



Phoenixsingers

Musical Director's report to the Phoenix Singers AGM of 5th October 2016

The past singing year has been demanding and fun, and I have been pleased and impressed with the way the choir has risen to the varied challenges of a very mixed programme. It has also been very encouraging to see such large and appreciative audiences at our concerts.

The Christmas concert marked our first Messiah together (albeit the seasonal portion). The sprightly and committed singing boded well for a complete performance at some point in the future. I know that the audience greatly enjoyed 'Brother Heinrich's Christmas', and we (and the orchestra!) rose magnificently to the demanding cantata by John Gardner.

Our collaboration with Woodbridge Choral Society was a long time in the planning, and my thanks to those who made it possible; it was certainly a musical feast! The Stanford and Sibelius sounded particularly thrilling, and I was impressed with everyone's hard work when it came to the Russian language of Nevsky. What a challenge that was. I hope you'll agree that singing in a larger group in the peerless acoustic of Snape made this concert very special, and that we should explore ways in which to work with WCS again.

The summer term is always rather problematic when it comes to attendance. This year's statistics make rather glum reading, with an average attendance of only 62% across the choir, with the basses dropping to just 54%. Consequently, though the evening at the college went well, and the audience were charmed by Ian and the repertoire, there were some unavoidable last minute changes. I'm afraid this was a direct result of the unsettled rehearsal period. We must give some thought to how best to negotiate this busy time of year in the future. On a brighter note, I was very pleased with the Firebirds, and would like to record my thanks to the Friends for their support of this new and exciting development, and to Kate Mawson at Robert Hitcham's.

The charity Come & Sing was a most enjoyable way to raise funds for a very worthwhile cause. Thank you to Gill and her team of helpers, and to those of you who sang and played.

The coming season includes some of my favourite music, and I know that you will find singing the Monteverdi 'Vespers' especially fulfilling. Welcome to new members; I hope you will enjoy being part of the Phoenix Singers!

My thanks to the committee for all that they do behind the scenes, and to my musical partner, Geoff Lavery, who plays and directs with such musicianship and bonhomie. I greatly value all of your help and support. And finally, thank you to the members that make up Phoenix; you are such a friendly and dedicated bunch, and I consider myself very fortunate to work with you!