

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY

1987 sees the fifteenth anniversary of one of South Cheshire's most flourishing music societies, the Nantwich Choral Society. This choir has become well-known locally for the quality of its performances, and brings considerable enjoyment to music lovers throughout the area.

Fifteen years ago there was little or no choral music in Nantwich, and a Workers' Educational Association committee member, Michael Bax, who had much experience of choral and church music, suggested a musical appreciation course. The resulting six-week W.E.A. course held in April 1972 with Michael as its tutor was in fact entitled 'Choral Music', and there was such an enthusiastic response from local people that a choir of 40 was formed and a full-scale concert was put on that June, including folk songs, madrigals, items by Stravinsky and Purcell, and Mass in G by Schubert. This in turn was so successful that it was decided to form a permanent choir, and the Nantwich and District Choral Society's inaugural meeting was held in September 1972, with Michael Bax as the choir's first conductor.

Thus established, the Society has never looked back. It has grown in numbers and reputation and has always enjoyed enthusiastic support. There are now over 60 members, and they come not only from Nantwich and Crewe but from all over the area - Sandbach, Alsager, Audlem, even Little Budworth. The Wednesday evening rehearsals are eagerly attended because members find the choir both friendly and stimulating. They enjoy the music and are prepared to work hard to live up to the reputation the choir has earned. A measure of their achievement is the comment of a local music critic after a recent concert that "the singing was fresh, flexible, balanced and true in tone."

This success is due in large part to the conductors the choir has had, and here it has been most fortunate. Michael Bax was followed by Michael Bridger and Edward Hewison, both experienced professional music lecturers, who set high standards and achieved great success with the choir's performances. When they left in 1982 Stephen Buckman was appointed. Stephen is a professional conductor who has studied organ and conducting in London and composition in Paris, and he is at present a professional singing coach in London. He travels up to Nantwich from London every week for rehearsals, and the choir is flourishing under

his expert and stimulating direction. Explaining why he is prepared to fit Nantwich into his busy schedule, Stephen says, "In Nantwich Choral Society I have found a friendly group of hard-working musicians. They have tackled a wide range of music by composers spanning five centuries. The Choral Society always performs to a high standard because they take a personal pride in their work. I look forward to conducting Nantwich Choral Society for many seasons to come."

The setting for most of the Society's concerts is Nantwich's beautiful 600-year old Parish Church, where it is possible to accommodate an orchestra as well as the choir. The Society has also performed frequently at Nantwich Central Methodist Church, in school halls, and at Nantwich Civic Hall, but they have travelled further afield on several occasions - twice recently, for instance, they gave concerts in Bunbury Parish Church, and Cup Final Day 1986 saw them braving the motorway traffic to give a concert at Beckenham, near London, by invitation.

The choir gives several concerts each season, and over the years it has presented a wide range of choral music, from madrigals and motets to the major works of Mozart, Haydn, Brahms, Handel and Bach, covering all periods of composition from Schütz, Monteverdi and Purcell to Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten and Carl Orff. At the first concert, in December 1972, they presented Messiah, and this has been repeated on many occasions and is now established as a popular annual event at Christmas. Equally popular are the Society's Christmas Carol Concerts, and the audiences for the 1986 Messiah plus two carol concerts totalled over 1000.

1986 was in fact particularly busy for the choir, and the list of concerts shows how varied its programme can be: Bach - B Minor Mass in March; Vivaldi - Gloria, and Handel - Four Coronation Anthems, in May (Beckenham) and September (Bunbury); Orff - Carmina Burana, in June; a concert of Baroque Music by Bach and Charpentier in November, and Messiah (in aid of the N.S.P.C.C.) and two carol concerts featuring local primary schools in December. The programme for 1987 starts with the Nelson Mass by Haydn on April 11th. at Nantwich Parish Church, and on June 21st. the choir will be giving a concert version of The Mikado in Nantwich Civic Hall. In November 1987 they will perform the Fauré Requiem, in December Messiah and carols, and the 1988 Easter concert will consist of works by Vaughan Williams: Dona Nobis Pacem and Towards the Unknown Region.

Presenting such a range of music, with professional soloists and often with professional orchestra as well, is costly, and the Choral Society, which is a member of the National Federation of Music Societies, is grateful for the financial support given by North West Arts and by Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council. In addition, several local firms have agreed to sponsor concerts, and others are to advertise in future concert programmes. If anyone is interested in advertising or becoming a sponsor, in joining the choir itself, or in buying tickets for the concerts, the secretary will gladly give details if they phone Crewe 780552

In 1972, in a letter to the local Chronicle appealing for members for the new Choral Society, its first secretary, Brian Roberts, wrote, "A flourishing and progressive choral society is essential to the cultural life of an area, and the encouraging attendance at the concert given...by the choir sponsored by the W.E.A. shows that Nantwich can support its performances". This has certainly been borne out by the Choral Society's first fifteen years. Its concerts are well supported - often eagerly awaited - and it is indeed both flourishing and progressive.

Its accompanist, pianist and music teacher Joy Roberts, who has been with the choir right from the W.E.A. course, says how much she enjoys playing for a choir that is so alive and ongoing. The Society's President, Nantwich Headmaster Herbert Rowsell, comments on how well "the vision of the choir's originators has been fulfilled" and says, "It is fascinating that what started as a W.E.A. class has grown into a choral society for which an accomplished musician will come from London for rehearsals each week."

February 1987-

HISTORY

12 th. April 1972 start of 6 meetings on Choral Music, a W.E.A. course
at Manor Road, given by M.Bax. W.E.A. Choir - 41
41 members

Concert given on June 28th, 1972.

20th. September, 1972 Inaugural Meeting of Nantwich and District Choral
Society held at Public Library. Mr. A. Chatwin -
President.

Society set up and Constitution drawn up.

Rehearsals held at Teachers' Centre, Willaston.
Conductor - Michael Bax. Accompanist - Mrs. Joy Roberts.

Michael Bridger - joint Conductor -date?

Edward Hewison - joint conductor with M. Bridger. date?

1982 - Mr. Hewison left, followed by Mr. Bridger (summer 1982)

20th. October 1982 Stephen Buckman elected Conductor.

date of move to Malbank for rehearsals?

number in choir? 66

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY - WORKS PERFORMED

- June 1982 Schubert - Mass in G & Purcell, Vaughan Williams, etc. WCA choir
 Dec. 1972 Choral Society's first concert - Messiah.
 Oct. 1973 Madrigals, Folk Songs, etc.
 Dec. 1973 Messiah extracts, Schutz - Christmas History.
 April 1974 Monteverdi - Beatus Vir, Vivaldi - Gloria, Faure - Requiem.

 Dec. 1974. Bach - Magnificat, Mathias - Ave Rex.
 March 1975 Dvorak - Stabat Mater.
 June 1975 (Crewe Festival) a madrigal, Thomson - Alleluia.
 June 1975 Orff - Carmina Burana, Thomson, Bartok.
 Nov. 1975 Haydn - Creation
 Dec. 1975 (with Rochdale Band) Verdi - Speed your journey, Copeland, etc.
 April 1976 Purcell - Come ye sons of art, Handel - Zadok, The King
 shall rejoice, Jacob - Highways.
 June 1976 (Christleton) Handel - Saul.
 Oct. 1976 Bach motets, Kodaly - Missa Brevis, Britten, Thomson.
 Dec. 1976 Handel - Messiah.
 Jan. 1977 Victorian Evening.
 March 1977 Monteverdi - Vespers, Gabrieli - Canzona.
 June 1977 (with Tarporley Band) Purcell, Handel, G&S choruses.
 June 1977 (with local choirs) Wilbye - The Lady Oriana, Handel - Zadok etc.
 June 1977 (Civic Service - Jubilee) Handel - Zadok, Walton - Te Deum.
 July 1977 Folk Songs, Moeran, Schubert, etc.
 Oct. 1977 (at Wistaston) ditto
 Nov. 1977 Brahms - Requiem, Vaughan Williams.
 Dec. 1977 Schutz, Gabrieli, Bach - Sleepers Wake!, Bruckner.
 March 1978 Bach - St. John Passion.
 May 1978 (at Hanley) Havergal Brian - Gothic Symphony.
 July 1978 Brahms, Monteverdi.
 Nov. 1978 Haydn - Theresa Mass, Mozart - Requiem Mass.

 March 1979 (Winsford) Verdi - Requiem
 April 1979 concert as part of festival of Arts
 June 1979 Bach, Palestrina - Mass, Bernstein - Chichester psalms
 Nov. 1979 Bach - New Aanket, Handel - Dixit Dominus, Schubert - Mass

 Nov. 1980 Orff - Carulli Carmine, Rose - Winter Music.

March 1980 (at Civic Hall) Vaughan Williams - Sea Symphony, Stanford - Songs of the Fleet.
 June 1980 Trial by Jury, Horowitz - Horrotorio.
 March 1981
 June 1981
 Nov. 1981 Music for St. Cecilia - Purcell, Britten.
 March 1982 (Oakley Centre) Beethoven - Mass in C, Choral Fantasia.
 June 1982. Tenth Anniversary Concert.
 Nov. 1982 Orff - Catulli Carmina, Rose - Winter Music.
 March 1983 ? Bach - Mass in B Minor
 June 1983 Haydn - Missa Solemnis (S. Buckman)
 Nov. 1983 Kodaly - Missa Brevis, Dvorak - Mass in D Major.
 April 1984 Bach - St. John Passion.
 June 1984 French music - Durufle - Requiem.
 Nov. 1984 Handel - Four Coronation Anthems.
 March 1985 Mozart - Requiem, Haydn 'little Organ Mass'.
 July 1985 English Music ^{by} Five Tudor Portraits. (E. Hewison)
 Nov. Dec. 1985 Brahms - German Requiem, Song of Destiny.
 Dec. 1985 Handel - Messiah (Bunbury)
 March 1986 Bach - B Minor Mass
 May 1986 (in Beckenham) Vivaldi - Gloria, Handel - Four Coronation Anthems.
 June 1986 Orff - Carmina Burana.
 Sept. 1986 (in Bunbury) Vivaldi - Gloria, Handel - Four Coronation Anthems.
 Nov. 1986 Bach, Charpentier.
 Dec. 1986 (in aid of N.S.P.C.C.) Handel - Messiah.
 April '87 Haydn - Nelson Mass
 Nov. 1987
 Dec. 1987

Nantwich Choral Society

'THE FRIENDS OF NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY'

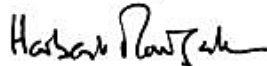
Dear

Nantwich Choral Society is planning to launch an Association of Friends. This will take place on Friday 1st. December at 7.30 p.m. in Malbank School, Welsh Row, Nantwich. Knowing of your interest in music, we would like to invite you to this inaugural meeting.

Any musical society must be responsive to the needs of its audience. We have thought of many benefits that could be offered to Friends of the Society ranging from advanced notice of concerts, privileged booking and opportunities to meet performers, to social gatherings and outings. Nevertheless, we are keen to know what could be of interest to you, and this is the purpose of the inaugural meeting. To celebrate the launch there will be a wine and a light buffet.

We do hope that you will be interested in this venture, which we are sure will be well received. Perhaps you would be good enough to show your interest by completing the slip below and returning it to me.

Yours sincerely,



Herbert Rowsell
President, Nantwich Choral Society

TO BE RETURNED TO J. H. ROWSELL, 69 WELSH ROW, NANTWICH

- I/We would like to attend the Inaugural Meeting on 1st. December at Malbank School
- I/We are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to hear more of future plans.

Names:

Address:

• Delete as applicable.