



VAUGHAN-WILLIAMS SEA SYMPHONY GRAND CHORUS NEWSLETTER NO. 5

It's a wrap!

With a beatific smile and unending positivity, millionaire Osgood Fielding III (Joe E Brown) had it right at the end of *Some Like it Hot*, in answer to flapper Geraldine's (Jack Lemmon's) desperate protestations that they couldn't marry... *Nobody's Perfect!* And none of us could claim to have performed to perfection, but I'm sure we did our best in an ambitious programme.

(I tried to come up with another nautical quip/quote/analogy, but *Sink the Bismarck*, *Titanic*, *The Cruel Sea*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Two Years Before the Mast* didn't seem appropriate! Oooh, just thought of one: "*Now Voyager*" with Bette Davis: "Don't let's ask for the moon - we have the stars..." I've only just realised how apt that is - the film title is taken from a Whitman poem! Owzat!)

The good news is, overall we had a grand time by the sound of the feedback; we enjoyed the rehearsals and workshop, on concert day it didn't rain, we had wonderful picnics, we heard Julia Hwang play in rehearsal and concert, we had a goodly number (350-ish) in the audience, we made a little for the partner societies, and a resounding £620 for the GW Air Ambulance. The MNDA in the cafe had a good day too - about £1100! A few glitches and imperfections in our performance I think we can forgive ourselves for. That's live performing for you - it can be... eventful?

Did you catch the Sea Symph on the first night of the proms? and how much could you do without the score?

CDs

Despite our small lapse in the last movement of the Sea Symphony the recording sounds really great. It is a 2 cd set with the Elgar, Parry and Lark on the first cd and the whole of the Sea Symphony on the second cd.

Jos has a very few spare copies at £8 on a first come, first served basis. If you would like a copy contact Jos on 01454-411652 or by email: jos@josgregson.plus.com, cheques made out to Thornbury Choral Society, please

THE FUTURE

The four Big Sing 2013 partner societies held a short meeting after the concert by way of debriefing session before winding up on completion of the 2013 project. Possible future events were discussed - but the mechanics are that all SCCG members are invited to participate in these events, and all matters are subject to agreement of the committees of the individual societies, so we have a way to go.

That said, as Wycliffe holds a bi-annual overseas tour in May in odd years the partners felt that it would be a good idea to change the Big Sing dates to even years, so the next would be in 2016. It has been suggested for there to be workshops in June 2014 and June 2015 to raise funds for a further Big Sing in June 2016. Watch this space!

Jos is willing to continue in his role as project chairman for 2016 and Melanie Reed has volunteered to take over the project secretarial duties from Julia O'Connor Beach who has stepped down. Again, this all has to be ratified by the South Cotswold Choral Group at their next meeting.

THANKS from Project Chairman Jos Gregson:

- o To Chris Swain and Steven Kings, our rehearsal conductors, who suffered as many nerves over our performance as we did ourselves!
- o To Julia as our meticulous Secretary, for sorting out all the ticketing arrangements, the budget and all the arrangements for stewarding and all the other work necessary as SCCG Secretary
- o To Lisa as Publicity Manager - the fine sight of a full nave a tribute to her success!
- o To Alison for acting as Treasurer, a really thankless task carried out with great charm!
- o To David Joyce and Ian Stewart for their work as Concert Manager and Deputy Concert Manager, very successful, they make a great team
- o To Mike Elcock for setting up the website and maintaining it throughout the whole period of the 2013 Big Sing - have a look at the site, please!
- o To Deborah Smith, Alison Makepeace, Rosemary Robinson and Philip Revill as liaison officers between their societies and the committee

- o A big thank you to the following who helped at two separate Rubber Parties to clean up the scores after the concert - *Rosemary Burton, Doreen Giudetti, Jenny Gregson, Jos Gregson, Su Joyce, Kathy Pearce, Diz Pedrick, Ann Revill, Philip Revill, Margrit Schallberger and Tessa Sullivan*. Extra thanks are due to those who not only came to the parties but also took bundles of scores home to work on.

KIND WORDS RECEIVED

The following letters and emails have been received from members of the choir and audience:-

"Just a quick note to say how much we enjoyed our trip to Tewkesbury and the splendid concert. All most enjoyable especially the Vaughan Williams and again in such a splendid setting. We are still hoping you will be in place in 2015 so we can repeat the experience" LJ (London)

"What a marvellous evening! Thank you for the splendid organisation and the sheer hard work which comes with such a huge event. My friend Helen and I went up with the choir coach and pottered around Tewkesbury, popping into the rehearsal from time to time which was fascinating. Just to sit in that awe-inspiring abbey is enough but with the addition of all those voices and instruments it is a memorable experience. The Lark Ascending left us breathless - what a talent. I didn't really know the Sea Symphony and really enjoyed it.- so atmospheric - and Helen relived her A level studies by following the whole thing with a score she borrowed from Kate PM. She loved it all. So congratulations on a fantastic evening and thank you all again for your dedication and hard work." JJ (Thornbury)

"I don't know where to begin! The event on Saturday was amazing. Thank you so very much. You raised a staggering £620.13. How wonderful is that? Joe and I had a brilliant time. I want to send you a certificate letting you know the total. Can you give me an address to send this out to please. I am sure I will see you at the next Thornbury concert in December if not before. Best wishes," Nicole (Great Western Air Ambulance, Bristol)

"It was lovely to see a packed Abbey for the concert and thank you so much for reserving a space in such a prime position. We really enjoyed the evening , despite being rather tired from a long day at the coffee shop! We grossed £1273 overall, which, once the Abbey's expenses are accounted for, will give us a net result of around £1100. We are delighted to have had the opportunity for such good fundraising and I do hope that everyone felt their meals and cream teas were enjoyable. We learnt the hard way that the cooker at the coffee shop isn't up to the mark and without one of our volunteers being a professional chef , we would have struggled to get the hot food out on time , but thanks to his skill we weren't too far off time wise and it all came together with everyone's help!

Many thanks for all your hard work in helping make the day a success and hope you had a very enjoyable time performing at the concert."

Jean (Motor Neurone Disease Association)

"Just wanted to say thank you for all the effort you put in to the organisation of the workshops and concert. It was very well put together and went really smoothly. Well done everyone." MP (Thornbury)

"Just a quick note before we leave for Madeira tomorrow to say thanks for all you did to make yesterday a great event - apart from our singing gaffes! I hope you can both take some time to relax and recover!" MMcG (Thornbury)

"Thank you. It was a lovely evening and wonderful to see so many in the Abbey. I'm glad all seemed to enjoy themselves. We certainly did! Congratulations to all involved in the concert . They were all so kind and supportive and welcoming. And yes indeed...it was a memorable day all round!" MP (Wokingham)

"My husband and I want to express our deep gratitude for the beautiful "Big Sing" performance we were privileged to attend at Tewkesbury Abbey, bravo! We appreciate the countless hours of rehearsal on the parts of Maestros Nigel Perrin and Stefan Hofkes, the outstanding soloists, Ms Hwang, Ms Plazas and Mr Melrose. As my husband is a tenor in our church choir, he is particularly impressed with the coordination necessary to bring together not only the talent of 4 choral groups but also a full orchestra.

Those of us fortunate enough to be in attendance were impressed with the performances of all the participants – and what an awe-inspiring venue. We were not familiar with Vaughan-Williams' Sea Symphony and will now add it to our music library. Thank you too for making the lyrics available to be savoured later.

We understand that the "Big Sing" occurs only every two years so we were indeed most fortunate to be here on holiday at the right time.

With sincere admiration and thanks" GH and BH (Arizona, USA)

"It was such a fabulous experience I enjoyed the concert, the company, the whole experience! I would definitely do it again. Thank you all for the hard work. Hope you are getting some rest." SA (Stroud)

"Julia and all organizers, thank you for all the hard work! It made the day all the better that you had thought of everything, even sunshine! It is a shame there was the one 'omission' which the audience will have noticed but overall it was a tremendous day and thoroughly enjoyable" NB and PB (Tytherington)

"Have a good rest, you truly deserve it. What a wonderful evening we all had, audience and ourselves. I know it wasn't perfect, and there were some "glaring" mistakes. But then the soloists made some errors, and if they can then we certainly can. It was an ambitious work, which I enjoyed it despite the stresses as I got to know a piece that I did not know at all until now. What a lovely setting to do an English (Welsh) work.

I write to say a huge thank you. I am well aware that I am only a consumer, and that there is a huge amount of work and time spent by a few dedicated people that include yourself. If I could do

more to help I would, but I cannot. However I do appreciate all your efforts and am deeply grateful to you for them. Please pass on my thanks to everyone in your team." FW (Littleton-on-Severn)

AND FROM ALL OF US...

Sincere thanks to all you singers for your support, for your hard work, cheery attitude, marvellous efforts to sell tickets, and for pitching in to help whenever the call went out. Well done all!

Hope to see you again soon!