

ACS Musical Notes



Spring 2025 Newsletter

AYLESBURY
Choral Society



Our Christmas Concert in December '25 of Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solennelle'

Wow! What a fantastic concert our December 2024 event was. Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle* is a very popular and much-loved work but it is surprisingly infrequently performed. Perhaps part of the issue boils down to the fact that the score requires a piano and harmonium - the latter not being that easy to acquire for performances. In the end, we managed to hire an antique harmonium dating from the period when Rossini composed his work and which may well have been involved in the earliest performances. We also had four superb soloists, including past friends of ACS, Alison Kettlewell (contralto) and Stuart Pendred (bass), together with new friends, Penglei Liang (soprano) and Gareth Dafydd Morris (tenor). We had a large audience on a very cold evening who were warmed by the greatness of the music, the splendour of the performance and the magnificence of the venue. A review of our concert, written by Heather Timpson, can be found elsewhere in this newsheet.



Coming up this term, on Saturday 5th April, we have a very special concert indeed. We have paired a very well-known and highly respected work with a piece virtually unknown. Mozart's *Coronation Mass, K.317* is widely known and, again, much-loved by music lovers round the world. We will be performing this work with another four fantastic soloists along with our usual orchestra: The Aylesbury Sinfonia. Accompanying this famous work will be another by one of Mozart's contemporaries who was, in fact, a friend of Wolfgang's with whom he often played piano duets and, in her day, was respected in the Viennese musical community. Marianna Martines's *Quarta Messa* will be a revelation to you - a delightful, joyful and beautiful work of great maturity and accomplishment. Please do put this concert in your diary. As far as the writer is aware, this will be only the third performance of the Martines in this country. This will be a very special evening indeed, and worth earmarking for your attendance.

The 2024 - 2025 concert season continues....

(all at St Mary's Church, Aylesbury, 7:30pm):

Saturday 5th April, 2025

Mozart: *Coronation Mass*; Marianna Martines:

Quarta Messa - two great classical pieces, familiar and unfamiliar (with orchestra)

Saturday 21st June, 2025

An evening of opera choruses and arias (with piano)

The 2024 - 2025 concert season - our ticket prices:

Adults: £18

Under 18: £7

Review of our December Concert (Rossini: 'Petite Messe Solennelle')

by Heather Timpson

Aylesbury Choral Society's performance of Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle on Saturday was a triumph. I was not familiar with this work but thoroughly enjoyed it.

The choir sang to their usually high standard, conducted by Jeff Stewart who appears to bring out the best in everyone. The four soloists gave a very good performance and I particularly enjoyed listening to the soprano, Penglei Liang, who has a truly wonderful voice.

It is a testament to the Aylesbury Choral Society that there was a packed audience on such a horrible evening with the howling wind and rain beating down.

St Mary's Church in Aylesbury is a beautiful setting and adds to the atmospheric music. I don't think I have often heard a harmonium in a concert but it certainly added to the performance.

A very enjoyable evening with wonderful music .

...And, on into the summer...

On Saturday 21st June, 2025, ACS will be performing an evening of Opera solos and choruses. We are so used to singing sacred music that such an evening will be a welcome change of direction (though we have done a performance of opera choruses before). We are hoping to persuade Jeff Stewart, our musical director, to perform a 'swansong' for us with some tenor solos as part of the concert. He is a professional opera singer, frequently performing at places such as Covent Garden and with opera companies such as Opera North. We are, after ten years, losing Jeff as our director in the summer and it will be good to hear him perform, himself, once more before he retires from his work with ACS. ACS has developed considerably under Jeff's baton and we have also grown in numbers and strength. He has particularly focused on communicating the emotional power of the music and, it has been a revelation how much we have improved in this area. We are currently interviewing applicants for the post which will become vacant either after the Easter concert or at the end of the Summer and we will announce our new director, introducing you to him/her, on our website within the next few weeks, so do keep an eye out.

On Saturday 17th May, 2025, we are holding a musical comedy evening with **Victor and Albert** to which 'Friends of ACS' are also invited. More information on V&A can be found on their website at <https://www.timandrolly.com/contact>. "Spend an unforgettable evening in the company of Professor Victor and Dr Albert who guarantee a night of merriment, laughter, music, magic and comic mayhem." Tickets cost £15 per person and available from all the usual places, including on our website. Do come along for an evening of fun. There will be a licensed bar available.

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 or our chairman, Chris Dalladay, at 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.

We hold 'Open' rehearsals on the 2nd Tuesday of each term - all are welcome. You could, in fact though, try us out on any rehearsal evening.

If you would like to join our mailing list, please jot a brief email to our chairman, Chris Dalladay, at acschairman@gmail.com letting him know your name and email address.



An evening of musical comedy with
VICTOR AND ALBERT

Spend an unforgettable evening in the company of Professor Victor and Dr Albert who guarantee a night of merriment, laughter, music, magic and comic mayhem

Saturday 17 May, 2025 at 7:30pm

Tickets £15 from
www.aylesburychoral.org.uk
acschairman@gmail.com
0781 477 3919
Choir Members

Licensed Bar available

AYLESBURY Choral Society