

HEREFORD
CHORAL
SOCIETY

Friends & Patrons Secretary
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Dear

Hereford Choral Society will be presenting some iconic and inspirational works for its 2016/17 season. To start the season on the 19th November, we will be performing the profoundly moving Dvorak's "Stabat Mater". It is intense, dramatic and passionate – a choral masterpiece that has the power to move performers and listeners to tears. The annual performance of Handel's "Messiah" by candlelight takes place on the 10th December and our final concert on the 25th March features Haydn's *Harmoniemesse* & Poulenc's *Stabat Mater*. Haydn's last major work, the *Harmoniemesse* was written in 1802; it is known as the Harmony Mass because of the prominence of the wind ensemble, the German terminology being "Harmonie". Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* was composed in the summer of 1950 and displays the more introspective side of a composer generally known for his comic compositions.

We hope you enjoyed the 2015/16 season which started with Brahms' masterpiece, *Ein deutsches Requiem* and the exquisitely crafted *Five Mystical Songs* by Vaughan Williams. Our performances of Handel's *Messiah* seem to improve with each passing year and his *Alexander's Feast* was a real joy to sing. Geraint Bowen's talk on the work, organised specifically for the Friends & Patrons, was extremely well received and helped set the scene for this rarely performed work. Local artist, Diana Nuttall, displayed some of her latest work and gave a short talk on the abstract and natural forms she uses to produce highly individual results. Diana kindly produced a triptych composition based on *Alexander's Feast* and this is now hanging in the breakfast room at Southbank House, along with some of her other works inspired by the undulating hills and valleys of her surrounding landscape. Geraint has kindly offered to give another talk on Tuesday 14th March from 11:00 – 12:30 which will be held at Aylestone Court Hotel. I'll send out details nearer the time but please bookmark the date.

The Sing for Fun workshop, featuring Faure's *Requiem* will be taking place on the 25th February at Aylestone Business College, Broadlands Lane, Hereford HR1 1HY from 10:00 – 13:00. This is a hugely popular event, led by Geraint Bowen with Peter Dyke as our accompanist so do book your tickets early, either through me or through the Courtyard. Tickets (£15) will be available for sale from the 1st October 2016.

One of the benefits of being a Friend/Patron is that you can book your tickets before the general ticket sales begin on the 1st October, hence ensuring your choice of seats (subject to availability). Should you wish me to organise your tickets (no booking fee to pay) please complete the form in the enclosed leaflet and return this to me at your earliest convenience and certainly by the 1st September, with an SAE. Please note that cheques should be made out to "The Courtyard Theatre"

as The Courtyard is now managing our concert tickets. Patrons: please remember to deduct your 10% discount on all ticket purchases.

Details of the **Friends & Patrons Scheme** can be found on the back of the enclosed flier. You will observe that there is now a special rate for couples with Patrons at £85 and Friends at £35 (there is no change to the individual price despite what the flier suggests!). If you fall into either of these new categories please complete and return the membership form to me. If you pay by Standing Order you will need to complete a new standing order form and send it to your bank by the 7th September. For those who pay by cheque, please make your cheque payable to "Hereford Choral Society". Should you wish to convert from a Friend to a Patron you can do so for the discounted rate of £60 & if your circumstances have not changed in the past 12 months, just ignore the enclosed forms. Phew!

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Hilary Markland, Southbank House, 34 Southbank Road, Hereford, HR1 2TJ.

Hereford Choral Society has an enviable reputation for fine choral singing within and beyond the county and the Friends & Patrons are an integral part of supporting and promoting this great musical tradition. As an expression of this support, would the Friends & Patrons consider launching a promotional fund raising activity? It is incredibly important that we are able to maintain our standards by engaging high quality soloists and orchestras; it is also important that we encourage young singers as they are our future and we need to reach out to wider audiences to ensure the perpetuation of the society. Please do mention your suggestions in the designated area at the bottom of this letter, or send an e-mail & we can then organise an informal meeting to pursue ideas.

I admit to complete failure in keeping the F&P web page up to date! However, I will be putting some notes gleaned from the internet on the Dvorak and Poulenc *Stabat Mater* in a belated effort to remedy the oversight.

I look forward to seeing you at our pre-concert receptions, held in the north transept from 18:30.

Best wishes,

Hilary Markland

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Suggestions for a promotional fund raising activity