

NOTES

The Newsletter of the Formby Choral Society
No 8 February 2008

President-Stephen Threlfall

Conductor-David Holroyd

Chairman's message

Shirley Potter writes

It does not seem 2 years since we were eagerly anticipating our return visit to the Philharmonic Hall. These concerts are always a huge thrill to take part in – definitely the highlight of the season and currently the only opportunity we have to perform with a really big orchestra.

As I know you are aware, this is also a huge financial venture, even when combining our efforts with our friends in Birkenhead and Merchant Taylors' School, and it is vital that we raise as much money as possible both through ticket sales and by obtaining sponsorship. I am sure the programme will be extremely popular with our loyal audiences and I hope that you will all be able to sell tickets without too much trouble. The capacity of the hall is around 1600 and it would be wonderful to perform to a full house.

The concert will be fantastic; let's make it a financial success too.

Around the Choral Societies

During January to April, many of the more standard works of the amateur choral repertoire are, of course, being performed in the North West, several, such as 'The Armed Man' and the Brahms 'German Requiem,' by a number of choirs. However, study of the Making Music website reveals that some more esoteric programmes are being presented.

- Two shows by the Wordsworth Singers in the Lake District include Bach's 'Komm Jesu, Komm!' and 'Singet dem Herrn', Josquin's 'Missa Pange Lingua', Stravinsky's 'Sacred Choruses', and Szokolay's 'Ave Maria'.
- The St George's Singers will sing the Rachmaninov 'Vespers' and the Taverner 'Nunc Dimittis' at their Poynton performance.
- The Levens Choir announce their concert at Cartmel Priory as 'Settings of English Mystical Poets by Spicer, Finzi, Self, Elgar, Maw, Dove, Holst, Walton and Harris'. Pity it's such a trip....
- The Barnby Choir in Wilmslow will sing Vaughan Williams' 'Sancta Civitas' and Finzi's 'Lo, the full final sacrifice'.
- Vaughan Williams' 'Pilgrim's Progress' is offered in a Bolton C.U. concert.

And then there are some 'blasts from the past' such as Ulverston C.S.'s 'Merrie England' by Sir Edward German and Bolton C.U.'s 'Crucifixion' by Stainer. Takes you back, doesn't it? But, what goes around comes around.....

A message from Barbara Lloyd

Barbara, a committed and hard working member of the Society since 1992, has moved on and writes:

As many of you know, I have reluctantly resigned from FCS due to family commitments. We are relocating to Worcester to be near our daughter and family. The decision to leave has been due to my commuting up and down the motorway every week to babysit!

My first experience of choral singing was at school and I remember singing excerpts from Messiah at a school concert. After I left, I didn't sing again until I attended an Open University summer school at Cardiff as part of a music course. We performed a concert which included the Cantique de Jean Racine. By then, I was hooked and determined to join a local choir at the end of the course. So, in 1992, I joined FCS and was made to feel most welcome despite knowing no one. I have really enjoyed every minute of my time with the Choir, including the trips abroad. I've always said that one of the best things I did was to join - I just wish I had done so sooner!

I'm sure the Choir will continue to go from strength to strength under David's expert direction and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Ho! Ho! Ho!

Rubato: ointment for the musician's back.

Lento: the days leading up to Easto.

Allegro: I have a little car.

Metronome: a person small enough to fit into a Mini.

Syncopation: a bowel condition brought on by too much jazz.

Coda: served with chipsa.

Mon April 7th

Joint Rehearsal Dates

Sat April 12th

Wed April 16th

All at Merchant Taylors' School, Liverpool Rd., Crosby

Not such a Magical Musical Moment

It had been a bad afternoon in the surgery. The patients were all depressed and too many “emergencies” had turned up without appointments. We had tickets booked for the opera that night so I was keen to get away on time. The opera was *Il Trovatore*, to be performed by the English National Opera at the Empire with Rita Hunter in the lead role. At that time she was already corpulent but her voice was at or near its best and we were really looking forward to hearing her. I arrived home late for a snatched meal and we drove into Liverpool on one of those miserable misty drizzly late autumn days. On the way I told my wife what a bad day it had been and said, “And I bet Rita Hunter will be indisposed”. We arrived at the theatre just in time, there were no programmes available and as we reached our seats, the lights dimmed, the curtain parted, the house manager appeared and said, “Rita Hunter is indisposed”. Her replacement was awful (I will not name her) but there was a highlight in the evening during the *Anvil Chorus*. Shortly after its start, the head flew off one of the hammers. Can you imagine an *Anvil Chorus* with only one anvil playing? A hilarious moment in an otherwise not very magical evening!

Bernstein and Jenkins

The composers of the works we perform in the Philharmonic Hall on April 19th have the rich variety of their musical activity and their concern for world peace in common.

Leonard Bernstein ‘is generally recognized as music’s most exuberant hero.

Conductor, composer, pianist, teacher, humanitarian, thinker, entertainer and adventurous spirit, he transformed the way people everywhere hear and appreciate music. He broke rules, shattered precedents and opened doors, insisting that music could and should play a vital role in the lives of all people’.

Bernstein’s life and career resonates with the American experience. Born in 1918 of middle class Jewish immigrants, he studied music in parallel with his academic education until reaching Harvard. From then on, music dominated and over time he became not only the first American to direct a major American orchestra but also the first to conduct great European orchestras and operas.

As a composer, his works ranged from jazz to musicals, from symphonies to ballets, from choral to solo instrumental; *West Side Story*, *Wonderful Town*, *The Kaddish Symphony*, the score for *On the Waterfront*, *The Chichester Psalms* are just some.

Bernstein’s concern for world peace and reconciliation led him to Hiroshima in 1985 with the EU Youth Orchestra on the 40th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the city by his country. And in December 1989 he gave concerts both sides of the Wall as it was being dismantled - the orchestra containing players from East and West Germany and all four occupying powers.

Karl Jenkins has become one of Britain’s best known ‘classical’ composers, in 2006 being voted fourth in Classic FM’s British Composers list, the highest position for a living composer. His style, fusing his classical background with his jazz and world music interests has appealed to the ears and emotions of people with diverse musical experience. Jenkins was born 1944 of Welsh parents. His father, a schoolmaster, organist and choirmaster, taught him the piano and he went to grammar school and then on to read for a BMus at the University of Wales, Cardiff. Then followed a period at the Royal Academy of Music where he is Fellow and Associate. As a teenager he took up the oboe and played in the National Youth Orchestra of Wales.

But it was in Jazz that he first earned his living and attained fame, playing baritone and soprano saxes as well as keyboards and oboe in the Graham Collier Band and later his own group, Nucleus with whom he won first prize at the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival. His next venture was with his band *Soft Machine*, ‘one of the seminal bands of the 70s’, one that ‘defied categorization’ and which played at the Proms and Carnegie Hall.

Coming off the road in the 80s, Karl entered the world of media music, writing advertising themes for famous brands and gaining many awards in the field.

And then came the ‘crossover’ project, *Adiemus*, ‘combining a classical base with ethnic vocal sounds, ethnic percussion and an invented language’, which headed classical and pop charts worldwide.

The Armed Man was his first major choral work and has been enormously successful, having been performed well over 300 times since 2001. His 2005 *Requiem* looks set fair to have the same success. ‘The ultimate in post modern Requiems....’ (Music Week)

CAPRIOL SINGERS’ SPRING CONCERT

Saturday 15 March
2008 at 7.30 pm.

St. Nicholas Church,
Blundellsands.

Gounod ~ St
Cecilia Mass
Andrew Carter ~

Benedicite

Tickets: £8
(concessions £7,
under 19s, free)

including
refreshments, and
are available in
advance from

Pritchards Books,
choir members, or
can be booked by

ringing 01704-
876754, or by e-
mailing

www.crosbycapriolsingers.co.uk

From Wikipedia.org

‘the opening section of the first movement of the *Chichester Psalms* is often considered one of the hardest passages for choral tenors ever written owing to its rhythmic complexity and the constant presence of the strange and difficult to maintain interval of a major 7th between the tenor and bass (what about the basses? Ed). The seventh interval figures prominently due to its numerological importance in the Judaeo-Christian tradition.’