

Ashford Choral Society

Founded: 1857

Conductor: Matthew Raisbeck
Chairman Alan Paterson - Secretary : Virginia Brown
Newsletter: August 2021



Season 2021/22

Ashford Choral Society has a proud tradition of performing choral music since 1857 and is one of the oldest such societies in England.

During the period September to May, the society performs some of the major works in the choral repertoire with leading soloists and a professional symphony orchestra.

Subject to Covid conditions allowing, we will return to rehearsals at Ashford School in September ready for a full programme of concerts.

Please be assured that the committee takes safety very seriously and will make every effort to ensure that all necessary Covid risk assessments, cleaning, spacing and ventilation are in place.

New season – new Music Director, new Accompanist



This will be our first season under the baton of Matthew Raisbeck, who will be joined by new rehearsal pianist, Tim Woodhead.

We very much look forward to welcoming Tim, who is an extremely experienced pianist and accomplished organist – having been organ scholar at The Queen's College, Oxford and postgraduate organ scholar at Manchester Cathedral. If you would like more details about Tim and his career he has a website:

<https://timothywoodhead.co.uk/>.

Programme 2021/22

After one of the longest breaks in the Society's history, including the two world wars, we return in September to rehearsals for a full concert programme.

The first major work is Haydn's so-called Nelson Mass. Haydn actually titled his work *Missa in Angustiis* – a Mass for troubled times. This might therefore be thought appropriate for the times we have lived through – though perhaps they are not as anguished as 1798 when Austria, where Haydn was living, faced annihilation by Napoleon's army. Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile later in 1798 gave much needed hope to the allies against Napoleon – hence the better-known title for the Mass.

The Mass will be performed alongside two of Handel's joyous Coronation anthems and Pergolesi's ecstatic *Magnificat*.

We will then rehearse for our beloved and traditional carol concert in December – hoping to make up for no Christmas carols last year!

The full season is set out below:

- **Tuesday September 7th 2021**, 7.30 pm
First rehearsal of season
Ashford School, Brake Hall
- **Tuesday October 12th 2021** – AGM (after a short rehearsal) - Ashford School, Brake Hall
- **Saturday November 13th 2021 – Concert**
Colyer-Fergusson Hall, U. of Kent, Canterbury
 - *Handel Zadok the Priest*
 - *Handel The King Shall Rejoice*
 - *Pergolesi Magnificat*
 - *Haydn Nelson Mass*
- **Saturday December 11th 2021 – Carol Concert**
St. Mary the Virgin, Ashford
- **Tuesday 11th January 2022** – First rehearsal of 2022 - Ashford School, Brake Hall
- **Tuesday 12th April 2022** – No rehearsal
- **May 2022** - date to be confirmed – Concert
Colyer- Fergusson Hall, U. of Kent, Canterbury
 - *Rutter Requiem*
 - *Puccini Messa di Gloria*

Online lectures

As an integral part of the rehearsal process, giving context and guidance on what we are singing, our Music Director plans to give some online talks over Zoom. These will be on non-rehearsal nights with dates advised in good time.

Election of a new Chairman

Alan Paterson has valiantly led the society through the huge changes of recent years – not least the retirement of Mark Deller, the appointment of two new Music Directors and the challenges of Covid.

After over 20 years as Chairman Alan will step down at the October AGM to just enjoy singing with the Basses.

We already have one willing candidate in Dominic Urand, but should anyone wish to offer themselves in an election, please write or e-mail our Secretary, Virginia (virginiaaw@aol.com) by Wednesday 22nd September.

Nominations have to be made in writing 21 days before our AGM on 12th October and any contender must have one member as their proposer and another as seconder present at the AGM.

If you would like to know more about the role of Chairman you are extremely welcome to talk to Alan about what the post entails. You can contact him in confidence at Sutton Corner, 65c Oxenturn Rd, Wye, Kent TN25 5AY, Tel: 01233 812740 or email: fieldbank@btinternet.com.



New rehearsal piano

Whenever we have had to rehearse in Ashford School's Coronation Gym, Matthew has been obliged to strive valiantly to produce sound from the keyboard provided, as many of you will recall.

We are therefore delighted to announce that, when not using the Brake Hall grand piano, Tim will use an electric theatre piano which the society is in the process of buying, following receipt of a grant from Ashford Federation of the Arts.

The new piano will be owned and carefully stored by the society. The portability of the new keyboard also means that we have a reliable instrument should we perform in another venue where a piano is not properly maintained.



Music scores

Scores for hire for the forthcoming season

Matthew and Penny have worked hard during the past months to secure all the necessary scores for the pieces we are to perform. Scores can therefore be hired at the first rehearsal at £2 a copy.

As there will be three copies of music available to hire - Haydn, Pergolesi and Handel (the two coronation anthems are in the same book) it would be greatly appreciated if members are able to bring the exact money to first rehearsal, being £6, by cash or cheque.

Buying your own scores

Virginia will not be arranging the purchase of scores for choir members, but for those of you who would like to buy your own scores, the appropriate editions for the first concert are listed below.

- Handel Four Coronation Anthems, OUP edition
- Pergolesi Magnificat, Walton
- Haydn Nelson Mass, New Novello Choral Edition, revised by M. Pilkington

Folders for Carol scores

The committee has decided that black folders are to be used for the December carol concert. We are therefore asking choir members to provide their own black A4 ringbinder folder, so that all carol music is readily accessible and neatly held for both rehearsals and the concert.

October AGM

Nomination papers for officers and committee members are available from Virginia and need to be completed and returned to the Secretary before the AGM.

If you wish to raise anything under Any Other Business, it would be helpful to let Virginia (virginiaaw@aol.com) know in advance.



A recruitment poster for the Ashford Choral Society. The background is a photograph of a choir performing in a hall. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top left, it says 'JOIN THE CHOIR!' in large, bold, orange letters. Below that, in smaller white letters, it says 'SEASON 2021-22'. The main title 'ASHFORD CHORAL SOCIETY' is in large, bold, white letters. At the bottom, it says 'FREE FOR UNDER 25s' and 'ALL MUSICAL ABILITIES WELCOME' in white. Below that, it lists rehearsal times: 'Rehearsals Tuesdays 7.30-9.15pm from Sept. 7th 2021. Brake Hall, Ashford School, TN24 8PB' and the website 'www.ashfordchoral.org.uk'. There is a Facebook logo in the bottom right corner of the poster.

Subscriptions

Those who were existing members in 2019–20 will be entitled to renew their membership for the 2021–22 season at £76 – which provides compensation for the lost months of their full subscription for that season.

The society welcomes new members of all ages and abilities – so if you have friends, family or colleagues who have been thinking about joining a choir, bring them along. There is no charge for the first two rehearsals and scores will be made available free of charge.

For new members joining from September 2021, the annual subscription is £96 – whilst under 25s join for free.

All subscriptions are due in September, preferably by BACs online banking or standing order rather than by cheque or cash payment since there is a cost to the Society of banking these.

Bank details, and any Gift Aid advice, will be available from Hugh Cooper, our Treasurer, at the first rehearsal. Anyone interested in paying their subscription by instalments should talk to Hugh.

Patrons

If you are also a patron, please bear in mind that the minimum donation is now £30. If you would like to become a patron, please let us know.

Contact :

Email: info@ashfordchoral.org.uk

Telephone: 01233 660559

www.ashfordchoral.org.uk

