

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE 2014 AGM

My job, this evening, is to reflect on the past year, give some pointers to the future and give you some applauding opportunities.

It has been one of the busiest years we have ever known with three major concerts, an outing to Snape with the BBC, a Christmas evening and a charity come and sing. I find it hard to pick a highlight. It could have been the spine tingling performance of the Duruflé Requiem, the good humour of the Wings of Love concert, or the thrill of singing, rather well, William Lloyd Webber's Missa Sanctae for his son and our biggest audience in living memory. We had fun, too, especially with Drew's medley of Americana at Christmas, and welcoming new faces and colleagues from other choirs to sing the Vivaldi Gloria with us.

We need audiences, not just to buy tickets - although that helps - but also - and this is rather easily forgotten - to listen to our performances. Fortunately, statistics and anecdote show that a growing number of people are appreciating that gift.

Our Autumn Voices concert attracted an audience of just short of 200, Wings of Love, in March, 120, and our summer outing with Jaixin and Julian Lloyd Webber, 285, which explains why the hall looked crowded. Whilst some may have come solely to hear Jaixin, there was much very positive feedback from audience members who had not heard us before. Here's hoping they come again.

All this takes some effort, and I would like, first, to suggest that you look round at your fellow singers and acknowledge the hard work each one of us has put in during the year, rehearsing, performing and supporting the choir, and, of course selling tickets.

Then, I must thank your tireless committee, Miranda, Gill, William, Liz, Peter, Judith and Geraldine. Their inspiration and energy powers this choir and enables us all to flourish. Thank you.

And of course, we must thank Drew and Geoff, our musical team. I hope you would agree that their dedication, skill and attention to detail, not to mention patience and good humour, could well be without equal. Thank you, Drew and Geoff.

Lastly, I want to thank, on your behalf, Celia Blois. Celia has organised concert catering for many years, facilitating the production, by you, of some scrumptious spreads - remember the canapés at the July concert? I do. Celia is taking a rest this term. We have made a presentation but please do show your appreciation of Celia anyway.

Thank you.

So, what of the future?

Last year saw the establishment of a three year concert programme. This enables better advance planning for each concert. Once we have delivered *1914* in November, we start rehearsing Carmina Burana and the Wilberg songs for the spring concert. The selection of pieces for the summer concert, called *Show Stoppers*, is already well advanced so more consideration can be given to rehearsal, promotion and presentation.

As you will hear from Gill, last year saw the choir make a significant financial surplus. This gives us the confidence and backing to plan performances of works that require more

resources. It also means that it has been demonstrated that a choir of our size, in this town is, in modern and oft meaningless parlance, sustainable. Very good news.

It is also a great pleasure to welcome committee members elected this evening and to thank William offering to stand for a further term as secretary.

I am, not, by nature, one who looks for clouds on horizons. I have consulted my committee colleagues, some of whom do, and they tell me that they see no present danger. So it seems that we have almost everything in place at the moment to keep this choir vibrant and thriving.

Long may it remain this way.