



**REHEARSALS  
CONCERTS  
SOCIAL EVENTS**



**WORKSHOP**  
Plans for a learning  
event - details to follow



**FEATURES**  
people/music/events

# THE CHORAL

-NEWS-

## Singing again soon



The frustrations of cancellations, or more accurately postponements are soon to be behind us. At least that is the hope. The committee met recently and confirmed plans for the autumn/winter/spring programme with the exciting prospect of performing two rather than the usual one concert this season. All of this is subject of course to the Isle of Man maintaining its near miraculous management of Covid-19 for the foreseeable future. We would be foolish to assume that there are not going to be problems ahead, of course these

almost certainly will occur. That said, the committee is firmly of the view that starting with a social get together and then a regular programme of rehearsals for two potentially superb concerts is the sort of tonic we all need. The plans include a wide range of music - much with a celebratory feel, which will hopefully give us all a lift as the autumn months approach. We will, of course keep a close watch on the news and if there is any significant change in the risk we will initially delay and if necessary cancel to reschedule events.

This newsletter is intended to revive the older ones and as such it will be the first of an occasional but not infrequent update. In it we will outline the plans as well as keeping everyone up to date. We will be introducing some features intended to build on our enjoyment of being involved. This will include items about members of the chorus (contributions please), key performers such as our soloists, news from the committee as well as items about the music we will be performing. If you have any items please send them in to Brian.

**Whilst the Proms  
are truncated and  
the Three Choirs  
Festival is  
cancelled in the  
UK, IOMCS plans  
its autumn ahead**

## Social event (to get us started)

Plans are in hand for an informal get together in early September (7.00 on the 4th at St Andrews). The aim is to give everyone a chance to meet up, chat over tea and cakes and be entertained!

It will be important to welcome new members and maybe also say goodbye to one or two long standing ones who have chosen to stand down some after many years of involvement.

If you are reading this newsletter for the first time after the event, we hope you've enjoyed it!

## A message from our MD



Julian Power looks forward to new members joining this autumn and is sure we will all reach out to them to make them welcome.

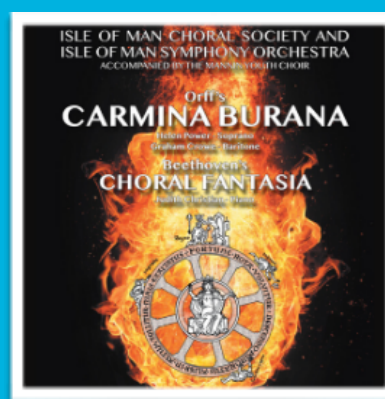
## Rehearsal schedule

The intention is to replicate as closely as possible previous patterns of rehearsals with a full schedule to be circulated shortly. If there are any changes with venues - and there may be the occasional one - it will be important that choir members share contact details with Brian (or make sure they are up to date) so that any changes can be communicated.

The first rehearsal will be on Thursday 10th September at 7.30. Please aim to arrive early in order to ensure the distribution of the scores. (no later than 7.15). There will be a short AGM at this first rehearsal. Subsequent dates are 24/9, 8/10, 22/10 29/10 ...etc. Check the full schedule and make sure it is in your diary - there is a lot going on!

On the subject of scores ....it would help greatly if you can

### *Carmina Burana*



The disappointment of the postponement was huge but we have now planned for the same concert to be held in early spring - still in the Villa of course with our friends from Isle of Man Symphony Orchestra.

Judith Christian, Helen Power, Mandy Griffin and Graham Crowe will join us for what promises to be a memorable afternoon.

(Probably the most anticipated concert ever, waiting as we have been for over a year!)

collect the Weber from Brian sooner. This will save him carrying so many boxes to the venue. AND...it will give you a chance to prepare ahead of our first rehearsal.

## Concerts

*Carmina!* Yes, we are going to do it. Beethoven *Choral Fantasia*, it would simply be wrong not to. We will of course need to work on both pieces to get them up to concert scratch. But who wasn't blown away by Judith's playing of the Beethoven? The men are going to have to get back into the tavern (metaphorically speaking of course) and to get back up to speed.

Then we will also be working throughout the autumn to prepare a varied programme for our "extra" concert. This will have as its centre piece the lovely *G Major Mass* of Carl Maria von Weber. (see the YouTube clip below). Weber is relatively little known or at least infrequently performed these days but was a very influential composer of a range of works, often noted as a



precursor to Wagner. Possibly most famous for his Opera *Der Freischütz* (The Freeshot) which incidentally was this writer's first experience of live opera at ENO many years ago.

The concert will be held in the lovely Trinity Church on Rosemount and although not a specifically religious event there are other simply gorgeous religious or liturgical pieces in the programme. There will be an excerpt from Brahms' *German Requiem* and the

motet *Locus Iste* by Anton Bruckner which may not be well known to some choir members but a listen to this on YouTube should persuade any doubters that it is a lovely piece. There is a short article about this (with YouTube clip) later in this newsletter. The programme will be rounded off with the Hubert Parry Anthem *I Was Glad* and Handel's *Zadok the Priest*. Something for everyone.

## The concert dates

### Carmina Burana

#### Choral Fantasia

#### Villa Marina

28th March 2021

### Choral

#### Masterpieces

#### Trinity Church

13th Feb 2021

13th Feb 2021

## Other events on our lovely Island

Ramsey Choral are about to get up and running for their 40th anniversary year in which they will be performing two concerts, the first of which will be a Christmas concert held in the newly refurbished Lezayre Church. The concert planned for January will feature an Island premiere of Dan Forrest's *Requiem for the Living*. Anyone living north of Port Erin is welcome to join. Rehearsals will be held at 7.15 on Mondays at the Catholic Church on Queen's Promenade. To confuse matters, the first rehearsal will exceptionally be on Tuesday 15th Sept. The concerts will be further advertised in due course.

Our friends at Manx Festival Chorus plan to be up and running just before us with a schedule that includes Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle*. Their rehearsals are on alternate Thursdays at Union Mills Church Hall starting Thursday 3rd September at 7.30. We always aim to avoid clashes so many members can and do take part in both choirs.

## Member news

Dylis Watson has been in touch to say that she and Malcolm have most likely sung for the last time with IOMCS. As most of you will know Dylis has been in the choir [formerly the Teachers' Choir] from its inauguration and for a good chunk of those forty one years she sat on the committee. Everyone at the Choral Society will wish them well going forward. Brian commented that she has helped him enormously in his role of secretary and they will both be missed.

It is likely that other members may also choose not to return - either on a temporary or permanent basis. If you know anyone struggling with this difficult decision let Brian or a committee member know. They will be missed, but we do understand.

## Other events off Island : Cancelled!

Plans for trips to sing elsewhere have all sadly been put on ice. These had included the Mozart *Requiem* at the Albert Hall and *Messiah* in St Stephen's Basilica in Budapest. No explanation needed for the cancellations, and it is hoped that anyone who had planned to go has got their money back. Future events would appear to be in the realms of wishful thinking just at the moment. We will have to make the most of our "On Island" events.

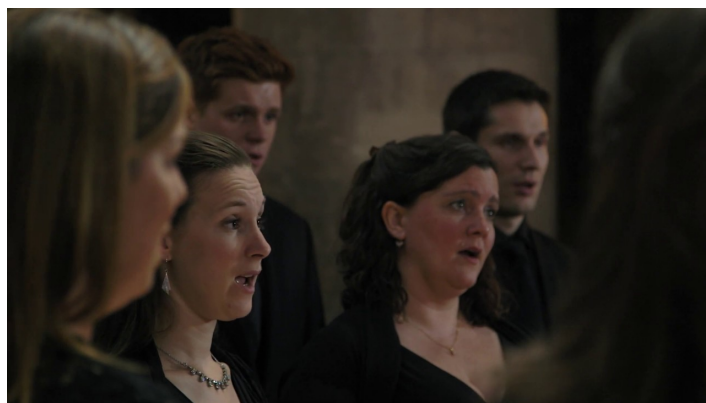
## Bruckner and *Locus Iste*

Anton Bruckner divides opinion, and opinions vary depending sometimes on what type of music you like. Most think only of his symphonic writing and unless you have had the opportunity to hear the symphonies in large venues with clear musical performances and direction many are put off by the size and length of these gigantic structures. Lovers of baroque or early to mid classical (Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven) as opposed to romantic or especially the German romantic traditions tend to be dismissive. To them he is long winded and grandiose. Lovers of more modern idioms equally find it hard to fathom the argument within his symphonies. There are of course others who love nothing more than the majesty of his long arching phrases and huge chorales. The long musical arguments or journeys can sometimes bewilder and bore, others can uplift and thrill. I



count myself in this latter group and have found few more satisfying experiences in all music than listening to Abbado conduct the Fifth in his (Abbado's) later years.

There is however another side to Anton Bruckner, many people are less familiar with the entirely different sound world of his choral writing. All of Bruckner is in fact late Bruckner composing as he did after many years of study and work as teacher, choir master and organist. His choral work came in phases interspersed with his symphonies and is made up principally of seven masses and a significant oeuvre of other shorter works. Of the masses, all written relatively early in his compositional career, three are regularly performed and are eminently listenable but not exceptional works. Whilst in total he wrote a significant number of motets, there are a dozen or so that are regularly performed in which he compresses stunning beauty and extraordinary depth into works of usually just a few minutes. This compactness is so different from the symphonies which are all huge edifices and yet they bear crucial similarities. At their core they are all works of extraordinary belief, they are awe inspiringly honest and passionate. You don't have to be religious or a believer to be inspired by Bruckner's belief, you just have to listen and let it flow in and through. Nowhere is this more extraordinary than in his *Te Deum* written in 1881 and into the score of which Gustav Mahler inscribed over the words "for chorus, solo voices and orchestra.



Organ ad lib" the following: "For the tongues of angels, God-seekers, tormented hearts and souls purified in the fire". If you have never heard it, get a good recording and retire for just over 22 minutes into an extraordinary world.

Locus Iste is different again - a Graduale, it is not just concise, it is intimate, sung without accompaniment and a piece that will no doubt be a challenge to our large forces. Julian will have his work cut out keeping us disciplined but the rewards

will be a different and ecstatically beautiful piece to sing and to listen to.

**Other listening :** If you are inspired by the smaller scale works, try listening to the *Ave Maria*, *Ecce sacerdos magnus*, or *Os justi*. Larger in scale and with orchestra, the *Te Deum* is simply magnificent and *Psalm 150* very moving. If you are inspired to try the Symphonies then all of them are long - set aside time. Many people find the Fourth - nicknamed 'the Romantic' - one of the easier works to start with. All the symphonies from the Third onwards are rewarding, and in each the slow movements can almost stand alone. The Adagio of the Ninth which was not intended as the final movement is an incredibly moving piece.

## A last word:

Whilst this is not the first IOMCS Newsletter, it is Ed's first effort at editing - he and we would welcome feedback. What sort of information would you like to see? Ideas for future editions would be great, and articles, whether about members, local events or about the works we are singing would be most welcome.

Now - prepare, and enjoy our autumn schedule. Listen to the YouTube links and be inspired.

Ed Coates, Committee Member