

Start of Season Newsletter August 2012

To All of our Members and Supporters

Introduction to the New Season

Our last season was memorable, culminating with the Verdi Requiem conducted by Graham Caldbeck. There are many things to look forward to starting in September; the most obvious is the start of our new Musical Director, Rebecca Miller. We are sure that you will find her to be inspirational and full of vigour. There is a note from her later in this letter.

The 2012/13 Season will be one of our most ambitious, cementing our position as the biggest and best choir in Tunbridge Wells and far around. The list is:

November 11th, Elgar's *The Music Makers* and *The Spirit of England*, performed at the Assembly Hall Theatre. *The Music Makers* was last performed by us in May 1992 and deserves another performance after 20 years. *The Spirit of England* is a patriotic piece and well suited to being performed on Remembrance Day, previously performed in 1973.

December 16th will see us back in St. Mary's Church, Goudhurst with our Christmas concert. Rebecca has put a lovely programme together with a baroque style.

April 7th 2013 will see us join forces with the Royal Tunbridge Wells Symphony Orchestra for a performance of Beethoven's mighty *9th (Choral) Symphony*. October 1992 was the last time that we performed this work in association with the RTWSO and we are very pleased to renew the association of the town's 2 major music makers.

June 16th will be yet another major work, Haydn's *The Creation*, a work that is always popular with the choir and audience.

Our rehearsals recommence at St. John's Church hall at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, 3rd September 2012 and we look forward to an exciting and busy season. New and old members are all invited to participate and enjoy the experience.

Music Hire

The scores for the Elgar works will be available for hire on Monday, 3rd September. For this first rehearsal we ask that to arrive no later than 7.15pm please, to allow time to be issued with scores and for new members to be registered.

Annual General Meeting

It has been usual for many years that the A.G.M. be held on the first evening of the new season, but this year we have to change that. The principal reason for this is the recent constitutional change of the end of the financial year, which delays the issue of audited accounts. The new date for the meeting is to be **Monday, 8th October**. An agenda and invitation to attend will be issued at the start of the season.

At this meeting there will be some changes to the Officers and Committee. After many years of hard work and dedicated service **Michael Selway** (Treasurer) and **Gareth Looker** (Publicity Manager) are retiring from their post. We are fortunate in having 2 candidates who are willing to replace these two valuable workers

Elena Gente, who has been shadowing Michael for this year as his assistant, will offer herself for the office

Natalie Beresford has offered to become Publicity Manager. She is not a singing member of the RTWCS but is keen to take on the role.

Barbara Maw has kindly undertaken to be Concert Secretary following the retirement of Jane Reed. She has performed this duty before

All 3 candidates and will offer themselves for election at the A.G.M. on October 8th.

Sharon Harrison is also to stand down after serving as a Committee Member for 3 years and we thank her for her support by assisting with the ticket sales. 2 members have indicated their willingness to serve upon the Committee and their details will follow with the A.G.M. information. If other members would like to put their names forward they should please contact Trevor Hurrell, General Secretary.

Members Information

If we are to keep you informed about events and the life of the Society we need to maintain an up-to-date register of all members, which includes your address, telephone number(s) and e-mail details. If we do not have this information, or it has been revised, please ensure that you provide it to Olivia Seaman, our Registrar, or to your Line-Representative. With the increased cost of postage we will try to communicate with members as much as possible by e-mail, so if you have this facility it is essential that we have your current address.

Website

Our website is being constantly updated by Gavin Grant and you are urged to access and use this useful source of information.

Ticket Sales

In our appraisal of our current financial position we intend to make some changes to ticket prices. Details of this will be shared with you at the coming A.G.M. Obviously the success of our concerts is wholly dependant upon the income arising from ticket sales and the members are asked to assist in this by selling as many as they can to friends and family. If 100 members were to sell at least 4 tickets each then our audience is well on its way. Do not leave it to the Assembly Hall box office to do the selling. They do not have the enthusiasm or friends that you have.

Ticket sales for the November concert will commence on Monday 10th September and continue for a duration of 4 weeks, when the Assembly Hall will take over. We have to pay a commission to the box office for their services so we urge members to obtain their tickets from the RTWCS.

Subscriptions

To fund our rehearsals and allow us to put on concerts of the highest quality, the society charges members an annual subscription. Despite inflationary pressures the subscription has not increased for some years now. In fact it went down...

For many years we have held a Summer concert to round off the year's programme, with a separate subscription fee of £30. But in the last two years, this fourth concert of the season has been incorporated as part of the normal programme – last year we put on a magnificent performance of Verdi's Requiem with two visiting choirs. In both of the last two years we have waived the normal extra summer subscription fee, so for many members the total sub went from £120 to £90. But the extra concert and its rehearsals do cost money, and for the forthcoming season the full-year subscription will have to revert to £120. This is the same as it was in 2008/09, 4 years ago, and excellent value when compared with other societies or activities. To put this into context, if you attend all of the rehearsals in the coming season you will be paying **less than £3 per night for your enjoyment**. You will also be participating in 3 major concerts in the season plus the beautiful Christmas concert.

To assist you a reduced sum of **£105** can be paid up to the 3rd September, after that date the full figure must be paid. So please send your cheques now to the Assistant Treasurer, Elena Gente.

As usual, you can pay in 2 equal instalments of £60 if it helps you, on 3rd September 2012 and 7th January 2012. For anybody who finds it difficult to pay, please have a word with the Treasurer, in complete confidence: we are a charity and we always value the person more than the money. There are also reduced levels for students and young people under 25 – please talk to Elena

If you are a taxpayer and have not yet signed a Gift Aid Declaration please ask Elena for one. It does not cost you anything and is a great help to the Society in keeping the value of the subscriptions down to realistic levels.

Please make cheques payable to RTWCS and hand in at rehearsals or send to The Assistant Treasurer

Please print the box below, fill in or delete as appropriate and deliver with your cheque to Elena Gente.

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| To Elena Gente, Assistant Treasurer |
| I attach my cheque for the 2012/13 Season -- |
| £105 if received by 3 rd September 2012 (delete as appropriate) |
| £120 for the full season |
| £60 as my first instalment. |
| I also donate an additional sum to assist the Society's funds. £ |
| Name: Choir Number: [if known]..... |
| Postal payments to: Elena Gente 30 Mortley Close, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1ET |

A Message from our new Musical Director Rebecca Miller

Dear choir member



Greetings! I hope you have all enjoyed a lovely summer, with all the Jubilee and Olympic excitement. I'm very much looking forward to commencing our work together in a few weeks and to beginning what I hope will be an inspiring and fulfilling musical journey. My journey into conducting began in the choral world -with training as a soprano and choral experience at conservatoire - and coupled with my most recent orchestral experience, I am greatly looking forward to the opportunity to merge these two great genres in some exciting choral/orchestral projects.

The programme that lies ahead of us in November touches on two elements of being musicians – the significance and responsibility of every person's artistry, and music's essential role in celebration and occasion. The Music Makers, written exactly 100 years ago in 1912, is an incredibly moving work - O'Shaunessy's poem speaks about the trials and tribulations of the dreaming artist – his/her loneliness, isolation, and responsibility to the world and society. Elgar's music is perfectly suited in its reserved and personal touch - the composer quotes several of his own works, but particularly poignant is his setting of 'Nimrod' from the Enigma Variations, used in this work in honour of the recent passing of his dear friend (and Nimrod's dedicatee) August Jaeger. Performing this work on Remembrance Sunday reminds us that not only are we honouring and mourning the known and unknown soldiers, but also dear friends and loved ones. In addition to this ode to music, we will be singing a work that is rarely performed, but entirely appropriate for the occasion – an ode to the fallen. Elgar's Spirit of England is a real gem, and though very much written 'of its time', is still entirely relevant today.

I do hope that you will take the opportunity this autumn to take some new people by the arm along to a rehearsal or two – for a bit of fun, a taster session, and even merely to check out the new conductor! (I'm happy to be used as the excuse....) The size and makeup of our membership is crucial to our survival, and I would encourage all of you to bring along an unsuspecting friend to a few rehearsals, and please - take them out to the pub afterward! Because of the distance I must travel home, I probably will not be able to join in, but I would certainly encourage the organization of a few post-rehearsal outings. As I'm sure you all appreciate, the social aspect of the choir is (almost) as important as the musical one, and through members bringing along people they know, this element of inclusion can carry on most easily.

I look forward to an autumn of hard work, rewarding music-making, and inspirational singing.

Best wishes,
Rebecca