August 2021

Newsletter

Dear everyone,

I hope you are all well and as excited as I am to be beginning in-person rehearsals again. Those of us who were lucky enough to be able to attend our outdoor rehearsals earlier this month had two wonderful, uplifting experiences. It was heart-warming to see such a large turnout each evening and we were blessed with glorious sunshine. Andy’s enthusiasm kept us all going when it got a wee bit chilly, and it was an absolute joy to be singing together again. Huge thanks to Margaret Mowat for facilitating the use of Wellington School car park, it was the perfect venue for us. Thank you also to Marion for administration and to the Committee members who came early, wore the hi-vis jackets, chalked out the 1 metre spacing and guided people to their places.

Tuesday, 31st August is the start date for our new season and as I explained previously, we have organised a change of venue: we are moving to a larger, safer, better ventilated space and will now rehearse in Castlehill Church. For the first four weeks we will be split into two groups, one in the Church with Andy and the other in the Hall with a Vocal Coach - vocal coaching is necessary as most of us haven’t done much singing since March 2020 and I’m sure a lot of us will now have a smaller vocal range and probably poorer breath control too. After a 45-minute session, we’ll have a short break and then Andy and the vocal coach will swap over and work with the other group. At the end of September, we plan to sing together in the Church.

We won’t be having an October Concert this year, instead we are planning a Come and Sing on Sunday 24th October in Castlehill Church, with an afternoon rehearsal and an early evening performance. Repertoire will be announced at the first rehearsal.

Our Christmas Concert will be in Ayr Town Hall on Sunday, 12th December, with organ accompaniment, and the programme will consist of a couple of more substantial pieces in the first half then lots of cheerful carols after the interval.

The Spring Concert will be on Sunday 3rd April,2022, and we’ll perform Bach’s St. John Passion which can be done with a small orchestra. We last did the St. John in 2007 and for those of you who don’t know it, it contains some glorious music. So, we have a busy time ahead!

Recently we received a message from Gerry Docherty informing us of the death of Bryan Free – those of us who are long-standing members of the choir will remember Bryan as a trombone player who was also an orchestra fixer and he organised wonderful orchestras for many of our outstanding performances over the years, dating from Stewart Linton’s time as our conductor.

The Cumnock Tryst will take place from 30th September to 3rd October this year. They are looking for volunteers to help with front of house duties during the festival so if you aren’t singing in the Festival Chorus, please have a look at the Tryst website – all the information about volunteering is available there and they are particularly short of volunteers this year.

Marion will be sending out the start of season letter soon, followed by details of arrangements for arrival and departure from rehearsals at Castlehill – as with our outdoor rehearsals, these will have to be staggered to avoid a gathering of a large group of singers. Inside the Church, stewards will guide you to your seat and give you information about moving round the venue. Feel free to bring your own cushion if you find the pews uncomfortable and please bring your own refreshments (with a chocolate biscuit for Andy!) It seems so exciting to be planning for ‘normal’ rehearsals again- I look forward to seeing and hearing lots of you at Castlehill on 31st August.

Best wishes to you all.

Kate