

Music in 2022

Martin Penny

2022 was a year of celebration and sadness both nationally and locally, a time of revival and renewal. We held two Civic Services for the Town and two National events, whilst dusting off repertoire (Lent and Easter in particular) that had not seen the light of day since 2019 or earlier.

Over the course of the year, in addition to the regular cycle of rehearsals and services we:

- Sang an Epiphany Carol Service.
- Sang Candle-lit Compline in the Chancel regularly.
- Sang for a Civic Service on 2nd Sunday of Lent.
- Celebrated Mothering Sunday for the first time since 2019.
- Held a Meditation on Palm Sunday Evening reviving music last sung in 2018.
- Similarly revived music from then or earlier for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.
- Sang a specially composed Gloria by David Ford to match Healy Willan's Mass 'Weston Wynde'.
- Sang for the usual Civic Service in May.
- Participated in a 'Three Choirs' Platinum Jubilee concert as part of the Hertfordshire Festival of Music with St Andrews Choir and Hertford Chamber Choir. Learning two 'jubilee' anthems and a setting of Psalm 23 by the HFoM featured composer David Matthews.
- Celebrated 'Church' at the Family Service in September with specially composed setting of the psalm.
- Introduced Palestrina's Mass 'Aeterna Christi Munera' at September's Choral Communion.
- Welcomed Susanna Farrell, formerly a Choral Scholar in Sheffield, to the choir.
- Sang a specially devised Civic Service of thanksgiving for the life of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

- Added a setting of the Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, sung as part of 'Black Lives Matter'.
- Revived Jonathan Dove's Missa Brevis for All Saints tide.
- Held a 'Bring & Sing' Messiah with approx. 35 guests on Advent Sunday. All four soloists were from Hertford, three from our choir.
- Ran the usual pattern of Christmas services/celebrations.

People

All this is only possible because of the commitment and efforts of the choir membership. The 'gap' caused by the pandemic meant that much music was either 'rusty' or, in the case of more recent members, entirely new. We had much more learning/re-learning to do than would otherwise have been the case, so thank you to you all for accepting the considerable 'stretch' – and for being flexible over exactly which part you were singing.

Throughout John Norris continued to provide a solid base for all our work through his excellent and sensitive accompaniments.

Concerts

We gradually rebuilt the Soundbites programme, growing the audience, the range of performers and the fees we could offer, so that by the end of 2022 we were confident of running a very ambitious programme in 2023. Thanks to Ann and her team and, of course, to Chris for juggling performers and budgets to good effect.

Due to the considerable sum remaining from the 2019 legacy and the shortfall in the Church's ordinary income, at present the entire proceeds are going to the Church. This will be kept under review,

"Thank you"s

I've tried to mention most people during this report. I would like to finish by thanking Jo, the Wardens, Colin and indeed you all for so many helpful and supportive comments.

Love, Martin