

## Twickenham Choral Conductor's Report 2021

Just a reminder - my 2020 report was dubbed 'The Covid-19 Season' and a year ago we were feeling fairly sorry for ourselves having worked ourselves up so promisingly towards the spring 2020 concert with a repertoire of Pärt, Tye and Lassus (remember?) and subsequently having had the summer completely wiped out. On the plus side I was able to report on two really amazing concerts we had actually performed in that season, one at St Martin-in-the-Fields on 28 September 2019 (remember?) and one at Cadogan Hall on 4 January 2020 (again, remember?).

Little did any of us know at that point that the WHOLE of the 2020/2021 season would be virtually VIRTUAL. There have been moments of hope. There were seven glorious weeks in the autumn when we were allowed by government decree to get together in St Catherine's under strict Covid rules. We were led to believe it would lead to a further relaxation of the rules and possibly a concert. But no, that was not to be. The spring term and the summer term went by with hope occasionally dangled in front of us. The last weeks of the summer term were trumpeted as the final opening up only to be told that choirs (unlike pop concerts and football) could meet indoors only in groups of up to six and outdoors only in groups of up to thirty. Our hoped for event at the Landmark Centre was duly cancelled and therefore a select group of us congregated for a couple of weeks at **Brentford and Isleworth's Quaker Burial Ground** and we made live music. The season's **Grand Finale** was on **Saturday 3 July 2021** also at the Burial Ground, when we sang twelve motets/anthems by Byrd, Tallis, Purcell, Blow and others to a very appreciative audience of six brave choir husbands and friends!

These three live get-togethers were for me a welcome confirmation that the choir can still proudly hold its head up high both musically and technically, even in the enforced conditions of singing socially distanced, singing in the open air, singing directly under a flight path, and singing with only a relatively small proportion of the choir. Twickenham Choral is still a force to be reckoned with and we will be back! We are raring to go once the starter's gun finally and irreversibly sounds. There are for instance three new sopranos waiting eagerly in the wings to transfer from virtual to live and I am sure they won't be our only new choral friends.

During the seemingly endless lockdown period, Rebecca is owed our gratitude for finding all those excellent professional recordings which many of us enjoyed singing along to in our lonely garrets (some of you with those often preposterous electronic backgrounds), as well as dropping hints to keep our singing technique up to scratch. She and I, and later on helped out by Chris Britton and Lisa Colclough, endeavoured to train you up in a range of repertoire including Rachmaninov's 'Vespers', Handel's 'Messiah', Roxanna Panufnik's 'Wild Musick' and a large helping of English Renaissance and Restoration church music. We certainly haven't been wasting our time or sitting on our hands.

I want to thank everyone for sticking with the choir through thick and thin. Numbers at the Zoom rehearsals were generally healthy, declining only in the last weeks as any sort of concert became unlikely. By the way, those who didn't Zoom have my total sympathy! The Officers and Committee have all along tried their very best to react to events as positively as the drear circumstances would allow.

Next term, as we build up to our Centenary, we plan to perform **C.P.E. Bach's 'Magnificat'** and **Handel's 'Dixit Dominus'** on **11 December 2021** at the **Landmark Centre**.

Our actual **Centenary Celebration** is planned to run through **2022**, and a luxurious **Centenary Booklet** is already at an advanced stage of preparation.

We will sing **Mendelssohn's 'Elijah'** on **12 March 2022** at **Cadogan Hall** marking exactly 100 years since the Society's first public concert in which 'Elijah' featured.

**A Gala Concert** on **16 April 2022 (NB Easter Saturday)** at **St Mary's Twickenham** will include **Roxanna Panufnik's 'Wild Musick'** and a reception at York House is planned in conjunction.

Our special Centenary commission **Iain Farrington's 'Jazz Cantata'** along with **Mozart's C minor Mass** will be performed on **2 July 2022** at **All Saints Kingston**.

The calendar year of festivities will climax with **Bach's B minor Mass** in **December 2022**.

Christopher