



# ***IN TUNE***

## The official news letter of the Banbury Choral Society

Issue No 1 – October 2009

**Welcome** to the first edition of 'In Tune'!

Please accept my apologies as this is my first effort at being a newsletter editor!

Well, what is the newsletter for?

Having been a member of the choir for a year, as a Bass, I was approached by our chairman, John Evans, to see if I wanted to join the committee.

Initially I declined, mainly due to the fact that being a 'new boy' I wanted to see how the BCS 'ticked' before committing myself!

My first concert in November 2008 was the *Brahms – Requiem*. It was a very steep learning curve, believe me!

The experience for me was incredibly moving as were the rehearsals leading up to it. I was/am totally hooked.

Considering the last time I was in a choir, I was 7 years old, in a church choir in Gerrards Cross in Buckinghamshire that was a *very* long time ago!

I soon got the impression that the BCS could perhaps do with better communication between its members

With that in mind I stuck my neck out and before I knew it, I found myself taking on the mantle of '*In Tune*' editor

The title initially was to be 'Keynotes' but at the last committee meeting Liz Scamans & Keith Smith, suggested '*In Tune*' so '*In Tune*' it is! Thank you Liz.& Keith. Much inspired no doubt by our conductor Keith Smith continuous gesturing to get us to sing in tune!

## **The main aims are but not necessarily limited to!**

- To act as a means of communication between members of the BCS.
- Keep members informed of forthcoming and concert dates
- Communicate other choral events in the area, trips etc
- CD reviews, concert reviews.
- Singing techniques, i.e. breathing etc
- Exchange news and views

As far as the form in which '*In Tune*' will take it is hoped that the majority of issues will be distributed by email however there will be plenty of paper copies available at rehearsals.

## **Our next concerts**

Our next concert will be the Christmas concert on 10<sup>th</sup> December however we have now started our rehearsals for our next major concert -*Haydn – The Creation* which we will be performing in February at St Mary's Church in Banbury; on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2010.;rehearsals started on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September at 7:30 at the usual venue at the Banbury Methodist Church in Marlborough Road, Banbury, there will of course be a break for the Christmas concert rehearsals.

With regards to rehearsals, I would thoroughly recommend that you beg steal or borrow or preferably buy a copy of the CD of this masterpiece aka *Die Schopfung*.

Of course major and well known works such as The Creation, there are several recordings to choose from; Amazon lists at least twenty different recordings, so how do you choose which one?

I have always appreciated the sheer beauty of the bird like quality of Emma Kirkby's soprano voice for many years now, so when Amazon listed Christopher Hogwood conducting the New College Oxford and the Academy of ancient music orchestra & chorus with Emma Kirkby, Anthony Rolfe Johnson and Michael George on the *L'Oiseau – Lyre label CD 430 397-2* a 1990 recording I simply had to have it! Considering this is an analogue recording the quality is utterly stunning. In my opinion, better than the Classic FM recommendation. This 2 CD set comes with a very full and informative booklet about the work.

Another recommendation is that I have found the Coopers website: [www.thehoopers.demon.co.uk/index.html](http://www.thehoopers.demon.co.uk/index.html) an extremely useful tool for learning choral music. This uses midi files to play the music for you and you can choose which part you want to emphasise. As I am a bass I naturally want to emphasise the bass part. Please bear in mind that the midi files are created using software that make it sound a bit like a fairground organ in places. However if you ignore the sound tonation and concentrate on singing along with the tune, it can be very rewarding. There are midi players you can use and the links to these are on the cooper website. I

use one called *Notation Musician* this displays the score as the music progresses and you can highlight the emphasised part. You can stop, pause, go back and forth and if needed (!) go over the ‘difficult bit’ several times to your heart’s desire !

*The Creation* is a very major and moving piece for us all and I feel that we must do our level best to give justice to Keith’s hard work not forgetting of course the man himself Joseph Haydn !

As I am a mere beginner and cannot yet read music fluently, I have to say that the pieces we have sung since I joined the choir last September were very much a vertical learning curve! The *Brahms Requiem* I enjoyed immensely, the music is so moving and beautiful that in order not to let other choir members down I purchased the Simon Rattle recording of this, and it was always being played at home, in the car, on the walkman. It was the ONLY way I could really get it branded on my brain !

I felt the same way with the *Elgar – The Music Makers* and *Rutter’s - Gloria*. Curiously I didn’t like either piece at all when I first heard them. I felt especially miffed at *Elgar’s -The Bavarian Highlands*. I carried on because I felt that it would all be good practice, if nothing else. This is where a revelation occurred to me; singing has broadened my mind musically at least (!) so much so, that I have found myself appreciating all sorts of music that I would otherwise not bothered with. I still however, cannot abide what Jeanette & I describe as ‘squeak honk’ music – we draw the line at that!

Anyway enough about me, we all want to hear something from **YOU !**

What concerts have you been to ?

As I write this in the middle of the Proms season there are plenty of excellent choral pieces including a superb performance of Felix Mendelssohn’s Symphony No2 I had never heard this before but with Sir Mark Elder and the Halle orchestra and both the Halle choir and the youth choir it was superb !

As with all best intentions I was hoping to get this first issue out before the start of rehearsals however life keeps getting in the way !

With the Christmas starting in some shops in September-or sooner ! It will soon be a time to think about the Christmas festivities planning.

The BCS will be getting involved in a concert on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

### **CONCERT DRESS CODE**

Many newer members will be wondering what to wear for our concert performances.

Well.....for the **Gentlemen**

A standard dinner suit complete with white shirt and black bow tie. These vary in price enormously, however I purchased an off the peg suit from Matalan. I cannot recall what I paid for the suit but it was very reasonable. I have not ever needed a ‘DJ

'suit before I soon realised that the trousers don't have belt hoops, hence a pair of braces is a must !!.

Cuff links will be also be required however not too much 'bling' though!

All very 'James Bond' !

For the **Ladies:**

- Long black skirt or black trousers
- White blouse top
- Again not too much 'bling' !

**\*\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES\*\*\*\*\***

- **Thursday December 10<sup>th</sup> 2009-** Christmas Concert at St Mary's Church Banbury
- **Saturday February 6<sup>th</sup> 2010** Haydn -The Creation St Mary's Church Banbury
- **Saturday June 12<sup>th</sup> 2010** J S Bach – St John Passion, St Mary's Church Banbury

It is very important as a choir, to have as many members as possible to be available for these concerts.

The St John Passion is particularly important to have THE largest choir as possible.

I personally feel that a large choir is a must, due to the amount of effort put in by Keith Smith and the hard working committee.

**Obituary**

**Margaret Levell**

In July we learned that Margaret Levell one of our altos, was killed in a car crash. Our thoughts and prayers are for Margaret's family, especially her son and daughter. Margaret's husband died last year so this has been a very sad time for the family.

Margaret Levell, joined the choir approximately eight years ago singing at Eddie Palmer's memorial concert in 2001.

At Margaret's funeral on 16<sup>th</sup> July, at Bloxham Church the BCS were well represented as well as the representatives from the Bloxham choirs

May God rest her Soul.

**In the next issue of *IN TUNE***

Due in the Spring I hope to have mastered the 'Serif Page Plus x4' this is a desktop publishing software package that promises to enable me to do all sorts of weird and wonderful things to make *IN TUNE* hopefully more exciting to read and more professional looking.....watch this space !

**...and finally**

Please find attached, an article from George Macey, our hard working Treasurer saying where the all important money goes.

**PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE**

**Let me have items for the next issue of IN TUNE as soon as you can.**

**Simon G Angel**

***IN TUNE* Editor**

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