



# Winchester Music Club

## Chairman's Newsletter

### Summer 2015

I hope you are having a good summer and are able to enjoy the lovely weather we are having. We have an exciting season planned. Under the baton of our new conductor, David Thomas, we will be performing Handel's *Messiah* in its original edition in Winchester Cathedral on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and Strauss *Horn Concerto no. 1* and Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* in the Performing Arts Centre at St. Swithun's School on March 19<sup>th</sup> 2016.

Looking back at the last year, it seems a long time ago that we had Nick's farewell concert in New Hall, and even further away that we performed *The Dream of Gerontius* in the Cathedral. Both were hugely successful performances, thoroughly enjoyed by all the performers and our audiences alike. There are photos and critiques on the website. The Come and Sing Handel's *Coronation Anthems* workshop led by Oliver Tarney was also very enjoyable and once again the sun shone as we picnicked outside.

In May we held a party to thank Nick for his huge contribution to the Club. We presented him with a Georgian style music stand and a book of messages from members past and present that included a compilation of extracts from concert programmes and photos from rehearsals etc. A low resolution version of this part of the book can be downloaded from the website, on the "History" page in the "About Us" section. A donation was made to Buskaid with the majority of the money that had been generously donated. As you can see below, they were extremely grateful and will use it to buy new strings for the student's instruments.

We received this letter of thanks from Buskaid:

*I would be very grateful if you could pass on this thank-you letter to all the members of the Winchester Music Club who so generously contributed to the cheque for Buskaid on Nicholas Wilks' departure as conductor. We have received your cheque for £700 safely, and have been considering how best the money might be spent.*

*Rosemary Nalden, the Director of the Buskaid Music School in Soweto, has been discussing possible uses for your kind donation with Nicholas, and it has been agreed that the money will be spent on new strings for the Buskaid students' instruments. As you can imagine, the music school is in constant need of strings, especially as many of the more advanced students require high quality strings, which can be quite expensive.*

*As you know, the aim of our organisation is to give young people from Soweto the opportunity to explore and fulfil their musical potential, through high quality tuition on the violin, viola, cello and double bass at the Buskaid Music School in Diepkloof. Your donation will enable them this to continue, and we are very grateful for your contribution to our work.*

*With many thanks to all the choir members once again,  
With very best wishes,*

*Mary-Jannet Leith, Administrator, Buskaid UK*

I also had a lovely letter of thanks from Nick:

*I don't really know to begin to thank you and the choir for your generosity on Friday night. The generosity in terms of the wonderful gifts was extraordinary. The music stand is exquisite, and will goad me into doing some proper clarinet practice and score-learning – it looks magnificent in our drawing room, but I shall have to make sure that Iseabail doesn't commandeer it too often! As you know, Buskaid has been dear to my heart since I first visited the project in Soweto in 1997 – it seems like yesterday. The choir's gift is a really significant donation – Rosemary Nalden, who runs the project tirelessly, never knows when the funding is going to come in, and the project is heavily oversubscribed. Donations of this kind really matter, and I'm deeply moved that the choir thought about this use for their gift. Not a penny will be wasted. Perhaps the most generous gesture on Friday was the book. It is priceless beyond measure, and will be poured over by me for many years to come. It's a perfect reminder not just of the concerts but of the rehearsals, which are perhaps even more precious than the performances themselves. It was lovely to read of all the things the singers value most about WMC, and the things which seem to emerge time after time are the sense of fun and the energy of sheer hard work, and how these two things are essential to each other. There is a curious paradox about making music – it's fundamentally about people and human relationships, but in order for this to work you have to put the music first. I can't claim to understand why this is so, but it is, and I'm enormously grateful to everyone for making it possible over twelve unforgettable years of great music-making. You've all been wonderful at coping with my unreasonable demands and my lack of organisation!*

It is now only a month before we start rehearsing for Handel's Messiah on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September. The rehearsal starts at 7:30pm with "Halleluljah!" but please come at 6:45pm to have a glass of wine or fruit juice, hire scores (New Novello, Watkins Shaw (1992) edition (catalogue number 07 0137)) and meet up with other members old and new. For those of you who prefer not to pay your fees by bank transfer you will be able to give Andrew cheques, taking advantage of the £5 discount for prompt payment.

David Thomas will be giving an illustrated pre-concert talk at 7pm on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October in the Music School Hall. It will be entitled: 'Handel's *Messiah* - Towards an original version' and will last about an hour. This will be free of charge and all are welcome.

This year's AGM will be before the rehearsal on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September at 7:00pm. We will aim to keep it as brief as possible so that the rehearsal can start as near to 7:30pm as possible. Please consider joining the committee in whatever role you can as at present several of us are doing more than one job and would happily share the load. The formal notice of the meeting will be sent out soon.

Following careful consideration the Executive Committee has resolved that the annual subscription for membership of Winchester Music Club for the season 2015/6 will be £105, but reduced to £100, in accordance with the constitution, if paid by the end of the second rehearsal of the autumn term. Payment may be made at rehearsal or, preferably, by direct credit to our bank account, account name "Winchester Music Club", sort code 55 81 26 and account number 00343323 (indicating your name as reference). For those eligible to claim Gift Aid, the Gift Aid element will be £75 or £70 for the lower contribution. You are reminded that there are restrictions on the extent to which individual taxpayers can claim Gift Aid. We will assume that all those who

have indicated that they can claim Gift Aid remain eligible, but please speak to our Treasurer, Andrew Carruthers, if you are in doubt, particularly if your income is no longer subject to income tax following recent changes in allowances.

With costs for concerts continuing to rise we need to sell as many tickets as possible. Elizabeth Newport will start selling tickets to performers and Friends at the first rehearsal on 4<sup>th</sup> September. More details and a booking form to download will be on the website. Tickets will be on sale to the public from the Cathedral box office from September 14<sup>th</sup>. Prices range from £10 to £35.

Another way to fund concerts is by selling advertising space in concert programmes. If you can suggest someone who might be interested in this opportunity please let me know. Our advertising rates are very modest so even small businesses might be interested. We are also looking for more ways to publicise our concerts. Please take copies of the posters and flyers when available and display them on notice boards, windows and front hedges, etc. Word of mouth works really well, so tell everyone you meet or perhaps add a strap line to your email signature. All ideas and volunteers to help are very welcome.

Please do keep looking at the website, Arden works hard to keep it up to date and in addition to details of our concerts and rehearsals there are details of other events that might be of interest and contact details and photos of committee members. Please introduce yourselves to Sula and Gabi, the Voice Reps. Through them you can pass on your good ideas, requests or grumbles to the committee.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who made the 2014-15 season such a success and I hope to see you on 4<sup>th</sup> September to start the 2015-16 season and to make it as enjoyable and memorable as the last.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Angela." followed by a period.

Angela Ryde-Weller, Chairman