



FRIENDS OF ST MARTIN'S MUSIC

*Issue 1
August 2022*

From the Director of Music *Timothy Hill*

The Choir year began in September 2021 with much uncertainty. It is with great relief as I reflect on the recent past that we have enjoyed a wonderful year of liturgical music making, despite all the initial concerns as to the impact the COVID-19 virus would have.

The role of the Liturgical Choir is to enhance the worship at St Martin's and to lead the congregation in the offering of praise. With the support of the Parish Priest and assisting clergy, a rich and varied offering of choral and organ music is offered every Sunday of the year and on numerous Holy Days. From a simple but beautiful cantor-led mass to glorious polyphony offered by the full choir. Enthusiastic congregational singing of responses, mass settings and hymnody further enhances the offering of the whole assembly.

We are extremely lucky to have a talented team of volunteer singers who are the backbone of the Liturgical choir and support the musical offering throughout the numerous seasons. Through the generosity of benefactors, and the support of the Friends of St Martin's Music, the choral and organ scholarship scheme continues to



flourish. We look forward to celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Music Foundation next year which will happily coincide with the celebrations of the 120th Anniversary of the Consecration of St Martin in Roath.

A huge "thank you" to all who support the music making at St Martin's through their prayers, encouragement, presence and financial gifts.

To God be the glory!

"A wonderful year of liturgical music despite all the COVID concerns"



The Liturgical Choir at the Easter Sunday Solemn Mass, April 2022

THE JOURNEY SO FAR.....

The Parochial Church Council at St Martin in Roath endorsed the establishment of a discrete charitable fund to help provide financial resources for the church's ambitious music programme.

From initial discussions, a determined group of volunteers set out to make this request a reality. The group was chaired by Timothy Hill; Fr Irving agreed to offer his unconditional support to the scheme. Roger James offered his financial expertise to the role of treasurer. Ena Harding brought her administrative skills to the group; William Forrest (James Organ Scholar 2018-19) offered his services as Secretary. There was no guarantee of success – but a shared vision of setting up the charity and ensuring a secure future for the music at St Martin's.

The Friends' Logo was designed by Anthony Curry – we are grateful for his initial work in this area. (Those who join the Friends scheme for 2022/23 will receive a special badge which is based upon this design).

We were delighted that shortly after circulating information about the Friends of St Martin's Music (known hereafter as FOSMM), 50 responses were received. An initial General meeting was held in June 2021, at which the 5 volunteers were elected to their official roles and the constitution adopted. The extensive work began to set up FOSMM as a charity. After an initial attempt failed to meet the extensive criteria of the Charity Commission, we were grateful to Christopher Childs for offering guidance. The constitution was amended, an online Special General Meeting was held and the application to the Charity Commission was accepted. Subsequently, the Charity has gained Gift Aid Status, allowing any donations by eligible taxpayers to be increased by 25%.

The trustees continue to meet virtually and have prepared a programme of events for 2022/3, as well as continuing to search for grants to assist with the smooth running of the liturgical music programme.

A huge thank you to our Friends. Your support has enabled us to appoint a *Friends' Scholar* for the 2022/23 academic year

THE ORGAN SCHOLARSHIP

An organ scholarship was established in 2017. The first 'Harding Organ Scholar' was Matthew Nicholls. Matt moved to Cambridge University to complete a Master of Music degree in Choral conducting. This was followed by a Music Assistant Post at Wells Cathedral School (during which time Matt gained the prestigious ARCO diploma). Matt is currently the Director of Music at Prior School, Bath.

Alongside Matt, we were lucky enough to have William Forrest, the 'James Organ Scholar' in 2018-19. Will moved to Belfast Cathedral as Organ Scholar and then in 2020 to the famous Anglo-Catholic Church of All Saints Margaret Street in London. Will is a trustee and Secretary of the Friends of St Martin's Music.

Since 2021, we have been delighted to welcome Gheorge Turea as the "James Organ Scholar". Gheorge hails from Romania and is studying for the B.Mus degree at Cardiff University. Gheorge has passionate interest in improvisation in the French 20th Century style and we have enjoyed his splendid improvisations before Mass along with his accompaniment of the Liturgical choir during the course of the year.

In addition to contributing his Mass setting to the Choral library, George has attended an improvisation course at Koln Cathedral in Germany.

We look forward to welcoming Gheorge back in September for his third year and the results of his summer studying.

The Organ Scholars play a pivotal role in the life of St Martin's. As well as gaining valuable experience of choral accompaniment and liturgical organ playing, they allow us to participate in the essential work of educating musicians for the future. Special thanks to Ena Harding and Roger & Jacquie James for their generous benefactions which enable this particular scheme to go ahead.



THE SCHOLARS 2021/22

Mention has already been made of the successful recovery made of choral and congregational singing during 2021/22. The volunteer singers of the liturgical choir (known as 'lay singers') continued to offer a varied repertoire of sacred music at the Sunday Mass and feast days throughout the year. It is a delight to welcome choral scholars to join with our singers. As well as offering financial assistance to these students, we are able to offer a unique choral experience and provide many with their first experiences of liturgical worship. In return, we are able to benefit from their vocal skills and each year new faces help to bring a freshness and renewed zeal to our musical offering.

We are grateful to:

- Rebecca Jolliffe – Soprano Scholar - *part funded by the Ouesley Trust*
- Maia Jones – Alto Scholar
- Molly Beere – Mezzo/Alto Scholar
- Matthew Daly – Tenor Choral Scholar - *part funded by the Ouesley Trust*
- Alexander Aitken – Baritone Choral Scholar (The 'Harding' Scholar)
- Matthew Walsh – Bass choral Scholar

We offer our congratulations to Molly and Matthew on obtaining first class honours degrees from the RWCMD and Cardiff University respectively. Molly continues her

musical work with a portfolio career. Matthew will proceed to a Masters of Study degree at Magdalene College, Oxford where he has gained a prestigious choral scholarship to sing in the world-famous Chapel Choir.

We are grateful to Ena Harding, the Ouseley Trust and anonymous benefactors for supporting the scholarship scheme and ensuring that there are no costs to the Parish finances.



In the choir at St Martin's, Roath

Nearly sixty years ago, a student studying History and Music at the University here in Cardiff chanced upon the 11.00 High Mass at St Martin's where he had arranged to meet some fellow students for Sunday lunch. Two Sundays later and he was singing in the choir, back row decani side nearest the Sanctuary.

I was that undergraduate and so began a long association with church music and choirs conceived and gestated in an externally unattractive but internally stunning building at the junction of Albany Road and City Road when I was in my late teens.

St Martin's had a strong musical tradition and reputation for excellence as far back as the Edwardian era, interrupted only by the bombing of the church during the Second World War that left it an empty shell of outer walls. Nowadays the nature of the parish surrounding the church has changed almost beyond recognition. No longer is it a closely-knit working-class Christian population nurtured for generations in the Anglo-Catholic tradition but has over the years become a multi-ethnic area with many student lets. In the '60s nearly all the members of the choir lived locally. The trebles were drawn entirely from the boys of church families living in the terraces around the church. Likewise the 'back row' (apart from a few students like me) was drawn from the men of neighbourhood church families.

And what a large number of boys there were: Martin and Graham Winter, Robert Eager, Anthony Higginson, Nigel and Alan Chick, Anthony Bale, Robert Fox, Martin and Brian David, Richard Langford, Graham David, Simon Steele, Mark Llewellyn, Clive Lewis. At the end of the year they received a kind of gratuity and received a small fee for occasional weddings and funerals. Other than that they were not paid, as in some London churches, but sang as just a normal part of their church family life.

Also the men – Stuart Chalinder ('though now well into his nineties, still regularly with us on Sunday mornings), Sam Harwood (great-nephew of Basil Harwood, composer and sometime organist of Christ Church, Oxford), Lloyd Goddard, Jack Gibson, Peter Williams (father of one of our present churchwardens), Colin Mason and Ken Langford.

The repertoire was wide with, in addition in those days of course, the range of canticles and anthems in regular use at Sunday Evensong. The range of music for the Mass was more limited because of the more-or-less taboo on Latin: though there was no such limitation regarding Offertory or Communion motets. All the organ-loft composers were represented – Darke in F, Ireland in C, Sumsion in F, Wood in the 'fridge', Bairstow, Howells, etc. much of the content of the Church Anthem Book.

There was a full rehearsal on Thursday evenings, with the boys doing half-an-hour before the arrival of the men. Behind it all was the genius of John Cynan Jones who came down from Treorchy twice a week, to begin with by public transport until he acquired a car. He was brilliant at choir training, a gifted organist and with a remarkable ability of holding such a disparate group together and getting the best out of a mixture of talents. 'Cynan', as he was universally known, was Head of Music in Treorchy and had been brought up in the Faith in that redoubtable catholic stronghold of St George's, Cwmparc. His example played no small part in moving this priggish agnostic undergraduate to the Christian Faith, to Confirmation and eventually Ordination.



We supplied the choir for various special occasions in Llandaff Cathedral, like the demonstration of the Taizé Eucharist in preparation for liturgical reform in Wales. There were evening (drinking!) outings for the men always preceded by Evensong (usually a fauxbourdon setting) in a country church and, of course, a summer outing for the full choir, one of which began at Rest Bay in Porthcawl (where Morley Lewis, Cynan's assistant conducted a rehearsal of the Byrd Three-part Mass on the beach), followed by tea in the church hall at St Theodore's Port Talbot, and Choral Evensong at Margam Abbey (Brewer in D and Wood O thou the central orb).

For me they were heady days revealing the fun and excitement of church life. When, on graduating, I left to train for the priesthood at St Stephen's House – all the Vicars and Curates seemed to have been 'Staggers Men' – 'the gentlemen of the choir' presented me with a copy of the Briggs and Frere *A Manual of Plainsong*, which I still treasure. The whole experience of St Martin's Choir provided a marvellous base for my life following . . . as a priest in Porthcawl, a chaplain in the University here, a Cambridge college chaplaincy, singing Evensong for twenty years in New College, Oxford, and finally at Pusey House in Oxford . . . until I returned home to where it all began.

Fr Philip Ursell

New Music

FIRST PERFORMANCES

We are very fortunate at St Martin's to encounter a wide diet of choral and organ music during the liturgical year. In addition to established repertoire, prominence is given to music specifically written for St Martin's or by one of its associated musicians. The congregation sings responsorial mass settings written specifically for them, so it is good to see that we uphold the traditions established by renaissance composers of composing 'new' music well into the 21st century!



This tradition began in 2008 when Simon Hendry (bass lay singer and cantor) composed his "Missa Sancti Martini" and its premier was given at the Patronal Festival Mass. Each year, works have been added to the music library. In the Michaelmas term, we performed a Missa Brevis by Anthony Edwards (a well respected liturgical musician as well as being a Friend of St Martin's Music and a great supporter of the Parish) and also performed his motet "Thee we adore" on the Feast of Corpus Christi in June 2022.



During the Summer term, we were thrilled to give the first performance of a Missa Brevis by Molly Beere (C.S. 2021/22). This work was challenging but cleverly devised and well suited to à capella singing. As with Anthony Edwards' compositions, the Mass was full of liturgical understanding and a deep spiritual depth.

The choir worked extensively in preparing another new work during the Easter Term. Our organ scholar, George Turea has composed a mass setting based upon the Plainsong antiphon "Salve Regina". Conceived in the grand French organ mass style, George has contributed a dramatic and thrilling setting of the Mass to the Choir repertoire, demonstrating his ability to compose (and perform) virtuoso organ parts!



Some Facts and Figures:

During the 2021/22 academic year:

- *The congregation will have sung 200 hymns & 8 responsorial mass settings*
- *The Choir has sung 27 different choral settings of the Mass Ordinary*
- *The Choir has sung 68 different motets & anthems.*

In addition to the three mass settings mentioned earlier in the newsletter, we heard compositions by former chorister Sarah Hendry, Nathan Harrison (CS 2013-15) and Matthew Nicholls (Harding Organ Scholar, 2017-19).

FOSMM EVENTS already planned

Saturday 19th November 7pm
Vivaldi by Candlelight

Thursday 16th February 6.30pm
Dinner at Cardiff Metropolitan University

Monday 29th May 6.00pm
Evensong Magdalene College, Oxford

Please do speak to one of the trustees after Mass on any Sunday about the work of the Friends, or contact the Secretary for further information
secretary.fosmm@gmail.com

or Fr Irving, Tim, Will, Ena, Roger



Composer's whose music was performed at St Martin's this year

'Tis the season to get married

Huge congratulations to:

Sarah (Soprano Lay Singer) & Richard
married in St David's Cathedral
on Saturday 9th July

Jacob (Choral Scholar 2013/14) & Rachel
married in Trowbridge (Wilts)
on Saturday 30th July (picture below)

**Anna (Choral Scholar 2016/17)
& Jingwen Ong**

Lewis (Choral Scholar 2017-19) & Hannah
to be married in September

We wish all of these couples the very best as they begin married life together.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022/23

We look forward to welcoming back our Lay singers in September, and are planning a recruitment drive to develop the number of volunteers in the Choir.

We look forward to the exciting developments of Project 120 and the reinstallation of the Grand Organ.

We look forward to welcoming George Turea as the James Organ Scholar for his third year.

We look forward to welcoming new and 'old' choral scholars.

We look forward to singing visits to other ecclesiastical establishments.

We look forward to our Friends' Baroque concert on November 19th.

We look forward to the Friends' Dinner on February 17th 2023.

We look forward to another year of devotional music making under the leadership of our supportive and devoted clergy.

Thank you for supporting such diverse music making through your membership of the Friends of St Martin's Music!