

GERONTIUS NEWSLETTER No. 4

Dear Singer

This is to thank you all for taking part in that amazing performance of The Dream of Gerontius on Saturday night. We were fantastically well served by Brian, three excellent soloists, the Regency Sinfonia, the semi-chorus of Burford Singers and the very helpful staff of Gloucester Cathedral. I had 19 guests at the performance (as it was dedicated to my mother), many of whom did not know The Dream and they all really (and I think genuinely) enjoyed the performance.

Philip Lloyd Holtam was my suggestion for Gerontius as he sang so well for SCCG in the Verdi Requiem and in a Thornbury Gerontius a few years back. As Brian did not know Philip I was a little nervous as to whether Philip would meet Brian's exacting standards – I need not have worried!

1. Feedback

From **Brian Kay**

Dear Jos

emails are rather impersonal things, but they are quick and I do want to strike while the iron is hot!

The whole experience with you and the SCCG has been an absolute delight, right from that first lunch in the Carpenter's Arms all those many months ago.

Yesterday was one I shall never forget: to be able to perform Elgar's great masterpiece in a building so filled with the spirit of the composer himself was a privilege allowed to very few, other than the die-hards of the Three Choirs Festival and for that I shall remain profoundly grateful.

Your combined singers did a great job, splendidly prepared by Chris and Steve, and I found them wonderfully responsive, generous in spirit in both rehearsal and performance, and a real pleasure to work with.

I was equally pleased with the orchestra - particularly that magical opening to part two - often so difficult (particularly if there has been an interval - thank goodness there wasn't) and clearly enjoying the good fortune of playing that amazing score.

I hope you were pleased with Diana and Quentin (dream team!) as I was with Philip.

But it is you and your team who deserve the greatest thanks, for making it happen and for running it all in such an efficient and friendly way.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been part of it all - my thanks and thanks again.

And my congratulations all round. All best, most gratefully, Brian.

Jos - Gerontius was a knock out. Most, most impressive. Wow! Brough

From **Diana Moore**

Dear Jos,

Thank you so much for asking me to be part of such a wonderful evening. I really think it was my favourite Gerontius to date and a very special evening all round. I hadn't realised that the concert was dedicated to your mother - I'm actually glad that I didn't know BEFORE the concert - but I wonder if that's why it felt so emotionally charged? I thought the choir and the orchestra did a fantastic job and really pulled out all the stops.

Yes, I was watching the two girls too, but not when I was singing!! They were wonderful, weren't they?! So well behaved too!

DO keep in touch! And please do ask me about the Bach in 2020. I'd love to return.

All my very best,

Diana

Hi Jos,

I just wanted to say thank you for such a wonderful day yesterday. I enjoyed it so much and have had really positive feedback from audience members.

Brian Kay is a joy and one of the most fabulous conductors I've ever sung with.

Your ideas and hard work are much appreciated.

Best wishes

Pauline Cox

Dear Jos

A great Big THANKS to you for such an amazing concert. Thanks also to all those who were involved in making it happen.

It has been a great joy to sing with Brian and I hope we can use him again sometime.

The soloists were amazing - I had shivers down my spine a few times in the afternoon and evening.

My disappointment was that we didn't have a larger audience but we clashed with so many other minor events, like the Queen's official birthday!

Enjoy the summer and see you in Sept.

Mary and John

Dear Jos,

Everyone seemed very pleased with the performance – both audience and performers. It did go “right on the night”!

The Booseys are happy to come and help clean up copies of Gerontius. 9.30 onwards is fine.

Penelope

Just a note to say thank you for yesterday.

Without you it would not have happened and you put in an incredible amount of work with calm good humour; you thanked everyone but we did not thank you.

Whether it made money or not, it was a wonderful thing to be part of and both choir and audience seem to have enjoyed it immensely.

So from myself and on behalf of WCS, thank you very much

*Best Wishes
Rosemary Robinson
Secretary
Wycliffe Choral Society*

Dear Jos

I wish to say a big "thank you" to you and your team for all your hard work in organising the Big Sing.

When we signed up we realised, coming from Monmouth, that it would be a big commitment in terms of travelling (we didn't realise how big at the time - we had to contend with unforeseen bridge and slip road closures for almost every rehearsal!) but the whole experience was definitely worth every mile.

We were so impressed with the overall organisation and professionalism which made for such a wonderful performance in the Cathedral last night. And Brian Kay is delightful - endlessly patient and encouraging.

Thank you for facilitating such a memorable experience.

With best wishes

*Yvonne Nield
Monmouth Choral Society*

Dear Jos

I would like to give my thanks to you and your team members for all the hard work you put into the organisation which culminated in last night's wonderful concert.

I have been singing with Tyndale C S for many years, and have enjoyed taking part in some great choral works, but I think this 'Dream of Gerontius', together with the workshops and rehearsals, is the most memorable and uplifting choral musical experience I have had. I have wanted to sing it for many years, so these past few weeks have helped me achieve my ambition – and it was great! Chris Swain, Steven Kings and Brian Kay produced an amazing result.

Many, many thanks to all involved.

Anne Nuttall, Tyndale CS member

Hi Jos,

What a fantastic day on Saturday. I really enjoyed it in spite of it being quite hard work! Brian Kay was charming - so in charge but so modest and genteel with it. Things went very smoothly in no small way because of your arrangements, attention to detail and hard work - really well done.

Looking forward to the next one with anticipation.

Best wishes, Mel

Dear Jos

*You must be looking back at last Saturday with immense satisfaction!
The joy enhanced by the fact that the local rehearsals did not sound promising in spite of Steve's excellent leadership.
Brian handles these occasions supremely well and the overall result with soloists and orchestra was magnificent.
I enjoyed reading the programme - not my bits, but the whole thing.
Well done, and many thanks for allowing me to be involved.*

Best wishes

Michael

Just a note Jos to thank you and all the team for the efforts you put in to make the whole Saturday affair so enjoyable. I really enjoyed the whole thing, rehearsals and all, and appreciate all the organisation it took. So thank you all round for a very successful event.

*Sorry I'm not able to join in the erasure part due to work.
Lyn Summers*

Dear Chris and Jos,

Can I extend a huge thank you for organising this event, it was a great pleasure to be able to sing this work again and I do hope that it was a success in SCCG's terms.

I am looking forward to the Berlioz in 2018 and I do hope this will draw members of both GCS and BCS, especially if they can be given some dispensation from attending all rehearsals. (Some of us will have sung it 4 times in the last 4 years, once with BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales at the proms and three times with Philharmonia; once in RFH, once in Gloucester with GCS and once with 3C Festival Chorus). I am sure Adrian will be a draw for these singers too.

Do you have a projected date for the workshop next year? The diary is beginning to fill fast...

Best wishes

Peter Holmes

Dear Jos

Many thanks for this - your organization was as stupendous as ever and it was a great pleasure working with Brian culminating in a most memorable performance. The soloists were brilliant (Diana outstanding) and the orchestra did a good job so I would certainly agree that it was our best yet - a musical friend in the audience was moved to tears. I'm glad that you felt it did justice to the memory of your mother - what a remarkable life she had.

We are off to Honkers tomorrow - I'm looking forward to that and to 14th July 2018.

All best wishes

Chris (Swain – Rehearsal conductor)

Jos,

Thank you for your comments, similar to those I have received from Brian, and passed on to the members of the orchestra.

The trouble with superlatives is 'how do you top that?' You have done the Verdi, and one or two other big works, not all of them complete programmes in themselves, and I know that you are doing the Berlioz in 2 years time, which of course we would have loved to have been part of, but for which you are already committed to the CBSO.

Might I tentatively suggest the War Requiem, which we, as an orchestra, have done, but which requires, in my opinion, extra rehearsal for the chamber orchestra on its own - more cost!! Other thoughts include Belshazzar's Feast, only 35 mins, and Stravinsky - Symphony of Psalms but at 21 mins and with no violins virtually unprogrammable economically!!!

These are works however, that the individual societies are unlikely to perform without the added resources that combining as a group allows them.

Members of the orchestra also commented on it being 'one of the best Gerontius' we have ever done', so thank you for that opportunity. They put that down in a great part to Brian's conducting and knowledge of the piece, but not forgetting the quality of the choir, and not to forget the soloists who were wonderful..

Altogether a great evening. Thank you.

Diggory Seacome – (Regency Sinfonia organiser)

Dear Jos

Just a short note to say thank you very much to you and your committee for organising the 2016 SCCG Big Sing. I thoroughly enjoyed taking part, and particularly working with Brian Kay. All your hard work is greatly appreciated.

Best wishes

Harriet Barnes

(Wycliffe)

Hi Jos

Can I add my thanks for a really uplifting concert. All your hard work and organisation paid off and it was a privilege to be part of it.

I hope you have a good rest(?) and good weather for your walk.

Mike

2. The Future

We are planning a Workshop in Gloucester Cathedral on Saturday April 29th 2017 on the Berlioz Requiem under Adrian Partington. Booking forms will be posted on the website (see below) in August.

This will be followed by a full performance of the same spectacular work on 14th July 2018 as part of the Cheltenham Festival with the CBSO accompanying us.

3. Eraser Party

We had a fun eraser party this morning – the performance was analysed in detail, several scurrilous jokes were told and all the scores were rubbed out in 3 hours. My thanks to (in no particular order) Heather, Su, David, Michael, Jenny P, Jenny G, Nigel, Ruth and Penelope, you all did a great job.

4. The SCCG Committee

Over the last year liaison officers and Chairmen from the four choirs involved, the conductors, the secretary, vice chairman and the web manager have met regularly to plan this event, my thanks to them all for the time and effort that they put in. Also particular thanks to Su and David for allowing us to use their lovely house for committee meetings. Our two Concert Managers Ian and David were heavily involved in the Stroud rehearsals and the Gloucester rehearsal and performance, my thanks to them

5. The Website

Keep an eye on our website www.sccg.info to see if the information that interests you is already posted. We will make every effort to post the latest information there.

Jos Gregson

Chairman South Cotswold Big Sing

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