



STIRLING CITY CHOIR

April 2006 Edition of Noteworthy: Newsletter of Stirling City Choir.

St. Columba Charity Concert "A night of firsts"

Our annual Charity Concert on Sunday 19th February was greatly appreciated by a very responsive audience of about 250 people. The evening provided both audience and choir with a number of unexpected highlights and surprises. For instance, it was the first time we had properly heard our soprano soloist, Marion Wyllie, who delighted us with a stunning performance - indicating a very promising future. For the first time also, we realised just how talented our piano accompanist Laura Baxter is and how privileged we are to have her. Next, we had the pleasure of giving the first public performance (twice!) of our Librarian Kathleen McPhail's composition 'Hosanna' - a very fresh and joyful piece. And lastly, but by no means least, we enjoyed the first performance by a Chamber Group of choir members who sang the beautiful 'Lift Thine Eyes' from Elijah.

Thanks are due to all choir members for their contribution to the success of the evening. The concert made a profit of around £1500, half of which will be donated to St Columba's Church Fund, with the remainder going to choir funds.

Spring Concert - shaping up well!

At the time of writing, rehearsals are going well for our performance of Faure's Requiem and Haydn's Nelson Mass in St Mary's Church on Sunday 30th April. Records show that the choir last performed the Nelson Mass twenty years ago in 1986, so for the majority of us it is a new addition to our repertoire - and has proved to be a very enjoyable work to learn. With still a few weeks to go, we can be confident of attaining a high standard of performance, and are fortunate that Eric has arranged for four excellent soloists to join us. We look forward to singing once again in St Mary's - and to meeting the Glasgow Orchestral Society, who are playing for us for the first time. All we have to do now is to ensure a good-sized audience by selling plenty tickets!



Garden Party at Plane Castle, 2nd June 2006

Tickets - priced £15 - are now on sale for our Garden Party at Plane (or Plean) Castle on the evening of Friday, June 2nd from 7.30pm, to raise much-needed funds for the choir. This fascinating tower and manor house dates from the 15th century, and has been extensively restored by the present owners, John and Nancy Wright. We are very grateful to them for the opportunity of holding our fundraising event in such splendid setting.

Please buy a ticket for yourself, and try to sell at least one other. You will not be disappointed! A buffet meal in the Great Hall is included, and a group from the choir will entertain us with a selection of madrigals. Outside, there will be a treasure hunt for the young - and young-at-heart - not to mention the chance just to stroll around the beautiful grounds, and to view the sculpture garden...so altogether it promises to be an evening you should definitely not miss!!

Contributions of dishes for the buffet meal will be gratefully received. Contact Tricia Cooke on 01786 814 291 for any further details about the event.

Next Session 2006/2007: the picture so far

In recent weeks, the committee has been planning the programme for next session. In addition to our usual Christmas Concert in the Holy Rude and our Carol Party in the Great Hall of Stirling Castle, we have another very exciting opportunity: Stirling City Choir has been invited to join other Scottish choirs on Sunday 12th November 2006 in Glasgow, to take part in a fundraising performance of Karl Jenkins' Requiem for a cancer charity. Hopefully this will prove to be as uplifting and memorable an occasion as our performance in Glasgow last September of Jenkins' The Armed Man. More details of this event will be available soon. For our Spring 2007 concert, we hope to perform the Verdi Requiem - if, and only if, we can gather together sufficient funds soon (hence our fundraising evening). The Verdi Requiem is without doubt one of the most thrilling choral works to undertake, but it is also one of the most expensive, requiring two choirs, a full orchestra and excellent professional soloists. Our hopes are high, however!

NB - If you have any ideas for further fundraising ventures, please pass your suggestions on to your Section Rep or any committee member.



The things we sing - The background to 'The Nelson Mass'

Haydn wrote 'The Nelson Mass' in 1798 during his second period at the Esterhazy Court in Hungary. His first lengthy period there stretched from 1761-1790, when he held the post of Director of Music at the court of Count Nicolas the First. After the Count's death, however, Haydn was invited to London. During his visits there, he composed some of his best-known symphonies, and was feted as the most celebrated composer of the times, receiving an honorary degree from Oxford University. Also while in London, Haydn heard a great deal of the music of Handel, which remained very popular and which very clearly influenced Haydn's later works.

In 1796, when Count Nicolas the Second re-established the Esterhazy Court, Haydn returned to Hungary, and to his former position. In the next few years at court, Haydn composed The Creation, The Seasons, and also his six great settings of the Mass, including Missa in Angustiis: "Mass in Time of Need" - otherwise known as "The Nelson Mass". The work is said to commemorate Nelson's decisive victory over the French at the Battle of the Nile in 1798 - the sounds of war being particularly evident, perhaps, in the use of trumpets and timpani at the start of the Benedictus.

The Last Word - spoken in jest?

A reminder of some of the essential characteristics of each of the four sections of the choir - as described in the Minister's amusing vote of thanks at the end of our recent Charity Concert:

- Sopranos** - sing the highest, and because of this they take the view that they rule the world.
- Tenors** - are spoiled - choir directors would rather sell their souls than let a halfway-decent tenor quit.
- Altos** - sing elaborate passages full of sharps and flats and tricks of rhythm... and nobody is noticing.
- Basses** - make horrible faces when trying to hit very low notes.

A Note About Noteworthy

Suggestions, comments, or articles are welcome, though contributions may have to be edited. Any items for the next edition should be submitted by 8th August to Anne Montgomerie: Tel: 01786 473 466. E-mail: Secretary@Stirlingcitychoir.org.uk