



# North West Newsletter

## January 2010 Issue 50

### North West Region Last Paper Newsletter

After much debate, deliberation and gnashing of dentures, the North West committee had decided to change the format of our Newsletter – moving up from the A5 booklet design, used for many years, to an A4 version. We had also agreed to revamp the Concert List into an A5 booklet (as enclosed) and expand the email distribution of both publications. However, in beginning to compile this issue (in the new format) it came to light that, at a Budgets meeting in October, the Board of Directors of Making Music had taken two important decisions (in light of the effects of a significant drop in interest rates over the past year). They noted that the economic climate had made it more difficult to fund-raise. They examined what they consider to be the most effective use of spend in 2010 and, as a result, made two recommendations, which were unanimously accepted (both related to communications), the rationale behind which is detailed below.

“1) **Newsletters:** a number of Committees have either already moved, or are in the process of moving to electronic distribution of their newsletters. Given the cost of printing paper copies and the increase in postal costs, since the large letter rate came in, there is no denying that this makes financial sense, especially since the large amount spent on paper newsletters is offset by very little income.

**This booklet can be made available in larger format and is available to view online on the Making Music NW website at [www.makingmusicnorthwest.org.uk/](http://www.makingmusicnorthwest.org.uk/)**

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It is also a ‘greener’ option and provides the potential for the newsletters to be read by a far larger proportion of members. The Board has therefore agreed that all Committees should be asked to move to electronic distribution of newsletters following **this issue**.

2) **Websites:** the Board has also approved a major development which will hopefully see the launch of a brand new website for the organisation in September 2010. Part of the vision is that each Committee will have its own sub-domain within the national site, still with its own identity, content and webmaster but without the expense to individual Committees of hosting, domain name and maintenance costs. Each Committee will have its own domain name and its site will be directly accessible, but also easily navigable, from the main site.”

As a result of the decisions, we have decided to stay with our old format for this last paper issue. Our planned launch of an expanded email distribution of these publications will still go ahead but without a paper copy. Please send us the email addresses of people in your organisation who would like to be notified when there is a new newsletter and concert list on the web. Send these to: [circulations@makingmusicnorthwest.org.uk](mailto:circulations@makingmusicnorthwest.org.uk)

*Editor*

### Pro Nobis Singers - Development Grant Award

The unusual (unique?) name of this Kendal-based chamber choir of around thirty singers arises out of the circumstances of its founding. The choir was formed in 1969 when a group of friends met together informally in one another’s homes to sing madrigals, purely for private and personal enjoyment. At this stage, there was no thought of giving public concerts; but circumstances changed when the group was invited to perform at a local music club. At that time we were still ‘sine nomine; but, in search of a name, one of our members came up with “Pro Nobis Singers” to reflect our original intentions.

Over the years, the size of the group has grown, but the name has remained. We now give public concerts regularly in and around Kendal and district. We have a substantial repertoire which has at its

core *a cappella* music from the renaissance and baroque periods, and music by contemporary composers. We have had works written for us and have given several first performances.

In June, 2009, we celebrated our 40th anniversary with a large-scale concert in Kendal Parish Church, followed by a buffet lunch, to which we invited many friends and former choir members. The concert programme included Striggio's 40-part motet *Ecce beatam lucem*, Francisco Valls *Missa Scala Aretina* for four choirs, and Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri*.

This was an expensive project, requiring months of careful planning and preparation. We applied for, and were fortunate to receive, a small Making Music Development Grant which - along with other grants - enabled us to meet the costs of this anniversary project.

We shall always be grateful to those bodies who enabled us to fulfill our ambitions, which would not have been possible without extra funding. For us as a choir, it was thrilling to be joined by a team of top-quality professional early music singers and players of baroque instruments; a number of young people and singers from other local choirs joined us for the Striggio so they too were able to benefit. Our audience had an opportunity to enjoy works rarely performed - at least in this area. Moreover, for many of those who came, this was their first experience of hearing large-scale renaissance music; some reported themselves bowled over by the constantly shifting blocks of choral sound moving around the building in Striggio's monumental motet.

On behalf of the singers, I should like to record our thanks to Making Music committee members who supported our application for funding for this project, and I would like to urge all our member societies to go on applying for grants. Not only can they help you to plan and put into effect projects normally beyond your means, but they help to raise the profile of Making Music.

*Clive Walkley - Director:Pro Nobis Singers*

## **Young Reviewer Programme**

I am very keen to get teenagers into the concert halls. Despite many playing instruments, very few attend classical concerts. If those who

are young today fail to get into listening to classical music, the thousands who come out of Conservatoires each year will have no audience, and an enriching part of life will have been lost.

I started the Bachtrack Young Reviewer Programme which offers, through sponsorship of orchestras and venues across the UK, 2 free tickets for a 12 – 16 year old and a parent to attend a classical concert in return for a 300 – 500 word review which gets published on our site. I supply a link from the review to the performing orchestra so that they, the conductor and soloists all read it. These young people have the ear of some really first class musicians which is quite something for a young teenager!

The reviews are the most powerful argument in favour of trying hard to get these young people to apply: everyone who done so, often attending a classical concert for the first time, has come out breathless with the excitement of the event, and wanting to go again.

We are not looking for professional style reviews quibbling about the interpretation of a small section of the third movement. We want those who are honest about what they hear and can convey their emotions to us.

There are also a few opportunities to interview an internationally known musician. If any of your applicants are interested in this, please ask them to put it on the form. We very much hope you will be able to put forward several teenagers.

If you have time you can read the range of reviews at <http://www.bachtrack.com/youngreviewer-reviewlist>.

The application form which needs to be completed by all applicants can be found at <http://www.bachtrack.com/youngreviewer>.

I sincerely hope you can tell teenagers in your area that we would love them to try out this experience. As a 14 year old from Norwich recently said, "I am so glad that I took part in this programme, as I had a chance to watch and listen to music I otherwise wouldn't necessarily listen to. I hope that others - if the opportunity is given to them - will take it, even if it is just to experience something different."

If you have anything further you would like to know, please contact me either by email or on 020 8374 4548

*Alison Karlin [www.bachtrack.com](http://www.bachtrack.com)*

## **RDO's Report**

### **IT Seminars**

We have now run our two pilot IT Training Seminars looking at fundraising and using the Making Music North West website.

We are delighted with the response and are planning another session in February 2010. In response to the evaluation feedback the next session will focus solely on fundraising – accessing trusts and charities and how to write successful applications and other general advice.

We are targeting the next session on the Blackburn, Bury, Rochdale, East Pennine area and I am currently seeking a community IT facility. If anyone out there knows of one it would be great to hear from you! And we look forward to another fantastic event.

### **Choral Ambition**

As Regional Development Officer for the North West area I have spent quite a lot of time over recent weeks advising groups on their applications to the Making Music / BBC funding scheme Choral Ambition. The scheme has been designed for groups to run various events to expand choir membership, develop new audiences, develop repertoire and increase community engagement.

Miriam O'Keeffe, Performing Arts Fund Project Manager at the BBC has reported over 300 applications and with in excess of 20 coming from the North West. Announcements of grant awards are due during the second week of December. A big pat on the back for all the hard work put in. I've seen some great applications!! Let's hope that many of you get a nice Christmas present and that we can look forward to your plans coming to fruition in the New Year. Good luck!

## **Learn to Sing**

Many congratulations to St George's Singers and Salford Choral Society who are the TWO North West Recipients of Making Music's Learn to Sing funding.

Making Music has teamed up with Choir of the Year to help their member choirs run six-week Learn to Sing courses for their local communities in the run up to the area selection days for Choir of the Year 2010 in association with BBC Radio 3. The aims of these courses will be to teach members of the public the basics of choral singing (including voice technique, singing in harmony and sight reading), and to encourage them to join either the host choir or other choirs in the area. The courses will be led by amateurs from the British Association of Barbershop Singers, which created the highly-successful Learn to Sing model for their members.

Anne Frances the Chair of St Georges Singers commented "St George's Singers were thrilled when they heard that the Choir's application to host one of the 'Learn to Sing' courses had been accepted. We have worked hard in recent years to involve more people in singing. Our annual singing day is always well attended and last year we ran a series of concerts involving students and children of all ages. We are looking forward to extending our work to engage more adult members of the community, and welcoming singers from around the area to Poynton in January.

"We are now working with BABS (British Association of Barbershop Singers) who will provide the vocal coach and organise the main publicity. Our own informal start on publicising the course has already produced seven applicants in a week so we are sure the course will be a success. Information about the course is available on the choir's website - [www.st-georges-singers.org.uk](http://www.st-georges-singers.org.uk)."

A similarly delighted Kathy McNaughton, Secretary of Salford Choral Society, said the choir was looking forward to sharing the joy of singing with those who may not have had the opportunity to experience it before. "We have always been active in the local community and draw our members from a wide area around our Salford base. We look forward to welcoming new faces from the

region and introducing them to the pleasure of making music together.”

Robin Osterley, Chief Executive of Making Music, says "Making Music is delighted that we are able to help our members to run these courses. We are passionate about singing and committed to helping develop new singers of all sorts wherever they are in the UK and whatever they like to sing! With the great support of 'Choir of the Year' and Arts Council England we hope to make singing integral to the lives of a lot more people."

### **Youth Cluster**

Since the last newsletter I have had three expressions of interest in the bringing together of a Youth Cluster group. We have decided that this should now have an urgent focus on issues around Criminal Records Bureaux checks and the implications of new legislation.

There are many tales now coming through of groups simply deciding not to work with young people because of the 'red tape' involved. This does not just affect dedicated Youth Choirs and Orchestras but adult groups wishing to involve more young people through, for instance, Learn to Sing and Choral Ambition projects.

Encouraging young people to become involved in choirs and orchestras is an integral aim of Making Music and is a key factor in keeping our member societies dynamic and vibrant. I would like to approach a qualified individual to meet with a group of you to talk through CRB implications, what you need to do to comply and what means there may be to simplify the process.

Before I go ahead with booking a venue and a specialist contributor some more expressions of interest in an event would be welcome. It really is very important and we should not let the issue lie. We may not be able to change national legislation but we can inform ourselves of the best ways forward.

### **Forthcoming Events**

Details are yet to be finalised but:

An IT training event looking at fundraising will be held in February 2010 and will take place in the North Manchester, East Pennine area of the region.

As outlined in the article we are hoping to run a Youth Cluster event looking at the implications of Criminal Record Bureaux checks. This will also be held in February. It would be really good to get an idea of the interest in attending such a session so that a venue and contributor can be booked. Please e-mail your interest in attending either of the above sessions to [rdo.northwest@makingmusic.org.uk](mailto:rdo.northwest@makingmusic.org.uk).

*Maggie Potter – NWRDO*

### **The North West Festival Choir: Malta 2009**

For its 2009 event, some fifty members of the choir made a second visit to the island of Malta under the musical direction of Dr. John Bethell MBE, accompanist Kevin Thraves and soloists Karen Johnson, Adrienne Murray, Matthew Moss and Philip Smith. The programme of concerts and recitals, to say nothing of the sightseeing and hospitality, were generously supported by the Malta Cultural Institute, The University of Malta, The St. Lazarus Foundation and the Education Department of the Maltese Government.

The week commenced with a performance of Mozart's Spatzen-Messe at a morning Mass in a church close to our hotel and for which we were joined by the church choir. This performance was very well received and was an excellent start to the week. In the evening there was a Gala Dinner in our hotel attended by many representatives from the sponsoring organisations and by Mrs. Catherine Gonzi, wife of the Maltese Prime Minister.

Our soloists performed a Grand Opera Gala, this being the season's inaugural concert for the Malta Cultural Institute. It was a splendid

occasion and our accompanist and singers “did us proud”. This took place in the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Phoenicia in Valletta. The Choir’s first concert was in an ornate church in Bormla, where we performed Rossini’s Petite Messe Solennelle to a most appreciative audience. After the concert we were treated to an excellent buffet supper generously provided by the church members.

Our second concert repeated the Petite Messe, at the Jesuit Church in Valletta, a building with a superb acoustic. The choir and soloists gave an inspired performance in this wonderful building. This concert was organised by the University’s Music Department and was again followed by generous hospitality provided by the Vice Chancellor.

The final concert took place on the island of Gozo where, in addition to the Rossini, we performed a new work specially composed for us by Dr. John Gallea, who conducted that part of the concert and for which we were joined by his local choir and brass ensemble. Again the concert was enthusiastically received by a large and appreciative audience. Following the now usual and generous hospitality we caught the last ferry, for what proved to be a somewhat rough if brief crossing back to the main island. A short night and an early start marked our return to Manchester after what had been a most enjoyable week on this Mediterranean island.

The North West Festival Choir normally undertakes one concert tour each year. It is open to any members of choral societies affiliated to Making Music and non singers are welcome to come along. Next year we will be travelling to Jordan in October, where in addition to a very special performance of Mendelsohn’s Elijah, (of which more details will be given in due course,) there will be an extensive programme of sightseeing in this fascinating and safe country.

If you are interested in possibly joining this visit and would like to be kept informed, you should register your interest providing your contact details and voice to Graham Crompton on 0161 928 6498 or e-mail to [grahamcrompton@btinternet.com](mailto:grahamcrompton@btinternet.com).

*Graham Crompton*

## **Notes from Focus Group meeting held in Manchester 8th August 2009**

There were 8 people from the NE and NW present to provide feedback in a focus group to discuss the next Five Year plan for Making Music. There was also an independent facilitator for the discussions who would later forward a report to the CEO. This is a précis of the views expressed *[although we understand from the office that the comments made at the meeting are in contrast to the findings of the recent survey – Ed]*.

MM services particularly valued are:

- Young artists support scheme and the Philip and Dorothy Green Award
- Insurance

It was felt that the organisation was remote, difficult to connect with and that personal contact with central office in London was particularly difficult.

Suggestions for improvements and additions:

- Specific grants for new repertoire which had been already published rather than the ‘Adopt a Composer Scheme’;
- Proactive lobbying for better facilities at venues;
- Help with music hire especially orchestral sets with special rates for MM members;
- Better communications with the personnel at Central Office;
- Is Making Music too content with its profile? There was a feeling that MM was too content to be seen embracing government profiles and initiatives rather than engaging proactively amongst the membership.

Significant external Issues:

- The development of a national leisure budget;
- Transport and access to venues;
- Research project into performance times, e.g. Afternoon, Early and Late Evening Concerts;
- Improved Lighting and seating at venues.

*John Perrin*

## North West Region Committee members

You are very welcome to contact regional committee members if you have a query or want advice, or wish to know more about Making Music and its services. The committee members and their key responsibilities are set out below. All committee members are volunteers (except RDO).

Anne Shepherd	0125 373 7244	Chair
Graham Crompton	0161 928 6498	Vice-Chair
Una Talbot	0125 725 3689	Secretary
Alan Cantor	0125 372 4472	Treasurer
Sheena Williams	0197 875 2800	National Vice Chair
Maggie Potter	0796 872 3126	NW Regional Development Officer
Michael Bonsall	0125 746 3646	
Ian Coomber★	0161 973 5018	
Nancy Dale	0160 642 641	
Andy Humphreys★	0177 274 2307	Newsletter Editor
Shirley Jarvis	0162 561 1594	
Shirley Mitchell	0170 665 5655	
John Perrin	0152 470 1500	
Bas Perrins	0147 753 7769	Liaison for hire of our Grand Piano with NW Pianos - 0161 225 4110
Mike Porter	0162 483 2143	
Berkeley Ranby★	0124 438 1995	Chair Strategy Committee, Communications sub-group & New Member Contact
Howard Rogerson	0152 441 2552	
Clive Walkley	0153 972 3482	

### Non-Committee Volunteer

Victor Sumpter [victor@sumpter.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:victor@sumpter.freeserve.co.uk) - keeps concert list.

★ denotes member of the Communications sub-group and website administrators.

## New Charging system for NW Piano Hire

Until now, we have required hirers of the NW piano to insure the piano for £40,000 for the time it is on their premises. We have now been able to find insurance to cover this situation on an annual basis and an appropriate 4 day insurance figure is included in the hire charge (from 2010). This means that we are assured that it *is* insured and also, the hirer gets a better deal than taking out short term insurance. Details on our Website.

## Diary Dates ..... 2010

- 15<sup>th</sup> May Making Music 75<sup>th</sup> Celebration Workshop - George Dyson - The Minster Preston - led by Paul Spicer.
- 12<sup>th</sup> June Making Music Annual Regional Meeting - Lancaster Area.
- 10<sup>th</sup> July Jazz Vocal Workshop - Wigan Area - led by Pete Churchill.
- /11<sup>th</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct Making Music ANNUAL Conference (in South West)

**More details on each, nearer the time - but look out for leaflets.**

**MMNW welcomes** the following new members: 'Capriol Society', 'Tatton Singers', 'Blackbow Promotions', 'Manchester University Chorus', 'Lowton, Golborne & Newton Community Choir', 'Ribble Valley Jazz & Blues', 'Ladies in Harmony', 'Music at Wesley', 'Clayton-le-Woods Singers' and 'Ulverston Choral Society'.

**DEADLINE** FOR CONTENT FOR NEXT ISSUE TO THE EDITOR: **14 Mar 10**

Any views or opinions expressed in contributed articles are those of the respective authors and may not necessarily represent the views, opinions or policies of Making Music.

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