

Musical Director's Report, 2020/21

This year's musical activity has continued – sadly – to remain online owing to the pandemic. Nevertheless, members have tackled the challenges with great stoicism and focus. In both terms, singers have tackled unusual and varied repertoire while developing skills in musicianship and diverse musical material from well known "classics" such as Dvorak Mass in D to contemporary and varied music from the European sacred tradition and works by women composers. Alongside this, the format of Zoom has enabled collaborations and interviews with eminent ensemble singers and musicians including Graham Cooper of Collegium Vocale Gent; and Ben Palmer, Conductor of Deutsche Philharmonie Merck & Covent Garden Sinfonia.

While there have been things to embrace about this format, we look forward, most importantly, to our future. Our plans for this year ahead include workshops and a return to live sessions. On 4 December, we perform Messiah with the Academy of Ancient Music – one of the world's leading Baroque ensembles – and bring their music to mid-Surrey – a truly awesome prospect. Next May, we collaborate with Surrey County Youth Choir and Covent Garden Sinfonia – as we hoped to in 2020 – and perform a Bach Passion. The year following, we'll continue to push ourselves with a cappella music by Rachmaninoff, and other ensemble and orchestral works that will continue to stretch your ability and knock our audience's socks off.

For now, I can only offer my thanks to you all for your continued enthusiasm and well wishes throughout, with particular thanks to the committee for their diligent work and professionalism. From a personal standpoint, this past year has been emotionally and mentally so draining with my professional work and to come to a choir which is earnestly focused on still making the most of things is a tremendous balm so I will not forget that.

Counting down the days until we sing again. First rehearsal back, we start with the Hallelujah chorus. Be ready.

*Cole Bendall
Musical Director, Brockham Choral*