



# Chelmsford Singers' Newsletter January 2015



Comments from James Davy – Musical Director

November's performance of Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 was everything it promised: a near-capacity audience, glorious soloists and orchestra and a nimble, stylish chorus all taking their parts in the atmospheric setting of the Cathedral. There were so many high points it is impossible to list them all, but I'm immensely grateful for the amount of hard work that each singer contributed, not least at home between rehearsals. The dedication of all the performers and the added dimension of space and movement gave the occasion a magic that many people have commented on and it will remain as one of the high points of my time in Chelmsford.

December's Christmas concert was also a good occasion with a good audience, a lovely festive atmosphere, and some musical challenges for the choir (particularly coming so soon after the Vespers). Despite a few issues relating to sightlines and acoustic, the performances were nonetheless committed and gave the audience (many of whom expressed their appreciation as they left) a joyful Christmas occasion to enjoy. Many thanks indeed for an exceptionally busy and challenging term - here's to the next!



## CHELMSFORD SINGERS' PROGRAMME (2015/16)

<a href="#">Sat 28<sup>th</sup> March 2015</a> <a href="#">Chelmsford Cathedral</a>	<a href="#">Sat 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015</a> <a href="#">All Saints Church</a> <a href="#">Purleigh</a>	<a href="#">Sat 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015</a> <a href="#">Chelmsford Cathedral</a>	<a href="#">Sat 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016</a> <a href="#">Chelmsford Cathedral</a>	<a href="#">Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016</a> <a href="#">Chelmsford Cathedral</a>
Annelies by James Whitbourn Based on the diaries of Anne Frank	Music for a Summer's Evening Madrigals & Part songs to include John Rutter's Birthday Madrigals & The Sprig of Thyme	Merrily on High! Christmas Music 	tbc	tbc

## ANNELIES CONCERT

### War & Peace – Music to mark 70 years since the end of World War 11

Our soloist will be soprano Nicola Howard and the programme for the concert includes "A Prayer for Peace" by Richard Tanner, "Annelies" by James Whitbourn (an oratorio based on the diaries of Anne Frank) and excerpts from "Quartet for the End of Time" by Olivier Messiaen.

### CDs

CDs of Annelies are available for approx £6 – please let me know asap if you would like one.



## REHEARSAL SCHEDULE (JAN – APRIL 2015)

Date	Notes
6 <sup>th</sup> Jan	
13 <sup>th</sup> Jan	

20 <sup>th</sup> Jan	
27 <sup>th</sup> Jan	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb	
10 <sup>th</sup> Feb	
17 <sup>th</sup> Feb	No rehearsal – half term break
24 <sup>th</sup> Feb	
3 <sup>rd</sup> March	
10 <sup>th</sup> March	
17 <sup>th</sup> March	
24 <sup>th</sup> March	
28 <sup>th</sup> March	<b>Concert rehearsal 2 pm tbc in the Cathedral. Concert 7.30pm</b>

## **Review by Michael Gray of MONTEVERDI'S VESPERS OF 1610**

### *at Chelmsford Cathedral*

15.11.2014

It's one of the greatest works of Western sacred music. But we can't be sure why Monteverdi wrote it, or where, or for whom. Did he intend it to be performed as published? With what forces, in what context?

This intriguing uncertainty has given musicians creative freedom to interpret this monumental setting; James Davy's performance with the Chelmsford Singers, his Cathedral choir, a first-rate roster of soloists and a superb period band, effectively blended the devotional and the dramatic.

Every corner of the Cathedral was explored, it seemed, with the capacity audience in two facing blocks along the nave. A spectacular opening, with the choristers before the altar opposite the massed choirs at the West End. Exquisitely sung solos from the ambos for The Song of Songs; duet, trio and ensemble dictated by Duo, Tres and Omnes, choristers for the Sonata, trebles for the decorated, divided Gloria in the surround-sound climax of the Magnificat. And the echo in Audi Coelum drifting down from the quaint gothic balcony over the South Door.

The choral sound was superbly shaped, with some luscious harmonies, illuminated by the brass and rounded by the architecture. The six soloists were all the more effective for being mobile and close to their audience: the intimate Nigra Sum, the sombre, subdued Depositum.

Canzona, with their director Theresa Caudle on violin and cornett, gave colourful, often virtuosic support to the vocal forces.

More than 100 performers were involved in this memorable occasion – it is a measure of their success that our applause persisted until the very last of them had left the nave.

## **Review by Michael Gray of JOY TO THE WORLD**

### *Chelmsford Singers at St John the Baptist Danbury*

20.12.2014

Making his first visit to the Church on the Hill, James Davy proved a genial host for this seasonal mix of old and new.

Beginning with a spectacular setting of Joy to the World from the choir, sounding fresh and enthusiastic in the charming, if slightly chilly, church. Other choral highlights were a crisply sung Sir Christemas, Sund's tender

Newborn Child [sung in the original Swedish] and the timeless simplicity of Davy's own arrangement of There Is No Rose, an English carol almost as ancient as this medieval building.

The pews were packed; the congregational singing was impressive, too, joining the choir in a suitably schmaltzy version of White Christmas, and John Rutter's imaginative I Saw Three Ships, with tuneful whistling from the assembled gentlemen Josephs.

Weston Jennings, accompanying on piano and organ, gave us a Baroque Pastorale solo, and there were readings from Dylan Thomas and Robert Bridges, whose Christmas Eve 1913 seemed especially appropriate for this country church.

*The old words came to me*

by the riches of time

Mellow'd and transfigured

as I stood on the hill

Heark'ning in the aspect

of th' eternal silence.

### **Quiz Night - Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January**

You are all very welcome to the CS fundraising Quiz Night to be held on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm in the Cathedral Chapter House. Tickets are £7 each - please bring your own drink and nibbles. CS Quiz Nights are organised by our brilliant Quiz Master – Martin Burchett and are always good fun!

Either come with a team or on your own and we will find you a team to join. You will have fun either way!

### **Other dates for your diaries**

**Fri 9<sup>th</sup> January** – Weston Jennings will be performing at the free lunchtime concert 12.30 – 1.15pm in Chelmsford Cathedral.

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January** at 4.45pm – James Davy will be playing La Nativite du Seigneur – nine meditations on the birth of the Lord interspersed with readings.

**Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Feb** 7pm – Handel's Messiah will be performed in the Cathedral by Chelmsford Cathedral Choirs.

**Sat 9<sup>th</sup> May** - "Come and Sing" Mozart Requiem with Laurence Lyndon Jones. To take part, register at [www.chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk](http://www.chelmsfordcathedral.org.uk) or call 01245 294498 from Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb.

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 8pm** - The King's Singers and Chelmsford Cathedral Choirs in concert

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November** - The Sixteen – Choral Pilgrimage "Flight of Angels" concert 7.30 (pre concert talk 7pm and workshop from 1pm) To book, visit [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) from Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

### **Website**

A reminder that you can keep up to date with choir activities on our website is [www.chelmsfordsingers.co.uk](http://www.chelmsfordsingers.co.uk). Thank you to Richard Till for keeping the site up to date.

The FB page is [www.facebook.com/chelmsfordsingers](http://www.facebook.com/chelmsfordsingers) and the Twitter account (managed by James) is @chelmsingers

We now have an [info@chelmsfordsingers.co.uk](mailto:info@chelmsfordsingers.co.uk) that automatically forwards to me and a [friends@chelmsfordsingers.co.uk](mailto:friends@chelmsfordsingers.co.uk) that forwards to Val Hoines (Friends' Secretary).

**Thank you**

Congratulations to James for another very successful year.

Personally, I shall always be grateful to James for giving me the opportunity to sing in the wonderful Monteverdi concert and for his creative and brave approach. I found it a very moving, memorable and uplifting evening. It was a great privilege to be part of the concert.

Thank you to every one who helped with our recent concerts - to those who sold tickets, who sold programmes, who showed people to their seats, who served the refreshments at the party and who washed up and to those who cleared away afterwards. We could not possibly do a concert without lots of “willing helpers”.

Many grateful thanks to Mary Radford who worked so hard to ensure that the Danbury concert was so successful!

Thank you to Tony Harrington for all the work he did to produce posters, tickets and the programme for our Christmas concert.

Thank you to Weston for his work as our rehearsal accompanist and for his super contributions in the Christmas concert.

Many thanks to all the committee for their hard work; I am delighted to welcome Kathy and Julia to the group. I just hope I can find enough chairs for us all to sit comfortably in meetings!

### **Donations to the choir**

I am really delighted to tell you that we have had some very generous donations to choir funds this term from members of the choir. Their generous contributions have made a huge impact on the financial position of the choir. Thank you!

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

James Davy – Musical Director  
Sue Lowden – Treasurer  
Martin Burchett – Secretary  
Stephanie Valentine – Membership Sec  
Jean Cooper – Librarian  
Karen Brown



Val Hoines – Friends’ Sec  
Julia Cooper  
Kathy Shiels - Ladies’ rep  
Royston van Tromp – Men’s rep 01245261448  
Richard Till  
Richard Hickman  
Alison Widgery - Chairman

Our next committee meeting is on Mon 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015. If you have anything you would like us to consider or if you would like to join the committee please contact any committee member.

Best wishes,

Alison

Chelmsford Singers Chairman  
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