

## **Minutes of Anton Bruckner Choir AGM 2012**

Held at Interfaith Centre, Salusbury Road, at 5pm on 18 February 2012

Chairman – Alexander Churchill; minutes taken by Gordon Banner; 25 members attended

### **1. Approval of minutes from previous AGM**

Proposed by Will Hale, seconded by Nick Wood, passed nem con.

### **2. Treasurer's report - Graham King**

Last year we broke even - but only just. We got a large discount at St Sepulchre's, the venue for our Christmas concert, due to a mix-up in their bookings which meant we had no rehearsal time. Without that financial good fortune (albeit inconvenient in other respects), we would have made a loss on the year.

GiftAid: in respect of claims for 2007 and 2008 we received £400; our claims are now up-to-date, with another £1300 in the pipeline.

Our payment to Making Music increased slightly - with the larger concerts at St John's Smith Square, we need a higher level of insurance cover.

Proposed by Emma Anderson, seconded by Richard Hubbard, passed nem con.

### **3. Financial discussion continued...**

Graham then showed us a graph, which illustrated revenues and expenditure at all our concerts in the last few years. There was a noticeable trend of decreasing revenues at the large St John's Smith Square concerts. Moreover, at the smaller concerts there had been a (less dramatic) slide in revenues – from small profits towards break-even. Profits from the small concerts have been important to subsidise losses at St John's. So, if these trends were to continue, we would have to stop doing concerts at Smith Square.

There is also a cashflow issue: St John's pay us our box office receipts too late after a concert to cover our bills - our own ticket sales have to cover any payments we have to make.

Samantha Job asked if this is legal – if the choir is taking too much risk.

Graham replied that it's legally (and morally!) fine, so long as we can pay our bills - but it's a cashflow problem for the choir. We do have sufficient reserves to cover our liabilities. Alex added that ultimately the trustees of the choir have the responsibility to ensure the choir is solvent.

Samantha asked about the situation with our smaller concerts, and Graham assured us that there was no cashflow problem with these – we get all the ticket monies immediately on the door.

Graham continued:

[At SJSS] we need to sell about £4000 via direct sales by choir members to get money up-front in order to cover cashflow. We would need to sell out the whole ground floor of St John's to break even (this is possible!). Previously we have been sponsored by John Lewis, but we probably won't get that again.

Alex: John Lewis' sponsorship allocation policy changed - there's no longer a central person in charge - instead we have to apply to a particular store. We will apply, but it's less likely to be successful, and we won't know before March.

Finally, Graham noted that we seem to be selling fewer tickets for the smaller concerts too, hence the slide in profits there; we had wondered if weather might be a factor, but it just seems that our own choir sales are down (for all sorts of concerts).

Emma Anderson: Perhaps we need more nagging from the committee, to encourage us to sell tickets.

Nick Wood suggested updates in rehearsals - a "thermometer" to display the current status?

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

Alex thanked Graham for his clear explanation of the trends - the message was not to be complacent. Our concerts last year - Bach, Lesur and Christmas - were all excellent, but we need to worry about revenue.

His role as Chairman is to be a figurehead, and he thanked various others for their hard work -

- Pauline for the smooth running of the library
- Lulu for essential background work - the choir wouldn't run without her
- Ann for concert and rehearsal venues
- Graham for a wonderful job on the accounts
- Gordon for minutes, etc, as Secretary
- Sian Rees for Friends
- Caroline, Ruth and Jane for marketing, posters, etc
- Will Hale for Gift Aid - an important boost to income
- Richard Hubbard for the website - a superb piece of work, well organised, helps with committee functions such as librarian and subs.
- Chris Dawe for the quality of concerts he helps us produce - this is what makes the choir special.

## 5. Musical Director's Report - Chris Dawe

Chris reviewed the previous year's concerts:

The Bach Motets - this is the 2nd time we have performed the complete Bach motets (though we have of course done individual ones on other occasions). It is good to revisit pieces, as we see things getting better each time. We can compare to the early days of ABC - something like *Komm Jesu Komm* is hugely improved. This was a good concert, which got many compliments from the audience.

Next was the Lesur - a big challenge to which the choir responded well. People were very impressed, including our accompanist Nick O'Neill. Tuning was perfect, and no "turbulence". So we need more challenges like this - good for Chris as a conductor, and for the choir as a whole. We need to combine something new with something more familiar that complements it. Suggestions please! (Maybe a *Spem in Alium* in the autumn?)

The Christmas concert: Chris apologised that his new carol had been too hard - but after the work we put in, we can use it another time - at Christmas or Passiontide. It was an enjoyable event - we should have had a bigger audience. It was very nicely sung. Our first concert in St Sepulchre's, and worked very well in the venue.

A final comment on ticket sales: the periodic larger concert at SJSS is an important part of our schedule, very good for the choir - we mustn't let it fail just for lack of finance.

We had several good new members joined this year.

Alex had already thanked many people, but from the conductor's viewpoint, particular thanks to Pauline for coping with his indecision; to Ann for arranging venues (even when not singing herself); and to Alex for coordinating everything.

## 6. Committee reappointments

Per the agenda, the current committee was willing to be reappointed; no one else wished to stand for any position; so the current committee was re-elected en bloc. Nem con.

The committee is:

- Alexander Churchill – Chairman
- Christopher Dawe – Musical Director
- Graham King – Treasurer
- Gordon Banner – Secretary
- Lulu Chivers – member without portfolio
- Pauline Thompson – Librarian
- Ann Stedman – Venue management

## 7. AOB

Richard Hubbard: What's coming next? We should book it before SJSS so we can cross-sell tickets at the SJSS performance.

Chris Dawe: Possibly *Spem in Alium* together with the Frank Martin *Mass*, in October.

There was some discussion of whether we could do a Sunday afternoon concert for Christmas, as the last Christmas concert had a low attendance. Maybe pick a church to target commuters or shoppers. However, a Sunday concert might clash with the church's own carol services.

Richard Hubbard: There is now a page on the site for repertoire suggestions. Please look at the page, vote for ideas and add your own. Get some discussion going!

Chris Dawe: this has already paid off - *Long Ago*, as sung at our Christmas concert, was from a suggestion.