

Royal Tunbridge Wells
CHORAL
SOCIETY

Start of Season Newsletter: 2019/2020

September is approaching fast so it must be time for choir to kick off again. Our first rehearsal is on Monday, September 2nd and we are looking forward to welcoming all existing and new members to another exciting season.

Message from our Chairman
Michael Selway

I am delighted to welcome you all to another year of beautiful music-making. This year we will be singing some of the most fabulous works in the choral repertoire: Haydn's Creation in November, followed by Verdi's Requiem in the spring. For those among us who have seen it all before, it will be an opportunity to refresh and renew our relationship with these extraordinary works. For those who have never sung these – you are in for a glorious journey.

One of the things we shall be working on this year is to focus on the quality of our singing. There are always ways to improve and we all share the responsibility to make a difference; whether it's through paying more attention to the music between rehearsals or through choral training sessions which we are planning to investigate this year. We're also going to spend a little time to see if we can neaten our stage presence – entering and leaving and so on. More of that later in the term. But enough of me: we know we're all here for the music and the expert and enthusiastic direction from Robyn!

Message from our Musical Director
Robyn Sevastos

I would like to say what a pleasure it has been for me to join your music making community and I thank you for making me so welcome. I am looking forward to this season, now that we know each other better!

As usual the aim is to work hard but to have fun in the process. I am grateful to all those who put in the extra hours between rehearsals to familiarise themselves with the music and I would encourage all members to listen to the works we are doing - have it on in the car, around the house, in the garden - as this really helps with the more detailed learning process in rehearsals.

One of my objectives this year is to work with you on the homogeneous sound of the choir and to make this as good as it can be. We are, after all, aiming to give the best performance for ourselves and for our audiences and to ensure we present ourselves as a shining example of a long, proud Choral Society tradition.

**Calendar of key events 2019-2020 season
(full rehearsal schedule on website)**

Monday, September 2nd 7.30pm – first rehearsal at St John's Church Hall, working towards our performance of Haydn's Creation in November.

Regular rehearsal times are from 7:30 to 9:30pm, with a break of ten minutes to catch our breath.

Our librarian, Diana Blower, will have copies of the score available for hire at this time, at a cost of £5. If you're able to bring the correct change that would be most appreciated. For members wishing to use their own copies, Diana advises that we shall be using the old **Novello** edition.

Please do remember your soft pencil and eraser for all score annotations and conductor notes, especially vital if using the hire copies.

Sunday November 10th – Remembrance Concert

The concert will take place at 3.00pm in the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells with as usual the final rehearsal being held at 10.00am the same morning. Concert day running order will be circulated nearer the time.

Monday November 18th 9.00pm – Provisional AGM date

Our rehearsal will finish earlier than normal so as to allow time for the AGM to be held on the same evening. The Convening Notice and Agenda will be sent out to all Members nearer the time.

Sunday December 15th 6.30pm – Christmas concert at St Mary's Church, Goudhurst. Centre piece for this year's festive concert will be Britten's Ceremony of Carols. More details in due course!

REHEARSALS SUSPENDED UNTIL MONDAY JANUARY 6th 2020

Monday, December 24th – possible carols at Hotel du Vin but all details to be confirmed.

Monday January 6th 2020 at 7.30pm – rehearsals resume at St John's Church Hall, working towards our Spring concert where we shall be performing Verdi's Requiem. Again, copies for hire will be available through Diana.

Sunday April 19th at 3pm – Spring Concert at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells. As in previous concerts, there will be a final run through that same morning and possibly a separate orchestral rehearsal the week before. All details to be confirmed.

Sunday, June 28th 2020 – Summer Concert

Just a "Save the Date" at present, with full details of programme and venue to be confirmed much nearer the time.

Subscriptions

Subject to ratification at the AGM in November, the Committee is recommending a modest increase of £5 in the annual subscription for the 2019-2020 season to £140 (or two instalments of £70, payable in September and January). The subscription for students and under-25s will remain at £25.

The subscription was last adjusted in 2015 and it must be noted that this income does not cover all the choir's costs. We continue to be extremely grateful to those who can afford to pay a little extra on top of the standard subscription, by way of a donation.

As a charity we are able to claim tax back on donations and part of the subscription under the Gift Aid scheme and received over £2,000 last year. If you are in a position to sign a Gift Aid form, please will you check that we have one from you?

Subs can be paid online, by post or in person (cash or cheque) at rehearsals.

If you are happy to pay by online transfer this would be very much appreciated.

Account name RTWCS
Sort Code: 40-52-40
Account no: 00017884

Please use your name as the "reference" and email our Treasurer, Ailsa McMahon (ailsamcmahon@hotmail.com) to let her know.

Cheques should be made payable to RTWCS and can be sent in advance to Ailsa at her home address of 7 Broadwater Down, Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5NJ.

Website

All of this information and more can be found on our web site, especially with regard to future concert dates, rehearsal schedules, concert photographs, rehearsal notes and other useful snippets of information. It's worth a bookmark on your browser!

From time to time we do organise photography sessions for publicity and promotional purposes. The best of these appear on our web site but may also be found in a wider context, for instance as concert publicity within the Assembly Hall's digital marketing site. ***If you would prefer not to be photographed***, then please let me or any other committee member know. It's not a problem, we just need to know your preferences so we can accommodate them accordingly.

Parking at St John's

Our rehearsal host, St John's Church, holds its Parish Council meeting on the 2nd Monday of each calendar month. As a courtesy to facilitate their parking, Members are asked on these evenings to refrain from parking on any part of the area to the north of the church, the side with adjoining lawn. The main car park will continue to be available.

And finally ...

This completes my first year in post as your General Secretary and, cheesy though it might seem, I'd like to use this opportunity to sincerely thank my fellow Committee members for all their help and guidance in showing me the ropes. It's been an education!

On the website under the Members tab you can view a document, Membership commitments, which outlines the reciprocal aims and commitment of the Committee to the members and vice versa. This agreement can only succeed, however, if we have open lines of communication. So, please, let's keep talking - let us, your Committee, know your views, your ideas, your suggestions, the gripes too if necessary. If we don't know how you feel, we can't influence the outcome, good or bad.

With kind regards,

Janet Noble

Royal Tunbridge Wells Choral Society and its members

RTWCS –the commitment we give to members

- To provide a stimulating and rewarding musical learning environment to rehearse and perform choral and other music
- To offer rehearsals weekly on Monday evening between 7.30 and 9.30 between September and June in an accessible Tunbridge Wells location
- To give members an opportunity to sing a varied and enjoyable programme that may at times challenge singers
- To make the music being performed in any season available to hire at a reasonable cost
- To be open and friendly and welcome new members encouraging participation in the choir and on-going music making
- To typically perform 4 concerts over the year, 2 major concerts in Spring and Autumn as well as a Christmas concert and a summer sing
- To endeavour to provide soloists and an orchestra of good quality to complement the choir
- To maintain the membership fee at a level that is not prohibitive and encourages participation across a diverse community

The commitment Members give to RTWCS

- To regularly attend rehearsals, ideally 80% of the rehearsals offered for each concert, enthusiastic to sing, learn and enjoy music making
- To turn up to rehearsal on time, equipped with music, a pencil and eraser and never use a pen or highlighter on hired music
- To respect both the musical director and other members by not chatting during rehearsals, other than during social breaks
- To practise individually or with other choir members between rehearsals in order to optimise learning at group rehearsals
- To sing in the concerts
- To pay the fees as set, either in one lump sum at the beginning of the season or in two instalments, September and January
- To endeavour to purchase at least 2 tickets for each concert
- To participate where possible in social and fundraising initiatives that help build a sense of choir community and also raise funds