

CHORUS

The Winchester Community Choir *newsletter*

Issue 2, March 2008

Welcome to your newsletter

Welcome to the second edition of CHORUS, Winchester Community Choir's newsletter.

Welcome also to all our new members, we're delighted to have you with us and hope you enjoy your time with Winchester Community Choir!



Preview..

The Winchester Passion

The Winchester Passion is coming up fast, with plans now falling into place for both the Choir and those members who have temporarily joined up with other Winchester singers as The Passion Chorale.

As most of you will know by now, The Passion takes place on Good Friday, 21st March from between 6pm to 9pm. A 'cast of hundreds' will tell the story of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, throughout the City, starting at Oram's Arbour and ending outside the Cathedral.

Members singing with the Passion Chorale will have several musical moments, breaking into song as if spontaneously (thank you, Sarah!) from the depths of the crowd - look out for coloured balloons under which the individual parts will subtly linger... Other Winchester Community Choir members will come together to sing Sarah's non-denominational 'Keep You In Peace' outside the Cathedral at the very end of the Passion. However, it must be stressed that none of this is obligatory! Anyone who feels uncomfortable with the Christian

content of the Passion or who has other commitments need not feel in any way that they 'should' take part.

The MayFest

Another sing-out planned for this spring is our performance at Winchester's MayFest on Saturday 17th May. We'll be singing at 2pm at St Lawrence's (performances are 45 mins), so this is real home from home stuff and should be great fun.

Other info gleaned by your hard-working Chorus newshounds is that the concert is likely to be free (so invite your friends) and also that we'll be following on from Quattrio, a baroque music ensemble who will perform from 1pm and then need 15 minutes to remove their harp! So don't expect a warm-up.

Solstice Concert

We will be singing at our other favourite venue, the United Church for our main summer concert this year. This will take place a little earlier than usual, on Sat 21st June. We will be selling tickets for this one and hoping to raise a good amount of money for local charities, so please don't bring *all* your supporters to the MayFest - save some for midsummer.



Celebrity Guests for the Choir - from Sarah Morgan

During 2008 we have some distinguished musicians coming to work with us.

First off is a workshop with Paul Sartin on 25th March. Paul studied at the Purcell School, a music specialist school in London, and after a couple of years touring as oboist with the Gloria Theatre Company took up a place to read music, and a Choral Scholarship, at Magdalen College, Oxford. After graduation he became a Lay Clerk with Christ Church Cathedral Choir, Oxford, where he spent five years singing for services, recording and touring the world. He's now also a renowned folk musician, playing in Faustus, Belshazzar's Feast and the internationally acclaimed band Bellowhead, although he still occasionally appears in Winchester, singing in the Cathedral Choir. At his workshop Paul will be starting work on a new piece which he has arranged especially for our own choir - lucky us! Find out more about Paul at www.paulsartin.co.uk

On November 11th, our guest workshop leaders will be Finest Kind, the remarkable folk trio from Ottawa, Canada whose glorious sound, served up with easy-going humour, has won a devoted following across North America. Some of you will have heard them in concert with Craig Morgan Robson in the Milner Hall a couple of years ago. Their wonderful voices and brilliant vocal arrangements are a delight to the ear, and they'll be teaching us some of their arrangements and sharing some tips on group singing. www.finestkind.ca

You'll also be able to hear Finest Kind in concert the night before (once again, joined by Craig Morgan Robson) so make that a date for your diaries.

For our Christmas concert on 9th Dec 2008, we'll be welcoming as our guests Belshazzar's Feast. Paul

Hutchinson (piano accordion) and Paul Sartin (vocals, fiddle and oboe) are one of funniest and most talented musical duos you are likely to hear. Are they classical? Are they folk? Are they a category not even dreamed of yet by the reviewers?

The answer to all three questions is undoubtedly YES - and they're a lot more besides. Their music is note perfect and subtly nuanced, their humour is wickedly irreverent. And if that is not enough, they have bravely agreed to provide a band to accompany the choir on another performance of Chariots (so don't lose those practice CDs!). What a spectacular way to finish the year!

ChoirFest

Last year a number of WCC singers joined with members from Andover, Alton, Guildford and Brighton community choirs, for ChoirFest at the beginning of Sept.

This year's ChoirFest runs from 29th-31st August and you will need to sign up early as places are limited.

More details soon.



Bursaries - from Sarah Morgan

We are considering setting a sum of money aside in the coming year (amount to be decided), to provide bursaries for choir members who want to attend singing workshops or courses. The plan would be to pay a percentage of the fees up to a set maximum amount, and the criterion would be that the workshop would improve an individual's singing confidence and ability. This would in the long run benefit the choir, and by encouraging people to attend other musical workshops, we'd also be supporting arts organisations, which directly or indirectly give something back to us. For example, John Kirkpatrick wrote Chariots as a result of a commission and funding from Folkworks. We'd like your views on this proposal - whether or not you personally are likely to apply for a bursary, would you, or wouldn't you support the idea?

For Now..

Membership -from Sue Elliott, Membership Secretary

As many of you will be aware, due to space constraints for rehearsing and performing, we are now having to maintain a waiting list for new people who would like to join the choir. Towards the end of each term, we look at the membership numbers (maximum is 100) and decide how many 'free' spaces we have and then invite a proportional number of people from the waiting list to join us for 2 free taster sessions at the beginning of each term. So if you know of anyone who would be interested in joining the waiting list, please see Sue Elliott or email on:

membership@winchestercommunitychoir.co.uk, and of course, at the beginning of term, if you see a new face in your section, we know you will

do all you can to make them feel welcome.

Sartorial splendour

We have received many compliments as a choir recently and not only for our singing! Many people have been very taken by our "sea colour" tops and scarves. At Romsey Abbey, some of the men looked particularly ravishing in blue/green ties knotted over black shirts. That "look" is perfect for our more formal performances and we now have a supply of those ties. If you would like one, at £3 each, please see Jan Gapper.

What to Wear Basics

And whilst on the subject of the Choir 'look', for any new members (or others) who might need reminding about what to wear for our sing-outs, a full indication of what to wear is always in the folder that sits on the font each rehearsal - together with reminders of dates and other info. Basically, though, we ask for specific colours. The style is up to you, but smart casual please.

So - waist-down black and waist-up either black or 'sea colours', i.e. anything from sea blue, through aquamarine, turquoise and jade to sea green.



Oh, and no patterned material please, but a bit of sheen or sparkle is good if you can manage it (it reflects well under lights).

Musicians' Group- from Terry Cooper

The recently formed choir musicians' group began with 6 members: Janet Grey, Margaret Goodfellow, Avril (non choir member), Paul Northcut, Mike Grey, Gillian Fifield and me, Terry Cooper. A new choir member, Carmine Cristallo also came to our last meeting, on 25 January and we're happy to say he's joining us. The instruments played are guitar, accordion, melodian, Appalachian dulcimer, recorder, clarinet and low whistle.

The type of music played so far has been folk music in the keys of G major, D major, A minor, E minor. Although some of the tunes are songs, we have not got around to singing as well as playing. I am yet hopeful! With a bit more practise - and when we are happy with our ensemble playing - we hope to play for the choir.

Recording Available

We are making available a recording kindly done by Sarah of our Christmas concert at the United Church. We can't make cds for everyone in the Choir so, as in the past, we will hand a few round so that everyone who wants to can copy at home.

Suggestions Folder

In the interests of democracy a Suggestions Folder is being introduced so you all have a chance to have a say about what you've enjoyed or improvements you may like to see made. The A5 folder will be at the back of the church each Tuesday.

Review..

Charities receive cheques

We welcomed representatives of both Wessex Cancer Trust and Oakhaven Hospice to our rehearsal on February 5th and they were delighted to receive their cheques for £500 each, the proceeds from our Christmas concert. Tina and Jane from Wessex enjoyed listening to us (and joining in) so much that they want to know the details of our future performances so they can come and listen.



Christmas concerts

The '07 Christmas singing season was a very busy one with performances all over the city and further afield. We received much praise and heartfelt thanks from Macmillan Cancer Care for singing around the Tree of Thought in early December.



Some choir members braved the elements to sing in the Christmas Market, while much pleasure was given to residents of both Abbotts Barton and Brendon Care retirement homes at their mini carol concerts. Recording the Radio Solent Christmas concert at Romsey Abbey was very exciting and how wonderful to be on the radio on Christmas Day. But surely the highlight of the festive season was

our own Christmas concert on 11th December when, singing with Alton Community Choir, we performed "Chariots" as well as our usual mix of carols and seasonal songs. A great deal of hard work (especially learning Chariots!) went into all our performances but it was all really worth it - well done to everyone!

Thanks - from Steve Cox

I want to thank my fellow choir members for sponsoring my efforts in the 12k Votwo Pudding Catcher Race on 16th December starting at 10:30am and held at Fairthorne Manor Curdridge Southampton. With your help, I raised £330 for St. Michael's Hospice in Basingstoke where I work as the Manager of the Bereavement Services.

The idea was that the guy dressed up as the pudding set off 60 seconds before everybody else and the field of runners tried to catch him. Three keen, fit young people actually did catch the pudding - however, they still had to finish the distance. Most people, including me, reserved their strength just to get around the course. Anyway, 1 hour and 12minutes after starting the race I arrived at the finish line. All participants got to eat Christmas pudding and custard after crossing the finish line. I have to confess that it took me a couple of minutes before I could stomach eating the pud.



Thanks also..

to all who contributed images and words to this newsletter. We hope you've enjoyed reading it.

The next issue of Chorus will appear during the summer term. However..

..help is always needed

...with images for newsletter and website. If you (or a friend) have a talent in that direction we'd love your pictures of the Choir. Please email to mirandajohnson@btinternet.com saying where and when taken. Thanks.

This newsletter is edited for Winchester Community Choir by Miranda Johnson and Catherine Hahn. If you have photographs we can use in the next issue please email them to mirandajohnson@btinternet.com. Suggestions for stories should not be emailed direct. Please discuss beforehand with Catherine or Miranda at the next Choir session.

