

## MD's report for Aylesbury Festival Choir 2023-2024

The first use of 'small but perfectly formed' is believed to be 1779 in an article describing a newly discovered aquatic animal. The most recent use is by me in describing Aylesbury Festival Choir! I know we only have, at most, 2 basses but the balance is good, and the choir continues to tackle increasingly more demanding programmes with huge success.

December's Choral Classics programme was superb with a huge range of styles from a cappella Tallis to Rutter's *Winchester Te Deum*. The Rheinberger *Stabat Mater* was exquisite from start to finish and the Bach had a very youthful and exciting sound.

There were no soloists so the whole programme was down to AFC. Impressive!

Ben's accompanying was, as always, superb.

The Family Carol Concert was put together, as usual, in very little time and, again, was a very happy occasion. It was the first concert in our new rehearsal venue and definitely benefitted from having a real live Christmas Dog in attendance! There was a reasonable sized audience – possibly helped by being in the school holiday and at 4pm. This year will be different so it will be interesting to compare.

The Spring Concert was met with mixed views by singers and learning those 4 works in just 14 rehearsals was very hard work.

In the end, this huge undertaking went off with a bang with very few 'wobbly' moments.

Texts were clear, tuning was good and a little help from our soloist, Felicity, definitely gave proceedings a lift.

Rowena, substituting for Neil, performed brilliantly both musically & technically. Amazing support in concert as well as in rehearsals. Thanks Rowena!

As I write, rehearsals are underway for our summer concert: Ellington, Beatles, Gershwin and *Captain Noah*. I have no doubt that AFC will deliver the goods in this concert too.

Next season is going to be just as much fun: Poulenc's *Gloria*, Aylett's *Elegy* & Rutter's *Feel the Spirit* will give us plenty to get our teeth into and then, in May, a joint concert with Amchor performing Rutter's *Requiem* and *Magnificat* with the British Sinfonietta.

I know Kate will mention this but we're still struggling to recruit new members. Especially basses. We may have to launch a much bigger campaign to attract new singers into what is certainly one of the most versatile singing groups in the area!

My thanks to all the committee for their support throughout the year and all others who join Team AFC to help at various times. None of these fantastic concerts would happen without you.

Here's to another wonderful year of music making!

Nick (May 2024)