UK. Managed by Tim Knight Music and distributed both in the UK and overseas by Spartan Press, this ongoing new series features pieces in Unison 2 and 3 parts, secular and sacred, original and arrangements. Series Editor Tim Knight says 'we are fulfilling a need here of giving the increasing number of smaller choirs something accessible, affordable and appealing to sing and are also actively seeking out composers to add to our series' For further details about the project or to submit a piece for consideration do please join the Small Choirs Music Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Small-choir-Music-series/290567884354899>

If your choir is planning a piece that uses a harmonium,

You might like to know about Pam & Phillip Fluke's *Harmonium Services* in Saltaire, near Shipley, Yorkshire. They hire out a Mustel instrument that's top of the range. It's been hired out to BBC radio & TV, to many choirs, and to events such as the Edinburgh Festival and Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. So if you're doing Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*, Fauré's *Requiem* or *Cantique de Jean Racine*, Stravinsky's *Les Noces* or various things by Debussy, Berg, Puccini, Gavin Bryars e-mail harmonium.service@btinternet.com or phone 01274-585601, mobile 07976-535980.

'Singing for Joy' - WI Choir of the Centenary 2015

To mark the WI Centenary, the NFWI Board of Trustees would like all federations to encourage their WIs to join together members of all levels of ability to enjoy the pleasures of singing by forming a Choir or Singing Group. Assistance will be provided by the Federation Support Committee through information and singing workshops.

Federations will run initial heats from which the winners will go forward to 6 regional heats. The 6 regional winners will compete in the national final in London the night before the AGM in 2015 to crown the 'WI Choir of the Centenary'. All finalists will be invited to join together to 'Sing for Joy' at the AGM the following day. Entry criteria and timetable can be found on the [Moodle](#) under the '[NFWI Challenges and Competitions](#)' area. Alternatively, contact the NFWI-Unit team on 01865 391 788, or through the '[Contact Us](#)' form.

Pipe Organ for Hire

Hoffrichter three manual and pedal console with Hauptwerk software using Sonus Paradisi' St Etienne, Caen Cavallé-Coll organ set. Powerful Alto powered speakers on high stands produce 400w each controlled by a Behringer equaliser for acoustic control in churches, halls, large rooms or open-air stages. Organists have the use of a modern +/- sequencer system and can set up multiple channels for registration. also available is a two manual and pedal Meitke Harpsichord set. A touch screen may be used to select individual stops. Ideal for two organ performances, french repertoire, weddings, concerts, recitals, recordings and anywhere a high quality organ sound is required. Should you need an accompanist, the owner is an experienced and qualified (FRCO), organist. Visit www.pipeorganhire.co.uk or email rcfielding@googlemail.com for further details or a quote



Summer 2012 saw a flurry of choirs head off on their eagerly anticipated Choir Tours to an array of destinations throughout Europe with the help of specialist Choir Tour organisers, Rayburn Tours. Hallé Youth Choir decided that Belgium was the destination for them and with Rebecca Rowe, a Rayburn Tours Courier, by their side they set off. Here she gives us an insight into just some of her personal highlights...

Thursday 2nd August

The saying goes, 'start as you mean to go on', and I am pleased to say that a smooth journey over the channel, arriving in Belgium ahead of schedule and being greeted by a warm and friendly welcome from the hostel staff were both accurate signs of things to come! The first afternoon in Antwerp was spent exploring the main shopping street of *Meir* which hosted a wide selection of shops, including *The Chocolate Line*, a beautiful chocolate shop inside the Paleis op de Meir.

Friday 3rd August:

Today the choir performed at Brussels Cathedral - a truly spectacular venue! The choir stood on raised staging in front of the altar and performed to an appreciative and warm audience. I introduced the group in French and programmes were handed out at the venue. After the concert we were treated to a fantastic chocolate-making demonstration at *Planète Chocolate* where some of the group were able to join in making chocolate and pralines – a true Belgian experience!

Saturday 4th August:

After a morning in the picturesque city of Ghent, we headed to Mechelen for the group's second concert of the tour. We had scheduled a rehearsal at 5.00pm at St. Rumbold's Cathedral for the organist and then at 5.30pm for the choir. We met Bram who was incredibly helpful in organising the choir and helping to decide on the best position for them to be – in the end they performed from the gallery. Bram set up a camera and projector so the audience had the best possible view. The acoustics were incredible and the group really enjoyed performing here to an audience of over 100 people.

Sunday 5th August:

Bruges – a beautiful city brimming with history and culture around every corner! The choir performed on the steps in front of the altar at St. Salvator's Cathedral. A venue such as this can't fail to attract an audience that flocks in to listen to visiting choirs sing – and we weren't disappointed.

Monday 6th August:

Unfortunately our time in Belgium had come to an end. A superb Choir Tour all-round!

Feeling inspired? Why not visit the [Rayburn Tours Website](#) or contact one of our team on 01332 347828 to start discussing your requirements or to request a copy of our new brochure!

[Click here to follow us on twitter](#) – make sure you are kept up to date with our most recent news, share and compare stories with other choirs, and receive advanced notice of our very best offers!