

Hyfrydol



No. 126

St Swithun's Choir e-newsletter

November 2024

This month

After some challenging rehearsals over the past several months, and the eventual presentation of Haydn and Mendelssohn's works in October, this month will be relatively quiet. We have an Evensong for Advent coming up on the last Saturday. The music for this service has not yet been chosen.



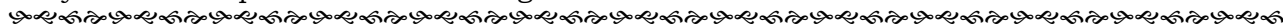
October

The Foundation Gala Concert was very well attended. Under the direction of Peter Gilkes, we sang Joseph Haydn's *Mass in D minor*, or mass in troubled times, aka the *Nelson Mass*. We had a small chamber orchestra accompanying: two violins (Julie Batty and Rob Nijs), a viola (Freyja Meany), a cello (Sarah Jameson), a trumpet (Andy del Riccio) and organ continuo (Peter Hamilton). Soloists were Amelia Linquist (soprano), Nicole Smeulders (alto), Simon Gilkes (tenor) and Ben Caukwell (bass). Someone asked me afterwards whether Peter and Simon Gilkes were brothers; I said no, they simply use the same barber.

The second half of the concert was made up of highlights from Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah* oratorio. Senior Minister Stuart linked the various musical items to build the logical story of the complete work. Phillip Linquist directed this part of the concert, and Peter Hamilton did all the hard work on the organ. Simon Gilkes sang a tenor recitative and aria, Ben Caukwell sang a bass recitative and aria, and Amelia Linquist (Phillip's daughter) sang a solo aria.

Each of us will have a different memory of the evening. Some will recall a missed entry, others might have lost count briefly, still others might even have sung a wrong note. We are choristers, and it is the whole choral effect that matters above all else. The overwhelming impression from the evening was of great music, sung well. There are not many, if any, parish choirs in this country who would have attempted these works. Thank you to Peter Gilkes and Phillip Linquist for trusting us to rise to the challenge.

Thank you to the singers from Willoughby. Thank you to soloists and instrumentalists. Thanks also to the people who welcomed, ushered, served behind and in front of the counter in the hall afterwards, to everyone who helped make the evening a success.



Grant us Thy peace

Wasn't the Foundation concert's *Elijah* enough of Mendelssohn for a while? Obviously not! The anthem chosen for Mission Sunday, 3 November, is *Grant us Thy peace*.

Felix Mendelssohn composed this "Choral Cantata in one movement" in 1831. It is one of eight such works, based on hymns written by Martin Luther, but it is the only one he, Felix, ever published.

Luther's text was a paraphrase, in German, of the old Latin prayer for peace, *Da pacem Domine* – Give us peace, Lord. It was a regular concluding prayer to services in Luther's time.

The same prayer was taken up by the Church of England in the lesser litany of the Morning and Evening Prayer services – "Give peace in our time, O Lord; because there is none other that fightest for us, but only Thou, O God."

Grant us Thy peace, almighty Lord
 O source of every blessing.
 We cannot keep Thy saving word,
 Unless Thy peace possessing.
 Thy peace O give, by which we live.

Luther's text, and thus the words of Mendelssohn's anthem, was written in German. We have no indication of who was the author of the English translation/paraphrase that we sing.



Our next overseas visit, New Zealand, September 2025

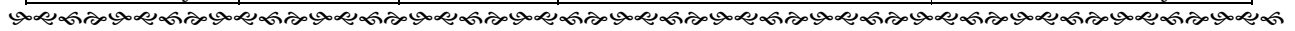
Our call for expressions of interest has yielded, so far, the names of 50 people who are interested in going to New Zealand. At present we are awaiting quotes from a couple of tour operators who we would like to manage our accommodation bookings and the travel between venues. When we have a good idea of the cost of our time in New Zealand, and our expected itinerary, we will call for our usual pre-trip commitments and do the detailed planning.

Some have asked whether the trip will or will not go ahead. The invitations have been received, and accepted. Be assured that the choir will be singing in Auckland, Wellington and Nelson Cathedrals next September/October.



Choir Calendar for 2024

Day	Date	Time	Location	Service/activity
Saturday	30 Nov	5 pm	Swiz	Advent Evensong
Monday	9 Dec?	12:30 pm?	RNSH?	Carols
Sunday	22 Dec	9 am	Swiz	Lessons & carols
Tuesday	24 Dec	10 pm	Swiz	Christmas Eve
Wednesday	25 Dec	8:30 am	Swiz	Christmas Day



One of ladies who augmented our choir for the Foundation Gala Concert was Carine Jenkins. We are very pleased that she has decided to join us permanently. Not only will she sing with the sopranos, but she will be a valuable back-up resource for Peter on the organ. Welcome Carine.

It was wonderful to see Heila Viljoen back at choir practice on the last day of October. She has been missing for several months, extremely unwell. Welcome back, Heila.