



ALTRINCHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

www.altrincham-choral.co.uk

Registered charity no 500729

March 2005 Newsletter

Singing Day 2005

Snow in the Peak District and a nasty lurgy notwithstanding, we welcomed about 60 people to our sixth annual Singing Day in Altrincham Methodist Church on 26 February. This year we had chosen Haydn's *The Seasons* to work at, and the irony did not go unnoticed. Steven was in fine form on the rostrum and Lydia was her usual calm, unruffled and thoroughly professional self at the piano; at least, we *think* it was Lydia, but she was concealed by a large organ throughout the day!

The singing sessions were interspersed by coffee and lunch breaks, at which, according to the coffee bar staff, vast quantities of bacon baps were consumed; the staff were very grateful to have made £150 profit (for their overseas work) out of us, and we were very grateful to them for providing refreshment.

Thanks again to Steven and Lydia (and the other members of ACS involved) for a thoroughly enjoyable and worthwhile day. No fewer than 17 choirs were represented and there is now a strong following of people from other choirs who come every year, demonstrating that this is an enterprise well worth continuing. (And we made a profit of over £200...)

Liz Foy

The November concert

We were to have sung Mendelssohn's *Elijah* on 12 November later this year. Unfortunately, Sale Choral Society upstaged us by putting the work in their programme for June 2005 at the RNCM. We therefore decided to bring forward our Spring 2006 programme to November. This is very different from Mendelssohn's massive oratorio and consists of three works:

– *Missa Criola* by Argentinian composer and pianist Ariel Ramirez. This is styled a 'folk mass' as it uses South American rhythms such as the *vidala* and the *baguala*. Since its debut in 1964 as a recording it has enjoyed world wide popularity. It employs a tenor soloist and we shall be singing it to piano and percussion accompaniment.

– An item to be chosen by the RNCM and performed by a group of their students.

– *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* by the Welsh composer Karl Jenkins. This will be a very generous second half as it lasts 67 minutes! It was recently voted the 8th best piece of classical music "ever" by the listeners of Classic FM (Could anything by Bach

or Beethoven have nudged ahead of it?). Putting scepticism aside, it should be an interesting experience. Accompaniment will be piano, organ, cello, percussion, 3 trumpets and flute/piccolo.

John Greenan

Thoughts from the Membership Secretary

Membership is still staying fairly steady at around the 100 members mark. We are temporarily down Dorothy and Peter Franklin whilst he makes slow but steady progress following his road traffic accident. It is very pleasing to see that following the successful choral Day we have three new interested applicants – hopefully to sign up with us shortly.

Ticket allocations

May I ask all members if you are not attending rehearsals regularly, that you make your own arrangements with either your voice rep, myself or Barbara concerning your ticket allocation. It is not part of the voice rep's job to track you down to find out if you want your tickets or not. In future, if we have not heard from you by 2 weeks before a concert, it will be assumed that you do not want your tickets (although you have already paid for them) and they will be returned to the RNCM.

Skirts and blouses!

Although the committee has been very quiet over recent months on the skirt issue, it has been noticed that those hem lines have been creeping up again! Your plain black skirt needs to be full length (to ankle height as a minimum). Front row singers are more exposed than others and we want to avoid a 'mexican wave' effect!

And another reminder: blouses need to be plain white (no patterns), with full length sleeves. I know many members don't take too kindly to hints about their concert dress but when we are on stage any deviation from the above is very noticeable.

Venice

Finally, all those going to Venice in the summer will need a new E111. The old E111 expired on December 31st 2004, and you will need to apply for a new one (if you've not already done so). However the good news is that from the information supplied on this year's application form, cards will be issued (for use from 2006) so it should be the last time you have to fill one in. Now would also be a good time to make sure your passport is up to date as well.

A Bit of a Do

The style given to this year's ACS Dinner on 11 February was deliberately demotic, but not the venue. The 100 or so members and guests who attended the function at Ringway Golf Club approved its ambience and enjoyed the buffet meal. No one found any difficulty in reaching the greens, but it was reported that one of the ladies had a big slice at the second.

The cabaret threatens to become an institution (no more feeble jokes, please) and on this occasion showcased some of the performing talent which has lain dormant too long in our demure organisation. As well as some impressively tuneful trilling, there were updated versions of familiar pieces – including the suggestion (which we surely already knew) that:

“Every girl and every boy that is born into this world alive

Is either a Liberal Democrat, New Labour or Conservative”.

But it was not all singing by any means. There were monologues and other dubious versifications with not a fugue to be heard, the only ‘choral’ music being an anthem by the first basses who showed themselves fully capable of blowing their own trumpets while admitting that:

“Most of us can't get it up.....Up to top G”.

Even our Musical Director – whom God preserve – got in on the act by sending us on our way with

“One for my baby and one more for the road”. Our thanks are due to Andrew Wragg who organised the event and to Marie Dixon who provided a valuable link with Ringway Golf Club – also to all those who contributed to the evening, not forgetting the accompanists – no less than four in number.

John Greenan

The Charity Shop in Sale

When we made the decision to rent the shop for half a week in March 2005, as opposed to January as we did last year, we took a gamble on the fine weather! This we got and so we were able to arrive and leave in the dry - as were our customers.

We took a grand total of £702.90p which gave us a profit of just over **£600** – a sum which will enhance our books and hopefully keep our treasurer happy. Lots of ACS members gave readily of their unwanted items and over thirty members did a stint in the shop itself. It was great fun recognising the customers' faces from last year, haggling over prices for bric-a-brac and wielding the tape measure over curtains and clothing. Coffee, tea and biscuits were served at regular intervals and a great feeling of camaraderie was established among us all.

The unsold goods were either stored in the shop's cellar for use in raising funds for Romania or, in the case of the books, taken to Christies - so nothing was wasted. Well done everyone and thanks for your support!

Catherine Merrell

