

QUEENS PARK SINGERS

Registered Charity 1094265

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD 1st MAY 2005 TO 31st MARCH 2006

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Signed on behalf of the Committee

Monica Healy
Chair



I Music Director's report

Main events during the year

This season we resumed our normal pattern of two major concerts, plus workshops and smaller contributions to other events. This year the Junior Singers took part in all the concerts: their contributions will be mentioned in a later section.

All events took place at the church of St Anne and St Andrew, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6.

- **Winter Concert, Sunday 27th November 2005:** we started work on the music for this concert after the AGM on 9th October. The theme for the concert was winter itself: snow, cold outside, warm inside, the turn of the year, etc., and we put on a programme ranging from a short Christmas cantata by Buxtehude, a cycle of pieces called *Un soir de neige* by Poulenc, some chansons by Hindemith, a part-song by Elgar, carols by Britten and Rubbra, and Christmas songs including *White Christmas* by Irving Berlin. (this last with audience participation). This was a challenging programme, and we found that we needed extra note-learning sessions, and for some of the items we reduced the choir to a smaller group of more confident singers. The audience participation went down very well!
- **Mozart 250 Concert, Sunday 12th March 2006:** in this 250th anniversary year the choir sang *Missa brevis* in B flat and *Ave verum corpus* and then the strings – needed for the *Missa* -- played Symphony 29 in A major, joined by oboes and horns. We had our biggest audience ever for this concert, indeed we could hardly have fitted another person into the space;
- **Shakespeare's Birthday Concert, Sunday 23rd April 2006:** this event was the idea of Gill Hallifax, and she together with Mary Phillips, put the programme together and made it happen; the Juniors took a major part on this occasion, and besides the music there were readings; and
- **Vocal Workshop with Mary Phillips, Sunday 9th July 2006:** we had a nicely balanced, albeit small, group of singers on this occasion. Mary worked on the breathing and vocal production with us, and then we worked on three varied pieces -- a chanson by Poulenc, a motet by Purcell, and a jazzy Shakespeare setting by George Shearing. The benefit of the work Mary had done with us was immediately apparent in the singing of these pieces.

There was also a **Midsummer Song concert on Sunday 25th June 2006** in which the Juniors participated. The programme on this occasion was mainly of solo songs, sung by Mary Phillips and David Till. Mary sang melodies by Poulenc and Debussy: David sang songs by Samuel Barber and Schumann.

The Junior Singers

Mary Phillips continues to conduct the Juniors and I occasionally act as back-up and/or accompanist. Mary chooses some quite challenging music for the children and also teaches them the basics of singing. The children respond very well and rise to the challenge. I must also mention here the work that Jane Cox has done to bring children into the group -- sometimes a frustrating enterprise. She is about to hand over this work to a successor, so I would like to record here my sincere thanks for all she has done.

The Juniors contributed as follows to each of the concerts:

- **Winter Concert:** Mary wrote two songs for the occasion and they also sang a Christmas song by Bob Chilcott;
- **Mozart Concert:** they sang two pieces by Mozart, including the trio of Genii from The Magic Flute, and a round by Haydn adapted to English words by a local music teacher;
- **Shakespeare's Birthday Concert:** this was mainly the Juniors' show; they all dressed up very elaborately and seemed to enjoy the occasion thoroughly; they contributed both songs and readings; and
- **Midsummer Song:** they sang folk songs arranged by Mary Phillips and David Till, and one of the Brahms Liebeslieder songs.

Some general remarks

The choir has seen quite a lot of change in the last few years, in terms of its membership and the way it runs. We now have a committee of somewhat younger people rather than a committee made up mostly of my friends of 30 or 40 years standing. This is good, because it means that new energy is being brought into the choir, as it is by the influx of younger singers which has also taken place.

The choir in general, not just the committee, used to consist in great measure of friends from when we first moved into the area 35 years ago, and friends with whom I have sung in other choirs over the past 40 years. A significant difference now is that the average level of choral experience of singers is rather lower than it used to be, and this requires a different pattern of rehearsals. We have always had a spread of ability within the choir but this has widened.

As you will have noticed, I like to work on a rather challenging repertoire and this has been possible in the past because of the presence of some very confident singers who could help and encourage the less confident. In order to continue along this path – and to be honest I wouldn't feel motivated otherwise – we need to maintain the interest of these confident singers, so we have to find a balancing point where the music we can tackle is attractive to the more experienced without being impossibly daunting for the inexperienced. This also seems to imply that the less experienced singers may have to put more time into rehearsals, at home with a piano or the MIDI files, and/or or in extra note-learning sessions.

I feel that the running of the choir over this last year has been much better dispersed amongst the committee and the membership at large. This is great, and we need to continue in this direction. I still end up with a huge amount of thinking and organising to do, much of which can hardly be delegated, so the more that can be taken on by others the better. For example, even now in the middle of the summer I am thinking about the concert in November and there are lots of details which need to be firmed up urgently.

There remains the perennial problem of the shortage of male voices. This problem will not go away of its own accord -- it seems to be a widespread phenomenon. Probably our best line of attack is for all of us to encourage friends to come and join us: perhaps the first sally is to bring them along to a concert, so they can see what kind of enterprise we are.

Thanks

I would like to thank all those who have taken on major and minor responsibilities for the running of the choir and of the events themselves. Thanks of course to the members of the committee but also special thanks to Ruth Kitching for assembling the string band, Mary for her work with the Juniors, Liz for making sure we had copies to sing from, Glyn for his imaginative art work for publicity materials, Gill for coordinating the Shakespeare concert, and all those who have helped with refreshments, logistics and clearing up on the day of events.

I feel that there was a new team spirit in the choir this season, which is very much what I had hoped might happen.

As ever, thanks to Fr Fergus Capie for his continued encouragement of our musical endeavours, and for allowing us to use the building for events and rehearsals.

David Till
Music Director

II Treasurer's report

Last year the accounts covered a 13 month period, from 1st April 2004 to 30th April 2005, in order to include income and expenditure relating to our concert in April 2005. This year we revert to the normal end-year, so the accounts cover the 11 month period to 31st March 2006.

The detailed accounts are set out on pages 6 to 8 below. The bulk of the Society's **income** is from subscriptions from members, which has increased again this year. Members can choose from a number of options to suit their individual preferences (see note 2 on page 7), and as a registered charity, the Society was also able to claim back £292 of tax from the Inland Revenue, in respect of donations and subscriptions paid under the Gift Aid scheme. Ticket income remains a useful source of income.

The detailed **costs** of running the society are shown in Note 3 on page 7. We have again spent quite a bit of money on visiting soloists and instrumentalists, and on coaching for the choir.

We have continued to raise funds for the **piano fund** set up by St Anne's and St Andrew's, our usual performance venue, donating a further £800 during the year. By the end of 2006 I would expect this fund to have accumulated some £2,000, nearly all from activities organised by Queens Park Singers. If you would like to sponsor a key, please get in touch.

Taking income and expenditure together (page 6), we made a healthy surplus (some £346) during the year. Our accumulated surplus is now nearly £2,200, predominantly in the form of cash in our bank account with HSBC (see the balance sheet, also on page 6, and note 5 on page 8).

I am very grateful to Nick Sharman for conducting the independent scrutiny of the accounts, as required by the Society's constitution. His report is on page 8. We are not required, by the Charity Commission's rules or our own constitution, to subject the accounts to a full and formal audit.

I would be happy to answer questions on the accounts at the AGM, or at any time. It would be helpful to have advance notice of any questions to be raised at the AGM.

Simon Judge
Hon Treasurer
62 Teignmouth Road
LONDON NW2 4DX
020 8452 2290
Email: money@queensparksingers.org.uk

IV Factual information required by the Charity Commission

Constitution and objects of the Society:

As adopted at the inaugural meeting of the Society on 24th February 2002, the objects of the Society shall be to advance, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts and workshops, and for such other purposes as shall be exclusively charitable as the committee may from time to time decide.

Principal address of the Society:

c/o 62 Teignmouth Road
LONDON NW2 4DX

Bankers to the Society:

HSBC
50-52 Kilburn High Road
LONDON NW5 4HJ

Officers and Trustees of the Society for 2005-06

Chair	Monica Healy
Secretary	Rachel Robbins
Membership Secretary	Rachel Brougham
Music Director	David Till
Treasurer	Simon Judge
Librarian	Liz Till

Scrutineer of the Society's Accounts

Nick Sharman Esq
c/o Simon Judge
62 Teignmouth Road
LONDON NW2 4DX

Other contact details

Website: www.queensparksingers.org.uk (includes details of past and future events)
Email: info@queensparksingers.org.uk