



Thomas Coats Memorial Choral Society Newsletter Autumn 2009

From the Musical Director

2010 marks the 30th anniversary of Thomas Coats Memorial Choral Society, and to celebrate this special occasion, we are giving a performance of Verdi's Requiem on 21 March 2010. Once again, the choir will be joined by soloists from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and, for this concert, the orchestra will be provided by RSAMD too.

The Requiem needs little introduction. It is one of Verdi's greatest masterpieces – '[his] latest opera, in church vestments' as a contemporary critic described it. Verdi's Requiem is an abiding legacy of the late nineteenth century, and one of the works all choral societies aspire to perform. It's no stranger to Coats, of course, having been performed twice before: in 1988 under the baton of Derek Norval, the choir's founding conductor; and again in 2001, directed by Myra Soutar.

I'm really looking forward to beginning rehearsals for this concert: I've sung Bass in the Verdi twice before, but now I have to learn all the parts (!) as well as the orchestral score, 'holiday tasks' that I have already begun. The choral society will provide the scores (we're going to use the Ricordi edition); some of you will have your own copies already; and they're easy to come by and relatively cheap in case you'd like to buy your own. There is also a wide selection of available recordings of the Verdi: those I'm most familiar with are John Eliot Gardiner with the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the Monteverdi Choir; and a recent recording by Colin Davis with the LSO; but you will have your own favourites.

I look forward to seeing you again (or meeting you for the first time) in January. In the meantime, I hope this has whetted your appetite! Have a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Gordon M

From the Treasurer : A brief summary of the choir's finances.

Last year, to 31st March 2009, we had a surplus of £516.09 of which £37.30 was earmarked as part of the surplus from programme donations as our donation to Accord. We ended the year with a balance of £6242.97 less the above £37.30, (£6205.67).

At the AGM the following items were approved:

1. Subscription "full" £35.00, Associate members and students £10.00
2. Ticket prices Adult £8.00, Student £5.00

The estimates of income and expenditure for 2010, when we will sing the Verdi Requiem, produced an estimated position where income and expenditure more or less matched. Therefore I would ask you to encourage new members and also sell tickets.

The target is 500 tickets. The last time the choir sang the Verdi Requiem, in 2001, we sold 607 tickets - the Verdi Requiem always seems to bring larger audiences.

We have a very good percentage of members Gift Aiding their subscription. Last year we recovered almost £700. We would ask any new members to do the same.

Enjoy the new session.

Roger

Committee 2009 –10

President	George Johnson
Vice-President	Janet Roddick
Secretary	Joanna Boddy
Treasurer	Roger Roddick
Assistant Treasurer	Audrey Peacock
Making Music Rep	vacant
Librarian	Jenni Wright
Soprano Rep	Paula Dudgeon
Alto Rep	Irene Cairns
Tenor Rep	Ross Brindle
Bass Rep	David Mills

For more information on how to join please contact the secretary Joanna Boddy:

Phone: 01505 816110 **Mobile:** 07990 975970 **Email:** Coatschoral@btinternet.com or visit our website:

www.thomascoatschoral.org.uk .

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Anniversary

We are planning a Dinner to mark our 30th anniversary and are currently in the process of looking at the options for this. The provisional date for this is Tuesday 18th May 2010 so please pencil this in to your diary. If you have any other thoughts about how we could mark this milestone please speak to a member of the committee.

Orchestra

Lots of concerns were expressed about our orchestra after the last concert and I think it presented Gordon with some "hairy" moments, particularly at the rehearsal. We have made the difficult decision to change the orchestra this year although we hope to maintain our relationship with the Kelvins. The committee felt it was important to have an orchestra in whom we have confidence for the Verdi. Our orchestra this year will be provided from RSAMD and we are looking forward to working with them. We will continue to be Friends of the Kelvin Ensemble and maintain our relationship with them.

Recruitment/ new members

We anticipate that the Verdi Requiem will be a popular programme choice and that other singers may wish to join us. New members are always welcome and the secretary can provide additional registration forms for anyone interested. We think that some singers who have sung the work before, may also wish to join us later in the season. We have a maximum number of singers we can accommodate and we will invite other singers to join us later if we have vacancies or to help the balance of the choir. There will be a reduced fee for these singers and a requirement for attendance at a minimum number of rehearsals nearer the performance. We would hope however that as many people as possible will join for the full season as it can be rather disruptive if significant numbers arrive later in the season and have to be placed near to the concert. You'd miss the fun of rehearsals and remember - all conductors have their own views on tempi, dynamics etc! Information on the arrangements for additional singers will be available later in January. Flyers for you to distribute are being sent out with the registration form and more will be available at our first rehearsal.

Tea/ coffee rota

Our tea break is an important part of a Coats rehearsal but will only happen if sufficient people put their names on the rota – please make sure you take your turn.

Photographs

As you all know we had a new photograph taken after our concert this year – to be strictly accurate we had a number of photographs taken! These were available to be seen at the AGM and we have selected a small number which we think would be good to have as a print. Gordon has spent some time trying to choose the one that had the largest number of us looking happy! We decided to leave the choosing and ordering of any prints for the start of the new season as it becomes too difficult to organise otherwise. The photos will be available at the start of the season and we will take orders. Costs of these will be dependent on the number we order.

Contact details

If you have an email address it would be really helpful if you could provide this on your registration form. It is a great way for us to be able to give out information quickly and easily, particularly out of season, and means that members are kept informed easily. We never give out the information to other organisations and will only use it for choral society purposes. We have email addresses for about ⅔ of the choir although some of these fail to deliver, so if you have given your address before please give it to us again and print it carefully so we can try to ensure it is correct. Don't worry if you don't have an email address – you will still get all the important information through the mail.

ACCORD hospice

The invoices for all the advertisers have now been paid and the final amount due to Accord from the surplus from programme donations is £287.30. Arrangements will be made with Ken Mathie of Accord to hand over the cheque - hopefully with some publicity!

Website

Thank you to David Simpson who has managed and developed our website until now. This task is now being taken on by Ross Brindle and he would welcome any suggestions for the site.

Rehearsal info

You will all be aware that, for a number of years now, our rehearsal on the first Tuesday of the month has clashed with a meeting at the Church which has meant we have had to make alternative arrangements; in the past at Sherwood and more recently by using the upstairs of the Church (and freezing!). This year we will not have such a clash due to changes at the Church and this means we will be able to have all our rehearsals in the church hall which will make life simpler for us all.

Concert Dress

Did you know that TCM have had the same concert dress since it started? Our 30th anniversary seems like a time to try something different and this has been the subject of a lot of discussion amongst the committee. After considering all kinds of things, we have decided to change to all black with a **small** splash of red. For the ladies this means long black skirt or smart black trousers with a black top with either full length or ¾ length sleeves (i.e. no short sleeves); the small splash of red should be some kind of plain red accessory such as a scarf, jewellery etc. It will be interesting to see what we all come up with – although no prizes for the most unusual! The men are to wear black or dark trousers with a black collared shirt; the splash of red for them will be a plain red tie (no patterns) and this can be a bow tie if preferred. We'll try this for this year and see how that works – I know some people were hoping for something very different but we can see what the feedback is like after our first "appearance" and review if necessary.

Committee

You'll see from the list that there have been a few changes to the committee following the AGM, although we still have a vacancy for a Making Music Rep. If you would be interested in taking this on please speak to one of the committee; David Simpson would be happy to explain to anyone what it might entail. Our constitution is quite specific about the number of people and positions on the committee and, as we have had difficulties filling some of these positions in recent years, we are reviewing the constitution to see if it should be amended to allow us a greater degree of flexibility. Any such proposals would of course be notified to members and would be considered at an extra-ordinary general meeting if necessary.