

## Music Director's Report Jubilate Singers for the year ending 31 January 2020.

It is with great pleasure that I present my first report as Music Director of Jubilate Singers. The year was a very successful one for the choir with the presentation of three major concerts: *Simply Divine: sacred music throughout the ages* at Knox Church on the evening of Saturday 6 April; *Swingers! – hot choral jazz from cool classical dudes* at A Rolling Stone Restaurant & Bar on the afternoon and evening of Saturday 22 June; and *The Orient Express*, as special guests of Risingholme Orchestra, at The Piano on the afternoon of Sunday 10 November.

There were also a further four outings with as many members involved as available. These were: participation in *Singfest*, 24 August with 'pop-up' performances at The Great Hall, Arts Centre and Fat Eddie's jazz and blues bar; a performance at 'The Windows Club', Rangi Ruru staff room, a women's club that happened to meet on Monday evenings, the Jubilate's weekly rehearsal night; evening carol singing at Christchurch hospital on 9 December; and carol singing on the afternoon of 14 December, at the request of the Arts Centre at various venues within the campus. For the latter two events the choir sang under the baton of our deputy music director, Denis Guyan.

We were very well served by various soloists and instrumentalists in these concerts: Sarah-Jane Rennie soprano, James Baines baritone, Daniel Cooper organist and Matthew Harris double bass in *Simply Divine*; Ted Meager drums, Hamish Smith bass, and Tony Hale folk guitar in *Swingers!*; and of course the Risingholme Orchestra in *The Orient Express*. Musical highlights were many and include, for me, the engrossing *Crucifixus a 16 voci* by Antonio Caldari, Brahms's *Nanie* and a beautiful Bulgarian folksong sung by the women of our choir in *Orient Express*; and watching members of our choir step out in *Swingers!*, with solos, duets and trios and even instrumental licks.

My task as musical director is made considerable easier by the keyboard skills of Denis Guyan and Rosemary Allison; both have contributed greatly to the smooth running of our rehearsals by willingly assisting as accompanists. My appreciation also to Felicity Ward O'Brien, for her assistance in coaching during sectionals.

That Jubilate Singers is in such good heart is testimony to the strength of the choir's administration, and in particular the work of co-presidents Lois Chick and Janine Heeringa whose combined governance and human resources skills are exceptional, our ever-willing, ever-smiling, indispensable secretary Vivien Hicks and our science-brained treasurer Nina Koele who provides much-needed ballast for the higher flights of fancy I entertain. Thanks also to Rachael Hawkey for words of encouragement and for taking responsibility for programme-note writing.

But perhaps my biggest vote of thanks needs to go to our amazingly patient and meticulous librarian Steph Gilks without whom we would be singing everything by ear and from memory. The music librarian's task is huge, but of course we all know this, which is why we always return our music on time and free of pencil markings.

As regards planning for the future, I have been keeping various points in mind.

1. That we need to broaden our audience base
2. That we need to continue to attract and encourage young singers
3. That we need to increase core membership particularly of basses and tenors
4. That we need to continue to be a choir known for its delivery of high-quality performances.

My overall compass though has been the Jubilate motto of 'Joy in Singing' – joy for the audiences as well as the performers. Joy comes in many forms including having music that is pleasurable to sing and that challenges us (but not to the point of frustration). Joy is having a great time in rehearsals but also in the savouring of improvement at each turn. Joy is in the friendship that membership of the choir can bring. Joy is also experiencing the magic choral moments when our whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts.

- Philip Norman, Music Director, Jubilate Singers, 29 June 2020