

## Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus 2020-2021 season

The new season began positively with detailed arrangements for a return to in-person rehearsals for both BSC and BSYC. Detailed Risk Assessments and elaborate precautions with masks, social distancing, timed entrances for each bubble and voice part meant that a good proportion of the BSC and BSYC felt confident enough to return to rehearsing together. The support of Lighthouse and their ongoing assistance made this possible. Between 65 – 85 members of the BSC attended every week although some members who were shielding either themselves or to protect a member of their family and they were able to participate on Zoom.

There was continuing uncertainty about choral concerts nationally and with the BSO. Original plans to perform with the BSO at least four times before Christmas had to be postponed. Issues around singing, and social distancing were making performances with the BSO impractical. Morale was boosted enormously by two Carols Concerts co-promoted with Lighthouse on December 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020, just before the second Lockdown was introduced. Around 60 BSC members and 22 BSYC members performed in two 75 minute concerts at 5.30pm & 8pm. The concert was recorded and uploaded to Youtube. Feedback was very positive and the audience were very enthusiastic.

One of the most impressive aspects was the performance of the BSYC under the direction of Victoria Gray. Although masked and socially distanced like the adult Chorus, their performances were excellent and a great credit to their professionalism. The other notable aspect of that concert, which was ably conducted and compered by Gavin Carr (also masked) was that it was Sam Hanson's, as newly appointed Assistant Chorus Director & Accompanist, debut in that role with the BSC.

The national lockdown continued beyond Easter and the gradual opening up of activities was eagerly anticipated for May 17<sup>th</sup> 2021, when choirs planned to return to risk assessed in person rehearsing. The BSYC had returned in April as that was permitted under the Government's Roadmap to normality.

On 18<sup>th</sup> May to the fury of the Choral world there appeared to be a singular change to the plans which would not permit non-professional singing indoors. All other activities were being permitted with most amateur musicians able to rehearse but not sing. A number of choirs had returned to rehearsing on 17<sup>th</sup> and the Guidance was formally updated on the 18<sup>th</sup> May. The BSC was informed that it could not rehearse in person at 3.30pm in the afternoon of May 18<sup>th</sup>. To say that this did not go down well is an understatement. This generated a huge re-action amongst the 43,000 amateur choirs in the UK. With a number of petitions and campaigns directed at Members of Parliament and the Department for Culture Media & Sport. Both the Chorus Director and Chorus Manager appeared several times on local radio to comment on the illogical approach in singling out singing and only amateur singers. Fortunately, the DCMS clarified that given certain conditions were met, some choirs would be able to meet legally, and the BSC was able to restart rehearsals in person on 1<sup>st</sup> June with a record attendance of 99 members.

Given that the Chorus was prevented from performing in public, four virtual choir recordings were made during the season and uploaded to Youtube.. Prior to the Carols Concert the BSC recorded audio and visual tracks for Boris Ord's *Adam lay y bounden*, and a reworded version of the *12 Days of Christmas* the latter drawing thespian feats from BSC members on screen. In Spring 2021 two more recordings were made. One of Bach's *O Sacred Head Surrounded* in time for Easter and reflecting the further postponement of the Easter Bach Passion performance, and Rachmaninov's *Tebye Poyem* from the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom also postponed. The Bach & Rachmaninov were audio tracks only and images were added to the soundtrack by Gavin Carr and his brother Paul, the latter recording using some of the excellent images provided by Peter Leete.

Tribute concerts had been planned to acknowledge the contribution to the BSC by Sandrey Date and Donald Sheppard both of whom died in 2020. The Lockdown restrictions made this impossible and these tributes are planned for 2021/22 programme.

In addition the Trustees plans to celebrate Christopher Dowie's contribution to the Chorus for over 30 years as Assistant Chorus Director & Accompanist were also frustrated. The Trustees were pleased to propose him as a Vice President at an EGM which attracted huge support from the BSC membership.

**Partnerships** are important to the BSC and were considerably disrupted by the Coronavirus Pandemic restrictions. The most important of these partnerships is our relationship with our orchestra, the BSO. We

were disappointed that we were unable to perform with the orchestra during the season although there are plans for the coming Autumn. The BSO through its membership of the Association of British Orchestras was very involved in the discussions with the DCMS and shared our concerns about the restrictions being placed on our singing.

Projects planned with the Leeds Festival Chorus and The Philharmonia Chorus were under review during the year. Both the Winchester Cathedral concert with Leeds and the Mahler 8 Concert with The Philharmonia Chorus were rescheduled in 2022. Re-arranging all the BSC commitments between March 2020 and May 2021 was a challenge with a number of alternatives being considered concurrently and necessarily reviewed several times.

### **Fundraising**

This was less overt than in previous years and the restrictions on the ability to promote concerts and to socialise had an impact. The BSYC Patrons generously continued to support the important work of the BSYC and small fundraising opportunities were taken i.e. on line Christmas Raffle in support of the Malcolm Burdett Fund, donated tickets etc all of which specifically helped the BSYC Funds. BSC Benefactors continued their support also and a new scholarship fund was established in memory of Sandrey Date to support young bass singers aiming to pursue a professional career.

### **Working with Young People**

The BSCC and YC had been going through a golden period in their evolution during 2019 and 2020 but the Covid-19 lock down caused a complete disruption to the operations and development of the two groups. Despite this, a strong core group has emerged over the period, attending every week and the dedication they have shown has been very encouraging. Nine new members joined this year by May, of which two thirds were for the BSCC. New members have applied through word of mouth or through a current BSYC member. Recruitment for the BSCC will be the priority next season, given the large group of 16/17 year olds in the BSYC and recruiting under 15s will be essential in progression planning.

The Board is very grateful to Music Director Victoria Gray and Accompanist, Katherine Wills for their hard work and dedication during a very difficult year. In person rehearsals took place in the Autumn and Summer terms, with Zoom rehearsals running during the Spring term.

The BSYC participated in the two Carols Concert at Lighthouse as mentioned above and also participated in an online concert in aid of the Wessex Chernobyl Children's Lifeline in June. There was also a concert in early July at Wimborne Minster which drew many compliments on their performance. At the time of writing the BSYC is to take part in a concert at Christchurch Priory on July 24<sup>th</sup> restrictions permitting.. All other concerts were cancelled due to Covid -19 restrictions.

The Board records its thanks to Sara Kemp for her efficiency in managing the administration of the two groups. The encouragement that she conveys to the members is essential in ensuring that both rehearsals and concert engagements run smoothly and that the necessary supervision and safeguarding is in place. The Board is also indebted to BSYC VP Margaret Burdett for the unstinting support she has given to Sara Kemp, to BSYC VP Elizabeth Nayler for her directing and accompanying work with the BSYC when needed, and to all those who support our work with young singers.

The Board also acknowledges the contribution of others who support the work of the BSYC; Joan Ingarfield the BSC Treasurer and John Martindale BSC Vice-chair and BSYC Lead.

### **Governance**

The Board of Trustees on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 had agreed a flexible forward strategy for managing the professional staff, operations of the Chorus and reviewing future programmes. The Trustees also agreed the process for the Board Meetings, and other aspects of Governance using the advice given by the Charity Commission to Charities in the UK. The Trustees, did not meet in person during the year but engaged in Zoom Board Meetings on six occasions.

In the Autumn BSC and BSYC rehearsals were hybrid with some members attending in person and others attending on Zoom according to their particular circumstances. The Lighthouse management offered use of the Theatre for BSC rehearsals and with social distancing measures 115 singers can be accommodated.

The Trustees had agreed the protocols for safe rehearsals with Lighthouse and all required Covid-19 Risk Assessments were dealt with by a small group of Trustees and BSYC Secretary Sara Kemp. All those attending in person rehearsal have to agree to conform with the BSC Covid-19 rehearsal code of conduct as a condition of attendance. Feedback from members attending was that they felt it was a safe environment.

During the year the Trustees reviewed the Safeguarding Policy to include all young people under 18 years and vulnerable adults. The Trustees also agreed an Equalities Policy and reviewed the Code of Conduct to include areas previously omitted.

### **Board of Trustees acknowledgements**

On behalf of the Chorus, the Board of Trustees thank our Chorus Director Gavin Carr for his energy and commitment to the Chorus in rehearsal and during the challenges of the last season. His enthusiasm and encouragement have resulted in remarkable attendances for Zoom rehearsals which are not the most satisfying way to rehearse. Motivating singers to keep up their attendance and commitment to work on Zoom is no mean feat and his humour and positive personality make a major contribution. The Chorus fully appreciates his qualities and recognises that we are fortunate to have him as Chorus Director.

Gavin Carr is supported by Sam Hanson in his first season as Assistant Chorus Director & Accompanist. Sam has very quickly settled into this new role and has undertaken sectional rehearsals on Zoom and assisting with the virtual choir technical aspects. He has quickly established himself as a huge asset to our music making and we hope for a long and fruitful working relationship with him, as with his predecessor Chris Dowie.

The Board of Trustees would like to thank John Martindale for the enormous amount of work he undertakes as Stage Manager for the BSC. This is especially challenging at present with the complications of social distancing at concerts but also in planning the seating for rehearsals. This is crucial for safety and musical reasons and his efforts create the best environment possible in very restricted circumstances.

The Board of Trustees is very grateful to John Pattison, BSC WebMaster for his technical work supporting the website functionality. In particular his support through hosting and supporting the zoom rehearsals is a major element in making those rehearsals run smoothly and minimising frustrations normally associated with such platform use.. He also manages the contract with the Hosting Company and supports Trustees and Members in their development and use of the website.

The Board values the enormous contribution made by longstanding members of the Chorus who had planned to retire this season, and agreed that they may continue their membership for the next season when a suitable celebration of their time with the BSC can be made.

The Board acknowledges the huge amount of work carried out to support individual officers by other members of the Chorus - Tim Arnold for his work on Grapevine, programme design and other publicity Sue Braunton and Joyce Hatchard for their work on our social media accounts. Also those who help with BSYC registration and chaperones, stage layout and concert management, publicity and ad hoc fundraising. The Board of Trustees particularly appreciates the positive input, action and teamwork of the membership in the operations of the Chorus and during the challenges of the pandemic.

The Board also wishes to thank Jill White who retires as Soprano Section Leader, for her work in that position and for the very practical support that she has offered members during that time. Jill will continue to support Trustees in her Publicity Officer Role.

Carolyn Date MBE  
Chorus Manager  
Bournemouth Symphony Chorus  
June 2021

2020				
£	ASSETS		£	£
	Cash in hand and at bank			
35752	Bank Accounts		61,218	61,218
13450	Sundry debtors and prepayments			8,730
	Stock on hand			
	Music and folders		1,795	
	Long service glasses		268	
2153	CDs		90	2,153
<b>51,355</b>				<b>72,101</b>
	LIABILITIES			
7469	Sundry creditors and advance receipts			3,592
	<b>Special Funds</b>			
222	H S Turner Memorial Fund	222	222	
440	Alverna Trust Bursary: Receipts	440		
	Awarded	(175)	265	
	Sandrey Date Memorial Scholarship Fund	8,992	8992	
	Future Projects Fund			
8130	As at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	8,130		
	+ net donations from Benefactors	5,253	13,383	
2182	BSYC Malcom Burdett Memorial Fund			
	As at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	2,182		
	Plus Raffle	560	2,742	
32912	General Fund			
	As at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	32,912		
	+ excess of Income over Expenditure	9,993	42,905	
				68,509
<b>51,355</b>				<b>72,101</b>

J E Ingarfield, Hon Treas , 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

I have examined the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and the Balance Sheet at that date with the books and information supplied to me, without carrying out an audit, and have found them to be in accordance therewith.

A.J.Agnew FCA

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