



The community choir for Rotherhithe & Bermondsey, where local people come together to sing

RBCS Chair's Report February 2015 AGM

This year was my sixth year as Chair, and RBCS has continued to develop musically and in terms of how we manage the group. We have more singers, bigger audiences, more funding and more invitations to sing at community events. It gives me great satisfaction that we are now firmly established on the local map!

Music

We clocked up a great 'first' in the spring, when our Musical Director led us in performing Verdi's Requiem, a great favourite, supremely musical, emotional and very memorable. In the summer we sang George Shearing's jazz settings of songs from Shakespeare, accompanied by a characterful jazz double bass. In the autumn we ranged from the baroque (Buxtehude) to a 'hot off the press' setting of In Flanders Fields and including one of our very favourite contemporary works, Tavener's moving and tender The Lamb.

Come and Sing Event

With financial support from the Rotherhithe & Bermondsey Community Council we invited everyone to join us in singing choruses from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat by Andrew Lloyd Webber. It was a really musical afternoon, charming, with children and a baby, and a romantic tenor soloist filling in the storyline.

Raising Money for Charity

Choir members sang carols in our local pub and raised a healthy £60 for the Anthony Nolan cancer charity.

Audiences

We offered free entry to our concerts so as to attract as wide an audience as possible. Audiences have given generously as they leave, reflecting their enthusiastic support for our local music-making. The Verdi Requiem attracted our largest ever audience, spilling into the gallery at St James. In the summer we performed for the first time at St Peter's to many new faces and the Christmas concert at St Mary's was well attended. Patrons and local councillors often join us, which we much appreciate as we know how busy they always are.

Supporters

We had substantial funding from United St Saviour's Charity and our patron Prem Goyal for musicians at our performance of the Verdi Requiem. We received astonishingly generous donations from supporters who prefer to remain anonymous. St Mary's, St Peter's and St James churches gave us a warm welcome to use their spaces for our performances. Time & Talents provided rehearsal space and photocopying facilities. We are extremely grateful for all this support.

Publicity

This was the year when our social media presence, on facebook and twitter, really began to make itself felt, in addition to our usual paper posters/flyers and alerts on the choir website. We have always recognised that as a community choir, our core audience is family, friends and local supporters and so we rely on members bringing colleagues, neighbours, friends and families revel in the music and community buzz at our concerts.

Good practice

The choir continues to be a member of our national association, Making Music, which keeps us up to date with good practice. Our financial success this year, means that we must now seriously apply for registered charity status, which will enable us to apply to a wider range of organisations for grants, to benefit from charity tax concessions such as gift aid, and to secure free google advertising for our concerts.

And to come in 2015

The choir is very much a collective labour of love, and I thank all choir members and supporters for joining in, for their support, effort, skills, commitment, musical prowess and, of course, voices! We sang out to great effect in 2014 and I look forward to reaching yet further musical heights with you all in 2015.

Clare Birks
RBCS Chair 2014-15

Supported by Time & Talents and Prem Goyal OBE