

ACS Musical Notes



Summer 2025 Newsletter

AYLESBURY
Choral Society



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

On Saturday April 5th, Aylesbury Choral Society performed what could possibly be described as one of the most important concerts in our history and/or in the musical life of Aylesbury and the Vale.

One of the composers represented was, arguably, the most famous of the period: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. ACS performed his much loved and extremely popular *Coronation Mass in C major* (K.317), written in 1779, probably for a premiere in Salzburg Cathedral at the Easter of that year. This is an exuberant, lively piece frequently performed at royal coronation services in the years after its composition. What is, perhaps, most striking though is the work that the choir performed alongside the Mozart.

Marianna Martines was a well known female composer, pianist and singer in Vienna in the late 18th century and was a contemporary and friend of Mozart. Mozart and she were known to have played piano duets together at musical soirees, some of which were composed specially for Marianna and he to play; and he is said to have greatly admired her own compositions. The fact that Marianna had developed some fame as a composer at a time when women were just not expected to take on such a role is a testament to the ambition and enlightenment of her father, Nicolò Martines (a musician of Spanish descent who served as 'master of ceremonies' to the papal nuncio and who was knighted by the Empress Maria Theresia) and the teacher he engaged for her education, Pietro Metastasio. In music, she was taught singing, piano, and composition; and Joseph Haydn - who was a lodger for a time in the family home in Vienna - gave her some additional piano and theory lessons. Yet, despite all this and Marianna's fame at the time, Marianna is almost unheard of today, though she left behind her a large body of the most beautiful and engaging works and she founded a school for the musical education of women in Vienna at the time.. ACS's concert included a performance of one of her most major works and the largest that she wrote for soloists, chorus and orchestra: the *Quarta Messa* (written in 1765). This was, we understand, just the third performance of this work in the UK and will certainly be a first for Aylesbury and the Vale. A significant concert, indeed, accompanied by the Aylesbury Sinfonia and directed by Jeff Stewart with four fantastic soloists: Stephanise Bodsworth, Maggie Cooper, Adam Tunnicliffe and Oleksii Zasiadko.

The 2024 - 2025 concert season continues....

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

Saturday 21st June, 2025 An evening of opera choruses and arias
with Colin Spinks at the piano and Jeff Stewart with guests as soloists.

This will be a very special evening as we say 'goodbye' to Jeff, leaving us as our MD after ten successful years. Do try to join us.

Tickets: £18 (£7 under 18) from our website: aylesburychoral.org.uk (concert & tickets menu) and from members.

Summer 2025: Saturdays 17th May & 21st June

'Victor and Albert', a professional duo, will be presenting a music comedy evening at the Roblin Hall, Aylesbury Music Centre in Walton Road on Saturday 17th May at 7:30pm. V&A are uproariously funny - think Flanders and Swann but brought into the 21st century. They are witty and talented musicians. Tickets are £15 from the usual places (see above). The evening will not be suitable for children. There will be a bar.

Then our farewell concert for Jeff Stewart, our musical director, will take place on Saturday 21st June at St Mary's Church, Aylesbury at 7:30pm. This will, aptly, take the form of an opera night with choruses from the choir, and arias from Jeff and other specially invited soloists. Colin Spinks will be playing the piano. This will be a very special concert and we are certain that you will not wish to miss it. Tickets are £18 each and £7 for under 18s..

News of our new Musical Director

As reported above, Jeff Stewart will be leaving as ACS's musical director this summer. It has been a real privilege having him with us for ten highly successful and developmental years, a real joy for all of us in the choir. However, things change and Jeff has decided to retire from some of his activities to leave more 'room' for others.

The committee spent much of the winter period before and after Christmas, advertising, reviewing applications and interviewing prospective candidates. We received eleven *very* strong applications from extremely gifted and enthusiastic musicians from the South of England. After a rigorous interviewing process, including online interviews and in-person auditions with the choir, we are very excited to have appointed Mr Philip Stopford, the well-known composer and choral director, who will join us at ACS in September.

Do visit Philip's own website and our own for more information on his experience and other activities: <https://philipstopford.com> and www.aylesburychoral.org.uk (News & Events menu). Philip will be introducing himself to the area with a 'Come and Sing' on Saturday 4th October and then we will have his first concert as our MD on Saturday 6th December, performing Bruckner's e minor Mass plus music for the festive season.

2025-2026 Season in short (all Saturday's) - see our website for more info.

- 4th October** 'Come and Sing' (10am-5pm), more details soon
- 6th December** Winter concert: Bruckner e minor Mass and music for the festive season
- 28th March** Spring concert: Requiems by Duruflé and Rutter
- 20th June** Summer concert: Songs from Musical Theatre

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

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