

THREE SPIRES SINGERS

President: Petroc Trelawny

news

Newsletter for Patrons, Friends, Sponsors, Singers
and members of the Orchestra

Autumn 2017

Welcome to Three Spires Singers Autumn Newsletter. As ever we are grateful to those who have contributed. Items for future newsletters are welcome. Please email them to Sally Williams at sal1will@btinternet.com

■ FROM THE CHAIR

Report to the AGM on 18th September 2017

ONE OF THE most valuable undertakings in the past year has been the consultation with choir members about future plans and funding. Thank you to everyone for the generosity of spirit with which you contributed to our re-evaluation of how much our membership of Three Spires Singers means to us. Having so many people share responsibility for these important decisions adds to our esprit de corps and confidence in each other. Thanks too to Simon Price, whose careful explanation of the financial picture enabled us to reach decisions about our future funding with great clarity.

The recommendation to increase subscriptions by 50% will be put to the vote shortly, but the indications, from the comments made to me since I emailed everyone in August about the outcomes of the consultation, are that you intend to support it. When I consider our activities in recent years – the premiere of Russell Pascoe's Secular Requiem in Truro Cathedral and then Cadogan Hall, George Lloyd's Symphonic Mass recorded for broadcast on Radio 3, the two War Requiem performances, the premiere of Paul Drayton's St Mark Passion – and the names we've worked with – Martyn Brabbins, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Cordelia Williams, Freddie Brown, Sarah Fox, Catheryn Wyn-Rogers, Mark Padmore – it reminds me how important it is to be able to continue in that vein, and the subs increase will secure that future for us.

MANY OF US were at Saturday evening's spellbinding performance by Tenebrae. It was absolutely thrilling to hear some 21st century works, and I came away feeling that it's really important that we should contribute to that kind of music making and creating. Commissioning new work should be a part of what we do, and I believe that aim can be achieved if we put our minds to it.

As you know, our plans might include the commissioning of a work by Graham Fitkin to mark our 40th anniversary in 2021. I would like to clarify the means by which such an undertaking could be funded. There are two main sources to whom we would apply. One of PRS for Music Foundation's schemes offers funding of between £5,000 and £10,000 for the creation of new works. An adviser to whom I spoke a few months ago indicated that for a commission by someone of Graham's stature he would expect us to be applying for the maximum amount. Arts Council England would be another organisation to whom we would apply, for a similar sum. There are other grant making trusts we could approach if necessary. If the overall project – not just the commissioning but possibly the involvement of schools, the potential for a second performance, by us or someone else, a seminar and so on – were to receive this kind of grant aid then the choir would be called upon to make a manageable contribution to the commission. We are not quite ready to submit funding applications but the direction of travel remains encouraging.

THERE ARE SO many people who give so much to the choir, and this year I'd like to give a particular mention to the following people:

- ◆ Damien Lyall, who is standing down from the committee. Thank you for the time and skill you put into working with Creative Edge to create the website we now enjoy.
- ◆ We are blessed to have some amazingly talented musicians in Cornwall, Devon and beyond who are happy to come and join us for performances, whether as orchestral players or soloists. I'd like to thank all of them for their commitment to making our concerts as wonderful as they are. I can't mention these people without also paying tribute to Dee Gordon Jackson whose work most of us don't see but who is the most wonderful and tireless organiser and mother hen for our visiting musicians; thanks too to everyone who offers hospitality to them. Players and soloists tell us that they really enjoy coming to perform with us, and they really appreciate the care and warmth with which they're looked after.
- ◆ The thing they appreciate above all else, of course, is the vision and musicianship of Chris Gray, whose contribution to the choir can't be over-stated. We are so fortunate to have you shaping our musical life.
- ◆ Another precious part of our musical life is Paul Comeau, not just in his capacity as accompanist and wise head on the committee but also as soloist in November's Schumann Piano Concerto, which will be a treat for us all.
- ◆ Thank you to everyone on the committee for everything they have put in to running the choir, and to all the other people in the choir whose contributions make a difference, whether it's serving as voice reps, putting out chairs at rehearsals, sending out circular emails; or making a generous gift of funds over and above the minimum subscription.

There are a lot of other people, who aren't members

of the choir, who make a big statement about how much they value us too, by contributing financially or giving their time to us. To our President, Petroc Trelawny; to Friends and Patrons, Sponsors, the Front-of-House team, thank you so much for being part of something that couldn't happen without you. Your generosity and our membership's broad shoulders in terms of hard work and self-funding mean that our continued commitment to outstanding music making really is a triumph of shared resolve.

IN THE FILM on our website Petroc describes us with approval as a choir that isn't afraid to take risks, financial and artistic. This reminds me of an event such a long time ago that most of you won't be aware of it so I thought it worth sharing my account of it. It was the one and only occasion on which TSS has entered a competition, the Six Counties Festival, in 1989. Having won through the regional heat of Cornish choirs we all went to Shrewsbury to take part in the final with choirs from the five other counties. The three works our then Music Director Keith Williams had chosen for us to perform were *Quick, we have but a second*, (an Irish slip jig, very short and fast), Percy Grainger's setting of *Londonderry Air*, and Schoenberg's *Friede Auf Erden*, which it has to be said was a bit of a white knuckle experience!

Sadly we lost out to a ladies' choir, bedecked in purple off-the-shoulder toga affairs, who sang Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Memory". The winning choir got to perform its programme again, and somebody from another choir was heard to say of us afterwards, "Thank goodness they didn't win, I couldn't bear to sit through that again". However, in her comments about each choir the chair of the judging panel, Lady Barbirolli, said of us, "This is a choir that knows how to live dangerously and get away with it – just"!

With Lady Barbirolli's fine endorsement and Petroc's approval of our not being afraid to push the boundaries, I think we can all feel very proud about Three Spires Singers' commitment to being innovative and challenging in our future plans.

Lora Wicks

Mobile: 07791 235 269

FORTHCOMING CONCERT

DVORAK'S STABAT MATER is a work that is seldom performed but deserves a much wider audience. A powerful large-scale work which uses the words of a thirteenth century hymn to the Virgin Mary, its title translates as "Mary stood": "Keeping her vigil at the foot of the cross, Mary stood, weeping." The music is heart-rendingly beautiful.

Dvorak began writing the work while grieving the death of his baby daughter in 1875. He laid the writing aside for two years, but returned to it when overwhelmed by the terrible loss of his remaining two children. This might sound grim, but after all there are many wonderful and life-affirming works of art that have come from the consideration of suffering. This major piece – it lasts 90 minutes – uses the usual varied forces of a big cantata. Among our soloists is tenor David Webb, who returns once again to his Cornish fan-base; Anna Patalong (soprano) who has performed at the Royal Opera House and recently sang Mimi in *La Boheme* in the Rouen Festival ("Patalong sounds utterly gorgeous" – *The Guardian* 2016); Angharad Lyddon (mezzo-soprano), who has sung for Sir John Eliot Gardiner and recently made her ENO and Glyndebourne debuts; and Benedict Nelson (Baritone), another young rising star described by *The Times* recently as "vocally glorious". Three Spires Singers and Orchestra will as usual be conducted by Christopher Gray.

The concert will open with the brisk and exciting – and rather better known – *Insanae et Vanae Curae* by Haydn, after which the orchestra will be joined by pianist Paul Comeau for Schumann's ever popular Piano Concerto, especially written for his wife Clara when they were first married. Dating from the happiest period in Schumann's very troubled life (he was probably schizophrenic), it seems that the work is completely bound up with his relationship with Clara. There is a motto theme, which is an encrypted form of her name in musical notation, and this pervades virtually every bar of the first movement. The second movement is full of delightful interplay between soloist and orchestra; like two lovers, the piano makes an old-fashioned tentative approach and then, given the slightest encouragement by the orchestra, swoons into giddy love. The rollicking, waltz-like finale is full of joie-de-vivre and almost certainly one of the happiest pieces Schumann ever wrote.

We are planning to include a regular feature entitled "Inspirational Notes" where you can share your musical experiences. Thank you to Peter Macdonald for this contribution.

SINGING WITH THE ANGELS

When I did my Cert Ed at Oxford I was lucky enough to join the Schola Cantorum Oxoniensis. This was a very exciting experience in a choir conducted by Andrew Parrott and including such singers as Jane Glover and Emma Kirkby. We went on tour with a similar choir from Cambridge to the Bath and Wells Festival where we sang, amongst other things, Tallis's 40-part motet *Spem in Alium*. We were fortunate to have Sir Michael Tippett to conduct us, although he was nearly totally blind (Andrew Parrott was his amanuensis at this time) who finally abandoned his huge score and told us to listen to choir 4 alto line when we would hear "the angels singing above us". We did!

What an amazing occasion!

Peter Macdonald



spread from Paul's well-used copy of Schumann's Piano Concerto

AMONG OUR SOLOISTS for Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* is tenor **David Webb**, who returns once again to his Cornish fan-base; **Anna Patalong** (soprano) who has performed at the Royal Opera House and recently sang Mimi in *La Bohème* in the Rouen Festival ("Patalong sounds utterly gorgeous"—*The Guardian* 2016); **Angharad Lyddon** (mezzo-soprano), who has sung for Sir John Eliot Gardiner and recently made her ENO and Glyndebourne debuts; and **Benedict Nelson** (baritone), another young rising star described by *The Times* recently as "vocally glorious".

Paul Comeau, who performs Schumann's *Piano Concerto* in the first half, needs no introduction to Cornish audiences, having given numerous concertos here in Truro Cathedral as well as elsewhere, including several by Mozart, Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* with Three Spires Orchestra a few years ago, and most recently and memorably, the *Second Piano Concerto* by Rachmaninov.



SCHUMANN'S PIANO CONCERTO

MY MEMORIES OF the Schumann Piano Concerto go back a long way. Whilst I was always drawn to music, my interest intensified at about the age of 9. The piano fascinated me, but for various reasons we did not have a piano in the house until I was 11, and I was encouraged to learn the recorder and subsequently other single-line instruments. At around this time, my father showed me three miniature scores that we had, one of which was the Schumann Piano Concerto. Being somewhat eccentric and geeky, I longed to match the written score to the sound, and my parents bought me a recording of the concerto. Although I instantly liked the music, it took me many listenings before I could follow the orchestral score, even at a very basic level.

I also remember being involved with the Cornwall Youth Orchestra from the age of 12; at the time, two members, aged 14 and 16 respectively, were accomplished pianists and they both played the first movement of the Schumann in a concert. I had only been learning the piano for a year; I longed to be given the same opportunity, but was convinced that I would never be good enough to be asked.

After many years of practice, expert teaching and much good fortune, I have often been asked to play piano concertos in Cornwall since permanently settling in the area. But the journey of learning and getting deeply inside the Schumann has been especially lovely and rewarding; yes, occasionally frustrating when the fingers won't do what you want them to (and terrifying when you break your arm and can't even play a C major scale with the right hand: the last movement of the Schumann is 980 bars long, and there is probably an average of 10 notes per bar for the pianist to play. Thankfully, I have now fully recovered.) The prospect of performing the piece in the Cathedral, surrounded by players, singers and audience members, many of whom are personal friends, is moving and exciting for me. On the night, I very much hope you will enjoy sharing in the outcome of my musical journey.

Paul Comeau

■ A WORD FROM THE TREASURER

AT THE OPEN meeting at the end of June and at the AGM at the beginning of this term everyone concerned had a good chance to discuss the future direction of the choir. We considered the option of reducing the costs of orchestras and soloists, but it was clear at the meetings that the choir wants to maintain its ambitiousness rather than cutting back on the quality of our concerts. This means either vastly increasing income from ticket sales – something that we are always striving to do – or increasing our core income from basics such as subscriptions.

The Committee's proposal for a substantial hike in

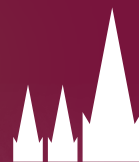
Members' subscriptions met with a very positive response, which allows us to embark with confidence on this year's exciting but expensive programme – Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*, Bach's *B Minor Mass* and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* – and put us in a strong position when planning further ahead – there are proposals for some wonderful concerts in the next few years now being discussed by the committee.

So the Treasurer's main message in this Newsletter is to offer a big Thank You for your willingness to "stump up" what's needed for us to go on doing the music we love.

Simon Price, Hon Treasurer

THREE SPIRES SINGERS & ORCHESTRA

President: Petroc Trelawny



Reg charity no 900017

Christopher Gray conductor

Haydn

INSANAE ET VANAE CURAE

Schumann

PIANO CONCERTO

Paul Comeau piano

Dvorak

STABAT MATER

Anna Patalong soprano

Angharad Lyddon mezzo-soprano

David Webb tenor

Benedict Nelson bass

Saturday 18 November 2017

7.30 pm

TRURO CATHEDRAL



TICKETS: Reserved £12—£21 Under 18 half price

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www.threespiressingers.org.uk



Truro Cathedral *by kind permission of the Chapter*

THREE SPIRES DINNER FRIDAY 3 MARCH 2017

MY HUSBAND and I were delighted to attend the Choir Dinner in March. As a new Choir member, it was a wonderful opportunity to meet new people. It was also an excellent way of raising funds for the Choir. We were welcomed with a glass of wine as we arrived at the Cathedral Café, which gave us the opportunity to chat to different people before joining our table.

Each table was kept busy throughout the meal guessing which composer was represented by jumbled up letters in the middle of each table. An excellent idea and not always easy!

There were raffle prizes and we were lucky enough to win a couple of Concert tickets to the Endellion Festival. We thoroughly enjoyed this experience. Many thanks to those who provided these tickets for the raffle and all the prizes.

The meal was excellent, as was the Gershwin, which we were treated to once we had eaten. The Citron Trio led by Paul Comeau provided the musical entertainment which was interspersed with a short history of Gershwin's life narrated by Simon Price.

A huge amount of work went on behind the scenes and on behalf of the Choir I would like to thank Sally Williams and Penny Price for their part in this. Barry Marsh took the role of compere. £1603 was raised in total for choir funds.

I sincerely hope that we can arrange another Dinner date before too long!

Elisabeth Gibson

Diners in the Cathedral Restaurant enjoy the music of George Gershwin, provided by Barbara Degener (cello), David White (clarinet) and Paul Comeau (piano), with an entertaining potted life history of Gershwin from narrator Simon Price.



TWO MUCH-LOVED CHOIR MEMBERS REMEMBERED



Stuart on the occasion of his son's wedding in 2016 ...

STUART SKEPLORN *Bass*

THE CATHEDRAL was full, and about seventy singers turned up to join the choir to sing in his honour; that probably says it all. There were good speeches about him and we heard about other and different activities and parts of his life of which we did not know about. We may only have known him as a member of Three Spires, but there was much more to his life than that. Stuart had been in Three Spires for a long time, not quite since the earliest days and I was lucky enough to sit next to him for nearly all that time and tried to work out how many rehearsals that might have been; many hundreds.

He could be a bit dry, was never shy about telling me where I had gone wrong, and did like to get small details correct. He was good hearted and always supportive. He was a great man to sit next to, and kind to those who came into the choir. He was not one to say a bad word about anyone. He had been ill for many years and for the last few was in pain, pumping his pain killer during rehearsals to keep going but always kept on going and singing.

Many will miss Stuart and we share his loss with his wife Lis, who is also in the choir and has remained good humoured and smiling through some difficult years. I shall miss him, because for over twenty years he kept me on the straight and narrow and I enjoyed his company. What we can all remember is that the cathedral was full for a service in his memory.

Stephen Tyrrell



... and with John Lander, doing stalwart service on the bar at a Three Spires Singers fundraising concert at Benallack in 2009.

ELIZABETH CYNDDYLAN *Alto*

MY COUSIN LIZZIE, fellow alto, sadly died after a two and a half year brave and dignified battle with cancer, on 18th September. She was born in Chester and spent all of her schooldays and university in the North, training in Fine Art and Design at Chester and Liverpool Art Colleges. John Lennon was one of her colleagues! After various teaching jobs she eventually became qualified as a very well respected freelance restorer of church art and artefacts and oil paintings. Her work took her all over the country, but particularly the south west after she and husband John moved to Cornwall in 1975.



Lizzie Cynddylan with Margaret Clutterbuck (left) in the Cathedral Chapter House, on the occasion of Three Spires Singers' 25th Anniversary concert in June 2006

Liz restored many of the painted Royal Coats of Arms that you see in our Cornish churches; and special to me, and I think her too, is the 'Ringers Rhyme' panelled painting which hangs in the bell tower at St Endellion church, so do go and look. We loved going together with friends and family to the festival there. Lizzie loved her conservation work as it enabled her and John sometimes with her, to meet and often stay with all manner of interesting and eccentric individuals, many from the clergy. It was her character to make the best and most fun out of all situations, however difficult they might be!

Lizzie and John arrived in Cornwall in 1975 and like many restored old cottages, moving several times with beloved daughter Sara. Lizzie adored family, their dogs and gardens. They had a house in France during the 90s, but settled back in Penzance to be near Sara and husband Johnny.

Happily, we also came to Cornwall in 1975 and so began singing together, firstly Truro Choral Society and in 1984 she joined Three Spires, auditioning with Paul Daniel, who was so inspiring in the early days of the Three Spires Festival. Choir was indeed a very special part of Liz's life. She loved music, a very eclectic mix – from Monteverdi and Bach to Britten, Finzi, Tavener and jazz. Choir was something that we shared, with the odd break or two, for over 30 years. So many memories of exciting concerts, funny incidents and

mischievous notes scribbled into the back of our scores during rehearsals! Highlights for her were always *St Matthew* and *St John Passions* with James Gilchrist as the Evangelist, singing the *Chichester Psalms* in the Albert Hall with Sir David Wilcocks and Russell Pascoe's *Requiem* in Cadogan Hall, but really she loved it all.

She made so many special friends through choir over the years, and it was her particular wish that Mozart's *Ave Verum Corpus* could be sung at her funeral. John, Sara and Johnny thank Three Spires so much for coming to sing so beautifully and to the choir for giving so much richness to her life.

As a great friend said of her "happiness is a gift and Lizzie chose it over all things and derived pleasure and laughter in the small things a lot of us miss".

Caroline Johnson

NIGEL SHORT MASTER CLASS

I WAS FORTUNATE enough to take part in our first choir rehearsal of the new season, when Nigel Short (Musical Director of Tenebrae) was leading the proceedings in preparation for their amazing concert the following Saturday.

It always takes a little while to settle back into the swing of things at the start of a new term (yes, I have been one of those teachers who have 'back to school' dreams in the days leading up to September!), and this was no different. Could we still sing, open our mouths stand up properly?! We were about to find out...

Nigel Short warmed us up brilliantly with some seemingly childlike, funny 'games' involving clapping, hand actions and jumping up and down. Our joint co-ordination (or lack of) caused much hilarity, especially when he got it wrong too! This meant that any nerves were soon dispersed, and the serious business of rehearsing could begin.

However, any false securities which we may have had through the merry nature of his easy-going manner belied a precise attention to detail, which rivalled even that of our own dear MD! Despite around ninety people singing in front of him, there was no hiding, and at times the rehearsal felt terrifyingly exposed. Taking the Messiah as a rehearsal piece was a great idea, as most of the choir know this very well; but again there was no place to hide. We were asked to sing without scores, which was pretty scary... what exactly ARE the words... or the notes?!

But this was liberating and it gave our singing a new edge. It increased concentration, eye contact with the conductor (always a good idea!), and most importantly the sense of singing TOGETHER as a group. This is what Tenebrae do so wonderfully well... so that they can position singers around Truro Cathedral, who cannot see each other, and still remain perfectly in time as a group.

In fact Nigel Short even introduced a further 'fear' aspect of singing with our eyes closed, leaving us to rely on each other: this was fantastic. As a (very amateur) member of a few a capella/folk singing groups in the past, I know that this is a natural tendency in small groups... but in a packed hall, it felt incredibly freeing, scary and galvanizing for the choir as a whole.

I for one felt truly invigorated both mentally, physically and emotionally by this: a great way to start the new term!

It was a fantastic experience ... and I haven't even mentioned "the breath"!

Claire Trotman



Nigel Short taking an energetic workshop with Three Spires Singers early in September

RAISING AWARENESS USING SOCIAL MEDIA

With our next concert a few weeks away, we would like to ask for your help to promote the choir on social media. Please 'like' the Three Spires Singers Facebook page (@ThreeSpiresSingers) and 'share' the concert information we post with your Friends. This gives the choir free publicity and an easy way to reach those potentially interested in attending a performance.

You can also follow the choir on Twitter (@ThreeSpiresSing). In the run up to a concert we use Twitter to get to know our soloists. It's a way to promote them to our audience and vice versa. Think live videos from the afternoon rehearsal of *Creation*, rather than Donald Trump style middle-of-the-night rants!

And if you need any help ask me in the rehearsal break for some pointers.

Thanks in anticipation.

Claire Whitehead

PATRONS AND FRIENDS

There are over 90 Patrons and Friends of Three Spires Singers at the moment. Their support is not only financial – they are true friends to us in the fullest sense of the word, coming to many of our concerts and spreading the word about the music we perform here in Cornwall. We are very, very grateful to them and hope they continue to enjoy being associated with us.

If you have friends and relations who like coming to our concerts, and they would like to receive early emails giving information about forthcoming performances and workshops, with priority booking of the best seats, please tell them about how our Patrons and Friends scheme works. We are always happy to recruit new supporters.

Full information can be found on our website

[http://www.threespiressingers.org.uk/
support-us/friends-patrons](http://www.threespiressingers.org.uk/support-us/friends-patrons)

or direct from Penny Price, 01872 865097
oak.farm@btinternet.com

THREE SPIRES SINGERS WINE TASTING

WHAT A GOOD WAY to cheer up a dark November evening: about 25 of us assembled one Friday last autumn at the Old Chapel Wine Cellars in Truro to enjoy a light-hearted and informative wine tasting. This was as far as can be imagined from the earnest, even intimidating, business of sniffing, swirling and spitting, when you're made to feel a complete fool for thinking that Pouilly Fumé has something to do with smoked chicken.

Done well, presenting a wine-tasting can be a clever variation on performance art, and the knowledgeable staff, Jamie and Charlotte, gave us a double-act that wouldn't go amiss in a comedy club. We were welcomed with a glass of Prosecco, followed by the sampling of six wines accompanied by an explanation of grape varieties, how the wine was made and where it came from, with such generous top-ups throughout that "quaffing" might be more accurate than "tasting". With a selection of nibbles thrown in between the whites and the reds, this made for a lovely evening. A raffle was drawn for a magnum bottle of Appassimento – a deliciously rich Italian red – which was won by Philip Feather. A total of just over £300 resulted from our conscientious application to learning about wine. It was a very enjoyable way to raise choir funds, we must do it again!

Lora



Forthcoming events

November 26 ♦ 7.30 pm

TRURO CATHEDRAL

Haydn
INSANAE ET VANAE CURAE

Schumann
PIANO CONCERTO

Dvorak STABAT MATER

March 24 ♦ 7.30 pm

TRURO CATHEDRAL

Bach MASS IN B MINOR

July 7 ♦ 7.30 pm

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Elgar
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REHEARSALS

All rehearsals are held at Archbishop Benson School from 7.30 pm to 9.30 pm unless otherwise stated

Spring 2018

M	Jan	8	
M		15	
M		22	
M		29	
M	Feb	5	
M		12	half term – no rehearsal
M		19	
M		26	
M	Mar	5	
M		12	
M		19	
S		24	1.30–4.00pm Cathedral 7.30pm CONCERT



THREE SPIRES SINGERS

Committee 2017–2018

Chairman	Lora Wicks
Secretary	Sally Williams
Treasurer	Simon Price
Posters & programmes	Camilla Comeau
Membership Secretary	Sally Hind
Orchestra & Soloists' Liaison	Dee Gordon Jackson
Friends and Patrons Sec	Penny Price
Librarian	Sarah Scott
Concert Management	David Smith
Publicity Officer	Claire Whitehead
Sponsorship	Lora Wicks

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHOIR – A SELECTION FROM THE FIRST ALTOS

My name is **Sarah Brown**.

I live in Truro. I play the piano and violin very badly but the recorder and various early music instruments slightly more successfully. I have sung in church, school and county youth choirs. Also the Bach Choir, and chapel choir and madrigal groups at university. I now sing in Three Spires Singers, St Mary's Singers and a choir singing services in various cathedrals. Ian (my husband and Bass 1) asked me out just before a performance of Verdi *Requiem* in 1980. How romantic! My favourite composer is Bach and my favourite piece of music is his *B Minor Mass*.

My name is **Camilla Comeau**.

I live about as close as anyone could to the school where we all meet to rehearse (and still manage to be late on occasions). As a child I had piano lessons but was extremely lazy – particularly about sight reading, and so never progressed very far (although I was able to pick out and harmonise a hymn tune and always gravitated to singing alto). Consequently I have immense sympathy for children who come here for piano lessons (with my husband, the choir's accompanist Paul) and who find music notation batty and illogical, and I so teach them music theory – hopefully giving them a love of something that I never had when I was

their age. Our jazz-loving boys have thrown my musical tastes into confusion so can't name a favourite composer!

My name is **Jean Farmer**.

I live in Truro. When I was at school I played the violin and piano. I have sung in various church choirs, mixed choirs, choral societies and taken some leading roles in light operatic shows. All a little while ago!! I am blessed with the gift of perfect pitch. I have been involved with Mencap for sixty years. My favourite composer is Mozart. I don't have a favourite piece of music – there are too many to list!

My name is **Suzu Hope**.

I currently live in Exeter (and Truro a little!) I used to play the clarinet and recorder. I joined Three Spires Singers in 2008 after singing with Truro Choral Society for a year. This marked a return to singing after a reasonably long break (university and school choirs). I also sing with the Exeter Festival Chorus. Apparently I make a good chicken pie and my baked cheesecake is an unexpected hit amongst the Italian community. It's impossible to say who my favourite composer is. As visitors to my flat will know, I have an extremely eclectic taste in music and love live music. WOMAD is a great place to discover new music

too! I completely fell in love with Elgar's *Music Makers* when we did it with Three Spires. Schumann's piano concerto is also a favourite though so I am greatly looking forward to Paul's rendition at the next concert!

My name is **Sarah Jewell**.

I live in St Ives. I have been a member of Three Spires Singers since 1992 when we were conducted by David Briggs. I played the piano and violin for two years as a junior school pupil. I sang with the Oriana Singers in Macclesfield for six years. In September of this year I was awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (50 years). My favourite composers are Bach, Mozart and Elgar. Amongst many other pieces of music my favourite is Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*.

My name is **Jo Mayes**.

I live in Penryn. I play the flute (but wish I had learnt the cello). I sang in school choirs up to the age of eighteen then didn't sing for eighteen years until joining Three Spires Singers in 2015 which I LOVE! As well as my 'proper' day job as a Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, I also make cakes professionally. It's too difficult to name a favourite composer. I have very eclectic tastes in music with difficult in naming any favourites.

◀ My name is **Frances (Fran) Mills**. I live in Truro. While I was at school I played the descant recorder. In the 1990s I sang with Duchy Opera and from 2000–15 I sang with the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir in Canada. I directed two plays in Truro Cathedral in the mid 1990s, as part of the Three Spires Festival: Jean Anouilh's *The Lark* and James Goldman's *The Lion in Winter* and for Duchy Opera I directed a touring production of Gounod's *Faust*. My theatre company "Palos" presented eight other productions either at the Falmouth Arts Centre or Trelissick Gardens during the 1990s. I love both the ballet and the opera *Eugene Onegin*, Wagner operas and the Verdi and Mozart *Requiems*.

My name is **Tricia Prescott**. I live in Truro. I am learning the piano and currently preparing for Grade 5. I have previously sung with my school choir and a small ladies choir. I was brought up in Africa and am a keen 8-handicap golfer. I am a retired physiotherapist. My favourite composer is Chopin and his *Nocturnes* are my favourite pieces of music.

My name is **Alicia Skekplorn**. I live in Devoran. I played piano, violin and recorder while at school but sadly do not play any more. I started singing while at junior school. My first auditioned choir was the Bristol Youth Choir at the age of 17 where I met my future husband Stuart. I have also sung with the Bristol Nova Singers, Truro Choral Society and Celtic

Voices. My claim to fame is that the actor Terry Thomas was my cousin's godfather and I once sat on his lap at the age of 8. My favourite composers are Vaughan Williams and Elgar and my favourite piece of music is Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto.

My name is **Yvette Smith**. I live in Truro. I play the piano, violin, guitar and recorder. I have sung with St Piran's Singers and in various church choirs. I once won a cup for playing badminton. I have several favourite composers but the first five are Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn and Vivaldi. Again I have several favourite pieces of music but the first five are Haydn *Creation*, Handel *Messiah*, Bach *Magnificat*, Brahms *Requiem* and the Grieg Piano Concerto. ■

A BASS VIEW

Chapter 4

Equipment

FIRST, THE IMPORTANT asset is not the voice but a pencil. A row of pencils shows you are experienced, although a pocket of pencil sharpeners is over the top. Pencils should be clutched, waved and lent with a friendly sneer to a neighbour. Conductors are obsessed that you should record their smallest thoughts, so without a pencil you are inviting destructive comment, social disgrace and shameful suicide.

Second, since hip flasks are not encouraged, you will need a bottle of water. This is the sign of a professional and is sipped throughout the rehearsal. You could keep throat pastilles handy to cultivate popularity with your neighbours.

Third, you will need a chair. One or two of the plastic chairs have different coloured feet and are more comfortable, so turn up early and grab one. Myself, I put two chairs on top of each other, which is easier.

Where you sit is also important. All the singers are friendly until you sing a wrong note, but they are also conservative in habit. Once you have selected your chair, you will probably sit in the same place with the same neighbours until you move to Australia.

Finally, switch off your mobile phone during rehearsal; it is embarrassing to speak to toy boys or mistresses when the conductor and entire choir are listening.

The Score

THOSE WITH THEIR own score will buttonhole you with: 'look, this is in italic ink, when I was a treble.' or will boast that no performance could equal 'that time with Bodgeroffski, when we did it in Mongolian in Minsk'. Ignore them and take one of the much marked library copies lent by the choir librarian. Do not, however, point out to the conductor that five other conductors have, according to the notes in your score, 'done it different'.

As a concert date nears, you will receive awesome threats from the librarian about the return of the copy. Although you should erase comments and shopping lists from a library score, their removal is a time consuming exercise that reduces the pleasure the next choir will get from the work.

Language

NEARLY EVERYTHING is in a foreign language for which special tutors are introduced. I have sat through pronunciation for Hungarian, Russian, Polish, Italian, Hebrew, French, Latin, Greek, Spanish, Creole, even American, but not yet Scots or Japanese. The worst are when competing explanations of German ensure life is not worth living. But of course there is only one way to pronounce any language, and that is in the English way; even if that is masked because we always have a loud orchestra.

Singing

MOST OF US start singing in the belief that the voice which fills a bathroom or football ground is magnificent. You may consider having a music lesson, but teachers try and turn you into a soloist when you should blend into the choir. Among the many different singing teachers I have had was one who made me wait with lots of four year olds, all of us hoping to sing 'Fairy Bells'.

You may also attend a master class. These vary with fashion and will range from African chanting to Indian mantra, or how to copy little Chinese girls who sing from memory. You may be asked to emulate an Olympic team by combining exercises with mind games and the singing of Scottish ballads. In fact, every choir rehearsal is a lesson and is

about combining with others 'as does a bee in a beehive', a concept that still worries me, but never mind just start slow and enjoy the choir, learning as you go.

There are many other benefits to singing, which is good for your health and happiness and gives exercise, companionship, breathing and concentration. One choir suggested choral singing was all about sex, although that choral benefit seems to have passed me by. I once played in an orchestra in Canada where the Mayor explained that only music could assure mental health before flinging her arm to point at us, the only examples of mental health in the hall.

The Rehearsal

ONCE STARTED, a rehearsal proceeds in an atmosphere of reverence, attention and concentration with no talking. The first hurdle is to find the correct page in the score. This can be difficult when there are different versions and when 'letter D', 'section 145', 'page 32 old version, 5th bar second system' is mumbled in haste. Just keep an eye on the person next door and turn the page when they do. Another problem may be to understand the heated rebuke 'can't you see this is a diminished seventh triad from a demonic minor cousin of E sharp...' Don't worry. No one else knows what it means either.

Other hints you may find useful: Silent mouthing is good, but don't be left gobbling quietly when the others have stopped singing. If you do sing, never finish a word or phrase so you then can't be the idiot with the 's', 'd' or 't' in the wrong place. Quietly opening and shutting your mouth is as important as a look of polite attention and is safer than actually making a noise. Practise this at home.

You might think social life and team building would improve if we chatted when the singing paused. But this seems to upset the conductor even if you only discuss the last note with your neighbour. Finally, whatever you do, never speak out during a rehearsal, never ask a question and never make a joke. If you want to deliver a joke, you should sit down knowing that the conductor will have identified you as a trouble maker. If he then learns your name off by heart, you really are in trouble and I suggest you move to another choir.

Enjoy your time with the choir. We do.

Stephen Tyrrell

MAKING A LEGACY TO THREE SPIRES SINGERS

WE HAVE MANY dedicated participants and supporters who are very committed to ensuring our continuing success year after year. These include members of Three Spires Singers, Three Spires Orchestra, Sponsors, Friends, Patrons and our many audience members. One way in which some of us might like to give future financial support is to make a legacy to Three Spires Singers in our wills. Such gifts are exempt from Inheritance Tax, and in April 2012 new rules brought in a reduced level of Inheritance Tax for people leaving 10% of their estate to charity.

If this proposition is not for you please disregard it, but if you think it may be of interest please continue.

It is best to leave a legacy as part of your Will, so it would be advisable to see a solicitor to arrange this. A suggested wording is below, but please check with your solicitor.

“I bequeath to Three Spires Singers, Registered Charity Number 900017,
either (Pecuniary bequest) the sum of (amount in words) or
(Residuary bequest)% (amount in words) of the residue of my real and personal
estate which I can dispose of by Will in any manner I think proper
to be applied to the general purposes of the said Charity, and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or of any
other appropriate officer for the time being of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my Executors.”

Alternatively, if you are simply adding a donation to Three Spires Singers to an existing Will, you can use a codicil. Adding a codicil means there is no need to change the terms of your current Will; it simply adds a new instruction.

A few simple rules for Codicils – an example is given below, available in hard copy on request:

- ◆ Do not cross out or write new instructions into your current Will as any changes will not be valid.
- ◆ As with Wills, two people need to witness you signing and dating the codicil. They do not need to be the same people who witnessed your original Will.
- ◆ Keep the codicil along with your current Will in a safe place.
- ◆ Send or give a copy of the Will and codicil (in a sealed envelope if preferred) to your Executor or a trusted friend, with a note indicating where the original is held.

There is no need to inform us if you choose to make a legacy to Three Spires Singers.

Thank you so much for giving this your consideration: any legacies made will bring pleasure to a great many people.

Legacy 10 is an independent campaign launched in November 2011 that seeks to increase the amount of giving to good causes. You may find it helpful to peruse their website for more information: www.legacy10.com

If you would like to discuss the details of making a legacy to Three Spires Singers please contact our Chairman: Lora Wicks, Albert House, Callestick, TRURO Cornwall TR4 9LN
Telephone: 07791 235 269 ◆ Email: lorawicks@talktalk.net

EXAMPLE CODICIL

This is the first* / second* / * / Codicil to my last Will dated / /
of me (name)

of (address)

I bequeath to Three Spires Singers, Registered Charity Number 900017,

either (Pecuniary Bequest)

the sum of (amount in words)

or (Residuary Bequest)

..... % (amount in words) of the residue of my real and personal estate which I can dispose of by Will in any manner I think proper

to be applied to the general purposes of the said Charity, and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or of any other appropriate officer for the time being of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my Executors.

If at my death any charity named as a beneficiary in this Will or any Codicil hereto has changed its name or amalgamated with or transferred its assets to another body then my Executors shall give effect to any gift made to such charity as if it had been made (in the first case) to the body in its changed name or (in the second place) to the body which results from such amalgamation or to which such transfer has been made.

In all other respects I confirm my said Will and any existing Codicils thereto.

Signed Date / /

SIGNED by the said (name of Testator)

as and for a* Codicil

to his/her last Will and Testament dated the (date of Will)

in the joint presence of us both being present at the same time who at his/her request in his/her presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses.

WITNESS 1

Name
Address
Occupation
Date
Signed

WITNESS 2

Name
Address
Occupation
Date
Signed

* Please indicate what number this Codicil is.