

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO AGM 11 JULY 2022

Good Evening Everyone

Thanks to you all for attending this evening during this very warm weather.

Firstly, I am 'exceeding glad' that we have managed to put on three concerts this season in very trying circumstances. We were very lucky that we didn't have to cancel or postpone any of our performances due to covid and that we managed to transfer our rehearsals to the Priory which offered a larger, safer place for us all.

Thank you for following our guidelines of testing before each rehearsal when requested and for wearing masks when asked to give others peace of mind and allow them to attend rehearsals.

Our Messiah concert in December was well attended, despite the covid seating layout, and enjoyed by our audience, many of whom took the time to contact us to say how much they had enjoyed it and were so pleased that we had managed to perform it given the uncertainty of further covid restrictions.

We had always planned to follow Messiah with the Verdi Requiem (which was supposed to be in our 60th anniversary year) but it ended up in our 61st year and it also ended Marcio's 10 years with us. So, it was a very fitting programme for those two reasons. It was a stunning concert which I know we all enjoyed as did our audience. We had some wonderful soloists and a very enthusiastic orchestra.

We were able to present Marcio, during our last rehearsal, with some records and a generous gift card for him to use towards the purchase of an Ipad which was on his wish list. I think we could all see that he was very appreciative of your generosity and kindness.

As time was short the Committee decided to seek a guest conductor for the summer concert and so I approached Simon, who, although is always very busy, kindly agreed to take this on.

We then advertised for a new MD and when the applications had been received it was clear that Simon's was head and shoulders above the rest and so we decided to offer the position to him. I was delighted that he accepted as were we all and I think he was pleased too.

From then on I perceived a slight mood change in rehearsals – a more positive feel – we were now set going forward. The weekly rehearsal schedule was most welcome!

Our Jubilee concert on Saturday was with organ, brass and timps which involved a lot of singing (and standing) for us. The Coronation Anthems are challenging but the more confident we became the more I enjoyed them. It was a very warm evening but a lovely concert nonetheless. Chris gave his all on the organ – I envy his energy! Although we did let him have a break for the Walton Crown Imperial which Simon played stirringly.

Next season will see us perform Elijah in January, The Armed Man in April and a summer concert yet to be decided. I have heard a rumour that the orchestral music for the Elijah concert is already in hand.

We shall be holding rehearsals at the school from September, barring any unforeseen circumstances. We will let you know the start date when that has been decided but it won't be before 12th September.

I would like to record my thanks to our main sponsor – Stephen Feltham and to Geoffrey Owen and John Craddock for their sponsorship of our individual concerts. We also had an anonymous sponsor of the soprano soloist in the Verdi Requiem – thank you to you.

Thanks to Chris Main for putting our programmes together and patiently waiting for me to provide the information he needs and to Hilary Martin for designing our flyers.

My thanks too to Chris and Simon for covering Marcio's absences due to disruptions with rail travel. These were usually very last minute requests and I am grateful that we didn't have to cancel many rehearsals.

My thanks also to your committee who work so hard behind the scenes to ensure that the choir runs smoothly and we put on our best performances. I would be lost without them.

Finally, thanks to all of you for turning up each week to sing so beautifully. I hope that you will enjoy some cake and prosecco later. I am especially pleased to welcome June Fleming, our longest serving member of 53 years, who will be cutting the cake for us.