

BIDDULPH MALE VOICE CHOIR "WELCOME BACK" CONCERT

Biddulph Male Voice Choir returned to the stage on Wednesday 15th December, with their eagerly anticipated "Welcome Back" concert at Kidsgrove Town Hall. Due to the covid outbreak, this was the first time that the choir had performed to an audience in nearly two years.

The choir, conducted by musical director Anthony Marks, and accompanied by principal accompanist Wendy Brown, deserve praise for an impressive performance singing a varied programme of Male Voice classics interspersed with carols sung together with the audience.

The first half of the concert commenced with the rousing "African Prayer" followed by the soft harmonies of "The Rose", "Deus Saluti" sung in Welsh, and the beautiful tones of "Gwahoddiad". Members of the audience then joined the choir in singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem" before the choir finished the first half, singing "What would I do without my music", "With a voice of singing", and "Let it be me".

Before the break in the programme, certificates of Honorary Membership of the choir were presented to long serving members Derek Cartlidge and John Lawton who have each sung with the choir for over fifty years. The presentations were marked by prolonged applause from both choir and audience which was richly deserved. Congratulations and well done to you both.

Following an interval, during which refreshments were served to the audience by members of the choir, the second half commenced with the choir singing the firm favourite "Morte Christie", followed by "All I ask of you" "Mansions of the Lord", and "Working Man". The audience then again joined the choir in singing "O come all ye faithful", before the choir sang "Roman war Song". In total contrast the choir's next number was the spiritual "My Lord what a Morning", sung unaccompanied to highlight the beautiful harmonies of the piece. The next piece was the rousing "Comrades Song of Hope". Everyone then joined in "Good King Wenceslas" with the female members of the audience taking the part of the page, and the male members that of the King.

For the finale the choir and the audience joined together for an hilarious version of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" with audience prompts provided by choir members holding up the appropriate day number on boards – sometimes even in the right order!!

Following prolonged applause the choir returned to sing "When the Saints go marching in" which was greatly appreciated by the audience.

This was a great end to a wonderful concert enjoyed both by the choir and the audience which also raised funds for two charities in memory of choir member Austin Bingley who died recently aged 101.

Next year the choir will celebrate its Centenary Year making it one of the oldest continuous male voice choirs in the UK. Planning for this event is in full swing with a diary of concerts and special events throughout the year. Anyone interested in joining the choir to help celebrate this special year can contact the choir on 07803 124768 or email join@biddulphmalevoicechoir.co.uk Reading music is not a requirement and you would be given a warm welcome.

Further information on the choir and its activities can be found online at biddulphmvchoir.co.uk or join the Facebook group “Friends of Biddulph Male Voice Choir”. The choir looks forward to welcoming you to one of its events in 2022.