

Scottish Chamber Choir
2023 AGM Report
Iain McLarty

Last season was our first full one post-lockdown and it was great to be able to work on some programmes which had been planned for a long time.

The Brahms collaboration with Calton Consort and Meadows Chamber Orchestra was a huge success from what I can gather, although I sadly had to miss the concert and final rehearsals due to illness. The feedback from both audience and musicians was extremely positive and although this is a piece which is performed relatively often, the collaborative nature of the project seemed to make it worthwhile. All three groups have expressed a desire to repeat this in future and plans are now in place for a programme to include the Mozart Mass in C minor in Autumn 2025.

While the Brahms is very much standard repertoire, the Christmas concert was an opportunity for us to continue our commitment to exploring repertoire by underperformed composers (in this case focusing on composers from Africa, Asia and Latin America) alongside pieces we sang the previous year when some people didn't get a chance to perform them due to a concert being cancelled. I think it's fair to say that the new repertoire was out of many people's comfort zone to varying degrees when we started but the hard work put into it really paid off as they were some of the pieces which got the most positive response from the audience.

The spring concert was based around one of the pieces from the choir library which a significant number of people had said they would like to perform again - Lauridsen's "Lux aeterna". I was extremely pleased with the choral sound we were able to achieve in this concert, with the experimentation around mixing up and memorising both extremely effective. While I wouldn't expect either of these to be regular occurrences, I do think that both are worth returning to every so often as they really help with focus and listening.

The summer concerts were a complete contrast but also very enjoyable. A huge thanks in particular to everyone who did readings as the format of this programme received an excellent response from audiences and is something we should perhaps consider repeating in future. It was also good to sing in some places where the choir hasn't performed for a long time and I am keen that we keep performing regularly outside Edinburgh so we can live up to our name. This has generally worked best where someone in the choir has a local connection and can help with publicity in particular. Please do share any ideas you have around future possibilities for this.

Looking ahead to this season, we have an exciting range of repertoire, including two brand new pieces written specifically for us by Kevin Leomo and Ailie Robertson and a continued exploration of underperformed repertoire by composers such as Sulpitia Cesis and Hyo-Won Woo alongside popular classics. We have had great feedback on some of this less well

known repertoire from audiences but it does present a challenge for drawing audiences so please keep spreading the word about our concerts.

As with last year, our overall membership is now at a healthy level, but we are a bit imbalanced between parts and it would be great to have some more tenors and basses. Please remember to keep spreading the word about singing with us as word of mouth is always the best way to generate interest.

Finally, a huge thanks to everyone who works so hard to run the choir and in particular the committee who are a pleasure to work with. A particular thanks to those who are stepping back for all your hard work over the last few years.