

Another ACS season starts!

But first, a quick re-cap on the three targets for the 2003-04 season which Steven set us at the end of the previous season:-

Recruit more Tenors: *Achieved!*

Change rehearsal venue: *Achieved!*

Get more money: *Achieved!*

So a huge "thank you" is due to all those who worked during the last year to make these happen!

Achievement of the 3rd target was due almost entirely to the efforts of the Fundraising Team (under the leadership of Dudley Harrop). We gained several Patrons last year and we hope they will continue to support us in the coming season. We also raised a considerable sum at the Sale Charity Shop in January. We have booked the shop for another slot in March 2005, so please start to collect appropriate items!

As mentioned at a recent rehearsal, Dudley has produced a set of "management accounts" based on Ted's audited ACS accounts for 2003-04 and has come up with the interesting observation that the last season was the first in which the concerts made an overall profit! This must be due to increased income from ticket sales, so thank you to all those who made the effort to sell extra tickets - it really does make a difference!

Moving on to the 2004-05 season. Steven and the Music Committee have come up with an exciting programme for us (see listing). We will have three concerts at the RNCM (November, April and July) and two carols concerts at Hale URC in December, plus one concert in Cartmel Priory and the ACS Tour to Venice in July. We also have the Singing Day on 26 February when we will work on "The Seasons" by Haydn.

A record 40 singers from ACS are going to Venice in July and will perform two concerts, one in the church of San Samuele (Thursday 21st) and one in the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista (Saturday 23rd). There are 12 non-singers joining us, making this the largest ACS Tour to date.

I'm looking forward to this season (my 5th as ACS Chairman) - I hope you are too!

Pam Mould

En tante cordiale

Yvette Willey has been a stalwart of the sopranos for 23 years and she is most certainly one of us, but still retains her distinctive Gallic poise and charm, in addition, happily, to a subtle French dressing to the full mastery of our language.



It was choral singing which brought Yvette to our shores and indirectly to marriage with David who had a language school in London where Yvette went to hone up her spoken English. The choir was Le Cantrel from Lyon which came over to Llangollen and won one of the first prizes. Yvette says that in her time there were 3 rules for sopranos wanting to join the choir: to be under 30, to have a top A/B, and to bring a man. What singing capability, if any, the man needed is not on record. There would be inducements, and interestingly Yvette relates that the continuing practice in this choir is to provide a glass of white wine before every concert to clear the throat. We could even try this at rehearsal as a speedier alternative to Steven's warm-up exercises.

Yvette grew up in Collonges au Mon d'Or, near Lyon, place of the internationally famous restaurant of Paul Bocuse. One of her English teachers was a middle-aged English miss with a false fringe which got displaced from time to time during lessons. Little did she realise then that she would be singing alongside many of this ilk! But for the fateful trip to Llangollen and its aftermath Yvette's life would probably have been spent in French Academia. Not her words, but she was clearly a high achiever in the field of Biology and had a teaching/research post at the University of Lyon. Yvette worked alongside David and they opened language schools in Copenhagen, Lyon and elsewhere. Outside work they shared interests in skiing, tennis, swimming,

ballroom dancing and trekking. Culture clash was not entirely avoided since David, having married a girl from the gastronomic capital of the world, maintained that the best food he ever had was in the army. David, a man of many parts, sadly died in November 2000. Yvette has two sons, Stephen and Dominic, and lives in Urmston. She is a well-organised person with many interests. She is Supporters Secretary and treasurer of the Optimum Population Trust founded by her late husband 12 years ago, she does voluntary work at Christie's and holds French conversation sessions with a group of ex-Open University students.

Yvette has always taken a full part in ACS events and was for some years a very efficient librarian. She also sings with Romulus Singers. She says that she enjoys the variety which characterises our programmes. Her sole bête noire, oddly enough, is Puccini's Humming Chorus. Yvette says that its only saving grace is that no-one can tell whether you are giving voice or not. She is perfectly at ease in England but doesn't like our pubs and our weather. Come on now Yvette - we can't help the weather, and we have to shelter somewhere! She finds British people pleasant and tolerant, perhaps too tolerant of bad service and the like. Summing up, our popular soprano from Lyon says "The relationship between French and English people is often described as a love-hate one. But in my case, love has won. Vive l'entente cordiale!"

Forsyth Brothers Ltd are pleased to offer Altrincham Choral Society Members a special 10% discount on recorded music and sheet music of the choir's repertoire.

Everything is also available mail order if you can't make it into Manchester.

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For further information please contact Emma Loat (Alto)

Programme 2004-2005

16, 18 December 2004

Carols with the Choral

26 February 2005 (Singing Day)

Haydn: The Seasons

9 April 2005

Haydn: Paukenmesse;

Schubert: Mass in Eb

9, 16 & 20-25 July 2005

Italian and other sacred choral music

Extra Singers for Venice Tour

We are honoured to have these outstanding personalities joining us on our venture abroad!

Sopranos

Barbie Hynde
Evelyn Tensions
Mimi Mee
Gloria Stitz
Jemima Lott
Sheila Blige

Altos

Dawn Chorus
Emma Vailable
May Cuporlova
Vi Larpmits
Helda Breff
Eve N Bosom

Tenors

R Sole
Maximilian Aveek
Walter Plonker
Stan Duppenpose
Hugh Jeego

Basses

Omar Throat
Roger Anything
Joe Kovavoyz

Counter Tenor

Aladdin Dragg

Free Dry Cleaning!

As well as becoming one of our new platinum patrons for 2004/5, Faddies Dry Cleaners of Hale have made a generous offer of a free service to any member of ACS who takes their concert skirt or suit to them for dry cleaning. And this offer is available twice a year for each member! Simply say you are from ACS. (You may be asked to sing a short excerpt from Poulenc to prove it!)

Faddies is on Victoria Road in Hale, just by Hale station.
Telephone: 0161 928 7660.

Having Fun Finding Funding

It's great to report that last year (2003/4) we made a good start on getting our finances into better shape. With the Sale charity shop raising nearly £1000, our Patrons and Sponsors contributing a generous £3,400, and our other fund raising efforts (tea money, cake and book stalls, CD sales, the cabaret evening) chipping in over £500 – well, it all amounted to a gnat's whisker short of £5000. Didn't we do well?

This year we want to do better. On our radar we have the surprisingly large number of companies who have their HQ's in Altrincham or important operations here. Last year, they turned us down flat. But we'll try again. We also know that there's a lot of 'charity' money out there. We'll have a go at that as well, although we have to accept that it's difficult for a competent, enterprising, normal (normal?) group of adults like ACS to attract much sympathy from these fund providers.

Maybe you can help. Do you know of anyone who – for whatever reason – would be happy to become a Patron? For £250 they get two free tickets to each of our three main concerts; for £150 they get tickets for one concert of their choice; for £100 they get a mention in our programmes and a lot of thanks. They all get regular news of events coming up and an invitation to be part of our success.

If you have any possible names, or any other ideas to help us attract support, please contact one of the members of the Funding Team – Joyce Crimes, Michael Cummings, John Greenan, Caroline Harris, Dudley Harrop, Cathy Merrell and Brian Whitehouse.

Singers beware ...

“On the radio a lady has just been caterwauling for a quarter of an hour some songs which may very well have been mine!”

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

The Charity Shop

This year we rented the Charity Shop in School Road, Sale in January for 3 days and raised £944.66p for choral funds. Next year we are hiring it from **Sunday March 6th 2005 until Wednesday March 9th**. We decided on a later date in the hope that people will have more money in their purses (perhaps last time we were too soon after Christmas).

Everyone who helped this year thoroughly enjoyed the experience and I do hope the stalwart helpers will be available again. We do NOT take electrical goods or any furniture bigger than a coffee table. Please book the dates in your diaries now. Many thanks in advance.

Cathy Merrell