

Royal Tunbridge Wells
CHORAL
SOCIETY

Start of Season Newsletter: 2023/2024

I hope that you have all had a wonderful summer and that you're raring to go now that September is upon us. A very warm welcome, everyone, to our 2023/24 season and especially to our new members - we're very much looking forward to meeting you.

Term starts next **Monday, September 4th** at our usual venue of **St John's Church Hall, Amherst Road** and the rehearsals will start at their regular time of **7.30pm**. Our rehearsals run for two hours with a short break to catch our breath. We don't have refreshment facilities, I'm afraid, so do bring along a bottle of water to keep you going.

KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our first concert will be at **3pm** on **Sunday, November 19th** at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells. We shall be performing requiems by Faure and by Durufle.

At Christmas, we'll be at St Mary's, Goudhurst on **Saturday, December 9th**. Final touches are being put to the programme so more details as the season progresses. And the Village Hall has been booked for our traditional choir tea between rehearsal and concert.

After the Christmas break, term will restart on **Monday, January 8th 2024**.

We shall be rehearsing Beethoven's Mass in C and Handel's Coronation Anthems for a performance at the Assembly Hall Theatre at 3pm on **Sunday, April 14th 2024**.

Unusually this year, we're going to have the opportunity to sing a concert twice! We have been invited to make a trip to our twin town, Wiesbaden in Germany and we'll be singing this programme at a concert there on **Saturday, April 20th 2024**. More concrete details will follow shortly but preliminary thoughts are that we would travel out on Thursday, April 18th, returning Sunday, April 21st.

And to round off our season there'll be a Summer Sing on **Saturday, June 29th 2024**. This programme is yet to be decided but after such a successful visit this year we hope to be able to hold the concert at Holmewood House School again.

MUSIC

Our opening concert features two beautiful Requiems. Scores will be available for hire from our Librarian, Judith Henderson, at the first few rehearsals at a cost of £1.50 each / £3 the pair. If you could have the exact change ready that would not only be much appreciated but also help keep the line moving!

For those who like to use their own scores, we shall be using the Novello edition of the Faure Requiem and the Durand edition of the Durufle.

Whenever using a hire copy, please do remember to use a soft lead 2B pencil when noting any of Robyn's rehearsal directions. Judith and her trusty team of library elves have to ensure that all of these marks are erased before the scores are returned to the hiring library so if we can make this task a little easier where possible it would be most appreciated.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subject to ratification at the AGM later in the term, the subscription for 2023/24 will be increasing slightly to £150, from the current level of £145. We appreciate that this is hardly welcome news amidst the current cost of living crisis but it is still modest. We hope you feel it represents extremely good value for money when considering thirty five scheduled rehearsals and four concert opportunities. And not forgetting to mention the Wiesbaden trip of course!

Subscriptions are due at the beginning of the season and can either be paid if full or in two instalments, with £75 in September and £75 in January. The subscription for students and under-25s remains at £25.

If you are able to pay by on-line transfer that would be very much appreciated.

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) to let her know.

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 £11].

SOCIAL EVENTS

Another early date for your diary is **Friday, September 22nd** when we're holding a **Cheese and Wine Evening** from 7.30 at St Peter's Church Hall.

There's also a Quiz Night in the pipeline for later in the Season, details of which will be announced shortly.

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.

There's also a choir WhatsApp group which is good for catching up on late changes, etc. It's easy to sign up, just speak to Nicholas Frank in the Bass section who is coordinator.

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.

YOUR CHOIR NEED YOU!

Sheila Jones, our Concert Secretary, will be stepping down at Christmas after many years in the role and we are looking for a replacement to take over. Tasks include liaison with the orchestra, sourcing and distribution of orchestral scores, on the day "stage management" with venue staff of choir seating, etc. If you are interested in finding out more please let us know. We're fortunate in having such advance notice from Sheila that allows the opportunity to understudy the next two concerts for "on-the-job" training so you'll not be expected to jump in without a lifebelt!

Judith Henderson, our Librarian, has been conducting an audit and review of the music we hold in our own library. Following this re-organisation, we're now looking for a new home to store around ten archive boxes. They would be accessed once, possibly twice a year but otherwise just need to be kept somewhere dry. If you have a spot that might fit this bill, please mention it to Judith. We'd be very grateful.

AND FINALLY

The bi annual Tunbridge Wells International Music Competition at Mayfield Festival takes place next year between 1st and 5th May 2024. This international competition for outstanding young musicians is recognised around the world as a unique event, combining excellent judging and performance across three music sections with a friendly local welcome.

It has played an important role in the careers of many internationally celebrated musicians - past winners include piano virtuoso Paul Lewis; great Spanish clarinettist Joan Enric Lluna; Russian pianist Yuri Didenko; and flautist Michael Cox, currently principal flute of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

In all, around 150 young musicians from all over the world are expected to take part and the organisers are looking for Hosts to accommodate them. Would you be able to assist?

Contestants usually arrive the day before (Tuesday 30th April) but if they don't get through to the next round they may leave after a day or two. The preliminary rounds take place Wednesday through Friday, the semi-finals on Saturday and the finals on Sunday afternoon. So if you're lucky enough to be hosting a finalist you might have them for Sunday night too!

If you interested or would like more information please contact Nicky Moreton directly at nicky.moreton@gmail.com. The competition organisers thank you very much in advance for your consideration!

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That's quite enough for the time being, I think – thanks for reading through to the bitter end and as ever, if there's anything I've forgotten to mention or which needs clarification please don't hesitate to ask. We look forward to seeing you in a week's time!

With kindest regards,

Janet Noble
General Secretary
August 2023