

CHOIR NEWS-APRIL 2014

Another month; another Choir News. Time flies. I am revising my view of journalists from them being overpaid, work-shy scribblers to industrious and conscientious bastions of society.

Congratulations to soprano Kerri Byrne and her husband Lee who are expecting their first child. We are all very pleased for them.

YORK MINSTER

With choirmaster, Jeff Stewart back from Germany, our preparations are gathering pace for York Minster. Thanks are due to Cynthia who has been both choirmaster and organist in Jeff's absence. As I write we have about eight weeks to perfect the music for two Evensongs and two Eucharists.

The Messe Chorale by Charles Gounod new to us and a very beautiful piece, has a lot of dramatic organ work for Cynthia. Gounod, a devout Roman Catholic, is perhaps best known as the composer of the opera Faust. Born in Paris in 1818 he lived in England from 1870 to 1874 whilst the conductor of the Royal Choral Society. He died in France in 1893.

We are also singing Haydn's Little Organ Mass, a staple of our repertoire. But there is always room for improvement and redoing familiar pieces very often reveals subtleties that one, well me at least, has missed so far.

Our Evensong offerings will be Stanford, mag and nunc in C and Wood in E flat.

RADIO 3

It seems Radio 3 will be featuring us in the Meet My Choir slot on Sunday afternoon, but we do not yet know when. If you send me (mike.beattie@jmbt.co.uk) your email address I will notify you when I know myself. The BBC described our recordings as 'beautiful' and have chosen to use Locus Iste, recorded at Malvern Priory and O Magnum Mysterium recorded at York Minster. There will be voice-overs from choir members describing their feelings and experiences of being part of the choir. Driving force for this has been bass, Greg Moore who does so much for us behind the scenes.

TOO MUCH INFORMATION

Some of us have just got back from a weekend away at Milton Abbey where we joined with singers from many parts of the UK and beyond (Nova Scotia and Australia to be specific) for a Choral Holiday workshop. It was hard work but very satisfying. You can learn interesting things about your fellow singers on these trips. For example, I now know that one of the altos likes a flutter on the gee-gees; we have a bass who wears Preston North End PJs; and that one of the tenors sleeps au naturel, or so I was told. Would you believe it? The sops came out of it with their reputations intact- do I hear 'what reputation is that?' Don't worry folks; your secrets are safe with me.

THE BLEDLow 100 CLUB

The winner of the March draw was Susan Anderson, wife of one our tenors, who won £152. We have recruited another member and the prize in April will be £154. Good luck, you have to be in it to win it!

Our April draw would have fallen on Maundy Thursday, so I put it back one week to Thursday 24 April. That seemed more appropriate.

More next month

Mike Beattie
7 April 2014