

Songbirds Newsletter - Autumn 2020

So, fellow Songbirds, new restrictions and a rising number of cases of Covid-19 form the backdrop to this latest Newsletter! Concerns expressed by the committee in the August Newsletter about the possible health risks involved in reopening our choir have become far too real in recent weeks and for now we can only remain 'waiting in the wings' for safer times while Covid-19 cases continue to increase in number, and growing swathes of the UK experience tighter restrictions.

As you will know, our choir is a member of the National Association of Choirs and the Midland East Group held a Zoom Open Forum on October 3rd which Charlotta was able to 'attend' on our behalf. The purpose of the forum was to look at the current restrictions answer questions from members about the situation for choirs like ours. There will be notes produced from the meeting which we hope to share with you in the next Newsletter. It seems that there are a number of choirs using Zoom and WhatsApp for 'rehearsals' and there may be ways in which we can benefit from others' experience to develop our own practice further during Covid-19 restrictions.

Thank You Songbirds!

As a result of the financial situation reported in the August Newsletter many members have made voluntary contributions of £30 and the Committee would like to thank them all for helping to ensure that the choir can remain financially stable and continue to meet its financial obligations during this time. The Committee has been in touch with the Methodist Church and is delighted to report that our place there on Thursday evenings is definitely secure until we are able to restart. Although the venue has been able to reopen to one or two small groups, it is not yet available to larger groups.

I heard music in the kitchen - I think it was the Chopin board!

In this month's Newsletter there are a range of things which include the usual one-liners and some book reviews from Martine on a wide range of fiction and non-fiction stories of the lives of women. There's also a delicious sounding recipe from Julia, Dingbats from Judith and Ali has sent us a before and after picture of her Race for Life. We start with a catch-up on the Thursday Zoom sessions that have been running.

How many altos does it take to change a lightbulb? None, they can't reach that high!

Zoom-along with Faye

So far, we have had 4 opportunities to sing along together (but separately!) and these have been well attended by an average of 20 members per session. Feedback tells us that these sessions are really enjoyable, with members saying it gives them a boost and reminds them that singing really is an uplifting activity.

In the weeks running up to lockdown in March members may recall posting favourite songs choices into a suggestion box. The titles in the box have now been forwarded to Faye who will be working on adding some of these songs to the list of songs already available on Zoom to choose from giving us a wider range of options for our Thursday sing-along sessions. If you have a song you would really like added to the list please message a committee member.

We have 4 more Zoom-along sessions already planned this year - 2 in October and then 2 in November and would like to propose a 5th one in December with, naturally, a Christmas theme. (More information in the next Newsletter.) - There's likely to be a "Make Your Own Christmas Hat" competition with prizes!!!!

If you haven't yet had chance to try one of these Zoom sessions, the next one is on Thursday October 8th from 6:45 until 8pm, so tune in and see what you think - it really is good for us. As Plato said,

'Rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul'.

Ali and her Race for Life- Well Done!!



On a Saturday morning in late September, Ali Brown successfully completed the 'Very 2020 Race for Life' for Cancer Research. It was planned for much earlier in the year but Covid-19 delayed it and also altered the organisational aspects of it considerably but, in essence, it was still a successful fundraiser for a worthy cause. If you would like to make a donation it is not too late - please ring or email Ali - you do not have to sponsor her online - an envelope through her door works just as well!



There are so many jokes about this composer - I could write you a Liszt!

Mini Berry Cakes - A recipe from Julia

Ingredients:

- 150g porridge oats
- 150ml milk
- 2 ripe bananas
- 2 handfuls of raspberries and 2 handfuls blueberries
- 2 tbsp smooth peanut butter



Directions

1. Put the oats into a mixing bowl and pour over the milk.
2. In a separate dish, mash up the 2 ripe bananas and mix in the peanut butter.
3. Add this mixture to the mixing bowl containing the oats and milk.
4. Mash up the raspberries and gently stir into the oat mixture.
5. Finally add the blueberries into the oat mixture - either whole or halved.
6. Spoon the mixture into 8 cupcake cases or pour onto a flat baking tray to slice when cool.
7. Cook at 180 degrees/Gas Mark 4 for 15 minutes.
8. Enjoy!!

What is Beethoven's favourite fruit? Ba-na-na-naaaa!

Songbirds AGM 2020

This time of year is when we would normally hold our Songbirds AGM (between September and November) however, this year, as we are all acutely aware, is very different. In the light of these unusual circumstances the committee would like to propose to members that, whilst the current situation persists and prevents us from meeting up as a choir, we maintain the existing arrangements and defer our AGM until we can meet together again. This is in no way intended to prevent members who might wish to become part of the committee (new members would be extremely welcome) from doing so, rather this proposal is intended as a measure to 'hold things together' during these strange times.

If any members feel that the AGM should not be put on hold or if anyone wants to join the committee at this time then please contact a committee member and raise this with them. It is the committee's intention to review the situation on a regular basis.

Judith's Dingbats Quiz

(Answers next time.)

I went to the zoo yesterday and saw a baguette in a cage.

The zoo keeper said it was bread in captivity.

1 Get it Get it Get it Get it	2 Jack	3 Somewhere 	4 DOOR
5 READ	6 Blood Water	7 Beeeeeee	8 CANCELLED
9 once 	10 Egg Egg HAM	11 Try Stand 2	12 TOWN
13 Nl bumpGHT	14 Aid ← Aid Aid	15 Mill1on	16  3.14
17 ice ³	18 G R O N  C I K	19 Think 	20 GROUND feet feet feet feet feet feet
21 1 KNOWS	22 Big Big ignore ignore	23 RAKEN	24 KNEE light light

Answers to the second instalment of Judith's musicals/oprettas quiz in the July Newsletter:

- (1) The Wizard Of Oz, (2) Pirates Of Penzance, (3) Carousel,
- (4) Trial by Jury, (5) The Full Monty, (6) West Side Story,
- (7) Grease, (8) Showboat, (9) Aspects Of Love, (10) Wicked,
- (11) Kismet, (12) The Gondoliers, (13) Camelot,
- (14) Copacabana, (15) Anything Goes, (16) Kinky Boots,
- (17) A Night on Broadway, (18) Gypsy, (19) Hairspray



My friend told me he failed his exam in aboriginal music. I said, 'Didja redo it?'

Book Reviews - From Martine

"The Other Side of Augusta Hope" by Joanna Glen

Even as a child Augusta never felt she fitted in and her only friend is her twin sister. She picks her favourite country from the sound of its name - Burundi - and as an adult, dreams of exotic places until a tragedy

upends everything in her life. A well written and moving story, told in dual narratives against the background of the 1990's genocides.

"Girl, Woman, Other" by Bernadine Evaristo

This book was joint winner of the Man Booker Prize 2019. It follows the interwoven lives of 12 very different characters, mostly women, black and British. While the lack of punctuation is unconventional, I felt that this created a lyrical style which enhanced the thought processes of the characters. An excellent read.

"The Offing" by Benjamin Myers

At the end of WWII a 16 year old boy walks from Durham to Robin Hood's Bay and meets an eccentric older woman. This is the tender story of the friendship that develops between them, based on their shared love of poetry.

"Lady in Waiting - My Extraordinary Life in the Shadow of the Crown" by Anne Glenconner

Lady Glenconner's memoir of her remarkable life, part of it as Lady in Waiting to Princess Margaret. This is a fascinating insight into 'how the other half live', full of wit, tragedy and drama.

July's Caption Challenge

Remember the picture from last time? Here are a few captions:

"Sopranos realising they **don't** have the tune!"

"Altos realising they **do** have the tune!"

"Do we really look like that on Zoom?!"



How do you fix a broken brass instrument? With a tuba glue!

Songbirds Website

The website has had very little added to it since lockdown began in March but there are a couple of additions in progress now. The home page has a piece updating website visitors on what we've been doing in the intervening months and there is a new section being added to 'more' which will contain the Newsletters so don't forget to have a browse when you get the opportunity.

<https://harboroughsongbirds.weebly.com/>

Did you hear about the female opera singer who had quite a range at the lower end of the scale? She was a deep C diva!

Albany Singers

As you may know, Mandy also belongs to another choir based in Stoke Albany called 'Albany Singers'. This choir has been using Zoom for some time as a way of singing 'together' and now a video has been created covering the work of the choir in the immediate period before lockdown and includes a song recorded

during lockdown. 'To A Wild Rose' is the song and each choir member made a recording of themselves singing it and then forwarded it to the conductor for some 'technological wizardry' (techniques employed with the Gareth Malone Home Choir and others). Below is a link to the video - see what you think. It could never replace singing together as part of a choir to a real audience but still, do have a listen to it if you can.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L59p0riYH6VO6s9zd0u2tKvIbG2TYARG/view>

Breathing for Singers

Here is a link, sent by Rosemary, to a podcast about practising breathing to improve our singing. It's about 25 minutes long and well worth a listen to!

<https://ia800604.us.archive.org/17/items/5Breathe/05Breathe.mp3>

See you next time everyone!

The Committee