

Royal Tunbridge Wells  
**CHORAL**  
**SOCIETY**

## **Start of Season Newsletter: 2021/2022**

A very warm welcome, everyone, to our 2021/22 season and especially to our new members - we're very much looking forward to meeting you!

It's quite a lengthy message I'm afraid, but hopefully you'll find it chock full of useful information. I usually include messages from our Chairman and Musical Director but thought perhaps that could wait this year so they can speak to you in person - as yes, we are resuming face to face, real, rehearsals!!!

The hiatus of the last eighteen months has obviously had an effect on our ability to organise as much in advance as we would usually have done in the past. Flexibility and a readiness to accept changes at short notice has had to become the modus operandi for all our lives and organising choirs is no exception. As a result, your patience and understanding would be appreciated as we continue to work to confirm events later on in the year.

Another major change for this season will be the way we actually run rehearsals and conduct ourselves generally. You'll find a stand-alone section further down the page entitled "Rehearsal Protocols" which seeks to outline the way we propose to organise them, at least in the short term. I would ask for your help and cooperation as we endeavour to find and strike the right balance between a return to "normal" and respect for the reality of continuing to live through the ongoing Covid pandemic. The emphasis, as it is in wider society generally, is for us to take personal responsibility for our own health and take into consideration the safeguarding of the health of others around us.

### **KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings with the first one taking place on **Monday, September 6th**. We shall be working towards our autumn concert which will take place at the **Assembly Hall**, Tunbridge Wells on **Sunday, November 14th** at 3pm.

Rehearsals will take place at our usual venue, **St John's Church Hall, St John's Road, Tunbridge Wells** and start at **7.30pm**.

We also hope to hold our usual Carol Concert on **Saturday, December 11th** but this is a provisional date at present, subject to confirmation - more details as the term progresses, I promise.

Looking ahead, we have our Spring concert booked for **Sunday, April 10th 2022** at the Assembly Hall. We also anticipate staging a summer concert towards the end of June 2022, actual date again subject to confirmation.

## **2021/22 PROGRAMME**

Our concert in November is entitled "Simply Schubert" and we shall be singing three wonderful pieces.

The centrepiece is ***Schubert's Mass in G, Missa Brevis (Novello edition)*** and we shall also be performing his ***Magnificat in C (Faber edition)*** and a shorter piece, ***Tantum Ergo (D962)***.

All the music will be available at the beginning of the season for you to ***hire at a cost of £5*** and we shall be following best practice guidelines in "quarantining" the copies from handling before distribution. Of course, you may wish to source your own copies of the first two works ( if only to avoid having to rub out pencil markings before returning!) so I have noted the editions above that we shall be using. The Tantum Ergo is only a few pages long and we have sufficient copies already for everyone.

The carol concert is still under construction but if it goes ahead is likely to be a relatively modest affair as we will only have four rehearsals beforehand.

For the spring concert in April next year, we plan to make it third time lucky and stage ***Verdi's Requiem***, which had to be abandoned in March 2020.

For summer 2022, we would hope to be able to reinstate our plans for a concert of ***Living British Composers***, again a casualty of the lockdown. As mentioned above, these plans are all subject to confirmation and contingent on being able to source the necessary scores again.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subject to ratification at the AGM in November, the subscription for 2021/2 will remain at its current level of £140 (or two instalments of £70, payable September and January). The subscription for students and under-25s similarly remains at £25.

As a charity we are able to claim tax back on any donations and part of the subscription under the Gift Aid scheme. If you are in a position to sign a Gift Aid form, please will you check that we have one from you - if not, they are available on request from the Treasurer. [For information, the tuition element of this year's sub is calculated as £12].

If you are able to pay by on-line transfer that would be very much appreciated as well as being a much more "Covid" secure method.

Bank details	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](mailto:ailsamcmahon@hotmail.com)) to let her know.

In the event that you are unable to pay in this way, please do contact Ailsa via the email above and she'll be happy to help find alternate methods.

## **REHEARSAL PROTOCOL**

We are indebted to St John's for once again allowing us to rehearse in their Church hall. As mentioned earlier, the lifting of Covid restrictions has moved the burden of responsibility onto individual shoulders. It's appropriate, therefore, that we respect our hosts as well as our fellow singers and create a sensible framework for conducting our rehearsals in tune with their procedures, HMG guidance and suggested best practice from Making Music.

On arrival the first thing you'll see is the most important notice of all, the general no-

brainer which applies wherever one goes:-

**If you or anyone in your household is feeling unwell, then please DO NOT ENTER these premises.**

**Masks** - our suggestion/expectation is for these to be worn whilst moving around, especially in crowded moments which would include the atrium area on arrival, during registration and whilst picking up music. Once into the rehearsal hall and seated, they will not be required.

**Hand sanitiser** will be available. In terms of the hall itself, we're obviously following St John's requirements but if people wanted to bring their own wipes for their chair that's obviously OK. In the atrium, we shall be positioning the registration desk and music pick up desk in separate areas to avoid crowding and potential bottlenecks. In terms of the music copies, as already mentioned above, these will have been quarantined prior and members will be encouraged to pick their own score out of the box. Similarly, if the exact money could be proffered that would avoid the need for change.

**Registration** - we have always kept a register and would ask that you ensure you've been ticked off as usual. Again, this is in line with St John's own procedures, to be aware of numbers in attendance, as well as providing a record in the unlikely event of being needed for "track and trace" purposes.

**Seating** - More distanced seating will be arranged, better utilising the existing space. How exactly this will be configured depends of course in how many of us turn up but the use of a different layout will serve as a visual reminder of the "new normal".

**Ventilation** - depending on the state of the weather, we shall have as many doors and windows open as we can. The parallel advice, of course, is to make sure one is wearing sufficient **warm clothing** to rehearsals!

**Rehearsal Duration** - in order to minimise potential exposures, the rehearsal will run for 90 minutes with no break.

We do not intend to ask for any evidence relating to members' **vaccination status**.

How long we operate with these mitigations in place remains to be seen and there may well be elements that we can change and/or relax in the coming weeks. Let's see how it goes for the moment.

### **COMMITTEE VACANCY**

We're still looking for a volunteer to take on the role of Librarian - if you think this is something you might be interested in or if you would like to know a bit more of what is entailed, then please let me or any of the Committee know. We'd be delighted to hear from you.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to introduce Gilly Cameron-Cooper who has kindly stepped forward to be our new Publicity Officer. Although new to our choir, Gilly has fulfilled this role for a previous choir and has a professional background in publishing/publicity.

### **AND FINALLY**

As ever, if you have any questions I'm happy to field them - if I can't answer them, then I know a man who can! Seriously, though, we would be interested in your feedback: as I'm sure you appreciate, there has been a lot for the Committee to consider not all of which can be distilled here.

On a more mundane note, it would also be jolly useful were you able to let me know if you're going to attend the first rehearsal as we'll then be able to set out an adequate sufficiency of chairs!

With kindest regards,

Janet Noble  
General Secretary, RTWCS  
August 2021