

# AGM - 21 May 2019

## MUSICAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Firstly, let me say how very sorry I am not to be able to be with you all this evening, at the end of what has been a particularly wonderful year of music-making.

Autumn 2018 saw the preparation of a concert to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War. An opening half of shorter works was perfectly complemented by some carefully-selected war poetry, with Sarah Wynne stepping in at extremely short notice to sing for our soprano soloist, who was unwell. Duruflé's "Requiem" followed the interval, with baritone James Quilligan (fresh from the Monteverdi Choir Apprenticeship scheme with Sir John Eliot Gardiner) and organ soloist David Davies on fiery form. I still remember how Olivia Jane Gomez seemed to make time stand still during the solo movement "Pie Jesu".

Members of the choir then supported "Christmas at the Wellesley" with other Wellington music groups, a first for us all. We were also out in force for the Sing for Somerset carol service in Wells Cathedral, which for me - like many of you - now feels like the real start of my Christmas celebrations

There was some incredible work done during the Christmas/New Year gap, with a large number of new members turning up to sing the first St Matthew Passion rehearsal of 2019. I'm not sure what the committee did during the break, but please can we do it again before each new term!

And now to Bach, and a classy and very confident end to our great 'cycle' of the Christmas Oratorio, Mass in B minor and both major Passions. One of the great things about the St Matthew is the way that you never really know how well it is going to come together until you've got to the end. Performing it is a real test of stamina for everyone (including the audience), and I think we can all agree that their reaction summed it all up perfectly.

And now to the thanks. Firstly to all of you, for however you've contributed to Wellington Choral Society this year. Every poster you've put up, every note you've sung (including the wrong ones), every cup of tea you've made or every piece of staging you've dragged out of the trailer has made this year successful. No soloists, conductors or instrumentalists can make this kind of thing happen in our town without **you**.

Secondly, to our committee for this year, and to Mike who is standing down as Chairman at the end of his term of office. Under his oversight we've managed to:

- buy staging and a means to store and transport it, ending our reliance on expense hiring.
- improve the lighting for the choir, particularly at the east end of the church.

- acquire our own seating for the staging, ending years of perching on hassocks.

Careful budgeting and successful fundraising have both meant that we have done all this without sacrificing the music we love to rehearse and perform.

Finally, thank you to Alison Pink our accompanist, to John and David who have stepped in for Alison or me (or both) during the term.

See you all in September to start work on the all-Brahms programme.