



CAPELETTA

No 5, August 1991

EDITORIAL

Yet another Leith Hill Festival season is almost upon us again! The summer months just fly by, and before we know where we are we'll be thinking about Christmas Concerts.

At the moment I'm contemplating the speed at which the last twenty years have passed. Two decades ago Gill and I had been married just two months, and were settling into our first home in Dorking, when a neighbour enticed us into joining Dorking Oriana Choir. Men singers were in short supply even then, judging by the enthusiasm with which I remember being welcomed by the Choir!

Enough of reminiscences - what has the new Season in store? Well, even before the singing gets under way we have an "Open Evening" at which we hope to introduce potential new members and Associate Members to the choir. Please come along and bring anyone who might be interested in supporting us. There are details elsewhere, with a form for you to return to Eileen if you would like to attend.

The other event which I have been asked to publicise is the LHMF AGM on October 18th. Attendance at this very important meeting has been rather sparse in recent years, and although Capel is usually quite well represented do please make every effort to attend, especially as the Festival will be bidding farewell to the current Chairman, David Leach at this AGM. Refreshments will be provided.

I look forward to meeting you all again in September.

Ian Moir

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 1991/92

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| September | Sunday 8th: Capel Choral Society Open Evening (see separate notice) |
| | Monday 9th: First practice, 1991/92 season. |
| | Wednesday 18th: Elgar 'The Kingdom' sing-through. |
| October | Saturday 5th: Brian Kay Choral Workshop (see separate notice). |
| | Friday 18th: LHMF AGM. |
| November | Wednesday 13th: Division I Combined Rehearsal. |
| December | Saturday 14th: Capel Choral Society Christmas Concert. |
| | Monday 16th: Capel Choral Society Christmas Dinner. |

RUSSIAN REQUIEM - A POSTSCRIPT

Here is a transcript of a letter from composer Elis Pehkonen to LHMF Chairman David Leach:

Dear Mr Leach

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chairman of the Leith Hill Musical Festival to thank you and your Committees for arranging such a splendid performance of my Russian Requiem in the Dorking Halls last Saturday.

I am extremely grateful to William Llewellyn, to all the musicians, especially the choirs, their rehearsal pianists and their conductors, for such a splendid performance. It is difficult to bring together orchestra and chorus for this work in such a short rehearsal time and I felt that Mr Llewellyn brought off an authoritative and moving performance beneath that secure baton.

I was very pleased, indeed honoured, to give out the prizes. I am no public speaker, but I hope I said some of the right things.

I count myself very fortunate indeed to be amongst the many composers and musicians to be associated with the Leith Hill Musical Festival and I would be very grateful if you could pass on my thanks to all the people I met, who, in an official capacity, helped to make the concert and the Requiem performance such a success.

I look forward to meeting you again. In the meantime my best wishes.

Sincerely,
(signed)Elis Pehkonen

CARMINA BURANA

Carl Orff, like most early 20th century composers, had to consider what his response would be to the enormous and all-consuming impact which the music of Wagner and the late 19th century Romantics had made upon musicians and audiences alike. As with many of his peers he realised that, in order to be himself, he needed to go beyond this Romantic stranglehold, and, like Stravinsky with his "back to Bach" compositions, he realised that he too might gain inspiration by looking into the past. His researches took him even further back than the Baroque era to primitive rhythms and associated melodic ostinati. He made this combination of essentially rhythmic music coupled with simple, repeated tunes very much his own, and nowhere is this style seen better than in "Carmina Burana", which he wrote in 1937 and is the best known of a series of large scale choral compositions using full orchestral accompaniment with a large percussive element.

The words of some of the songs in the work are taken from mediaeval manuscripts, the extremely secular output of travelling monks. The themes covered are those of love, spring, drink, nature and the uncertainties of fortune. Some of the words (all sung in "dog Latin" or mediaeval German),are decidedly 'risqué'. But it is the excitement, the energy and the impact of the piece which is extraordinary, together with the wide range of contrasts which Orff draws from his resources - two soloists, the choir, a boys' choir, and a large orchestra. Much of the choral writing is very straightforward; rhythmic complexities and time changes make some movements a little harder, but it is still a work worth studying - contemporary, undoubtedly, yet making contact in the same way the "Russian Requiem" did, though in a most dissimilar idiom and musical atmosphere. I hope very much you will all enjoy working at this piece. It is, strangely enough, a work which doesn't need too much rehearsal - spontaneity is all important!

Alan Drake

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES FROM CAPEL CHORAL AGM 15th April 1991

Money Matters The Choir lost about £100 last season, mainly due to the Christmas Concert, but this was thought to be worthwhile. The Choir will be able to afford a small orchestra again for a concert next season. The subscription will be £25 for 1991/92. There were various ideas put forward to encourage the early payment of subs. The idea of a pre-season 'invoice' was proposed which would set out all the costs per member for the season, particularly which music has to be bought and which is on loan. It was stated that twenty extra choir members would make a lot of difference to the choir finances and the idea of an 'Open Evening' to promote the choir and help recruitment was proposed. (This has now been organised -see separate notice.) Sonia Turner and others offered to cook the Choir's Christmas Dinner for free as a fund-raising effort.

Committee Peggy Barnet stood down from the Committee and Pam Tangley was elected in her place. All the other Committee members were re-elected.

Conductor's Report Alan Drake spoke of a successful and enjoyable season and thanked the Choir for its efforts. There was a discussion afterwards about the Choir and the Festival - attendance, arrangement of the Choir, and voice production (Alan offered to give help in this area), and whether we benefited from taking part in the LHMF. One member thought that the Competitions were not too demanding for the Choir and left plenty of time and scope for other concerts. The need to recruit more men to the Choir was again raised. The Chairman knew of several men who would like to sing but couldn't read music. It was suggested that we circularise local Men's Clubs and Badminton Clubs, etc.

LHMF GENERAL COMMITTEE SUMMARY

There follows some notes supplied by Alan Drake on the LHMF General Committee meeting which he attended:

- 1) It was decided that, as Mickleham had won Division 2 twice, they would move up to Division 1 and Buckland agreed to move to Division 2.
- 2) The "Walk-a-Singathon" had realised, as at mid-May, £3,123* towards Festival funds, with more to come. This was felt to be excellent and might suggest a further fund-raising event in 1992, since Festival funds were still deflated. (Might we, as Capel, put on some smaller fund-raising event, proceeds to go to the Festival? - my idea, not the Committee's.)
- 3) The Festival stood to make an overall loss in 1991 of between £1k and £2k, largely as a result of poor ticket sales (particularly from the Division 2 concert).
- 4) The singing fee for 1992 will have to be raised from £5 per member to £6.
- 5) There will be a Choral Workshop on October 5th with Brian Kay, following the success of his previous one (see details on back page).
- 6) There will be a "sing-through" of Elgar's 'The Kingdom' on 18th September at Dorking Halls, largely for Advanced choirs, but anyone else is welcomed, for the experience.
- 7) The LHMF AGM is on the 18th October. A selection of photos of the "Singathon" will be on display, and there will be refreshments.

Alan Drake

*This has since risen to about 4500 with still more to come.