

NANTWICH CHORAL SOCIETY - AN OVERVIEW

1 Introduction

Nantwich Choral Society grew out of an evening class in 1972. It has performed for much of the last twenty-one years in Nantwich Parish Church. This has the benefits of having the right atmosphere, good accoustics and an attractive, sympathetic location. We have performed in Nantwich Civic Hall, but this has neither good accoustics or the correct ambience. We have been unable to find a location around Nantwich that possesses these qualities and seats 400 people.

For the first ten years the Society was entirely amateur, but since that time we have gradually employed more professionals. We pay our Conductor a professional rate and employ young professional soloists and musicians in the orchestra. Our members pay a subscription of £45 per year; we raise a further £1,000 from covenants. Our grants and sponsorship usually total around £1,000 per year, and we raise perhaps a further £1,000 from other fund raising activities. The rest of our funding must come from ticket sales; despite raising our prices by 50% over two years to £5 and £7 we have still made a loss on some of our concerts of over £1,000 this season. Other concerts, such as our annual Carol concert and Handel's Messiah generally make a profit of between £3-700. We wish to try to secure our audience so that we can continue to perform music of a wide range and of a semi-professional standard, while not losing the freindly nature of the choir itself.

2 Sales & Marketing techniques

We sell tickets via members of the Society, at the Church shop in Nantwich (a convenient central location open 6 days a week with no commision charged) and by 'phone from a member's house. We advertise by a brochure for each Season, distributed to information centres and libraries throughout the region.

Information is also circulated by the NFMS and in the What's On section of local magazines and papers. We put posters and hand bills up around the locality. A successful concert will sell around 400 tickets, with a 60% full price/40% concession (for DAP's, unemployed people and students) split.

At our last concert we had 12 telephone enquiries. 90% of our ticket sales are personal, but in the last year a significant but to date unquantified number of people have come from further afield because of the quality and variety of our performances. We believe we need to secure this audience.

3 Current Position

We have been reluctant to raise ticket prices again. Sadly we have had to agree to increased rates for our professionals this year; this has meant that to roughly break even on the cost of each concert we have to sell 400 tickets. We have not done this so far this season and have therefore a projected loss. (Appendix 1)

4 Future Plans

In the short term we have arranged a number of events to make up the deficit. These include a charity auction and other social events. In the longer term we need to attract more people who are prepared to pay for the quality they hear. We are considering a direct mail operation or the sharing of such a facility with other Arts organisations (see previous document).