



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday 12 September 2022 at 7.30pm
Balfron Church

Present: Kirsty Allan, Ken Allen, Amy Anderson, Pat Ashworth, Joyce Begg, Liz Brander, Roland Brooks, Catherine Davidson-Carr, Pamela Dymott, Gerry Eckersley, Mark Evans, Philip Gaskell, Victoria Glasse-Davies, Madeleine Gorham, Richard Green, Joan Hoggan, Mary Lawson, John Macdonald, Sheena McLean, Judith Neil, Bill Noblett, Carol Omand, Anne Parker, Fiona Renfrew, Annette Rogers, Isobel Shaw, Ewing Wallace. Apologies were received from Jennifer Lunn and Julia Cross.

1. Philip welcomed new members Joan Hoggan (alto), Roland Brook (tenor) and Luda Sayenko (soprano)

2. **Minutes**

The minutes from the AGM 2021 were accepted as correct. Proposed by Philip Gaskell and seconded by Catherine Davidson-Carr.

3. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Chair's report**

Philip encouraged people to get to know the new people who have joined the choir. He spoke of the sad loss of Iain Howie and also said that John Smith is sadly not coming back to choir because of health issues. Philip finished by thanking the committee and Mark.

5. **Treasurer report**

Bill commented on the financial report which had been sent out previously. Gift aid had fallen as subscriptions had fallen. (90% of

subscriptions are eligible for gift aid.) We have also not had coffee donations to get gift aid on. Bill commented that the earlier concert was popular and this may be a learning re timings, but revenues for concerts are dropping overall as audiences are getting smaller. Other choirs charge a little more for their concerts and we may need to think about this. Membership numbers have fallen therefore income from this has also dropped. The number of Friends has increased and Bill thanked Anne and Lock's work for this. There was also a little income from Easy Fundraising and Amazon Smile. Advertising was quite difficult last year because of the financial situation. The Ukraine donation of £1853 was made up of over £1000 of donations on the concert night plus a percentage of the takings for tickets. Edyta also kindly donated her accompanist's fee for which we thank her.

With regard to other expenditure, there were no accompanists' fees in 2020-21 hence the increase this year (2021-22). There were no charges for photocopying the programme thanks to Bill's contacts and supplying his own paper. Web support expenditure was lower.

The financial report was proposed as correct by Vicky Glasse-Davies and seconded by Judith Neil.

6. Music Director's report

Well, isn't it good to be back to normal! It has been so good to be able to make music together, back in person, this past year – thank you all and welcome back!

I'd say given the fact that we had time off and with a few cobwebs to dust down we have done well. I know that for a number of reasons last September we were not at full strength and it is lovely to have more members joining us again this term.

Looking back at the Christmas concert it was lovely to be able to perform the Messe de Minuit again in a concert with a slightly different format to

normal. The slightly shorter concert performed twice in the same evening worked well and probably suited well where we were in terms of Covid. I thought the choir's performance of the Charpentier was super and it suited the slightly reduced numbers we had – even more so by the time of the concert with various call-offs! The young quartet very much enjoyed the opportunity to play with us and indeed managed very well. Their own short contribution of Sleighride was as ever, a lovely addition enjoyed by the audience.

It was a lovely opportunity to perform at least two of the pieces which we had been rehearsing online, the Miskinis Cantate Domino (although we did not perform this in the concert) and the Nystedt Laudate – a good opener.

As ever, I enjoyed the Arnesen Cradle hymn which is so simple and so effective with the quartet helping to bring it to life.

It was great to have the chance to sing the repertoire twice of course, the second audience possibly post-dinner a little more lively!

Then to Spring, and the second term afforded yet more freedoms and we were able again to welcome our friends from Scottish Opera – lovely folk who are always a joy to work with.

This concert was of course pretty much our postponed 2020 concert and I was delighted that the choir jumped at the chance to perform that repertoire again.

The first half opened with Gjeilo's Ubi Caritas, performed most effectively by the choir and of course Edyta who really did a fabulous job of the improvisation on piano.

The opening of the Sunrise Mass is very difficult but I was very pleased with our performance (again with a few call offs), working so hard on these cluster chords – made a little easier with the addition of the strings. I enjoyed the energy throughout the Mass although that energy created a little ‘moment’ for me in the Credo. I do love the Ground, especially with the addition of the strings resulting in a rich, full sound from choir and band which then contrasted with a beautiful calm and serene close with controlled, sustained singing from the choir.

The second half included some incredible music, and some of my favourite Baltic repertoire

- the very moving Da Pacem Domine – so simple but so moving - the Ciurlionis Sanctus which was fantastic
- the Vasks Pater Noster which is so hauntingly beautiful and even more so I think with the orchestra doubling the chorus, helping to add to the drama of the climactic moments
- The Maldele where you all did magnificently well singing in Lithuanian – not easy! I am sure had our Lithuanian visitors been in the audience, they would have been impressed!
- The Vox Populi went very well indeed – on the surface seemingly simple but very tricky to lock all the rhythmic lines together – well done!
- and then the Flight Song by Arnesen – another of my favourites with which the choir really engaged and delivered the sentiment within.

Who would have known how appropriate our programme was going to be in relation to events in Eastern Europe in March but it was very moving indeed to be able to play the Melodia and particularly to finish with the Prayer For Ukraine after which there was such silence and stillness – very emotional and a fitting end.

As we move to this session and Christmas, the bulk of the concert will be Chilcott's On Christmas Night. I have been in touch with the Faculty Head of Performing Arts at Balfron High and am keen to have her choir involved with us in this piece as well as singers from my own school. I know folks at Balfron are keen and I would hope that as well as helping to swell our audience numbers, it will also help our profile in the community.

Spring Term will be as I have indicated Rutter's Requiem and all being well the Duruflé Requiem. I say that as the Duruflé is challenging and I would like to see how our numbers look across this term before confirming. These two pieces can be performed with organ and various combinations of instruments, so easy to do in Killearn Kirk.

As ever, my thanks to all the committee working behind the scenes and to Viktoria who was with us until Christmas (and you might like to know has now started a two year accompaniment fellowship at Bard University in the States) and then Edyta who joined us in January and continues with us this term.

I am looking forward to the year and having the chance to make more great music with you all!

Thank you.

7. Committee: re-election of office bearers

Bill announced that this would be his last year as Treasurer, having held the post for nine years. Amy is stepping down as secretary this year, after three years. Philip asked for new people to take up the roles, particularly secretary.

8. The way ahead

Philip noted that there were 27 people present with a possible 8 more to attend, making numbers stand at 35. We need to try and get this back up to 40 if possible. We also need to think about audience building.

Bill asked for help with Twitter and Facebook in order to promote the choir. Mark commented that to be most effective, there has to be continuous communication. There is evidence that some people are hearing about our concerts through Facebook.

9. AOB

It was decided that the choir would meet on the evening of 19 September, despite the bank holiday for Queen Elizabeth's funeral.