



Newsletter

May 2021

Chairman

Kevin Ilsley

Spring is in the air at last. After the coldest and driest April for many decades, I was looking forward to a better May and the prospect of getting the plants that are taking over the conservatory, out into the garden. They're so leggy they look as though they're ready to walk there themselves. I was also looking forward to starting rehearsals in person. The mood amongst the participants in the Making Music workshops I attended was optimistic. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport had signalled that the anticipated loosening of Covid regulations on May 17 would mean that amateur choirs could get back together indoors and as I wrote in my last newsletter, your committee had prepared thoroughly to allow this to happen safely. But May has shown itself to be as unpredictable as April. All the overdue April showers seem to have arrived at once and the water garden I've been thinking about starting for years is constructing itself. And now the government has poured water on our rehearsal plans as well.

A few members of the committee joined Jonathan and Penny at Holy Trinity Hall last Saturday for a final assessment prior to a planned rehearsal there on May 25. We set out the spaced chairs, tried the acoustics and the piano. All OK. Would it be possible to Zoom the rehearsal? I set up my iPad, connected it to my mobile phone and tried to link up with Chris Little, our audience of one. It worked. The keyholder, who had let us in, seemed a little sceptical about our planned starting date but I reassured him that I'd phoned the staff at Making Music to make absolutely sure of the regulations.

I was beginning to get a little anxious however because of the changing Covid situation. The government's optimistic tone seemed to be faltering a bit as a result of the arrival of a new variant of the virus from India. It's a bit like the English Test Cricket team, I thought. Coasting towards a certain victory and then late in the

game the opposition bring on this tricky spin bowler. How should the balls be played? No-one seemed quite sure. We began to hear confusing messages that implied that while we would be *allowed* to resume some activities from May 17 that didn't mean we *should* resume them. I heard medical experts on the radio saying that yes, it was good that pubs and restaurants would be open again but no, they wouldn't be going into them themselves. Committee members were emailed for their opinion about whether we should postpone our proposed start while I consulted medical friends for their advice. There was a sense of déjà vu, March 2020 all over again.

In the event the decision has been taken out of our hands. A number of local choirs rehearsed indoors on Monday 17th but on Tuesday 18th the governmental regulations finally appeared on the web. Amateur singers are specifically forbidden to meet indoors in groups larger than six. This has caused puzzlement at Making Music because the decision has not been explained. What is it about amateur choirs that makes their singing more hazardous than that of professionals? We are urged to write to our MPs to seek an answer. I confess I'm puzzled too. I would have thought that mixing in bars or sweating in gyms was far more hazardous than singing Brahms love songs with masks on.

The risk of contracting Covid remains low, according to Prof Spector of the Zoe Covid Symptom Study, though he has revised the figures that were included in last month's newsletter. He's done this because 80% of the respondents to the study have been vaccinated and this skews the calculations. His revised figures give a daily risk of Covid infection of 1:16,000 for the unvaccinated, 1:32,000 after one vaccination and 1:46,000 after two.

We await developments and hope for better news in June. Meanwhile we will continue our weekly rehearsals on Zoom. We are very grateful to those members who continue to attend these and to everyone that makes them possible, particularly Jonathan and Penny. Thanks are due as well to Barbara and the committee members who work so tirelessly on our behalf in these confusing and changing times.

Musical Director

Jonathan Brown

Dear All,

It has been a fair while since I last wrote to you and I hope that you are all keeping well.

Clearly, we are all living in very strange times and, whilst we seem to have been on an increasingly good trajectory over the last couple of months, events in recent days do mean concerns re-surfacing. There has been a lot of work behind the scenes in order to get us back together again which we still hope will be sooner rather than later, but we will need to see over the next few days how the new Indian variant strain develops - or doesn't (we all hope). I have to say that the Committee have been absolutely amazing in everything that they have done to give us a chance of singing together again in the next few weeks, and I want to pay tribute to them - you and I are extremely lucky to have such a dedicated and passionate team leading us.

I don't know about you but, in the time before Easter, I kept thinking back to last year when we were on the cusp of singing the Bach, and I have to confess that it took me quite some time to come back to listening to it again. Once I did, however, I was reminded of just what a wonderful piece it is, and the recording that is my favourite - Phillipe Herreweghe and Collegium Vocale, Ghent - moves me greatly, not least because of the performance of Ian Bostridge in the role of Evangelist. I originally went for the recording because of Andreas Scholl singing the alto arias - including Erbame Dich, but I was soon more drawn to Bostridge whose singing is so characterful and engaging in its narration. That said, I'm pretty sure that our President was going to be equally amazing in that role, as was the whole team.

We have had a long time to reflect on events around the world over the last 15 months, and I'm pretty sure that, had you told me last March that we would go through what we have, I would not have believed you. It has been extraordinary and frustrating in equal measure, and just as we thought we were seeing light at the end of the tunnel, further doubt has emerged. Let's hope that the evidence that the vaccine is resisting this new strain continues to strengthen.

In the meantime, we continue to look forward. Dates and venues for concerts remain on the Committee's agendas and there are various permutations about concerts,

programmes etc. Having done so much work on The Armed Man and the Nelson Mass, my current feeling is that we should keep these on our radar for concerts in the coming year. These pieces were chosen because we felt that, between them, there would be broad appeal. We also have Rory Boyle's piece that we will begin looking at once we are back together again - it doesn't look straightforward and so we will be starting on that sooner rather than later. We are also looking at some lighter programming later in the season which, I hope, will be attractive. Some of this is still under discussion and so I don't want to say anything that hasn't been rubber-stamped, but I am looking at some secular repertoire which will be something different (the Liebeslieder Waltzes notwithstanding of course).

Finally, I would like to say a particular thank you to those of you who have joined us week in, week out on Zoom. I hope that, whilst it hasn't been the real thing, you have found your singing enjoyable (in a different way!) and have overcome your fears and concerns about learning in such a way - perhaps, you may have found that it has given you some confidence in learning more independently and that, when you are singing with others again, you will do so with greater self-assurance.

So, to finish, I have my fingers (and toes) crossed that we can make our first tentative steps into a world of singing together again. We must be patient, of course, and when we are able to, it will be that much more enjoyable.

All best, as ever,

Jonathan

18th May 2021

My musical life.

Penny Vere

My life has always been surrounded by music (I'm happy to say!) My mother came from one of those families that loved to get together round the piano at the end of the day and sing and play together. As a small child I would listen to my mother playing her favourite pieces (I remember Sinding's Rustle of Spring was one....quite tricky!) and I would join in at the top end of the piano, thinking I was helping to make this wonderful noise!

So, I was sent for piano lessons at an early age and I loved it; as an only child I was never lonely with a piano to play. The music teacher at my school was brilliant, introducing us to the very best of music (no “dumbing down for kids”) and encouraging us to do our very best.

She urged me to take up a second instrument “which I would need if I wanted to go to music college”. So, I learned to play the violin, my teacher was from our Rural Music School, which ran a school’s orchestra (which I joined) and that led to a life-changing experience.....

I lived in Suffolk, where Benjamin Britten was based. He often wrote music for children and in 1957 he wrote Noah’s Fludde. I played in the orchestra for its first performance as part of the Aldeburgh Festival. Owen Brannigan was Noye, members of the Melos Ensemble led the orchestra (and they were so supportive and friendly to us kids). Britten was conducting and the whole atmosphere of top-level artistic endeavour, and the magic of theatre made a lasting impressionI have loved and been involved in musical theatre ever since!

To cut a long story short, I went to study at the Royal Academy of Music....piano and violin plus harpsichord and also accompaniment classes, because I always wanted to play with other musicians....not for me the stress of a solo career! London was wonderful...my first landlady had sung at Sadler’s Wells and regularly gave me free tickets to the opera. You could also get free tickets to concerts at the BBC, just by turning up.

Eventually I had to earn a living, so I started teaching and found myself in Malvern. I soon got involved in all the music I could find in the area, which was a lot! Festival Chorus of course (singing and playing), playing violin in the Chandos Orchestra, lots of chamber music (piano trios), Operatic societies (Sue Black was my first Merry Widow!) and running the music events for the Malvern Festival Fringe. I even became part of a scurrilous female cabaret act (“ASP”) which was huge fun!



Life changed again in 2000 when Tony and I moved to Glasgow.....another great place for music, so that part of my life didn't stop....I conducted four musical shows at the King's Theatre (with an orchestra drawn from the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, who were so good that they didn't turn up until the dress rehearsal and played like a dream! How lucky I was!

But it was in Glasgow that I followed another dream....to paint! I had plenty of time (no committees, no job) to throw myself into learning to paint, including classes at Rennie Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art.

Just one more passion.....Sailing. Sailing a dinghy, playing with the wind, leaving the troubles of the world behind, or sailing a yacht with friends around Greek Islands....total bliss!

To be honest, I have truly enjoyed my life.

Penny

Dates for your diary

Friday 28 th May	Deadline for Novello scores order (see offer)
Tuesday 1 st June	Half Term No Rehearsal
Sunday 4 th July	Outdoor Singing Together Celebration, (details to be confirmed)

Editor's note

A huge THANK YOU to this newsletter's contributors, Kevin, Jonathan and Penny. We are so lucky to have this trio, who are going beyond what was ever expected of them, to guide and assist us through these challenging times.

We are intending that future newsletters will follow, and we would be very grateful to have your ideas about what you would like to have included. If you have any puzzles or links to interesting articles, performances and recordings that you think other members would be interested in, please send them to me. I hope you enjoy the Jazz quiz.

Bridget

bridget.corlett@btinternet.com

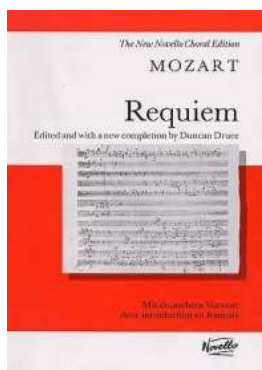
Offer from Forwoods Music 25% off Novello scores

I have received this special offer from Stephen Forwood of Forwoods Music. Forwoods Music is the music supplier that I use most often to buy new scores.

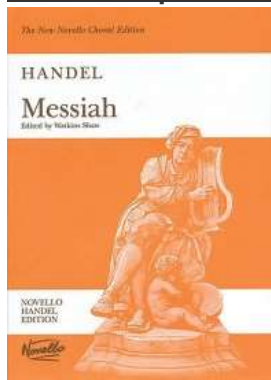
They are currently running this offer on Novello choral music – 25% off until **31st May**:

Please see this link for more details <https://www.scorestore.co.uk/novello.html>

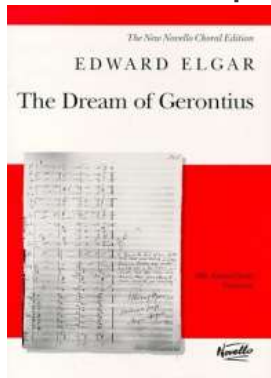
There are lots of scores on offer, here are just three. If you are interested in buying any score, either follow the link and purchase scores yourself, or let me know by **Friday 28th May** and I will create a joint order to send to Stephen. **Bridget**



Mozart: Requiem K626 published by Novello - Vocal Score ~~£8.99~~ £6.74



Handel: Messiah published by Novello - Vocal Score ~~£8.99~~ £6.74



Elgar: The Dream Of Gerontius Op.38 published by Novello - Vocal Score ~~£15.99~~ £11.99

30 Books of the Bible

Please accept my sincere apologies, when I was copying out the text, I added an extra 'the' into the sentence that begins "Truthfully from...." making it only possible to find 29 books. Here is the correct text and answers for 30.

There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them? Without using a computer? This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing the banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving the puzzle so involving she brews cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people however will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalised. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit, it usually takes a minister or scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in the paragraph. During a recent fund raising event which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new sales record. The local paper, The Chronicle surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Hummana humbly puts it, the books are right there in plain view hidden from sight. Those able to find them all will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also keep in mind that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know all the answers. Remember there is no need for a mass exodus. There really are 30 books lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found.

ALL THAT JAZZ!

1. The 2002 song "All That Jazz" comes from which musical film set in the Jazz Age?
A). Chicago B). West Side Story C). Hair
2. When was The Jazz Age?
A). 1900's B). 1920's C). 1940's
3. Jazz developed from the roots of what sort of music?
A). Blues B). Folk C). Gospel
4. Which American city is said to be the birth place of Jazz?
A). New York B). New Orleans C). New Jersey
5. What dance craze was inspired by jazz?
A). Jive B). Lindy Hop C). Charleston
6. Which of these is the name of a song and a dance in the Jazz Age?
A). Black Bottom B). Black Boogie C). Bottoms Up!
7. During the Prohibition in America in the Jazz Age, what was slang for any alcohol?
A). Adam's Ale B). Giggle Water C). Blue Nun
8. During the Prohibition in America, what were the illegal bars called that sold alcohol?
A). Speakeasies B). Shebeens C). Cellars
9. What was the name given to the young fashionable women of the Jazz Age? It was also used to describe the dresses they wore.
A). Flappers B). Floosies C). Babes
10. What was the name of the hairstyle popular for women in the Jazz Age?
A). Ben B). Bob C). Bill
11. What was Louis Armstrong's nick-name?
A). The Lion B). Satchmo C). Fats
12. Which instrument did Louis Armstrong play?
A). Banjo B). Saxophone C). Trumpet
13. What was the name of the Jazz club that opened in 1959 in Soho, London?
A). Bessie's Bar B). Concorde Club C). Ronnie Scott's
14. Which of these names was often given to the American jazz singer, Ella Fitzgerald?
A). Queen of Cool B). Queen of Hearts C). Queen of Jazz
15. Which of these songs did Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald duet on?
A). Head to Head B). Eye to Eye C). Cheek to Cheek
16. Who starred in the 1927 American musical film "The Jazz Singer"?
A). Al Jolson B). Richard Pryor C). Adrian Lester
17. What flower did Billie Holiday nearly always wear on stage?
A). Lily B). Gardenia C). Rose
18. What was Billie Holiday's nick-name?
A). Lady Day B). Lady Bird C). Shady Lady
19. A 1947 romantic film featuring jazz music, starred Billie Holiday as a singing maid and Louis Armstrong as a bandleader. What was the name of the film?
A). New York, New York B). New Orleans C). It Happened in Brooklyn
20. Who played Billie Holliday in the 1972 film, "Lady Sings the Blues", about her life?
A). Lena Horne B). Diana Ross C). Tina Turner
21. George Melly was an English jazz singer, a critic and writer with an emphasis on humour. What was his nick-name?
A). Georgie Fame B). Good Time George C). Georgie Porgie

22. Django Reinhardt only lived from 1910 to 1953. He was born in Belgium and was one of the first jazz musicians to emerge from Europe. Which instrument did he play?
A). Piano B). Guitar C). Clarinet
23. What was the nick-name of the clarinettist, Benny Goodman, in the 1930's?
A). King of Swing B). King of Jazz C). King of the Jungle
24. "The Great Gatsby" was a 1925 novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald set in the Jazz Age. Baz Luhrmann made it into a film in 2013. Who starred as the main character, Jay Gatsby?
A). Jude Law B). Leonardo di Caprio C). Freddie Fox
25. Duke Ellington was a famous American composer and leader of a jazz orchestra, which he led for about 50 years until his death in 1974. Which instrument did he play?
A). Double Bass B). Piano C). Tuba
26. Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald duetted in 1943 on which of these songs?
A). It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing
B). Swing low sweet chariot
C). Swinging boogie
27. Which of these songs was the American jazz singer, composer and actress, Peggy Lee, famous for singing?
A). So What B). Strange Fruit C). Fever
28. Ragtime was a fore runner to jazz from 1899 to 1917. Which 1973 film, starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford, had a sound track of ragtime tunes by pianist and composer Scott Joplin?
A). The Heist B). The Sting C). The Catch
29. Which jazz musician and composer was the English jazz singer Cleo Laine married to?
A). John Dankworth B). Andrew Lloyd Weber C). Leonard Bernstein
30. Count Basie was an American musician and composer. In 1935 he formed his own jazz orchestra. He played drums, piano and which other instrument?
A). Guitar B). Organ C). Trombone
31. The saxophonist Charlie (Bird) Parker was a jazz legend. A film was made in 1988, about his life, called "Bird". Which actor played Charlie (Bird) Parker?
A). Forest Whitaker B). Will Smith C). Sidney Poitier
32. Humphrey Littleton was an English jazz musician. He played the trumpet and clarinet. In later life he became famous for hosting which Radio 4 series?
A). Would I Lie to You? B). I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue C). Just a Minute
33. The song "When the Saints go Marchin' in" is often played by jazz bands. Which football club often sings the song at their matches?
A). Sheffield United B). Southampton C). Stoke City
34. The clarinettist, Acker Bilk, personified the trad jazz revival of the 1950's and 60's with his bowler hat and waistcoat. Which of these was his most famous tune?
A). Stranger on the Shore B). Moon River C). Sleepy Lagoon
35. The model Sophie Dhal married which modern English jazz singer and pianist in 2010?
A). Jamie Cullum B). James Brown C). James Blunt
36. Who wrote the music for and sang the jazz songs "Ain't Misbehavin'" and "Honeysuckle Rose", and appeared as himself in the 1943 American film "Stormy Weather"?
A). Fats Waller B). Joe Stilgoe C). Dave Brubeck
37. Known for his New Year's Eve TV show every year, which piano player and band leader plays jazz, boogie-woogie, blues, R & B and pop music?
A). Billy Cotton B). Jools Holland C). Miles Davis