

The City of Bath Bach Choir

# The Newsletter

## Chairman's New Year Message

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## CBBC GREETINGS CARDS



*Sue Cook is selling these beautiful CBBC Greetings Cards. Make sure you get yours!*

One of the audience at the Autumn concert writes: *A very favourable review and entirely justified. It's a shame he didn't say more about the Chilcott. The first half was good, but the Salisbury Vespers grabbed you from the word go and was a really absorbing piece. You mentioned that Bob Chilcott was very positive when he took the rehearsal and I can understand why. When a composer writes a new work, what must please him is musicians who can give a convincing performance and demonstrate that it is a substantial work, and the CBBC certainly did that.*

## Good November Concert Review

**T**his concert was a fascinating exercise in using the abbey space to create a variety of musical effects in an imaginative and highly effective way.

Using a range of music from the 17th century to the present day – Monteverdi, Grandi, Gabrieli and Franzoni to Bob Chilcott – we moved from the opening bell, calling the faithful to prayer, through a kaleidoscope of vocal music, organ and brass, first from Bath Camerata's immaculate plainchant *Deus in adiutorium*, sung from the rear of the nave.

Then came the Bach Choir's exhilarating *Dixit Dominus*, contrasting piquantly, not only with the different sound quality, but in the changing dynamic of Monteverdi's writing.

Then a beautifully phrased cantata by Grandi, *O quam tu pulchra es*, sung with style and finesse by Johanna Harrison was followed by the Wells School Brass Ensemble in a resounding canzona by Gabrieli, clean and assured.

The Bach Choir sang *Nisi Dominus*, a work of some complexity, well handled here, before a vocal duet by Franzoni featuring four trombones with Johanna Harrison and Sophie Gallagher, beguilingly done with balance and style complimenting the vocal quality in a surprisingly modern sound.

Then Bath Camerata again with *Adoramus Te*,

from the rear nave with chitarrone, played by Jamie Akers. The first half concluded with *Ave Maris Stella* from Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*, a beautifully constructed set of differing soundscapes which brings together voices, brass and organ, in solos – Johanna and Sophie with Philip Brotheridge – and chorus with a tumultuous finale. Its rich complexity gave the combined forces their opportunity to produce a ravishing range of tone which blended from hushed piano to exultant forte.

Bob Chilcott's *Salisbury Vespers* in the second half sustained the extraordinary richness and vitality with his idiosyncratic balance or crunchy dissonances, lyrical melody and jazzy rhythms. Again, the combination of organ – Marcus Sealy in prime form – brass, tubular bells and percussion, together with solos and both choirs, gave an immensely satisfying range of sound, with the blazing final *Gloria* filling the Abbey with glorious colour.

Conductor Nigel Perrin's careful and intelligent creation worked brilliantly and his musicians rose to the occasion in great style.

*Peter Lloyd Williams  
Bath Chronicle, November 2010*

### ADVERTISEMENT

#### CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS THE MID-SOMERSET FESTIVAL

The Mid-Somerset Festival, now 110 years old, is looking for a new influx of people willing to act as volunteer stewards. Numbers have fallen in the last few years so Janet Read has been asked by Maggi Harley, the Chief Steward, if any of you would be willing to step in next year.

There are four categories of stewards:

- 1) **Adjudicators' Stewards**, who sit with the adjudicator and act as his right hand during classes;
- 2) **Scribes**, who also sit at the adjudicator's table and write certificates for competitors,
- 3) **Door Stewards**, who sit just inside the entrance of the room and check tickets
- 4) **Treasury Stewards**, who sell tickets to the public at each venue and have to complete a simple return of tickets sold and monies taken.

The first job needs attention to detail, the second legible handwriting, door stewards' work requires careful attention to those entering the room and treasury stewards need to be able to count! All the jobs require a sense of responsibility.

The Festival runs all day and some evenings from March 5 - 19 with Speech and Drama classes taking place in the first week and Music in the second. This includes instrumental and vocal, both solo and choral - a great experience. The talent displayed in both weeks is amazingly good and many competitors over the years have gone forward to establish professional careers.

If you can give some time next March, you would be most welcome. You can volunteer for as few or as many sessions as you can spare the time.

Just tell me, Janet Read, or contact Maggi Harley on maggi.seymour@btinternet.com or on 01225 707522. For more details about the festival, go to [www.midsomersetfestival.org.uk](http://www.midsomersetfestival.org.uk)

## Bath Bach Choir: Carols by Candlelight

This is one of Bath's most familiar musical landmarks in the run up to Christmas, a full house on three consecutive nights, eloquent testimony to its enduring popularity.

As usual we heard a mixture of the old and new, done with the customary joyful panache and good humour, sadly, though, without conductor Nigel Perrin, who is – literally – on his back with a slipped disc.

We all wished him a speedy recovery and in his place Marcus Sealy, known for his consistent excellence at the piano and organ, took up the baton. The show went on and the choir responded in spirited lively style to Marcus's spare but highly effective direction.

After a robust opening *Hodie* among the high-lights were a setting by Roderick Williams of *Mary Had a Baby* – solo tenor Andrew Clark – beautifully sung with a delightfully cheeky ending. Bob Chilcott's carol *Remember O Thou Man*, bluesy and evocative, *De Virgin Mary*, full of rhythmic bounce, William Matthias's spiky *Was-sail* and Britten's jauntily syncopated *Deo Gracias*.

The choir gave it their all, the sound full and well balanced, the dynamics carefully observed, and full of energy, especially in the high register, vibrant and compelling. The final group of carols were all arranged by Bernard Wight, who sings tenor and he took over the baton, with Marcus at

the piano. They are all imaginative, very singable arrangements, with unusual and effective accompaniment, and I loved *Away in a Manger*, with its subtle modulation. So, clearly, did the choir.

The Junior Choir, under conductor Adrienne Hale, gave us an enjoyable group of four carols. Bob Chilcott's *Midwinter*, with the familiar Rosetti words, coming off particularly well. What a great introduction to the enjoyment of choral singing.

We also had the now traditional young musician from Wells Cathedral School. Wednesday's performer was soprano Verity Wingate, a pupil of Nigel Perrin, who sang a very original juxtaposition of Mozart and Gilbert & Sullivan, and aria from the *Marriage of Figaro* and *Poor Wandering One* from *Pirates of Penzance*.

This is a remarkable mature voice, confident throughout the register, crystal clear and with real power. The vocal technique and breath control impressively assured.

She brought the house down and I am not surprised. A talent to watch – she is aiming for Covent Garden. Marcus Sealy was at the piano and he returned to conduct the usual encore, *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, full of vim and vigour, with Jamie Knights, who had a very good evening back at the piano. It put a smile on everyone's face as we all said Merry Christmas on the way out.

Peter Lloyd Williams

Bath Chronicle, 17 December 2010

*The second choir during the Chilcott Vespers got used to Bob's instruction to sing "like a football crowd"! The Newsletter is grateful to Robin Dixon for pointing out that Bob is not the first composer to praise the sounds of the terraces. He quotes the Daily Telegraph of 26 September 2010:*

*"Elgar was a Wolverhampton Wanderers fan and wrote one of the first football chants, 'He Banged the Leather for Goal,' in honour of 1890s striker Billy Malpass."*

*Bob's in good company then ...*

*David Hill and members of The Bach Choir are sponsoring a choral training day, in the church of St Stephen's with St John, Rochester Row, London SW1 on 12 February 2011.*

*The work studied will be the Bach B Minor Mass.*

*Book online at <http://www.thebachchoir.org.uk/comeandsing/>*

**BOOK NOW!**

**CBBC ANNUAL WORKSHOP SATURDAY 29 JANUARY 2011**

**9.45 AM TO 4.30 PM**

David Hill will lead

### Mendelssohn's Elijah

held at St. Michael's Without  
Great Raffle

Bring a packed lunch or eat at a local restaurant  
Hot drinks and a selection of "lite bites" will be on sale

**Special price to CBBC Members of only £9.00 for the whole day!**

**saving of over 50% on the price to non-CBBC members**

**Please hand this completed form with your cheque to Richard Young as soon as possible.**

First name ..... Surname.....

Contact telephone: ..... Email .....

Voice: S A T B (Circle as appropriate)



## Editorial

**W**elcome back! I hope you had a great Christmas and New Year and are really pleased to come back straight into one of the all-time Choral 'greats', *Elijah*.

The rehearsal on Monday the 24th of January is, of course, our 'open' rehearsal and you will have no doubt made plans to bring your friends along. Please also remember to bring some party food and drink along as well, so that for the second part of the rehearsal we can have a great CBBC party.

The following Saturday is our day-long Workshop in St. Michael's Without. Please make every effort to come along. For those of you who haven't already booked there is an application form on Page 3 of this edition. Experience has shown that attendance at the Workshop makes a great contribution to our overall performance on the 19 March 2011.

Lists for the Choir tour to Rome are at the back of the hall and will be there for the next four rehearsals. Please sign up as soon as you can, and remember to bring your husband/wife/partner along with you too!

Finally, you will undoubtedly agree that I have been editor of *The Newsletter* for long enough, and I have indicated to the Chairman that I will resign the Editorship with effect from the Summer break 2011.

So, we are looking for someone to take over Editorship of our *Newsletter*. It's not terribly onerous, I use Microsoft Publisher® but of course any desktop publishing package will do. If anyone would like to have a go please contact me and we'll start to arrange something of a handover!

Happy singing!

*Bob*



**We're on the Web!**  
[www.bathbachchoir.org.uk](http://www.bathbachchoir.org.uk)

**Material for publication in The Newsletter should be passed to Bob Hussey as soon as possible. Bob can be contacted on 01225 316 899 or by**

## The Choir Diary

<b>Mon 24 Jan</b>	Open Rehearsal	Willett Hall, KES
<b>Sat 29 Jan</b>	Workshop Mendelssohn <i>Elijah</i>	St. Michael's Without
<i>Fri 18 Feb</i>	<i>Schools Term 3 ends</i>	
<i>Mon 28 Feb</i>	<i>Schools Term 4 starts</i>	
<b>Fri 18 Mar</b>	Compulsory Rehearsal	Willett Hall, KES
<b>Sat 19 Mar</b>	Spring Concert Mendelssohn <i>Elijah</i>	Bath Abbey
<i>Fri 8 Apr</i>	<i>Schools Term 4 ends</i>	
<i>Sun 25 Apr</i>	<i>Easter Sunday</i>	
<i>Mon 26 Apr</i>	<i>Schools Term 5 Starts</i>	
<b>Mon 2 May</b>	First rehearsal Summer Term (NB also Bank Holiday)	Willett Hall, KES
<i>Fri 27 May</i>	Party in the City - start of the Bath Festival	Bath Abbey
<i>Fri 27 May</i>	<i>Schools Term 5 ends</i>	
<i>Mon 6 Jun</i>	<i>Schools Term 6 starts</i>	
<b>Fri 15 Jul</b>	Compulsory Rehearsal	Willett Hall, KES
<b>Sat 16 Jul</b>	Summer Concert Duke Ellington <i>Sacred Music</i>	Wiltshire Music Centre
	David Fanshawe <i>Pacific Song</i>	
<i>Fri 22 Jul</i>	<i>Schools Term 6 ends</i>	
<i>Mon 1 Sep</i>	<i>Schools Term 1 starts</i>	
<b>Mon 5 Sep</b>	First Rehearsal Winter Term	Willett Hall, KES
<i>Fri 21 Oct</i>	<i>Schools Term 1 ends</i>	
<b>21-24 Oct</b>	<b>2011 Choir Tour to Rome</b>	
<b>Fri 4 Nov</b>	Compulsory Rehearsal	Willett Hall, KES
<b>Sat 5 Nov</b>	Autumn Concert Goodall <i>Eternal Light</i>	Bath Abbey
	Górecki <i>Totus Tuus</i>	
	Pärt <i>Beatitudes</i>	