

Minutes of the 2015 AGM of the Anton Bruckner Choir

Held at 17:00 on Saturday 21 March 2015
at the London Inter-Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG

25 members were present
Minutes taken by Gordon Banner

1. Approval of Minutes of 2014 AGM

Proposed by Charlotte Nicklin, seconded by Nick Wood, passed nem. con.

2. Treasurer's report – Graham King

Graham referred us to the accounts [available at the meeting and on the website]. Some explanation and comment:

The concert in memory of Pauline Thompson had been paid for by her bequest – and had actually left us with a surplus. This would go into general ABC funds, as indicated in the bequest. As a side note, Graham remarked that Making Music had also had reason to thank Pauline, as she had provided for their computer system to be upgraded.

Also showing on the accounts was the deposit made last year (2014) to St John's, Smith Square in advance of our concert this year. There was also a sum for 2015 subscriptions which had been paid early.

Nick Wood: Does anything worry you about our finances?

Graham: Currently ticket sales for the SJSS concert are going OK, so we are in reasonably good shape.

Richard Hubbard: What's the current state re GiftAid?

Graham: we have a claim currently in progress by Will Hale – should be around £400.

David Willink: Was there any cost for scores for Pauline's concert?

Graham: No, that was provided for in her bequest.

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Will Hale, seconded by Nick Wood, and passed nem. con.

3. Chairman's report – Samantha Job

Sam started by noting that 2015 was our 20th anniversary year; she asked for a show of hands from those who had been members all of that time, and several people owned up. She thanked the core people who had been around so long, and asked us to pause and mark the moment!

It had been a busy year – at the previous AGM there had been only one concert to discuss, but in the subsequent year there had been several. They had all gone well, and Pauline's would stay in the memory in particular.

She thanked her “busy” Committee:

Phil Pratt for concert venues organised well in advance, as well as rehearsals, toilets...

Gordon Banner for AGM and minutes

Graham King for his meticulous accounts – keeping us in good financial shape enables us to take calculated risks on special concerts

Karen Gilbert – who had been co-opted at no notice at the last AGM! – for publicity and for taking on the organisation of a tour, which is an extraordinary amount of work.

Lulu Chivers for keeping us all in line – “the power behind the throne”!

She also thanked some of the non-committee members who had also helped:

Richard Hubbard for the website, which was such a help to the Committee and reduced our workload by half

Charlotte Nicklin for tea at every break

Anne Mitchell and Anna Moses for being the music librarians

Kay Leedham-Green for artwork and Emma Anderson for programme production

Will Hale and Sian Rees for GiftAid and Friends respectively

...and all the others who had helped in various ways. The choir only worked because of everyone chipping in.

Sam looked forward to the Tour – it would be “mindblowing”, a huge step for the choir.

And finally she thanked Chris as she invited us to consider the hours, blood, sweat and tears put in by the conductor.

4. Musical Director's report – Chris Dawe

It had been an unusual year.

We had the Lenten Passiontide concert – which actually made money. It had been good, but it also made us think about the numbers of people singing, e.g. the Byrd *Four-part Mass* with 55 singers, and had chimed with the discussion about numbers at the last AGM.

The upcoming *St Matthew Passion* at SJSS, like the “Vienna” concert last October, would be slightly smaller, which had meant less note-bashing and a more agile sound. So he was pleased with how it had worked out in the end.

Pauline's memorial concert had featured an extraordinary set of repertoire – reflecting her sense of humour – with *Spem in Alium*, the *Martin Mass*, and even the de las Infantas piece in two simultaneous keys! It was testament to the power of the choir to have put it on successfully. The

representatives from Making Music had been impressed.

Lulu Chivers added that Pauline's family had been sceptical about how it was planned. But they were very impressed – they really felt they'd laid her to rest. We suspected that Pauline had rather enjoyed planning a concert from which they would not be able to excuse themselves!

Chris continued: the “Wien und Venezia” concert had also been something special. The citterone player and violin interludes had added an extra touch. This could be a model for our future small-scale concerts, though we needed to avoid recycling the same repertoire too much.

He too reflected on the anniversary. Over 20 years we had been successful at recruiting new people while keeping a strong core membership. And we had progressed: remembering our first St Matthew Passion, although it was not bad, it did not compare to the scale or ambition of the upcoming performance of the same piece.

On to the upcoming tour to Portugal: this would be a new step for the choir, and we looked forward to having partners and children coming along. He urged everyone that if they couldn't come to this, they should plan to come to the next one – it ought to become a regular part of our performance cycle. Immense thanks were due to Karen for making it happen.

Chris thanked the Committee, in particular Phil for practical organisation, taking a lot of work off the MD; and Anne for sourcing music copies. And finally Samantha, the other “power behind...” who in the nicest possible way drives us all in the right direction.

There was some applause!

5. Appointment of Committee

The proposed Committee was as on the Agenda.

Approval was proposed by Georgia Lowe, seconded by Margaret Vincent, and passed nem. con.

6. Other discussions

Headcount

Rosemary Hadfield asked about the reduction in numbers – she hoped that it had been handled carefully and had not caused hurt to those who had been dropped. Nick Wood asked if there had been any subsequent feedback.

Sam said that there had been some emails back from those affected, none of them “hate mail”. There had been some uncertainty about the new system and the new signup procedure, but this was hopefully becoming clear in practice. We had seen some of those members in the audience at subsequent concerts, so we hoped no one was unreconciled.

Chris added that there was no nice way, he had just had to write to the individuals to explain. There was agreement from the floor that it wasn't pleasant but had been necessary to maintain standards – “we are primarily a choir, not a club”.

Future concerts

Georgia Lowe asked about plans for next year. Sam and Chris replied that 2016 would be one of those years with no big concert – we would be making specific plans soon.

Charlotte Nicklin asked if there was any plan for a Christmas concert. Sam replied that the Committee had discussed this more than once, but that it was difficult logistically: finding a convenient time and place given Chris's other commitments in December, and getting a balanced choir together. Maybe an informal soirée instead?

Repertoire

Aby King asked about making repertoire suggestions. Richard Hubbard reminded us of the suggestions page on the website, and urged everyone to vote on the suggestions made by others – though sceptical voices pointed out that Chris would have to decide regardless of the votes, and that probably members didn't want to vote on pieces that they didn't know – so lack of votes did not mean lack of enthusiasm.

Chris said that we can't usually do an entirely new programme due to rehearsal constraints, but obviously we do want some new stuff; the website suggestions were definitely helpful and we had already picked up items through that route. He encouraged us to add more soon, ready for decisions on the 2016 schedule.