



October 2019

Dear All



Concert update.

Arrangements for the December concert are moving on apace! Our soloists have been finalised - many of you will know James Letham (baritone) who has sung with us before and Tamsin Davidson (mezzo-soprano) who recently sang the Durufle Requiem with us. In addition we have two young soloists from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland - Karina Bligh (soprano) and Matthew McKinney (tenor). We look forward very much to welcoming them and the Berwick Arts Orchestra, many of whom played so memorably in Elijah.

Posters for the concert have now been printed and will be available at tomorrow's rehearsal for you to take away and display. This time we have three sizes - A4, A5 and A6 - so please help yourselves! The usual lists will be there for you to sign indicating where you will be displaying the posters. **Please can you try to put up as many posters as possible in and around the area and spread the word about the concert to as many people as you can.** It should be a great concert and we would really like to attract a big audience - glorious, live music like this deserves to be heard!

We are delighted that the concert provides another opportunity for collaboration with Berwick Educational Association (BEA) as our performance is to be complemented by a talk about the Schubert Mass to be given by Dr Michael Worboys as part of BEA's *Talking About Music* series. Dr Worboys' talk will take place at the Berwick Parish Centre (next to Berwick Parish Church) from 1-3pm on **Thursday 5th December**. Coffee and biscuits will be available. Dr Worboys is a fascinating and knowledgeable speaker and his talk should provide many insights into Schubert and in particular the Mass in Ab.

A few of you have not yet signed to confirm that you will be singing in the concert. Please can you remember to do so tomorrow. This will help us start to sort out the seating arrangements for the church.



Other info

Next week (7th December) there will be a table-top sale in aid of choir funds. We would be very grateful for donations of items to sell (home-produce, baking, bric a brac, books, CDs etc etc) on the night. We are also hoping that the choir's stylish Christmas cards will be on sale that night as well - £5 for a pack of 6 or £1 each.

Best wishes and looking forward seeing you all tomorrow.
The Committee

Extracts from the Chair Report for the BAC AGM September 2019

As well as putting on two successful and well-received concerts the year from September 2018 to September 2019 has been a very busy and productive year for the choir.

Singing Workshop

We started the year in fine style by organising a Singing Workshop in October. This was held in the magnificent surroundings of Ayton Castle and was led by Kathleen McKellar Ferguson, Singing Tutor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow. It was a really good fun and informative day and we were royally looked after by the castle factor and his wife. We opened the Workshop to people from other choirs and it was a great way to meet other singers and make new friends.

Christmas cards

Approaching Christmas, as part of a publicity / fundraising exercise, we had some BAC Christmas cards designed and printed. They were very well received by choir members and we have ordered some more similar ones for this year

Online ticketing

For our January and May concerts this year we explored online ticketing using a well-established and well-regarded outfit called Ticketsource. These days most people, and especially people with no connection to the choir, expect to be able to buy tickets online and we hope that as people get used to the convenience of buying their tickets online it will take off and encourage bigger audiences and more pre-concert sales. We have also continued to sell tickets through choir members and through Grieves the stationers in Berwick.

Funding applications

As well as raising funds internally through three very successful table-top sales over the year we have been pursuing outside funding for the choir and made several applications during the year. We received a generous grant of £300 from NCC towards concert venue costs, for which we are very grateful and a further grant of £500 from the Simpson McCreath Trust which I'll say more about later.

BEA collaboration

The January Elijah concert saw another collaboration with Berwick Educational Association (BEA) and our concert was complemented by two very interesting talks on Mendelssohn and his life and music – one given by Hazel Rowland of Durham University and the other by Dr Richard Moore of BEA. There will be a further collaboration with BEA for this December's concert when Dr Mike Worboys will give a talk on the Schubert Mass two days before the concert on Thursday 5th December.

Friends

During the year we resurrected the choir's Friends Scheme and launched this at the May concert with a brand-new Friends leaflet and we have already got our first few Friends. We are appointing a Friends Coordinator who will be responsible for keeping in contact with our Friends and hopefully encouraging more Friends to support us.

Website

The most recent event of all is the completion and launch of the revamped choir website.

We hope you like the new website. It contains lots of information (check out the Members tab for information about rehearsal aids such as Cyberbass and Choraline) and I think it paints a great picture of the choir and the people in it – we all look very jolly and that's what singing is all about! We hope the revamped site will encourage new members to join us, new people to come and listen to our concerts and new Friends to support us. To go back to funding - we are also delighted to announce that the full cost of the website revamp was met with a very generous grant from the Simpson McCreath Trust for which we are very grateful.

Thank yous

Finally all that remains for me to do is to say some thank-yous – to Kate for all her hard work over the year and to Margaret for accompanying us so ably at rehearsals. Lastly, but by no means least, I'd like to thank all the committee who worked really hard to make it such a successful year

Many thanks to all of you as well for all your great singing and general enthusiasm and support for the choir and we look forward to another enjoyable year of Berwick Arts Choir.