



Feedback from our summer concert 2024

1. Hi Sally. My guests were very positive about the concert overall. One friend said that he could hear us more clearly than usual as a choir, without a big orchestra competing with us ! The soloist in the Bernstein was particularly admired. On a slightly negative note, my two sons were not given programmes so felt a little bit at sea as to what they were hearing (not being specialists at all). They did like the percussionist though, and the double bass player. All the best - from my side I thought we did very well ! Plus...a random person at the drinks table commented on what a wonderful concert it had been.

Cathy A

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2. Loved last night especially the Chichester Psalms. It was a very exciting sing. Now I know why Bernstein went clubbing after a performance!

Jane Dubeck

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3. A lot of favourable comments from my family and friends last night. More or less as follows:

All thought it was really enjoyable departure from the more usual repertoire, particularly the Shearing. Described as a refreshing jazzy way to hear Shakespeare but with a nod to madrigals.

The Chilcott street cries brought back memories of 'Oliver' for a couple of teacher friends and the Chichester Psalms were praised for the choir's spirited effort.

Greatly enjoyed by one elderly singing teacher who only gives praise when it's earned!

I hope you have chance to recover over the rest of the weekend! I'll see you on Tuesday.

Rosemary Brown

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4. Hi Sally

I could copy and paste my feedback for the March concert because the same comments apply. Thank you to Mark, Aeron and the committee.

It was lovely having Laurence this term too. Took up his suggestion to watch Maestro and that added a lot of context for me.

Really enjoyed yesterday. Genuinely thought it was the best we'd sung each work.



My friends and family absolutely loved the concert. A few of them might come along on 24 Sept. One of them mentioned that they enjoyed Mark's comments about George Shearing and liked the idea of hearing a little from him about each work, to avoid having their heads in the programme while we were singing. Excellent lamah rag shus from the tenors and basses btw. Don't know what anyone was worried about :-)

Sonya Jones

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5. Quote from one of my visitors " A Fantastically enjoyable concert. One of the most interesting ones I have been to."

Tim Burrell

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6. Feedback on Beckenham appreciation

This was from Jackie Andrews on FB Beckenham Appreciation Group on Sunday morning

"Yesterday I went to St. George's church to hear the Beckenham Chorale singing Bernstein's Chichester Psalms, Chilcott's Songs of London and Shearing's Songs and Sonnets. The only work I had heard of was the Bernstein. What a revelation this programme was. I shall now listen to more of the other two composers. The choir sang beautifully and I loved the accompanying musicians. The counter tenor sang superbly too. Well done to all of you."

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7. Hi Sally,

My three guests thoroughly enjoyed the programme and here is their response. They collectively agreed that it was a most successful and varied programme, partly because it was different and eclectic.

One said, "I am still amazed about last night's fabulous concert - the difficulties of it were immense".

Gill commented that she had never known David to practise "note bashing" so much, especially with the Hebrew.

"The percussionist was a joy to watch as was the harpist".

The Counter-Tenor's voice was quite remarkable and most distinctive.

Gill noticed that Mark was very evidently pleased with the choir's performance and blew a kiss afterwards!



Another guest collects Shakespeare's texts which are set to music and was delighted to hear the Shearing for the first time.

Thank you. See you Tuesday.

David Mac

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8. Hi Sally

Comments : excellent programme in its own right and also moves choirs ability away from more formal repertoire. Very enjoyable especially the Shearing and Bernstein.

Alison Charlesworth

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9. Hi Sally

An excellent concert!! Well done for all your hard work with organisation, negotiations and communications.

I had 4 guests at the concert:

My friend Anne said that what attracted her to attend the concert was the programme as a whole. She felt that the programming worked very well and was well put together. It was her first visit to our concerts and she and her husband were very impressed by the standard of our singing and felt that we tackled the more challenging parts of the programme extremely well. They also really enjoyed the variety of instrumental accompaniments which suited each piece well. They were very complementary too about our wonderful soloists particularly the counter-tenor.

My friend Brian also commented on the programming and he particularly enjoyed the Shearing work for the style of music and appreciated the variety of styles of music. He didn't know any of the works before he came to the concert.

He was also complementary about the men being elevated and said how this helped the whole blended sound of the choir.

In addition: my friend Anne also commented on how much she enjoyed the programme. She thought it was very well put together and written and really appreciated having the words for the works to follow, particularly for the Bernstein.

Thank you

Carol B

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10. Hi Sally

Everyone I spoke to said how much they had enjoyed it. One said 'I loved every note!'

Margaret Sunderland

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11. Hi Sally

Several people I spoke to afterwards enjoyed the concert and the unusual choice of music. For myself, I found learning the Chichester Psalms the most difficult work to learn in all my years with the Chorale, not so much from the language point of view, but for the timings and the harmonies and clashes and unexpected intonation.

Ann Edet

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12. People I spoke to really enjoyed the concert - the different pieces went down well.

My husband heard me practicing the Chichester Psalms with a Bernstein recording and thought the piece sounded very odd (and not very pleasant, but maybe it was my singing!!!) but when he heard our performance he thought it was a really interesting piece and loved the atmosphere we created. All thought the counter-tenor was great.

Personally - well done to all the tenors and basses - what a great sound.

Maggie Greenwood

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13. Dear Sally,

I felt the new dress code for men was an improvement. It meant we were more comfortable and could concentrate better on singing to the best of our ability - particularly important when the music is challenging! I hope the dress code can be applied for future concerts.

See you on Tuesday,

kind regards,

Daniel Capron.

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14. Jackie and my friend Julia have been to several of our recent concerts and they have enjoyed them all. I spoke to Jackie after the concert and she said how much she had enjoyed it and that she would post a review on the Beckenham Appreciation FB group page. So good to find that she has done this! She also advertised the concert for us in advance via the group. Feedback from my other



family and guests was great and surpassed my expectations of how this concert would be appreciated. So well done whoever chose the works for the concert. They were challenging to learn, but in the end well worth the effort!

Jaki Moody

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15. Dear Sally

May I write to thank you and Beckenham Chorale for making Saturday 15 June so much less of a headache than I thought it would be.

The rehearsal sounded fabulous and made me wish I could attend your concert.

I have had some lovely feedback in the office today from folk who attend Arts events to comment on the wonderful programme, the standard of singing and exposure to new music so please can you pass this on to your team and choir.

May I thank you, Henrike, Nigel and Felicity for so much help and your concert set up team who were just lovely on Saturday - their calm demeanour had a calming effect on a very stressed church administrator.

I hope your wrap party is a tremendous success.

With best wishes

Mary and Joan (St.George's)

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16 Message from Joan

Alex and I thoroughly enjoyed the concert, we loved the double bass which could be clearly heard.

In the Bernstein we loved the soloist and the harp. The singing was strong and the diction excellent.

All in all a lovely programme. Congratulations to you all.

Best wishes

Joan (St. George's) and her son Alex.

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17. Hello Sally

Here are my thoughts on Saturday's concert, as requested.

All three works were unfamiliar to me yet I thoroughly enjoyed the Chorale's performance of all.



From the life-like juxta-positioning of Chilcott's street cries to Shearing's jazz inspired "...in the springtime..." to the sumptuous musical tapestry of Bernstein's closing psalm, I am sure the entire audience, like myself, were thrilled. Well done Beckenham Chorale for mastering the Chichester Psalms.

Edmund Henderson

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18. Sally

"As a new choir member, my immediate observations on Saturday night were

- the concert was fun, energetic and focused. Once the performance got going, it felt exciting to sing. My guests remarked on how professional it was, and especially on the crisp clear diction and consonants at phrase endings
- We probably still have some work to do on the starting moments of a piece and in places, on tempo and rhythm
- A short warm-up at home, for those who can, might be a good idea
- The choir's enjoyment in doing this was tangible, to me and my guests. The very strong connection between Mark and the singers was also apparent, and paid off
- From my guests... They were extremely complimentary. They remarked on how professional it was, and especially on the crisp clear diction and consonants at phrase endings.
- and that it was a very professional performance. In particular how focused everyone was - how we watched Mark like hawks; how crisp and clear diction was, especially end-of-phrase consonants (hurrah!); how solid pitch was; and the great acoustic of the church. Surprisingly (to me) they enjoyed the Bernstein best of all and were very impressed at not only the music but the Yiddish. They also remarked on the gusto - how much the choir seemed to be enjoying themselves, and again and especially, what a fabulous director Mark was - energetic, involved, so absolutely concrete in his direction. I wholeheartedly agree with that. His engagement with the choir transmits enormous confidence and quality.

Personally, I would like to do it all again!"

Anne Finn

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19. Sally,

Very favourable comments from my family that attended the concert. Enjoyed the Shearing most of the items. Felt that the Bernstein needed more than one hearing



to really get the feel of it. Compliments paid to the women in 3. London Bells for their excellent diction and quality of sound. Felt it was a lovely combination of works, just right for a summer evening and a glass of wine. Impressed with sound of choir and accompaniment of piano, organ and percussion.

Carolyn E

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20. Hello Sally -

Good programme - a welcome change from the usual fare - and enjoyable performances of all pieces, if after a slightly uncertain start - the opening Chilcott number could have been stronger, it seemed to me, but not an easy piece to articulate straight in at the start of a concert. In one section - I think in one of the Shearing songs - tenors and basses got well behind and had to be rescued (I forget by whom), but other than that all very smooth. The Shearing collection an excellent discovery for the choir, and nicely done. The awkward moments in the Bernstein well negotiated, and a good atmosphere created throughout. I wasn't over-struck with the idea of using a counter-tenor, but it was strongly sung - and the composer does specify it as an option. Oh well I thought a boy would have been better. Good support from all the 'band' though - we're lucky we can call on such players. Everybody seemed to enjoy it all, as did I.

John Nightingale

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21. Hi Sally,

I've very much enjoyed learning the music for this term, finding it challenging like most of our members, but well worth the effort.

My guests enjoyed the variation in the pieces and were quite fascinated by the Bernstein. They had never heard anything performed in Hebrew before and asked several questions about the pronunciation and how we had attempted to learn it. My friend Gisela, who is a regular church-goer, said she loved hearing the Psalms performed in this way. Another guest complimented us on tackling the changing time signatures.

I also appreciated the tone colours in the pieces, showing how much can be achieved with very few instruments - but with terrific musicians of course!

Jan Messeder

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22. Dear Sally

Our concert on Saturday was a triumph and a memorable one. As a result I've had many persistent 'earworms' to distract me since then !

The programme was certainly something different and a challenge to many of us who discovered how much we enjoy learning new and exciting repertoire such as this. The Bernstein, in particular, was a delight to sing and the choir sang with enthusiasm and confidence on the night with the wonderful support of the instrumentalists. Weren't we fortunate to have that top-notch professional team who helped all of us raise the performance standard?

Another highlight for me was Richard and Aeron's piano duet accompaniment in the Chilcott. Quite brilliant, and we sang it very well too!

Let's have some more concerts in the future with this sort of creative programming. All the audience I spoke to enjoyed the whole evening of music, wine and company. I'm sure they'll be back hopefully bringing their friends along too.

See you this evening.

Jenny

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