



Farnham
& Bourne
Choral
Society

Newsletter

Summer 2011

G A L A C O N C E R T R E V I E W

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge would have enjoyed last Saturday's concert at the Farnham Maltings, given by the Farnham & Bourne Choral Society. Not only was it devoted entirely to English music, but the opening piece was 'Blest Pair of Sirens' most recently heard at their wedding.

Described by Vaughan Williams as the finest piece of twentieth century choral music, Parry's gem is rightly one of the choir's favourites, and they gave it full justice on this occasion. Lack of numbers in the tenor section, so often a problem with amateur choirs, was not apparent and the whole choir seemed well-balanced and in good voice. The performance would have benefited from more variation in the dynamics but at the crucial moments, such as "Jarred against nature's chime", they showed that they were well disciplined and attentive to their conductor.

The large orchestra, led by Sally Dewey, took over for the next piece, Vaughan Williams' 'English Folk Song Suite', which was familiarly tuneful and competently played. It was a refreshing change to be able to enjoy the orchestra in its own right and not to have to worry about its volume compared to that of the choir.

Then came the major work of the evening, Elgar's relatively little known 'The Music Makers'.

This is the musical setting of a poem by the nineteenth century writer, Arthur O'Shaughnessy, whose message was that the real "movers and shakers of the world" (and the phrase comes from O'Shaughnessy's poem) are not the leaders of the nations but the artists, a view with which Elgar identified. Despite the notorious difficulty of the work with its frequent changes in time-signature, the choir gave the audience a polished performance marred only by a tendency towards tentative entries. How-



ever the sopranos soared effortlessly and thrillingly over the other voices in their higher passages. Mezzo soprano Susan Mackenzie-Park, who has performed with the choir before and, one hopes, will do so again, played her role with aplomb; the beautiful richness of her voice adding very much to the moving quality of the performance.

This was billed as a "Gala" concert and, after the interval, changed mood to that of the Last Night of the Proms.

Sullivan's overture to Gilbert and Sullivan's possibly finest operetta, 'Yeomen of the Guard', was given another competent performance by the orchestra, after which the final choral work of the evening was performed. This was the 'Festival Te Deum' composed for the choir by its conductor Robin Wells and which, having been performed only twice before by the choir, deserves to be better known.

The final part of the concert comprised the orchestral piece, 'Crown Imperial' by William Walton along with two pieces for choir and audience - Thomas Arne's 'Rule Britannia' and, finally (back to Hubert Parry again) 'Jerusalem'. Susan Mackenzie-Park added much to the classic Proms moment, never sounding more Constance Shacklockian, and the audience enjoyed their all too brief opportunity to join in *con brio*.

The Farnham & Bourne Choral Society conducted by Robin Wells should be congratulated on its choice of music, on its performance, and, above all, on providing a superb evening's entertainment.

The Choir's next performance will be Bach's 'Christmas Oratorio' at the Church of St. Thomas-on-The Bourne on 17th December 2011.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Gala Concert Review	1
Patrons, Concert Fare, Vocal Workshop, Appeal for Past Concert Programmes, Social Events—Your Thoughts	2

PATRONS



Patrons are a very valuable source of support and income for the Society and need not be wealthy strangers. For a relatively modest sum family and friends of members or even members themselves, can reap the benefits of being a Patron. Speak to Andy Owen for details.

CONCERT FARE

Snow storms allowing, we shall be providing mulled wine and mince pies for our December audience once again this year and ask in advance for volunteers to help serve the mulled wine as well as to donate mince pies. For those who did buy or bake supplies for last year's postponed Messiah, as always 'Thank you' and we do hope that you were able to use them up (no problem if they were up to usual standards I'm sure). There will be lists to sign up to on the notice board at rehearsals.

Vocal Workshop

Enjoy a day of tutelage by a baroque expert, build on your confidence and improve your vocal technique. Details of our Autumn Vocal Workshop to be advised.

APPEAL FOR PAST CONCERT PROGRAMMES

Web Manager Paul Collins is trying to complete an archive of Farnham & Bourne Choral Society Concert Programmes but is missing some. If you think you can help, please contact Paul. See www.farnham-choral.org.uk to find out which are missing.

Support the choir and spread the word by sporting a clingy sticker in one of your car windows.

SOCIAL EVENTS – YOUR THOUGHTS

The Committee invites you to submit your thoughts about social events. Please respond to the questions below, detach this section and drop it into our 'Ideas' box at Rehearsal in September.

Do you think the choir should run social events? YES/NO

If yes, what type of event would you support:?

Should the extended break/bring & buy evening held a couple of times a season continue? YES/NO

Would you be prepared to help out with some social events? YES/NO

If yes, Name:

Don't forget to pick up publicity material at rehearsals and distribute among friends, family and colleagues.