

# ACS Musical Notes

Spring 2024 Newsletter



AYLESBURY  
Choral Society



"...there are certain things that are intrinsically linked to Christmas, such as Morecambe and Wise, mince pies and, of course, an Aylesbury Choral Society concert."

Simon Pogson (*The Bucks Herald* review, 6th December 2023)

Simon Pogson continues in his review of ACS's concert of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* on November 25th, reported in *The Bucks Herald* (see <https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/arts-and-culture/aylesbury-choral-society-kicks-off-the-christmas-season-in-style-4435645>), by commenting that "throughout the performance, the joy of Bach's work was etched on the faces of the singers, and this very much carried through in the music of the evening."; and, also, "...the choral society perpetually continues to fill this venue [St Mary's Church, Aylesbury] to create an amiable and benevolent atmosphere such as it was on Saturday, with an extra sprinkling of Christmas anticipation."

What a truly wonderful evening it was: the performance was full of exuberance, the choir was on top form, the orchestra and the soloists were exemplary, and the church was full. One orchestral member commented afterwards by email that "Players work a lot with choral societies, but it's a real pleasure to find a choir like your's that made all of us so welcome, showed us their appreciation, were very well organised, and clearly has a good following." And, an audience member had this to say: "every time the choir got up to sing, there was so much energy that we, in the audience, felt almost compelled to stand up and join in!" It appears that so many who were at the church for our concert were enthralled and enthused; and the choir, themselves, found it to be a particular joy to be part of. Jeff's continuing hard work in trying to get us to "break that straightjacket which leaves most choral singers looking as if they have no idea what they are singing about, and which prevents them from engaging with the audience," is paying dividends. You could palpably 'feel' the electricity of our performance of the *Christmas Oratorio* and I, personally, cannot recall being so excited by our music as on 25th November. Well done to all and particular thanks to Jeff and, of course, not forgetting Colin accompanying us in all those rehearsals.

We have now already made a start on rehearsing for our Spring concert on March 23rd: a themed concert of music based on Mary's song as she was told that she would give birth to the Son of God, known as the 'Magnificat'. We are singing six magnificats, including that most celebrated and extended version by Johann Sebastian Bach, and then other works by Antonio Vivaldi, Thomas Walmisley, Henry Purcell, Marcel Dupré and Arvo Pärt (the Walmisley and Purcell will also include their paired *Nunc Dimittis*). Once again we will be accompanied by the Aylesbury Sinfonia and joined by a group of fantastic soloists. Please make sure that this performance is widely publicised. Tickets are available online from [www.aylesburychoral.org.uk](http://www.aylesburychoral.org.uk) from January 1st; 'physical' tickets will be available from the beginning of February from [acschairman@gmail.com](mailto:acschairman@gmail.com) and choir members.

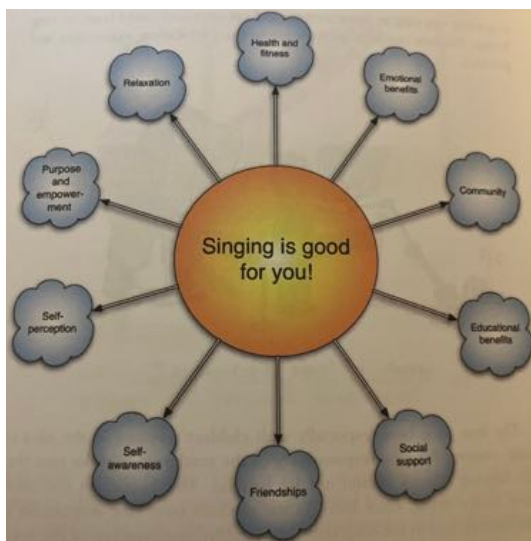
## The 2023 - 2024 concert season - our ticket prices:

		Spring & Summer-season tickets (2 concerts):
Adults:	£16 (£18 on the door)	£30
Under 18:	£6 (£7 on the door)	£10

## January to April and ACS

Easter is very early in 2024 so our Spring concert is also earlier than usual - Saturday 23 March - and we had two advance rehearsals before Christmas to give a 'head start' on learning the music. However, it is still going to be a busy season and here are some of the highlights coming up over the next few months:

- We are changing our website provider and, as part of this change, we have been designing a brand new website. Don't worry, though, the address will be the same as always once it goes live with the exception that the 'http' bit of the address will become 'https': <https://www.aylesburychoral.org.uk>. The site will be going live within the first week or two of January, so do keep an eye out for it and for the information it comprises.
- We are planning at targeting a marketing 'push' to see if we cannot increase our membership, particularly in the men's department. We will be making a start on this in the Fairford Leys area in time for the beginning of the summer term and, in addition, we will be targeting male-specific organisations such as football and rugby clubs.
- Related to the strategy above, we are also almost ready to introduce some new sponsorship schemes, of particular interest (we trust) to local businesses. Do keep an eye out for related literature, and the new website, for details within the next month or so.
- We will be organising a Quiz Night social event within the next three months - date still to be confirmed. Last year's Quiz Night was very successful, being a most enjoyable evening for both choir members and their friends, and also a valuable fund-raiser for the Society. Our running costs over a year can be in the region of £20,000 and we cannot hope to meet these from member subscriptions and concert ticket sales alone. Please do support this event when the date becomes public.
- Our summer term will commence on Tuesday 16 April, 2024 in preparation for a concert on Saturday 15 June. Our programme, *Ancient and Modern*, will be one of two parts: in the first part, we will perform a cappella music from the Renaissance including Palestrina's *Missa Brevis* and a small selection of motets; then in the second part, we will perform music of the twentieth century popular genres including songs by Gershwin, Cole Porter and Henry Mancini.



### Would you like to join us?

If you are interested in becoming a member of ACS, do come along to a couple of rehearsals - free of charge - to try out what it is like to sing with us. After this trial period, you will be asked to do a short voice assessment so that we can tell which is the best voice section for you. Being able to read music is an advantage but by no means essential and we give help with learning the music, e.g. by providing audio rehearsal files and Internet links to note-learning websites or within the rehearsals themselves. Please contact our membership secretary at [moira.membership@gmail.com](mailto:moira.membership@gmail.com) or our chairman, Chris Dalladay, at [acschairman@gmail.com](mailto:acschairman@gmail.com). We meet at The Church on Fairford Leys, Hampden Square, Aylesbury HP19 7HT on Tuesdays during school term times at 7:30pm. Music will be provided.

< Jenevora Williams (2013) 'Teaching Singing to singing and young adults'. Oxford: Compton Publishing

**Our next 'Open' rehearsal is on 2nd January; and then 23rd April - all are welcome.**

