

ACS Musical Notes

Autumn 2023 Newsletter



AYLESBURY
Choral Society



This newsletter is a new venture and is freely available to all those interested in Aylesbury Choral Society (ACS), their friends and sponsors, members and concert-goers. We hope that you find this both enjoyable and informative to read, and that your interest in ACS might be piqued further.

As a choral society, we had a most successful year 2022-2023, the first that felt really 'back to normal' since the trials of Covid. We started with our Christmas concert of two very contrasting works: Benjamin Britten's much loved *Ceremony of Carols* with Imogen Ridge on the harp, together with the much less familiar and, even, new to many: Saint-Saëns *Christmas Oratorio*. This was a most enjoyable winter concert and it was supported by some great soloists and, of course, our own Colin Spinks on the organ. Then, in April, we sang to a sell-out audience the ever-popular and delightful *Creation* by Joseph Haydn. This is a great favourite but is not actually performed that frequently at present. It was certainly the first time by ACS in a number of years. We performed with an orchestra and three absolutely tremendous soloists. Many members of the audience expressed how moving the performance was and we had a great write-up in the Bucks Herald (e-version) afterwards. If you would like to read this, it can still be found at <https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/arts-and-culture/aylesbury-choral-society-inspire-with-fantastic-haydn-the-creation-performance-4103887>. To quote one passage: "...if you've never heard the Aylesbury Choral Society before, or any choral music come to that, this would have been a fantastic evening to start." And again: "If you're ready to confine the doom and gloom of the last few years to the rubbish bin of history and get out and about again, you could do a lot worse than being an audience member of the next ACS concert..." What an accolade!

Finally, in June, we performed a concert of two halves: the first consisted of our more traditional fare of anthems and motets which ranged from Gibbons's *Almighty and Everlasting God* to Arvo Pärt's haunting *The Beatitudes*. The second took on a lighter form, including songs from Cole Porter, Harold Arlen and classics such as *The Teddy Bears' Picnic* and *I do like to be beside the seaside*. The music was either a cappella or accompanied on the piano or organ, once again by Colin Spinks. It was a smaller scale concert than for our previous ones but this was a lovely evening to get the summer off to great start and was widely appreciated by all who were there.

The 2023 - 2024 concert season

(all at St Mary's Church, Aylesbury, 7:30pm):

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| Saturday 25th November, 2023 | Bach: <i>Christmas Oratorio</i> (with orchestra) |
| Saturday 23rd March, 2024 | "Magnificat" - magnificats by a range of composers, e.g. Vivaldi, Bach, Purcell, etc. (with orchestra) |
| Saturday 15th June, 2024 | programme to be confirmed but largely a cappella |

The 2023 - 2024 concert season - our ticket prices:

		Whole-season tickets (3 concerts):
Adults:	£16 (£18 on the door)	£45
Under 18:	£6 (£7 on the door)	£15

Music and singing is at the centre of life

Music is one of the greatest gifts that we humans possess. It is the oldest form of communication and expression in the history of humanity, older than language or art. It speaks to the very heart of our experience and is there at all the major events of our lives. Consider for a moment: birthdays, weddings, funerals, singing in the stands of sporting events, inside the heads of many of those young and not so young people constantly with their ear pieces stuck in their ears, in the supermarkets and on railway stations (some!), on the television - it's everywhere and in everything (or most things) that we do. Singing is especially important: from singing 'Happy Birthday' on appropriate occasions to humming in the shower, to our places of worship, etc., etc. Singing speaks particularly to our hearts and minds as it is so personal; it comes from our insides and is more *part* of us than performing on any other musical instrument. Songs link those two vital forms of communication: language and music. It was Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 - 1822) who, in his poem, '*Music*', wrote:

*I pant for the music which is divine,
My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;
Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,
Loosen the notes in a silver shower;
Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,
I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.*

WE, at ACS, are the makers of this music, the quenchers of this thirst! As members of ACS, we have a great responsibility: to enjoy ourselves, of course; but, also, to bring this music and song into the lives of others. We have a particular responsibility for the people of Aylesbury and the wider area: to encourage a greater involvement in music - both by singing with us or other choirs and/or by coming along to our concerts.

Sponsorship: becoming a 'Friend' of ACS

Our expenses every year are large and we are now considering offering schemes for individuals, groups and businesses to support the choir and to be part of the musical life of this area. More news on this in the near future; but, if you would like to become a 'friend' and to sponsor the choir with a regular contribution to our work, please do contact our chairman on acschairman@gmail.com and he would be very happy to discuss options with you.

Would you like to join us?

If you are interested in becoming a member of ACS, do come along to a couple of rehearsals - free of charge - to try out what it is like to sing with us. After this trial period, you will be asked to do a short voice assessment so that we can tell which is the best voice section for you. Being able to read music is an advantage but by no means essential and we give help with learning the music, e.g. by providing audio rehearsal files and Internet links to note-learning websites or within the rehearsals themselves. Please contact our membership secretary at moira.membership@gmail.com or our chairman, Chris Dalladay, at acschairman@gmail.com. We meet at The Church on Fairford Leys, Hampden Square, Aylesbury HP19 7HT on Tuesdays during school term times at 7:30pm. Music will be provided.

We hold 'Open' rehearsals on the 2nd Tuesday of each term - all are welcome.