

The Derbyshire Singers

Chairman's Report. Season 2022-2023

Lynne and Joe continued with their unstinting contributions to choir. They dedicate time and energy to ensure that The Derbyshire Singers attain the highest possible choral standards whilst working with world class musicians coupled with diverse and challenging programmes. On behalf of the Trustees and choir members I thank them for this.

Our high standards of performance would not be possible without the preparation in rehearsals made possible by our wonderful accompanist Amanda Kornas, and we thank her for agreeing to continue for the 2022/2023 season.

We had high hopes that our 2022/23 season would be another significant step towards a return to a semblance of choral normality. Choir rehearsals were back to their normal length, and face coverings and testing became voluntary, although they remained necessary at times together with ongoing vigilance. The shadow of Covid continued to hover however, as we were to experience later in the season.

The Committee decided that in our first full season since 2018-2019 and our first with an orchestra, we would return with a popular work, namely Messiah, featuring four of our wonderful and much admired regular soloists. The Derbyshire Singers were privileged to welcome Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Andrew Mackenzie Wicks and Tim Murfin to a well supported and well received performance at Lady Manners School in Bakewell. Unfortunately Anna Dennis was indisposed, but was replaced by the talented Rowan Pierce who will, we hope, return to sing with us again at some point in the future.

Highfields School in Matlock has, for many years been the venue for our annual Christmas Cracker. The Covid pandemic had prevented us from staging this popular Christmas concert since December 2019, and we planned to restart the tradition in December 2022. The Highfields site is no longer viable, partly due to the loss of parking on their sports courts, but also the necessary use of the facilities by the school, so we decided to stage the event at Lady Manners School in Bakewell. Roger Jepson offered to arrange for the world class British Champion Foden's Band to play, as well as supporting this with a generous donation. Due to logistical difficulties with the Sports Hall at Lady Manners, the event was cancelled, but the Foden's event was rescheduled for the Christmas Cracker in December 2023.

2023 began with the rehearsals for Mozart's Requiem. The week before the performance in March Covid reared its ugly head, resulting in a significant number of choir members being unable to sing. True to form however, Lynne, choir, soloists and orchestra rose to the occasion with a memorable performance.

The Trustees had for some time realized, that the existing format of election requirements in the constitution posed a risk that several of the Officers might have to stand down, which would potentially result in a significant loss of individual and collective expertise. These Officers were the Secretary, Concert Secretary, Treasurer, Chairman and Librarian. During March the Trustees, with particular input from Jonathan Francis, discussed the situation, and the majority decision was that the Officers would stand for re-election on an annual basis, thus preserving

stability and allowing for more flexibility in succession planning. The Trustees without portfolio would continue to stand for election every 3 years on a maximum of 3 occasions ensuring continuing opportunities for new Trustees to be elected.

Jonathan presented these recommendations to choir members at a Special General Meeting in April prior to the Annual General Meeting, with the proposal being accepted by the members.

Lesley Butcher had indicated her decision to stand down at the Annual General Meeting in 2023. The Trustees thanked her for her 3 year tenure including her recent revision of the Constitution which she completed in 2023. This Trustee post was linked in part to providing support for the preparations for Choral Weekend and Choral Day events and the Christmas Cracker. Since the beginning of the Covid pandemic The Derbyshire Singers has not arranged these events, although we hope to return with the Christmas Cracker in December 2023. The Trustees therefore decided not to replace this Trustee position for the next season. As a result no elections were held for new Trustees.

The new election arrangements were introduced at the Annual General Meeting with the remaining Trustees eligible for election all standing. The members re-elected all Trustees for a further term.

The 2022/2023 season concluded with The Derbyshire Singers finally welcoming Lizzie Ball, who had been due to play at our concert in March 2020, which was cancelled due to the Coronavirus outbreak. We were privileged to welcome Lizzie together with her terrific accompanist James Pearson from Ronnie Scott's. They were the highlight of a sellout jazz-themed concert in July at the beautiful Cromford Church, a treat for us all.

I would like to thank the Trustees, Joe and Lynne for their continuing support during this journey back to choir normality whilst looking forward to our Golden Jubilee season of more inspiring music.