

For the Diary

Concerts

Saturday 9 May 2020 7:30 pm at Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick

An Evening of English Music including Parry, Elgar & Rutter - **POSTPONED**

Saturday 17 October 2020 7:30 pm at Collegiate Church of St Mary, Warwick
Durufle *Requiem* & Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*

December 2020 – Christmas concerts – watch this space

Saturday 20 March 2021 7:30 pm at Warwick Hall, Warwick

Verdi *Requiem* – joint concert with Warwick & Kenilworth Choral Society

Social Events

Sunday 28 June 2020 at Kenilworth Golf Club
Summer Sunday Lunch

November 2020 at St Barbara's Church Hall (date tbc)

Quiz night with fish & chip supper

Rehearsals

We normally rehearse every Thursday evening from October to July at Quinton Park Baptist Church Hall, Coventry. Rehearsals start at 7:15pm and finish at 9:30pm. Tea, coffee & biscuits are available at the interval.

However all rehearsals are cancelled until further notice due to the global coronavirus pandemic. We will let members/prospective members know via email, the website and the members' Facebook page when rehearsals resume.

Find us Online

Our official website is at <http://www.covphilsoc.org.uk/> and our official Facebook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/27912395845/>

Membership enquiries

Email: secretary@covphilsoc.org.uk, or you are welcome to join us at one of our Thursday evening rehearsals when they resume.



The return of the newsletter

As I write this, we face turmoil over the next few months due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. On Monday 16 March we took the difficult decision to, firstly, postpone our May concert, and secondly, cancel all rehearsals for the foreseeable future. For many of our members, this will have a significant impact on their opportunities for social contact, which is a great concern. Therefore it seems a good idea to revive the newsletter format to share good news as an antidote to the worries around self-isolation, cancelled concerts and holidays, and potential illness in our ranks.

We are also looking at other ways of maintaining community connections including: the use of social media, like WhatsApp and Facebook, online rehearsals, videos on YouTube and even outdoor rehearsals/concerts (if and when the weather improves). If you are able to support each other through grapevines and smaller groups, please do. And please let us know how you are weathering the storm. Email: chair@covphilsoc.org.uk.

This March 2020 edition contains some exciting news about a concert next year, and the delightful line drawing (above). This is one of three sketches executed by Tim Griffiths, a member of Birmingham Urban Sketchers, and passed on by Lynn Taylor (altos), a fellow Sketcher.

This is the first newsletter since we welcomed our new Musical Director, David Wynne, to the main Choir. He has plainly settled in well and is already getting to grips with our “Midlands” diphthongs etc. It’s a shame that David joins us at such an unsettled time but, on the basis of the few rehearsals we have had, it looks like he and Antoine will be making Thursday evenings both fun and instructive when normal rehearsals resume.

Rachael Bermingham
Chair



Much has been made of the fact that Coventry won the competitive bid for the UK City of Culture a couple of years ago and the start of the city’s year in the spotlight starts in just over nine months.

What does this mean for existing traditional “cultural activities”? You would be forgiven for thinking that organisations like the Phil have been forgotten and that there is a greater focus on visual arts or “youth culture”. It has also been the experience of many cultural groups that it is well nigh impossible to speak to anyone in the Coventry 2021 organisation to find out what plans are in place and indeed how to get into the programme.

Margaret Jakiel and Rachael Bermingham attended the Spark symposium in Leamington a few weeks ago and were able to sit in on a presentation by Martin Sutherland, the CEO of the Coventry 2021 Trust. There was a Q & A session afterwards and Rachael asked about issues around lack of clarity on who to contact, and the place of classic choral music in the larger picture.

Martin was very positive and reassuring on both points and responded as follows to a subsequent email enquiry:

“In 2021 we will be placing a significant focus on music, of all genres, so anticipate there being opportunities for you to reach new audiences (and therefore, potential new volunteers) as a result.”

Martin has also provided the name of a “producer” and as soon as the current difficult situation abates contact will be established with the Coventry 2021 team.

So hopefully we will dispel some negative perceptions and find a place or two in the Coventry 2021 cultural calendar. As a starting point, we are really excited about a concert we will be presenting in March 2021. This will be a performance of Verdi’s *Requiem* and will be a joint production with our “sister” choir (we share the same Musical Director), the Warwick & Kenilworth Choral Society. The WKCS numbers around 60 singers so the two combined choirs will be quite a formidable gathering. We are hoping to engage the Leamington Chamber Orchestra to accompany us and of course David will be looking out for some stunning soloists.

The concert venue is Warwick Hall which is part of the Warwick Schools Foundation site on Myton Road, Warwick. The building was opened in 2016 and is very impressive as the photos below show.



It’s serendipitous to have such good news and an exciting event to focus on for next year. In the meantime – stay safe and stay healthy.