



Summer Newsletter – August 2015

Welcome to the SBS summer newsletter. Towards the end, the newsletter contains information for singing members and our friends, life-friends and patrons all of whom receive a copy either by email or in hard copy. But first, Simon Lindley's notes about the forthcoming season provide a much appreciated insight into the programme of works we shall be performing. He has even found something new to say about Handel's *Messiah* which I am sure you will enjoy reading!



Saturday 17 October 2015
Handel SAMSON
St Mark's Church, Broomhill

In 1741, just two weeks after completing *Messiah* on September 14, and working with his accustomed white-hot intensity, Handel set about the difficult task of translating into music Milton's dark and dense meditation on the Samson legend.

Handel's interest in this particular Bible story may have been aroused two years earlier when, at a privately organized reading of the poet's *Samson Agonistes*, he improvised extensive movements on the harpsichord during pauses in the reading. His "harmony," according to his host the Earl of Shaftesbury's account of the evening, was "perfectly adapted to the sublimity of the poem." Whether this provided Handel with an impetus to consider the work for an oratorio setting and whether any musical elements of those improvisations were carried over into the oratorio we can only guess.

Even though it was composed with Handel's customary alacrity (within a period of exactly thirty days from September 29), *Samson* had to wait until February 18, 1743, almost eighteen months later, to be brought to first performance. And by that time, when he had time to reflect on the overall shape of the work and the characteristics of his vocal soloists, Handel felt the need to make substantial revisions, including some that played to the undoubted strengths of his chosen singers. Some, one suspects, were made merely to shorten it. Although Handel constantly revised his works, not always to their musical or dramatic benefit, he usually required the experience of a performance or two before undertaking such a task.

Days after completing *Samson*, Handel set off on a journey that turned into one of the great public and artistic triumphs of his life. *Messiah*, of course, was high on the list of musical gifts that he bore with him to Ireland, and it received its premiere there in April of 1742. But *Saul*, *L'Allegro, il Penseroso, ed il Moderato*, *Esther*, *Alexander's Feast*, and more also were taken along and each was received by the Dublin public with huge enthusiasm.

Returning to London in late summer 1742, Handel once again turned his attention to *Samson* and the revisions mentioned above in preparation for its first performance in February 1743. The premiere was a great success, leading to a total of seven performances

in its first season, the most in a single season of any of his oratorios. Exceptionally among his works, *Samson* retained its popularity throughout Handel's lifetime and has never fallen entirely out of favour since. (*Messiah*, which received its first London performance a few weeks later, was initially the victim of an ecclesiastically stoked controversy and thus took a few years to establish its permanent pre-eminent position.)

Unlike the other biblical oratorios, that were all either re-workings of existing Scripture-based plays or original creations by Handel's librettists, *Samson* stands alone. The librettist, Newburgh Hamilton, through skilful abridgements and juxtapositions of Milton's poem and the inclusion of excerpts from other Milton works, managed to maintain the integrity — the sobriety and penitential tone — of the original; in his collation of arias in ways that enable the characters to develop through established eighteenth-century operatic means; in his giving voice through the chorus to the swaggering Philistines and the oppressed Israelites; and, finally, in his constructing recitatives where Milton's temperament and language come most forcefully alive, Hamilton achieved a remarkable balance.

The work has everything – love, betrayal, battles between false gods and the one true God – and Handel's innate sense of drama and pathos never fails him. A small number of movements are omitted to bring the work down to a manageable size but nothing of the true spirit of the story is lost



Saturday 7 November 2015
Mozart REQUIEM and CLARINET CONCERTO
Bach CANTATAS 68 and 118
Sheffield Cathedral

Two Bach Cantatas – each a true masterpiece in miniature – serve as prelude to major works by Mozart, the Clarinet Concerto and, his last work, the *Requiem* of 1791.

Garnered for decades by doubtless well-meaning editors into Bach's cantata output, *O Jesu Christ, mein Lebens Licht* is, of course, a *Motet* rather than a cantata. This memorable single movement retains the chorale melody in the soprano line in long notes, with exquisitely wrought vocal counterpoint beneath. The tune is well-known to English music-lovers as *Breslau* and is universally sung to the noble Passiontide hymn *Take up thy Cross, the Saviour said*. Mendelssohn used the hymn tune particularly memorably in his 1836 oratorio, *St Paul*, where he presents the richly harmonised music as an interluded chorale unfolding from a single solo cello at the opening – *O Thou, the true, the only Light*. Bach's *O Jesu Christ* was probably composed for a funeral in 1736 or 1737. It is clear from instrumental material than an external performance may have been envisaged by the composer, with the piece perhaps being sung as a strophic processional since there exist parts for brass as well as strings and lutes.

Cantata 68, *That God doth love the world we know*, is proper to Whit Monday and is one of its composer's very earliest Leipzig works. The piece is distinguished by virtue of its housing one of Bach's most fabulous soprano arias, *My heart ever faithful* – a movement whose popularity vies with that of the Air from the third of its creator's four orchestral suites (sometimes known as the *Air on a G-string*. There are just five movements, with the choir being heard in the first and last. At the outset of the piece is a lilting *Siciliana* setting heralding a verse of a hymn of 1675 by Salomo Liscow with a chorale melody provided for it some six years later by Gottfried Vopelius. The final movement is a vigorous fugue beginning with the words *On Him believing, thou art free from judgement*. Like *My heart ever faithful*, the other aria in the Cantata was almost certainly adapted from a secular

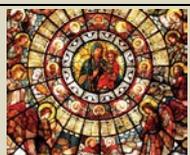
“hunting” cantata from 1716.

Although preceded twenty years earlier by a setting of Michael Haydn's that deserves to be better known, Mozart's *Requiem* - composed in the last months and weeks of his tragically short life - is certainly the greatest of all 18th century settings of the *Missa Pro Defunctis*.

Considerable interest attaches itself to the ailing genius's failure to complete the score. Generations previous to our own have been quite content to give the *Requiem* in the form completed for Mozart's widow by Franz Xavier Süssmayer. Commissioned by Count Franz von Walsegg (memorably described by Alec Robertson as: “minor nobleman, and an even more minor composer, in the habit of passing off works by other hands as his own”) the *Requiem* was left unfinished at the time of Mozart's death, his widow naturally seeking to avoid submitting an incomplete score with a possible loss of income as a result. The work is given this season in the version left to us by Süssmayer.

The majority of experts agree that Mozart was responsible for the *Introit* and *Kyrie* in their entirety, for the first five movements of the *Dies Irae* Sequence (beginning with the stanzas *Dies irae*, *Tuba mirum*, *Rex tremendae majestatis*, *Recordare* and *Confutatis maledictis* respectively), and for the two movements comprising the text of the Offertory, beginning *Domine*, *Jesu Christe* and *Hostias*. There is some fugal common ground in Mozart's *Requiem* with the *Kyrie/Cum sanctis tuis* subject matter and the main theme of the Chorus “And with His stripes” from Handel's *Messiah*. Mozart's own movements elsewhere contain other such derivations - the sublime, sustained theme at the outset of the *Introit* with its steady, relentless march of time also occurs in the *Requiem* of F L Gassman, while that of the *Introit*'s Psalm-verse *Te decet hymnus* is the plainchant *Tonus Peregrinus*. It is interesting that Michael Haydn had earlier used a plainsong tone at this point; by such means is provided a link in terms of compositional technique with the composers of the polyphonic period whose *Requiem* settings - especially those of Anerio and Victoria - alternated between harmony and the chant in an antiphonal manner.

The orchestral scoring is highly distinctive by virtue of the lack of the material for woodwind instruments, basset-horns and bassoons excepted - and for horns. Robertson has suggested that Mozart - by 1791 very ill indeed and certainly depressed - felt that this unusual autumnal and dark colouring (especially that provided by the hauntingly mellifluous tones of the basset-horns already mentioned) the more suitably expressed the mood of humanity preparing to meet its Maker.



Monday 7 December 2015
Handel MESSIAH
Sheffield Cathedral

It remains an extraordinary phenomenon of the fickle nature of musical tastes over the generations that performances of Handel's great sacred oratorio *Messiah* are invariably given at Christmas time or, more commonly, during the church season of Advent which comes immediately before it.

Part One of the work majors on the prophetic elements and the Birth of Christ and its consequences; Part Two is focused on the suffering of his Passion and his death with Part Three concerned with the Resurrection and what are scripturally referred to as *The Last Things* incorporating what are often referred to as glimpses of the Revelation.

Taking the whole into consideration, it becomes clear that the real “time” for *Messiah* is Holy Week or Eastertide. Only occasionally does the congruence of the anniversary of the

memorable first hearing of the piece in a Dublin music hall on 13 April 1742 focus our thoughts on this important matter. In 2017, we hope to celebrate the 275th anniversary of the work's first performance and take a chance to present an anniversary account as near to the date of the premiere as we can get.

Handel left a number of significant quotes following on his experience of the act of composing the masterpiece. That most often quoted is frequently, but incorrectly, presumed to have referred to the creation of the most famous single movement, the *Hallelujah* chorus – but it is now clear that Handel was referring to the apex of the final *Amen* following *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain* of which he wrote:

I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself

This must refer to the climatic final bars when the sopranos lead off on a stupendous top A with all the other vocal lines following in imitation at the tops of their own register.

Of the business of composing the *Hallelujah* chorus, Handel left us this remark:

Whether I was in my body or out of my body as I wrote it, I know not. God knows it.

Handel was engaged extensively in the composition and presentation of oratorio in London for the last two decades of his life. His business sense and entrepreneurial energy seems to have captured the mood of the age. Had he remained stubbornly committed to opera composition, his twilight years would have been much less comfortable and his public far less appreciative. The keeping of precise financial records, receipt books and “word books” as the programmes of the day were known, during the course of the composer's performances arranged for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital are of huge benefit to scholars in enabling us to ascertain which selections of the solo material were heard on which occasions. It seems extremely unlikely that the composer ever the work wholly complete, though the Bach Choir and many other ensembles are known for presenting the work “cover to cover” to quote a West Riding descriptive of an uncut version of the composer's magnificent score.



Saturday 5 March 2016
Bach ST JOHN PASSION
Sheffield Cathedral

Judged by any yardstick, Bach's Passion Settings have to be ranked as amongst the greatest musical works ever written. Two survive to us today in complete form - the *St John* of 1723 and that according to *St Matthew* of 1729. Parts of a setting of the narrative of St Mark's Gospel also survive. All of this music is in the important tradition of the Passion Oratorio. This is an art form essentially separate from Bach's use of the oratorio designation in works such as the *Christmas Oratorio* (actually six separate cantatas for each day of the Christmas holiday) and the so-called *Ascension Oratorio* better known as *Cantata 11*.

Using music as a vehicle for the narration of the momentous events of the first Holy Week can be traced back many centuries. The musical development of the settings of the Passion narrative begins with the use of simple inflexions to the matchless beauty of Gregorian chant and the adaptation of the special Gospel tones by the provision of more extended decorative figuration to add gravitas and pathos.

While it has to be admitted that Bach's two mighty settings – today's *St John* and, of course, the monumental *St Matthew* – are in a class of their own, there is one hugely significant precursor from the pen of G F Handel; Handel's *Brockes-Passion* of 1716 was copied out in full by Bach and his first wife. The work contains elements later used by Bach

in his two settings – arias to comment and reflect on the progress of the story and chorales for congregational singing among them. Sometimes, the chorus is involved in arias as rhetorical questions are presented and a fine example exists in *Eilt* (the bass aria in the *St John Passion* in which the three upper voices of the choir act responsorially to the solo singer).

While the *St Matthew Passion* is reflective and on a large-scale, the *St John* setting is incisive, often intensely dramatic and more concise. Bach's Passions were, of course, composed for liturgical performance – that is, for presentation within the context of public worship. The tradition of English performances of the Passion can be traced back many generations to the period immediately following Mendelssohn's trail-blazing centenary performance of the *St Matthew* in Berlin in 1829.

The *John* Passion has never equalled the popularity of the *St Matthew* in English-speaking countries. Part of this is perhaps due in part to the unfamiliarity of many of the hymn melodies used – those in the *St Matthew* are much-better known. Also, the choral material of the *St Matthew* setting, though often disposed for double choir, requires much less in terms of vocal technique from the choristers.

The often highly dramatic choral writing in the *St John* is often elaborate, melismatic and swift of momentum and tempo. At the heart of the *John Passion* lies a remarkable series of choruses interspersed with the dialogue of Christ's interrogation by Pilate. The choruses approach and quit palindromically to and from a centrally placed chorale – *O Christ, Thy fetters mean release* (this chorale is marked with an asterisk in the text printed within this booklet).

The work unfolds from and concludes with massive, rhetorical choruses: *Lord and Master* – a movement of acclamation and affirmation of the supremacy of Christ over all nations, and the lullaby-like *Rest well* – a commendatory movement in which the mood of incompleteness so crucial to the theology of the first Good Friday is wonderfully expressed. Each part ends with a choral verse. While that with which the first part concludes is comparatively conventional, Bach's final harmonisation of *Ah! Lord, when my last end is come* is a musical tour-de-force, spectacular in its tension and unforgettable in its entreaties for mercy combined with a determination of the Christian soul to eternal praise and worship.

The arias, too, have so much in terms of depth of expression to offer the listener in terms of pathos – from the almost desperate cry of personal despair at the end of Part One (*Ah, my soul*) the throbbing pulsating of the final soprano solo with its pauses indicative of the death-throes of Christ finds Bach at his most expressive. At such moments – and there are many of them in the *John Passion* – is shown very particularly the Leipzig master's personal response to 'the greatest story ever told' – a tale of divinity assumed by a suffering servant whereby the tree of the shame of the gallows becomes the tree of glory for the 'one reliance' of humanity as St Venantius has it in his famous hymn *The Royal Banners forward go*:

*O Cross, our one reliance, hail
So may thy power with us avail
To give new virtue to the saint
And pardon to the penitent.*

Yet we sometimes forget that the *Passion* is not - in essence - a concert-piece. All the oratorios in the stupendous Lutheran heritage were composed for liturgical performance - that is, presentation within the context of public worship. This is a long tradition in England too, going back many generations almost to the period immediately following

Mendelssohn's notable revival of the work for its celebrated centenary performance of 1829 in Berlin.

This masterpiece comprises the culmination of the musical development of the setting of the Passion story - a process that may with ease be traced through the simply inflected, yet immensely moving, Plainchant Passions by way of the additions of polyphonic 'turba' (crowd) choruses by Renaissance Masters such as Byrd and Victoria through to the Motet Passions of composers like J C Demantius and the narrative settings of Heinrich Schütz. All these works have involved their composer's personal response to 'the greatest story ever told' - a tale of divinity portrayed as the suffering servant from Isaiah's prophecy, whereby the tree of the gallows became the tree of glory - the 'one reliance' of humanity as St Venantius' glorious hymn has it. Truly may we all share the mourning of the daughters of Jerusalem expressed so powerfully in the intense music from which Bach's peerless setting unfolds.



Saturday 11 June 2016
German MERRIE ENGLAND
St Mark's Church Broomhill – part of Broomhill Festival

Sheffield Bach Choir presents a special concert version of Edward German's lively patriotic opera celebrating life at the Court of Queen Elizabeth the First.

Brimful of well-known characters from history and legend, with lively and highly accessible music enhanced by narration, Merrie England is enhanced by strong characterisation in the solo roles. Elisabeth Horsey provides the narration with renowned accompanist husband Alan Horsey presiding at the piano.

Thus, once again, Yorkshire revives a neglected work. Much within the county of broad acres has done much to revive Merrie England with recent performances in Leeds, Doncaster and Halifax deploying the same artistic team of soloists, narrator and accompanist.

Merrie England is in many ways a lost masterpiece. Produced in 1902, the year of the Coronation of Edward the Seventh, in the context of huge enthusiasm at the dawn of the "new" Edwardian age, the work is a remarkable affirmation of one of the very greatest periods in English history.

Sir Edward Elgar, no less, was a great fan of Edward German's music. Other operas by German included Henry VIII and Tom Jones; a fine recording of the last-named, a disc that is the subject of universal critical acclaim, features Sally Robinson and her National Festival Orchestra – regular guests at Sheffield Bach Society Concerts.



Monday 14 December 2015
'Come Sing Messiah'
Dore Parish Church

This event has become a favourite for many people in Sheffield, who enjoy coming along to join the choir in a slightly abridged performance of Handel's Messiah. This is also an opportunity not to be missed to hear Simon Lindley accompany the choir and soloists at the organ. This event illustrates our close relationship with the University of Sheffield Department of Music, being conducted by Mark McCombs and the solo roles performed

by students from the university. If you have not been before, we are sure you will enjoy the informality of the evening with festive refreshments of mince-pies and mulled wine or juice during the interval. I am sure everyone will remember that this event is not included in season tickets for our our main concert season. Mince pies, juice and mulled wine are provided by members of the choir.



Now, some notes and information from our secretary . . .

THANK YOU TO OUR OUT-GOING PRESIDENT

The society was sorry that Canon Trevor Page decided to step down from the role as our President at the end of this season. This event provided us all with an opportunity to thank Trevor properly for his tireless work for the society and mark his 'retirement' in some style. A performance dedicated to Trevor of one of his a particular favourites Stanford's Beati Quorum Via was included in the final concert of the season and Trevor and his wife Deborah joined singers, friends and patrons for a celebration at our final rehearsal of the season, where a presentation was made to Trevor. We hope Trevor will still be able to come to some of our concerts but know that if he cannot manage this, his thoughts will be with us. He wrote to us saying . . .



'I would be glad if you would let the Society know how grateful Deborah and I are for the wonderful way in which you all marked my retirement from the presidency. The food was delightful; the remarks of Simon extremely generous; the flowers in the tub were lovely and the champagne exhilarating. As for the Waitrose voucher, it took our breath away. Never has a good evening ended with so much promise of more good things to come. Thank you all so much. Yours gratefully and in keen anticipation of the new season, Trevor'

MUSIC FOR THE COMING SEASON

Singers will remember I am sure that they need their own copy of Handel's Messiah and Bach's St John Passion. All other music will be provided (or has been already) and we are enormously grateful to Simon who is often able to lend us his own sets of music or arrange for us to borrow these from Leeds Minster. This saves us a huge amount of money in every season – thank you Simon.

'REHEARSING' AT HOME

A choir of our calibre, should not need to spend *too* much time on what is proverbially referred to as 'note-bashing'! Whilst many members are familiar with some of the works to be performed each season, for some, a performance with Sheffield Bach Choir may be 'a first!' The growth of YouTube over the last few years, has been a tremendous support to singers across the world, who wants to ensure that they are at least familiar with a work, before rehearsing with the full choir. I use this all the time for my other chamber choirs and can wholeheartedly recommend this. I have included some links to the works we are performing this season, but by going to YouTube and searching for the composer

and work, you can often hear a range of different performances and interpretations, including familiar works performed on spoons and other rather less conventional 'instruments', but here are some fairly 'straightforward' ones for you:

❖ Handel *Samson*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5wO8xRqrqQ>

You'll then see all the other choruses listed which you can click on

❖ Mozart *Requiem*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8BJo3ca5O8>

NB please remember to modify the word underlay in *Cum Sanctus* and ensure you have a copy of the additional A4 sheet of minor alterations, both available at rehearsal

❖ Bach *Cantata 68*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJ8JDSSt82U>

In German, but the 'tunes' are the same!

❖ Bach *Cantata 118*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5i3OqXY_So

You can even follow the score on this one! NB we are singing in English

❖ Handel *Messiah*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTMJVvld9ok>

You can join the choir of King's College Choir for this one!

❖ Bach *St John Passion*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKRvnS2HFF4>

I can't seem to find a version in English which we will be performing – perhaps someone else has time to search and let me know?

❖ Edward German *Merrie England*

ACT 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hUC7kkstasw>

ACT 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFRMiXKzwSM>

If anyone happens upon the 2012 Proms performance, I can assure you that we are NOT dressing up!!!!

PUBLICITY, TICKET SALES AND FUND RAISING

A huge thank you to everyone who already contributes to advertising our concerts, selling tickets and fund raising. Especial thanks to

- ❖ Richard who continues to organise the monthly stall;
- ❖ Kitty who runs the 'little raffle';
- ❖ Joan and team of helpers who raise a considerable amount for SBS from sale of refreshments at her Open Garden each year;
- ❖ Members, often anonymous, who make a personal contribution to cover some of the SBS costs
- ❖ Anne who continues to 'tweet' widely on our behalf
- ❖ Paul and Simone who ensure our web-site is up and running
- ❖ Pam and her team of helpers who organise rehearsal drinks
- ❖ Sarah who assists in sourcing music we need

- ❖ Rachel who organises ticket selling at rehearsals
- ❖ Committee members who give up their time to ensure we are always well planned in advance for the next season
- ❖ . . . and the many other people who help out with many tasks which often go unnoticed, but are vital to ensure our season is a success each year.

Here are a few ideas of ways in which all members could contribute too:

- ❖ Talk to people about our concerts
- ❖ Advise Facebook users to join the *Sheffield Bach Choir group* and tell friends when you are singing
- ❖ Forward the electronic flyers to everyone in your address book (well, perhaps not your Canadian or Australian contacts – it's rather a long way to travel for them!!!)
- ❖ Display brochures, posters and flyers in local shops, churches, libraries & workplaces
- ❖ If you sing in any other choirs, please take some flyers or email your colleagues
- ❖ Do a 'deal' with a friend in another choir – *I'll come to yours if you come to mine!*
- ❖ Discuss possible sponsorship or contribution to our overheads with anyone you think might be interested
- ❖ Take a few 'sale or return' tickets from Rachel, but please remember to give her the money or returns by the afternoon rehearsal, so Michael knows how many more tickets he can sell.
- ❖ Encourage your contacts to register on www.classicalsheffield.org.uk to receive the weekly concert listings by email.
- ❖ Tweet about our concerts to help Anne Adams who does this for us – thank you Anne
- ❖ Buy someone a ticket (or even a season ticket!) as a birthday gift
- ❖ If you have reluctant concert-goers amongst family and friends, then this season, we have a very useful 'taster' performance of just 20 minutes in the City Hall Ballroom as part of the Classical Sheffield Festival. We are performing from 3.55 - 4.15pm. You could even treat them to a coffee afterwards!? They could then see what they are missing!!
- ❖ Encourage friends to become Patrons of the society, perhaps again as a gift?
- ❖ Register for our Treasurer's Give as you live scheme – learn more in 'Thoughts from our Treasurer', below

If anyone has any other ideas PLEASE let Liz Buxton know and this can be included in the choir emails which every member of the choir receives from time to time.

VOLUNTEER NEEDED PLEASE

We would appreciate hearing from a non-singing volunteer, who was able to come along to the afternoon rehearsal, especially when we are performing in the Cathedral, to hand out flyers and sell tickets to the many people who wander through the building during the rehearsal, and importantly, often ask '*what's going on?*'

KEEPING IN TOUCH

To reduce the time taken out of rehearsals to share information and other notices, *please* remember that virtually all communication with singers will continue to be by email. It is vital therefore that you let me know if you change your email address. I also keep a database of other contacts, so again, if your phone number or postal address changes, please let me know.

Liz Buxton

Secretary

secretary@sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk



Some words from our Chairman . . .

Having just finished an enjoyable season we are now very much looking forward to the next, which will be here before we know it! As you will see from Simon's notes, we have a great programme of music lined up and finish in a lighter style for the Broomhill Festival. This concert seems to be building in popularity now that it is included in the festival and is most encouraging. We have already produced the brochure for our upcoming season and this was available at that event. I hope that we can attract further audience for these concerts. Publicity remains a must and I would ask you all to try and display posters, leave flyers and sell tickets to your greatest abilities!

In addition to our concert series and Come Sing Messiah, we have an additional four events. I would very like to get as much support for these as possible. I have previously mentioned the **Christopher Wood workshop 30/01/16**. This is a great opportunity to attract new members, is FREE! and the organisers will also pay £10 per choir member who attends. We therefore would like a maximum attendance for this and also for you to invite any friends or acquaintances to come along. The work is very accessible and would be a lovely opportunity for former singing members to join us. Here is a link to some extracts which you can listen to on the internet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JkTh23LtHo>

We have the short performance for the **Classical Sheffield Festival of Music** during the afternoon of **24/10/15**. This will be a few of the pieces that we sang for the June concert recently. As Simon will be away we welcome George Nicholson and David Sanderson to see us through this event which is a great showcase for the choir performing alongside six other local choirs that afternoon. The Festival web-site is now available at www.classicalweekend.com and although this is just a holding page at the moment, you can register to receive updates and there is a link to the electronic box office, as much is happening across the city that weekend.

I have recently been contacted by the Chair of **Doncaster Choral Society**. They are holding another concert at Cast, in Doncaster, **14/11/2015** and have invited us to join them. This is to be with Lesley Garrett, in memory of her mother, Margaret, who was a long standing member of DCS. The first half will be with Lesley and three other soloists, pieces will include Mozart Coronation Mass and (probably) Stanford Magnificat in G. The second half will be lighter pieces with Lesley and choir.

We have also been invited to join the **Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus** for a concert in the City Hall on **04/06/2016** with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic orchestra. The programme will be the Vaughan Williams Dona nobis pacem and a choral version of Serenade to music.

I would be very grateful if you could put these dates into your diaries now - along with our concert series. We will be collecting names for these additional events from the start of rehearsals in September as the organisers need to know how much support we can give them. Whilst these additions are keeping us busy next season I think that it is exciting to be invited to participate in these events, will raise our profile and may help to attract new members.

It is likely that Simon will want to rehearse for the three extra concerts as possible and I would therefore request that you try very hard to be present in good time on Mondays as we now have further material to cover. The DCS and SPC concerts will involve some extra rehearsal with those choirs and we will let you know what the requirements will be as

soon as we have them.

Many thanks to all who help to keep things going behind the scenes and particularly to Simon for the work that he does for us outside of actual concerts.

I hope that you all have a pleasant summer break and come back “revitalised” for a busy season in September.

Chris Walker

Chairman

chairman@sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk

Some thoughts from our Treasurer . . .

Congratulations, everyone, on a good season, well performed and much enjoyed by everyone. Financially, it is too soon to give you any figures as there are still some bills out-standing, but what I can tell you about is a way to make money (which we need) without costing any of us a single penny.

Recently I came across “Give as you Live”, an on-line shopping organisation which persuades companies to give a percentage of the profits they make to charity – a registered charity of your choice! So, naturally, I chose Sheffield Bach Society.

To date I have raised £10.74 by doing nothing more than my normal shopping, via Amazon (but it can be one of any number of companies as you will see), who give a percentage of the purchase price (not, usually, including VAT) to the charity of YOUR choice. This was totally painless to me and could be to you as well. If you click on the following URL . . .

<https://www.giveasyoulive.com/>

. . . it will take you to the right place to start. From here you can learn how to install the shopping bar in your browser, set up your account, choose your charity and off you go.

Our Charity is registered as “Sheffield Bach Society, Reg. No. 511146”.

It takes some time for your money to arrive at our Bank, as distance selling laws mean that you have 28 days to return your goods, so the companies will wait for this period to elapse before paying over their donation to make sure you have not cancelled the purchase, but it is worth the wait! By the time all my purchases to date have been approved, I will have raised £27.23 – just for buying cat food, cat litter, cat de-ponger and other glamorous essentials!!! By the end of the year this figure will probably be £100, all for buying things I need in any case. If 50 of us did this at the same rate, it would give us £5000 extra per year without costing anyone an extra penny.

There are other organisations which run similar schemes, but this is the one upon which I have hit. I have now proved that it works satisfactorily so, if you buy anything on-line, please do your best to find it via the **giveasyoulive** shopping bar. Remember, every penny helps and adds up to many pounds so, even if the purchase of your new book only donates 23 pence, it will all help the total.

If you have received this electronically, which most people will, you can click on the link above **NOW** and start your fund-raising experience. There are also lots of tempting offers

	<p>in which you might be interested, so please go shopping.</p> <p>See you all on 7th September – enjoy what sunshine you can and come back refreshed and ready for another exciting season.</p> <p><i>Jenny Cowling</i> Treasurer treasurer@sheffield.org.uk</p>
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	<p>Membership matters from our membership secretary. . .</p>
	<p>Once again, I thank you for telling me in advance when you know that you will be unable to attend choir rehearsals. I think that the ‘forward planner’ has been a great help in ascertaining fluctuations prior to concerts, and I will be continuing with this in the new season. Last minute absences from rehearsals are best sent to my mobile number (07960 523 911) as I always have that with me.</p> <p>We have finished the season with 58 singing members: Sops 20, (2 moved away and 1 new joined); Altos 19 (and one to be auditioned in September); Tenors 8 (1 lost and 1 gained, with one to be auditioned); Basses 11 (one to be auditioned). Attendance has been steady, and I know that it hasn’t been easy for some of you to maintain this because of work commitments, ill-health or family responsibilities. The men’s sections benefitted during the year from the Voice Exchange scheme, and as a result of this we hope to enrol two new permanent singers.</p> <p>I was pleased that we managed a very energetic (and musical!) offering of carols in Waitrose – twice! I shall be contacting my ‘fixer’ again very shortly, to book us in again. It boosts the old morale to hear people commenting “Oh! I thought it was a CD!”, and I was glad that some shoppers felt able – and welcomed – to join in with us.</p> <p>Let’s keep singing, and enjoying ourselves while we do it, and encourage each other in the pursuit of new ‘blood’!</p> <p><i>Liz Arnesen</i> Membership Secretary members@sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk</p>

	<p>Here’s a summary of the additional events in 2015-16</p>
	<p>Classical Sheffield Festival of Music 23-25 October 2015 SBS will be performing from 3.55 – 4.15pm on Saturday 24th October in the City Hall Ballroom. More information to follow</p>

	<p>Saturday 14 November Doncaster Choral Society concert featuring Lesley Garratt SBS singers invited to take part – more information to follow</p>
	<p>Saturday 30 January 2016 Workshop on Christopher Wood's REQUIEM The full-day event will take place at St Mark's Church Broomhill - more information to follow</p>
	<p>Saturday 4 June Joint concert with Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus at the City Hall Sheffield More information to follow</p>

	<p>On a serious note . . .</p>
	<p>An old Yiddish proverb says, "What soap is to the body, laughter is to the soul." Everyone knows that laughter makes you feel good and puts you in high spirits, but did you also know that laughter actually causes physiological responses that protect the body from disease and help your vital organs repair themselves? A good laugh can be compared to a mild workout, as it exercises the muscles, gets the blood flowing, decreases blood pressure and stress hormones, improves sleep patterns and boosts the immune system. Furthermore, a study by the John Hopkins University Medical School showed that humor and laughter can also improve memory and mental performance. Yet despite the fact that laughter has so many benefits, far too many of us forget to even crack a smile every once in a while, let alone laugh. <i>Dr. Cynthia Thaik</i></p> <p>On a less serious note therefore, we hope the following help . . . !!</p> <p>A SINGER'S CONFESSION Almighty and most merciful Conductor, We have erred and strayed from thy beat like lost sheep We have followed too much the intonations and tempi of our own hearts We have offended against your dynamic markings We have left unsung those notes which we ought to have sung And we have sung those notes which we ought not to have sung But Thou O Conductor, have mercy upon us miserable singers Succour the chorally challenged Restore thou those that need sectionals, spare thou those that have pencils Pardon our mistakes and have faith that hereafter we will follow thy direction and sing together in perfect harmony. Amen</p>

TRY TELLING THESE AND YOUR FRIENDS MIGHT JUST BUY A TICKET TO STOP YOU!!!!

- ❖ Q: How long does it take for a conductor to change a light bulb?
A: Nobody knows because no one was watching!
- ❖ Q: What's the definition of a tenor?
A: Any baritone who joins a choir that doesn't have enough tenors!
- ❖ Q: What's the difference between a piano and a tuna?
A: You can tuna piano, but you can't piano a tuna!
- ❖ Q: What happens when you play Beethoven backwards?
A: He decomposes!
- ❖ Q: Why did the pianist keep banging his head against the keys?
A: He was playing by ear!

All the above courtesy of the internet – whatever did we do without it?!



And finally . . .

The Committee looks forward to seeing you at the first rehearsal of the new season which will be on **Monday 7th September at 7.30pm**. Please be aware that re-auditions will be taking place before and after this rehearsal, so if people could stay in the lobby before the rehearsal, and speedily 'evacuate' the hall at the end, this would be most appreciated!

We hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter – please let Liz B know if you have any suggestions for inclusion in future newsletters or general emails to singers.

Our web-site is

www.sheffieldbachchoir.org.uk

Please publicise all our events as much as you can and do enjoy the summer and our forthcoming 2015-16 season!