



Music Director's Report September 2024

The 2023/2024 choir season was certainly full of joy, challenge, variety and character - as you would expect from a series of programmes themed loosely around opera (or, at least, composers closely associated with opera).

Our collaboration with Sinfonia of Birmingham for a concert celebrating the last year of Mozart's life was as fruitful as ever in November, with their playing - delicate in places, haunting in others - matching the fine detail and musical colour shown by the choir across the well known, but evergreen, repertoire on show.

Some new and challenging repertoire was well presented alongside the familiar tunes in our popular Christmas concert, and it was good to renew our association with the choirs of St Alphege Church at this event. Thank you to Pam for facilitating this, with some fine young voices from the church coming together to remind us of the great music-making that continues there.

In March we returned to St Alphege for our long-awaited, much-anticipated performance of Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle - prepared and unperformed during the covid years but now finally rising a phoenix from the pandemic's ashes. The soloists deserve a mention for their wit, musicality and stamina but the 'unsung' hero of the night was pianist Roger Owens who so elegantly accompanied the event alongside our own David Rice (on the organ), also memorably providing virtuosic pianistic displays in his solo repertoire.

We enjoyed a new venue for our summer concert, and finished the year with a programme 'sacred and profane' which juxtaposed Bruckner's fine motets (in his anniversary year) with opera chorus through the ages - from Purcell to Britten, Handel to Puccini. A vibrant end to a splendid year.

I am grateful as ever for the support of the committee - nobly and efficiently led by Simon - and particularly so during my brief sabbatical this year. I am also indebted to all of the singers of the choir who make leading the group such a joy, and for being so constantly rewarding to work with. I wish you all (and of course David) my very best wishes for the next two terms, and I will enjoy returning later this year.

Best
Olly

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