



# Orpheus News

November 2016

Aberdeen Orpheus Choir 2011

## ***A thankyou from Stella***

I apologise for the lateness of this article but I missed the last issue of Orpheus News. That is little excuse but time seems to fly past, probably as a result of my advanced years!! I can't imagine that in 1956 when I was asked to come to the Orpheus little did I think I would still be a member in 2016!!

I would like to thank the Choir and in particular last year's Committee for making my 60th year with the Choir so memorable. I was thrilled with the beautiful brooch with which Graeme presented me at the Civic Reception and which I will always wear with pride, I have had it put on a chain so that it cannot be lost, stolen or stray while I am wearing it. The jewellers at Jamieson & Carry have made a very good job ensuring that it lies perfectly and on a suitable chain, and I have been given dispensation to wear it with my Choir dress. I will remember the Orpheus each time I wear it.

I was completely surprised when Jane asked me to come to the front of the platform to receive Life Membership of the Choir before a packed audience at Queens Cross Church. I am not used to being in the lime-light but since that time I have been congratulated by complete

strangers. The bouquet Jane presented me with was beautiful and lasted for almost a month. I don't know when all the arrangements for these were made but they managed to by-pass me!!

I would lie if I said I don't miss the Secretarial duties and being in the thick of organisation which I thoroughly enjoyed but I did think that the time had come to give up and pass the position to someone younger who has fresh ideas and I am certain Susan will serve you well. I wish to thank all those who helped me in any way - successive Presidents and Committee Members, past Conductors and Choir Members past and present, all of whom I thoroughly enjoyed working with both musically and administratively.

I must say I have enjoyed sixty happy years with the Choir and have made many friends along the way, and have certainly learned to appreciate different forms of music, 99% of which I enjoyed practising and performing. I don't know how much longer I will be able to be in the Choir, but I hope my voice will sound reasonable and blend in with my colleagues in the Alto Section for a while yet!! Please Jane, tell me if I become a nuisance as I would hate to spoil an excellent Choir with an aged voice!!

In closing I would like to thank our current Conductor and Accompanist-Jane and Erika. They are two lovely ladies whom I enjoy working with and greatly admire for their musical expertise and for the variety of music which is chosen for us and performed to a very high standard and to Graeme our current President, who is a computer wizard who puts our practice tapes on computer to make learning the notes easier for us and to his Committee for the hard work they do on our behalf.

With best wishes for the future to all Members and supporters of Aberdeen Orpheus Choir.

Stella

## ***Festive Flick***

If you fancy watching a festive film in the run up to Christmas that relates to our beloved hobby, why not give 'The Christmas Choir' a try? It's based on a true story about a man called Pierre Anthian and the Montreal Accrual Bonneau Choir from, eh, Montreal. Pierre started volunteering at a homeless shelter and he and the residents started up the choir. This is a made for TV, straight to DVD film so is probably complete tosh, but it's got Rhea Perlman (Carla from Cheers) in it, which is enough of a recommendation to include this tip in the newsletter. Plus it's available from Amazon, so if you go to Amazon via our website, the choir will be raking in the wonga!

Ed.

## ***The Choir With No Name***

Speaking of choirs for homeless people, The Choir With No Name is a charity in England that currently runs 4 choirs for homeless and marginalized people in London, Birmingham and Liverpool.

They were founded on the premise that singing makes you feel good; it distracts you from all the nonsense in life and helps you to build up your confidence and ability. It looks like they're doing some great work with people and if you'd like to find out a bit more about them, click here - <http://choirwithnoname.org/>

They've also got some recordings of them singing on the site including versions of Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush's 'Don't Give Up' and The White Stripes' 'Seven Nation Army'.

Ed.

## ***A choir-related Christmas story***

### **The C-C-Choir Boy - a short story by Fred Bauer**

*Disclaimer. For the atheists and agnostics out there, this story contains mild religious sentiment. Ed.*

Everyone was surprised- everyone except Mrs. Brown, the choir director—when Herbie showed up in November to rehearse for the church's annual Christmas cantata.

Mrs. Brown wasn't surprised because she had persuaded Herbie to "at least try." That was an accomplishment, for lately he had quit trying nearly everything—reciting in class, playing ball or even asking his brothers or sisters to pass the potatoes.

It was easy to understand: He stuttered. Not just a little, either, and sometimes when his tongue spun on a word, like a car on ice, the kids laughed. Not a big ha-ha laugh, but you can tell when people are laughing at you even if you're only nine.

Mrs. Brown had figured Herbie could sing with the other tenors—Charley and Billy—and not have any trouble, which is exactly the way it worked. Billy was given the only boy's solo and the rest of the time the three of them sang in unison, until Charley contracted the measles. Even so, Billy had a strong voice and Herbie knew he could follow him.

At 7:15, the night of the cantata, a scrubbed and combed Herbie arrived at church, wearing a white shirt, a new blue and yellow bow tie and his only suit, a brown one with high-water pant legs. Mrs. Brown was waiting for him at the door.

"Billy is home in bed with the flu," she said. "You'll have to sing the solo." Herbie's thin face grew pale.

"I c-c-can't," he answered.

"We need you," Mrs. Brown insisted.

It was unfair. He wouldn't do it. She couldn't make him. All of these thoughts tumbled through Herbie's mind until Mrs. Brown told him this: "Herbie, I know you can do this—with God's help. Across from the choir loft is a stained-glass window showing the manger scene. When you sing the solo, I want you to sing it only to the Baby Jesus. Forget that there is anyone else present. Don't even glance at the audience." She looked at her watch. It was time for the programme to begin.

"Will you do it?"

Herbie studied his shoes. “I’ll t-t-try,” he finally answered in a whisper.

A long 20 minutes later, it came time for Herbie’s solo. Intently, he studied the stained-glass window. Mrs. Brown nodded, and he opened his mouth, but at that exact instant someone in the congregation coughed.

“H-H-Hallelujah,” he stammered. Mrs. Brown stopped playing and started over. Again Herbie fixed his eyes on the Christ Child. Again he sang.

“Hallelujah, the Lord is born,” his voice rang out, clear and confident. And the rest of his solo was just as perfect.

After the program, Herbie slipped into his coat and darted out the back door—so fast that Mrs. Brown had to run to catch him. From the top of the steps, she called, “Herbie, you were wonderful. Merry Christmas.” “Merry Christmas to you, Mrs. Brown,” he shouted back. Then turning, he raced off into the night through ankle-deep snow—with-out boots. But then he didn’t really need them. His feet weren’t touching the ground.

## ***Singing tips***

Here are a couple of singing tips that I have divined from a most trustworthy source of the greatest veracity (well, Google). Ed.

### **Are you singing through your nose?**

Sing an open vowel sound such as AH whilst pinching your nose. Listen to how your tone sounds. Does it sound normal? If it doesn’t or is difficult to do, then you are singing through your nose.

### **Open your mouth**

Cradle your face in your hands and gently pull down so that your jaw opens more than usual. Now try singing with your mouth in this position and see how much easier it feels to sing.

Just imagine how much sweeter your tone will sound singing along to Slade and Wizzard on Christmas Day after a few sherries? Ed.

## Aberdeen Orpheus Choir Dates for the Diary

Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> November	Rehearsal at Trinity Church, Westhill 7.15pm (Beside Aldi )
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	Christmas Concert at Trinity Church, Westhill - 7.30pm
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> December	Rehearsal at Craigiebukler Church 7.45pm
Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Concert at Craigiebukler Church 7.30pm (Followed by Pizza)
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> December	Crown Terrace Church Service 6.30pm



**Joy to the World!**

## 2017

Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> January	New session starts 7.15pm
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> May	Christian Aid Concert - Skene Parish Church 7.30pm
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> May	Summer Concert 7.30pm - venue TBC
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> May	Summer Concert at Aboyne



**HOLIDAYS!!**