

Nov. 23, 2020

**Via Choralis Performance Society
Annual General Meeting
Report of the President to the Membership**

It is hard to believe that it has been eight months since we last met. In September, we decided to suspend regular operations (rehearsals) in the face of the onset of Covid 19. This has shown itself to be a prudent, if sad, choice in view of the devastation produced by this pandemic. I hope and trust that we are all well—avoiding infection and remaining in good spirits.

The business of the choir does not cease, of course. Your Executive Board continues to meet. These are virtual meetings (via Zoom), but no less real. Our challenges have been special. Recruitment, vitally important but hardly practical under the circumstances, had to be displaced by the need to retain as many of our members as possible. Many of you decided to continue as dues-paying members, for which we are most grateful. To make continuing less painful, we reduced the annual membership fee to \$100.

Choristers need to sing. So, at the suggestion of our Artistic Director, Nicholas Fairbank, we produced a virtual performance of Arcadelt's *Il Bianco e Dolce Cigno*. This was an enjoyable and rewarding experience for all who participated. Our next effort was a recording of Irving Berlin's *Blue Skies*. By this time, however, enthusiasm for virtual concert production was waning. The production was very good, but the number of participants was down.

Capturing these performances calls for a great deal of technical know-how and time on the part of the producer, Nick Fairbank. Note the artistic embellishments on display in the *Blue Skies* production. Things **can** get better. In the new year, Nick plans another virtual production. Even better, there is tangible hope for a vaccine to help put this pandemic nightmare behind us.

In preparation for a return to something like normal, we keep our AD on retainer and reimburse him for extra expenses (see report of Treasurer). September 2021 may well see us in full swing again.

The Executive Board this year has been outstanding (like all the others with whom I have been privileged to work). Secretary Cheryl Vickers can be relied on for good advice, good, concise minutes, and success in attracting financial support through grant applications. Treasurer Steve Soule has met the challenge of switching gears to a diminished income with smaller and quite specific demands on the budget (see his report). Our librarian, Nicholas Woollard went well beyond the call of duty. He has constructed a replacement for the old Groupanizer. Groupanizer worked well for us, but was costing us more money than our small group could afford. Two members “without portfolio” were Tsiporah Gottlieb and Gillian Lightbody. They were enormously helpful keeping my attention on the job, picking up on things that needed attention, and always ready to help.

Support also came from our Trustee, Brenna Litwack, who was always ready with help and advice regarding our finances. In effect, she acts as our auditor. Susan Fraser has been working on women’s costumes. Our AD, the choir’s very soul, is an ex officio member of the committee also.

We could use, and will need recruits. I am sad to report that Gillian Lightbody will have to withdraw from the committee. Thanks a million, to you, Gillian, for all you have done. We shall need a person in charge of publicity when we start up again, and we have not had a vice president for years. All positions on the Board are up for approval for the coming year.

Thanks, and good wishes,

Gordon Shrimpton, President.