

# Minutes of the Anton Bruckner Choir AGM 2011

Held at St Matthew's Church, Wandsworth Bridge Road  
5.15pm 26 February 2011

27 members were present.

Chairman: Alexander Churchill

Minutes prepared by Gordon Banner.

## ***Approval of previous minutes***

Proposed by Richard Hubbard, seconded by Carolyn Steele, passed nem con.

## ***Treasurer's report - Chris Sherlaw-Johnson***

Overall in the year, a loss of £440 ... the loss due to the Messiah concert at St John's Smith Square [SJSS]. The concert at St Clement Danes made a profit, as usual for this sort of concert.

Thanks to Alex for getting the John Lewis donation of £800 for the Messiah. We couldn't do SJSS every 6 months, but we can sustain a loss of this size occasionally. There is a backlog of GiftAid to be reclaimed. Will Hale has this role.

Richard Hubbard: Our first concert at SJSS was close to breaking even - what was the difference?

Chris Sherlaw-Johnson: Yes, the Christmas Oratorio did well, but the Bach Mass in B minor also lost £1500. In this case, ticket sales were down a bit; we spent less on instrumentalists but more on soloists. The awful weather meant no trains and therefore fewer tickets. There were fewer singers, so less money in subscriptions. We also had repetiteurs for all rehearsals.

Alex Churchill: Price for hire of hall no longer includes VAT, so that is more expensive.

Rosemary Hadfield: Parliament Square was closed during the afternoon for a demo, might have put some people off. Also SJSS had another Messiah only a couple of weeks later.

Chris Dawe: Ultimately the choir sold fewer tickets...

Sam Purdy: GiftAid needs attention - this was an issue a year ago.

Chris Dawe: Yes, we need to clear the backlog.

Frank Taylor: Are the GiftAid forms up to date?

Stephen Hall: The publicity costs for SJSS seem high, where did they go?

Chris Sherlaw-Johnson: partly on the SJSS publicity package (press adverts etc) - £500. There was a second run of flyers, which added cost.

Catherine Hope-Jones: Did non-singers (other members of the choir) get asked to sell tickets?

Chris Dawe: Yes, they were.. We should compare to other Messiah concerts in London around the same time - there was one in St Martin-in-the-Fields, which was packed out.

Pauline Thompson: one at King's Place too. That was later in the month - was ours too early?

Rosemary Hadfield: and don't forget the weather/trains, it affected some of my friends.

Chris Dawe: Let's not get too worked up about it. We used regularly to lose £2000 on our big concerts.

Accounts accepted: proposed by Sam Purdy, seconded by Pauline Thompson, passed nem con.

## ***Chairman's report - Alex Churchill***

Thanks to Chris Sherlaw-Johnson (who is stepping down as Treasurer) for this year's accounts, and also for the last 4 or 5 years. He has managed our finances, produced clear concise accounts, and ensured that we met all Charity Commission requirements.

It has been a successful year. A highlight was the trip to the Aldeburgh Festival, to sing the Haydn HarmonieMesse. We also had two good concerts of our own.

We also enjoyed the Garden Party in Wiltshire and the Serenade to Music. This will surely be the model for future events. Many thanks to Mrs Chivers (Lulu's mother) for hosting the event.

A note of warning re the John Lewis donation/sponsorship: they are reorganising their donations - you now have to apply through your local Waitrose or John Lewis store rather than the central Chairman's Fund, so it will be more regional. We've been very lucky to get this funding in the past - it may not happen again, so we will need to work harder at fundraising and ticket sales.

This year, we obviously the Bach concert in a week's time.

In October we will have the Canticque des Cantiques. This may require an advance rehearsal in the summer - perhaps in the form of another summer party?

Finally, thanks to all the choir's supporters:

to the members for singing, selling tickets, and all other forms of supporters

to everyone here at this AGM for coming!

to committee members and other volunteers, in no special order:

Pauline Thompson for librarian duties

Gordon Banner for help on the committee

Lulu Chivers for so much of the legwork

Ann Stedman for booking venues

Chris Sherlaw-Johnson, for 5 years' financial management

Graham King for agreeing to take over from Chris Sherlaw-Johnson

Sian Rees, Jenny Garrett, Claire Bennie, Jane Fisher-Hunt for publicity and mailings

Richard Hubbard for the website - it's very helpful to the committee to get all the info about who is singing etc at the push of a button.

Chris Dawe for inspiration, for conducting quality and for top-notch performances.

## ***Musical Director's report - Chris Dawe***

Musically 2010 was a good year.

St Clement Danes: Howells' Requiem here was our 3rd performance of that piece - it was one of our very first concerts, in Chiswick, and we did it a 2nd time at St Alban the Martyr. This was our best yet. Repetition to a certain extent, can lead to a top-quality performance, though we shouldn't overdo it. It is also necessary due to the practical limits of our rehearsal schedule. The Poulenc was new to us, and worthwhile - we should repeat it sometime to consolidate and get value from this new repertoire. The Vierge Noir was quite an exposed moment for the Sopranos and Altos, and improved on last time. Of course the men had their "moment" in the Biebl. Overall, a good concert.

Aldeburgh was perhaps more relaxed than last year, and hence more enjoyable. It's very worthwhile socially. We're not doing it this year, as there's no chorus. We don't know if we'll be asked again or not - the situation at Aldeburgh has changed - e.g. the Britten-Pears Chamber Choir has now been reconstituted as Aldeburgh Voices. As a replacement, suggestions for an ABC tour would be welcome.

The Messiah at SJSS: musically, this was tremendous. Lulu's viola teacher (in the orchestra) remarked it was the best of the 20 or so performances she has been involved in. Cothen Baroque (the orchestra) did us proud. We proved that Messiah is not just an old warhorse, but can be musically fulfilling.

This year we have the Cantique des Cantiques. It will be challenging, with divided parts, and will require good rehearsal attendance and perhaps a workshop rehearsal in advance. Suggestions welcome for something to go alongside it: we had planned the Durfle Requiem, but the organ is not working. We can't pair the CdC with high-maintenance repertoire, so we're still not decided.

The Christmas concert will be back after a 2-year gap. It's popular and financially helpful. Maybe at St Sepulchre? Somewhere central and warm, with a decent organ.  
Rosemary Hadfield: how about St Stephen's on Rochester Road, Westminster?  
Stephen: unfortunately the organ there is due for refurbishment April-December.

Venues are becoming an issue for cost and other reasons - St Augustine's is under refurb and may not be available after that is done; St Cyprian's is expensive. We really need somewhere in Kensington, Westminster or the City.

Thank yous:

Alex Churchill, our chairman

Ann Stedman, who does a very efficient job, particularly in the light of venue changes as mentioned earlier.

Pauline Thompson, who has been doing the Librarian role for 10 years now

Richard Hubbard for the website

Chris Sherlaw-Johnson for 4 years of doing the Treasurer job.

## ***Appointment of Committee***

As noted with the agenda, Graham King has offered to become Treasurer, otherwise the committee is prepared to continue unchanged.

Accepted: proposed Catherine Hope-Jones, seconded Tessa Henderson, passed nem con.

## ***Any other business***

Pauline Thompson: For the Christmas concert, we need people to sign up early so she can get music - all choirs are competing for the same scores. Can we ask people to sign up in July, at the same time as for the autumn concert?

Stephen Hall: What was the cost of the Aldeburgh trip?

Chris Sherlaw-Johnson: It's cost neutral (our expenses were paid by the Festival)

Stephen: Would a festival hire a choir?

[There followed some general discussion about festivals, with no particular conclusion.]

Pauline Thompson: Could we ever commission a new work?

Chris Dawe: It's possible. Paul Ayres and Nick O'Neill are both good friends of the choir, and are both accomplished composers. We could also consider doing some other contemporary items - Sandstrom, Whitacre, Lauridsen, for example.