

Minutes of Scottish Chamber Choir Committee Meeting

Wednesday 6 September 2023 (1830 to 2030) on Zoom.

Present: Brian Kerr (chair), Julie Morrice, Iain McLarty, Valerie Holehouse, Alison Fraser, Stéphanie Robin, Marjory Lobban, Catherine Hadshar

Apologies: Alastair Wilson

1. Matter arising from minute of meeting on 28/04/23.

Library storage.

VH explained that the choir library has been reduced from 178 sets of music to 56 sets but still consists of 8 large boxes of music.

Some 39 sets are still available to give away. Agreement to contact the Central Library, post on Facebook groups, donate to the Christian Aid book sale. **(VH/IM)**

Due to the volume of the library **(VH** to share measurement of space required to store) there was discussion of the potential to divide the Librarian role in two: a. sourcing music for our concerts and b. managing the lending of scores to other choirs. We make around £150 each year from lending scores to other choirs and it is a contribution to the wider choral community but it does require frequent access to the library which means the Librarian having enough storage space in their house.

At present VH is happy to continue but in future it may present difficulty in recruiting a new Librarian. Thanks were made to VH for her success in progressing the updating of the library.

2. Concert on 25 November 2023.

Old St Paul's has confirmed the concert date but the rehearsal times (Friday 24 Nov at 7.15pm and Saturday 25 Nov at 2pm) remain unconfirmed. **BK** to contact OSP to try and firm these up. **AF** to reiterate the dates to choir members by email to avoid confusion due to date changes.

Soloist for Bernstein: **IM** will approach St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral and/or NYCOS for a suitable boy treble.

Soloist for Ramirez: **IM** will approach Jamie MacDougall to see if he is interested/available. Potential for attracting a new audience if he sings with us.

IM will also research suitable instrumentalists. The programme requires around eight players including keyboard player, guitarist and percussionist.

Publicity for the concert can commence once the vocal soloists are confirmed. The Bernstein and Ramirez should be given equal billing and the new collaboration with Kevin Leomo also given a place on the poster. **(SR)**

It was agreed that given the scale and cost of the concert, ticket prices should be £15/£7 student and disabled.

There was discussion about affordability but it was agreed that adding 'unwaged' to the concessions would cause confusion for audience members over 65. It was agreed to revisit the issue at a later date.

3. Concert on 2 March 2024.

Arrangements for rehearsal (3pm) and concert on 2 March are in place.

A rehearsal at Canongate on Thursday at 7.15pm should be arranged. Guen Innes may be able to help with passing on a key. **(JM)**

4. Concert in Aberdeen 25 May 2024.

The concert is booked for 6pm; rehearsal time to be confirmed. **(JM/IM)**

The new commission from Ailie Robertson has attracted funding from Creative Scotland of £4609. £3457 has been received and the remaining £1152 will be paid to us after we complete an end-of-project report. Creative Scotland commented "It is recommended that you consider a more defined approach to bringing Ailie Robertson's commission to the attention of other choirs and music-making groups, for example through additional promotion of materials produced at the Aberdeen concert."

A pledge of up to £1500 from The Cockaigne Fund has been made, the amount dependent on the outcome of an application to The Hope Scott Trust.

The committee extended its thanks and congratulations to Catherine Hadshar, Iain McLarty and Julie Morrice for their sterling work on the grant applications.

Publicity for the concert in Aberdeen should be made a priority. **AF** will get suggestions from her contact at the university.

Schools workshops: **JM** will consult with Ailie Robertson and make initial contact with schools in Aberdeen.

Transport: choir members will be canvassed in January as to how many want to travel on the coach to Aberdeen. **(BK)**

5. Season 24/25 and beyond

The concert in December 2024 will be a Bach programme, most likely the Christmas Oratorio.

The next collaboration with Meadows Chamber Orchestra and Calton Consort will be Mozart's C minor Mass (and another piece) in Autumn 2025. **BK** will be involved in the ongoing discussions. Either **IM** or Rory Wilson will conduct the concert.

6. Treasurer's report

ML presented the accounts for the 2022/23 season which showed a small deficit of £242, due in part to the increased charge for our rehearsal venue and to the major investment in the World Carol books.

Our subscription to Making Music should go up to the next level as our turnover has increased. **ML**

There is currently £16,757.25 in the bank account, partly due to the receipt of the Creative Scotland grant. This represents a high level of reserves and it was agreed to research what the optimal level of reserves should be **(CH/ML)** for a future discussion to include thoughts on how we might programme concerts in a secure financial environment.

It was agreed to keep membership subscriptions at £14 a month.

ML will circulate the accounts to the membership before the AGM.

7. Committee roles

These have been updated and should now be posted on the members' area of the choir website. **JM**

8. Music Director's fees (discussed at the end of the meeting in IM's absence).

ML had prepared a useful set of illustrations of various options. It was agreed to offer IM £185 per rehearsal, £400 per concert and £230 to cover attendance at choir meetings. This represents a rise of 7.9% overall and will take effect from the beginning of this season. The committee is keen to raise the MD remuneration to a level that reflects the value the choir places on IM's work as well as the rising cost of living and the appropriate MU rates for the job.

9. AGM 2 October 2023

BK will circulate the agenda to the membership next week. There will be reports from the Chairs (**JM**) and Music Director (**IM**).

The positions of Concert Secretary and Publicity Secretary are vacant as John Halliday has stepped back from the choir and **SR** would like a well-earned rest from her labours on publicity. It was agreed that the membership should be strongly encouraged to consider involvement in the committee, particularly those who have not held a committee role in the past. Take-up of non-portfolio roles will be encouraged so that members can see how the committee operates. **BK** will make an announcement at the rehearsal on Monday 11 September.

Other AGM agenda items: a discussion about the storage of the choir Library
Ratification of the choir's new Safeguarding Policy.

10. AOB

Membership

The aim is to have 8-12 full members in each section. While soprano and alto numbers remain healthy, both tenors and basses are below optimum numbers. Members who have not sung for a while should be contacted and reasonable allowance made for their failure to be in touch since last season. (**AF**)

AF will speak to Catrina Clyne about putting a suitable notice on our Facebook page; will check that Catrina is happy to resume management of our FB page; and will inform Jim Murdoch of the outcome and thank him for his work over past months.

Making Music admin platform

MM are offering what looks like a good deal on an admin package. There is an online workshop explaining more. **BK** will investigate and discuss with Alastair Wilson.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 10 January 2024