

Issue 8

April 2024

Cantemus News

Let us sing!



**Around the World
in 80 Minutes!**

**UMS SUMMER CONFERENCE
9th - 12th August 2024**

Unitarian Music Society



www.unitarianmusic.org.uk

Our Summer Conference 2024



COG (Conference Organising Group) are well on the way to producing a programme for our 2024 Conference at Hucklow, 9th - 12th August. COG consists of Elly Brookfield, Esther Hudson and myself, Jo Rogers, and we meet when required by Zoom. Nothing is quite set in stone yet, but here are some items to whet your appetites for the weekend!

Our theme of ***Around the World in 80 Minutes*** is reflected in most, though not all, of the events. As usual there will be a lot of singing, with instrumental contributions, plus some talks and fun sessions as well. Margaret Lord, Richard Merritt, Veronica Clark, Karen Allison and Josh Johnston will all be leading the singing sessions which should culminate in the informal concert on the Sunday night.

Veronica will also lead a creative session with the song 'I've been to Harlem, I've been to Dover' which might include chants, hums, instruments and a linked game/dance. Sounds exciting and possibly challenging!

Peter Sampson will talk about his hymn-writing and the inspirations which led to his authorship. We'll get a chance to sing some of his hymns too.

Lyanne Mitchell will encourage us to have fun as we endeavour to create our own music from around the world - playing unlikely instruments!

Elly will have a Quiztime for us - this usually stretches us to our limits!!!

Sue and Jeff Teagle will lead us in an Epilogue, and Margaret L and Jo will, respectively, run a Madrigal Group and a Recorder Group as usual.

We will also participate in the Sunday service at the Chapel as is our wont.

I think we still have the odd space to fill in the programme, so if anyone would like to offer a session, that would be very helpful.

Most of all, we hope the weekend will be musical - and fun - as we carry on the tradition of the Music Society which first started, I believe, in the late 1920s. Wow! That means (if I'm right) we could be celebrating our centenary in a few years' time!!!

If you haven't already done so, please make your booking with the Nightingale Centre (01298 871 218) as soon as you can. We hope to see as many of you as possible in August - you could even Bring a Friend!

Hello UMS members

I was very happy to be the UMS delegate at this year's General Assembly Annual Meetings. The committee decided not to book a stall although Margaret Robinson did put some posters on another society's table. Because of the lay-out of the hotel and the packed schedule the display area was not very busy, so I was happy that we'd made the decision not to have a stall. We did however run a session. I led this under the title, 'For the love of hymns'.

The printer of the handbook had not included the information about our session, so it was added at the end of the booklet. I had requested people bring their smart phones – so my fingers were crossed that people would actually have them with them even if they hadn't read the information about the session.

We were programmed at the same time as three other sessions including that run by the Executive Committee. I did wonder if anyone would choose the UMS session. But about 15 people turned up and were all keen to participate. The next challenge was the IT – two people helped me and left saying it was fine. But it wasn't and despite having made sure that I had all the UMS hymn recordings on my laptop, I couldn't play them over the audio system. I was extremely grateful to the session participants who sang Song of Peace acapella to start us off.

Thankfully I had brought the Purple and Green hymnbooks with me, and the Grey and the Teal books from the UUA. Participants divided into three groups and set about choosing a hymn, finding out as much as they could about the writer and the composer. Rev Hans le Grand from The Netherlands sang one of the UUA hymns (he has a fine voice), and we joined in with humming and harmonising depending on our abilities and confidence. It was a lovely moment and an example of how we can use a hymn in a non-traditional way, an acapella solo supported by others in a completely unplanned way.

After about 15 minutes of researching people fed back to the whole group. It was great to hear that they had enjoyed finding out about the people who crafted those hymns and wrote the tunes – either for that hymn specifically or for another purpose. There was one delightful moment when one participant explained how he was surprised to learn that Morning has Broken was not written by Cat Stevens. We did have a good laugh about that. But until we do a bit of research we might all believe things about our hymn-writers which turn out to be untrue.

I finished with some brief thoughts about the use of hymns within our worship and various gatherings which included:

- Do the hymns link with the theme of the service or event?
- What do we know about – the lyricists, the composers, and the context of the writing and composing;
- Let's be aware of how the group is standing – it is lovely to face each other rather than singing to people's backs;
- Think about singing hymns in a variety of ways – varying the voices and the pace;
- Use instruments other than the organ or keyboard – as well as or instead of – for example, simple percussion or a flute;
- Try acapella singing for maybe just one hymn with a well-known tune;
- Speak hymns together, relishing the words;
- Move or dance to the melodies of the hymns;
- Harmonise the whole line or just the last note of each line; and
- Explore together how to get more from our hymns

Despite the small number of people present I thoroughly enjoyed leading the session, and exploring some of our hymns with others. There is certainly a lot more that we can do with this subject. Further down you will see the outline of an activity that you might like to try with your own congregations and fellowships.

During the Meetings I spoke with many people about music, more specifically about music at the Annual Meetings. I think that there is some support for giving music a higher profile and giving much more time to planning and rehearsing, so that the music on offer can be the best we can provide. It would also be lovely to have this all recorded for those not able to attend to enjoy and to feel part of the greater whole.

Thank you for making my presence at the Annual Meetings possible. I am hoping that together we can improve the profile of music and hymn-singing within our gatherings and encourage others to see hymn-singing as more than singing. And in doing this, to acknowledge the gift given to us by the writers and composers.

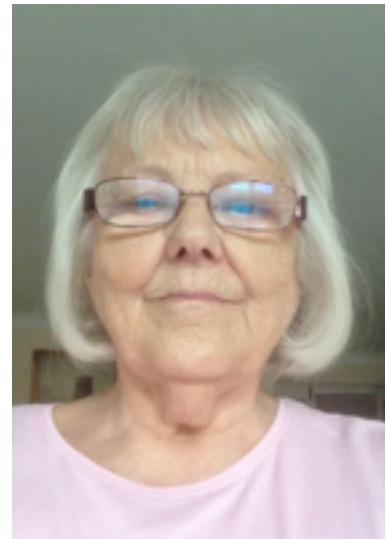
With love to you all.

Louise

Louise Rogers - UMS Chair

Secretary's Musings

As many of you know I am extremely fond of singing. I belong to Yarm Choral Society where we have recently sung The Messiah with the Black Dyke Band and a couple of other choirs to an audience of about 800 people at Yarm School. A great experience singing with so many. The Choral Society meets weekly on a Thursday evening during term time.



At the GA Meetings I joined the choir to sing in the Anniversary service. I attended these meetings as delegate for Stockton Unitarians. I had also been to the long weekend at Hucklow to celebrate 100 years of FOY and IRF.

I also join in singing hymns on Zoom with Uni-sing, which is fortnightly on a Saturday afternoon. We usually sing about 10 or 12 hymns, often with readings and a breakout session in the middle to chat to friends. For more details contact Louise Rogers.

I have recently joined Yarm Wellness Community Choir and we are going to be singing at Yarm Methodist Church service to celebrate their 260th Anniversary. We'll be singing The Rose and assisting the choir and congregation in singing the many hymns, in a couple of weeks time.

Once a month, at our weekly Age UK group, we have someone come along and lead us in singing popular songs from many decades. This also often includes dancing. Also we often have music or general knowledge quizzes, play Scrabble, dominoes and other board games along with talks from Beamish Museum, the local public library and the Red Cross. All for the cost of £1 a week, including a cup of tea and biscuits.

There are also twice weekly walks organised by the Age UK Teesside volunteers on a Monday and Thursday mornings. Alternate Thursdays also includes an hour of bowling (indoors in the winter and outdoors in the better weather) after an hour's walk.

I also continue to go to a local Community Centre on a Friday to play Bingo, we take along our lunch to eat together before playing.

I also am a member of Stockton Unitarian Knit 'n' Natter group which meets for two hours fortnightly on a Tuesday lunchtime. At Knit 'n' Natter we make some things for charities and other items for family members. I am making hats for premature babies. One of our members knits teddies and I took nine of these to Hucklow for Send a Child to Hucklow children. They are placed on the children's beds to welcome them.

I have recently joined a Creative Art for Wellness class and painted a sunset, hope to improve as the weeks go by, as I was never very good at Art at school. At the next class we have to paint a mountain.

I continue with my work as Secretary of Stockton Unitarians, UMS and the Unitarian Women's Group. I host the Zoom services at Stockton and many meetings, I also continue to lead Sunday worship and take other services with our Worship group. We have an Engagement group on Zoom where we have been using the book "Cherishing the Earth - Nourishing the Spirit" for a number of our sessions.

We have 26 bookings, so far, for our Conference in August.

Margaret Robinson
UMS Secretary



Margaret sings with the Black Dyke Band

News from Rosslyn Hill Chapel London

Just a few lines from Hampstead in north London. Our Chapel choir has about 25 regulars, many very longstanding stalwarts but recently we have had some new sopranos join us including two lovely and talented boys aged 9 and 11. Our brief is performing every 6 weeks or so in the morning services, which are now recorded on YouTube - thankfully I tend to forget about that aspect on the day! Our choir master is also our music director John Evans.

We attempt more serious pieces on Remembrance and Palm Sundays, so this last Sunday we sang some sections from Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle - we really enjoyed the grandness and the humour. We liked it so much, we are thinking of working through more of it and holding a concert when our organ finishes its much anticipated and very epic rebuild in May!

For the solo sections we had a couple of John's protégées helping us, Jack and Amy, his lovely partner Stephanie on soprano and guess who had to step in as well as direct us as tenor! We do like to work John very hard.

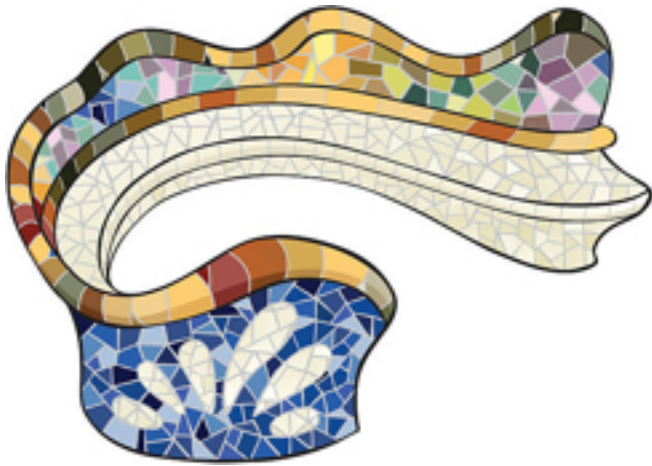
Here is the YouTube link if you would like to check out our efforts!

[Morning Service: Palm Sunday 24.03.2024](https://youtu.be/)
youtu.be

Kind wishes to all

Alison Bybee





“Music is, for me, like a beautiful mosaic which God has put together. He takes all the pieces in his hand, throws them into the world, and we have to recreate the picture from the pieces.”

– Jean Sibelius

Mosaics are one of my favourite art forms. In Barcelona, there is a wonderful curving, twisty mosaic bench made out of colourful broken tiles. I like to think that UMS is a kind of ‘musical mosaic’ - we are made up of individual shapes, sizes and musical talents!

But our ‘musical mosaic’ tells another story too, one that is often more difficult to see - one that is essential to the purpose and survival of our Society - one that lies not only in the beautiful bits and pieces - but in the *grout*.

Grout is the chalky, gritty stuff that is squeezed between the cracks of tiles. In a mosaic, the grout holds the image together, unifying disparate pieces into a whole. The grout of a Society like ours can take years to lay and settle. Many of us might say that the late David Dawson was our grout - setting us high standards and challenging us, over the years. Some of us feared that, without his talents and energies, we would fall apart.

But I believe our UMS grout will continue to hold us together in many ways as we go on without David’s leadership. There are many parts to play - whether it is being part of the conference planning...volunteering a workshop or epilogue....being an office bearer..... helping with rehearsals....or contributing to Cantemus News! (I like to think that this newsletter, established by David Dawson, also plays a part.)

The main ingredient in our grout is our shared love of making music together and the many warm friendships we have developed over the years.

I am looking forward to travelling around the world with you all in August!

Lyanne Mitchell



The Seal Lullaby

*Oh! hush thee my baby, the night is behind us,
And black are the waters that sparkled so green.
The moon , o'er the combers, looks downward to find us
At rest in the hollows that rustle between.*

*Where billow meets billow, then soft by thy pillow,
Ah, weary wee flippering, curl at thy ease!
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee,
Asleep in the arms of the slow-swinging seas.*

Rudyard Kipling

*I have enjoyed learning this with my Island choir.
This poem, written by Kipling, has been set to music by Eric Whitacre.
He was invited to send it to Disney Studios who were planning to make an
epic adventure, classic animated film based on Kipling's 'The Seal
Lullaby'. He heard nothing more from Disney for weeks and weeks.
Finally, he called them asking to know why his song had been rejected.
"oh" said the executive, " we decided to make **Kung Fu Panda** instead."*

Lyanne Mitchell

Springtime Joy in West Kilbride



WEST KILBRIDE MUSIC SOCIETY brought Springtime joy to members in their monthly concert on 25th March this year.

The society organises their concerts by inviting talented young people to preform for us in our spacious Village Hall. After a wet and dreary winter and unrelentingly depressing national and international news we all felt in dire need of cheering-up.

We were not disappointed in the programme from All Sorts, a quartet of young women already making a good name for themselves in the circuit of smaller musical societies in Scotland.

The programme was a delight songs from a variety of sources: traditional and more recent popular songs, films, musicals, motown and opera.

Here are some of my favourites on that occasion:

“Summertime” by George and Ira Gershwin, “Flow gently sweet Afton” words by Robert Burns” “Rainy Days and Mondays” by Roger Nichols and Paul Williams and “Some Enchanted Evening” by Rogers and Hammerstein.

The ladies certainly gave us our own enchanted evening, reflecting on the healing and comforting role of music in our lives and gratitude to the performers and the organisers.

Lucky us!

Ruth Gregory

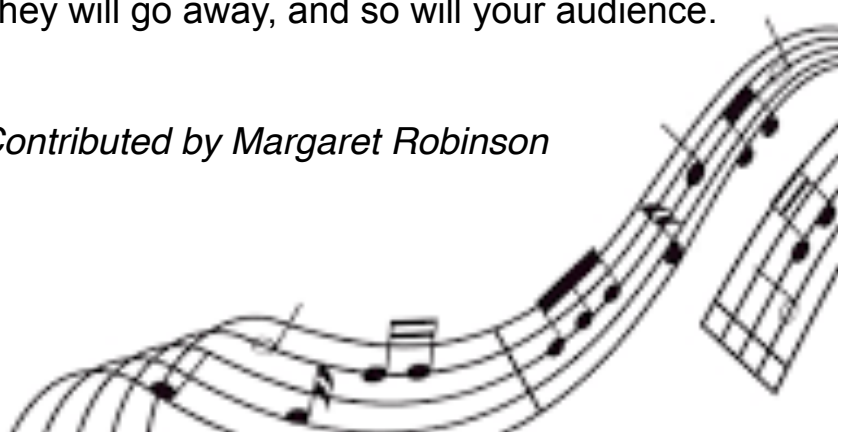


Music

Interpretation of signs



P piano (soft)	neighbours have complained
F forte (loud)	neighbours are out
Crescendo	testing neighbours' tolerance level
ff fortissimo	to hell with the neighbours
pp pianissimo	neighbours are at the door
Dim	thick
Obbligato	being forced to practise
Con moto	I have a car
Allegro	a little motor car
Maestro	a bigger motor car
Metronome	a person small enough to fit comfortably in a Mini
Lento	the days leading up to Easter
Largo	brewed in Germany
Piu animato	if you don't clean out the rabbit it will have to go
Chords	things organists play with one finger
Dischords	things organists play with two fingers
Suspended chord	for lynching the soloist
Rubato	ointment for the musician's back
Colla voce	this shirt is so tight I cannot speak
Improvisation	what you do when the music falls down
Opus	exclamation when moggy does a whoopsie on the carpet
Scales	fishy things
Trill	birdseed
Acciaccatura/ appoggiatura:	insects
Perfect interval	when drinks are on the house
Antiphonal	crossed lines
Quaver	feeling before a lesson when you have not practised
Key signatures	silly things put there to frighten you. Ignore them and they will go away, and so will your audience.



Contributed by Margaret Robinson

... And Finally ...

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue. Your participation is much appreciated.

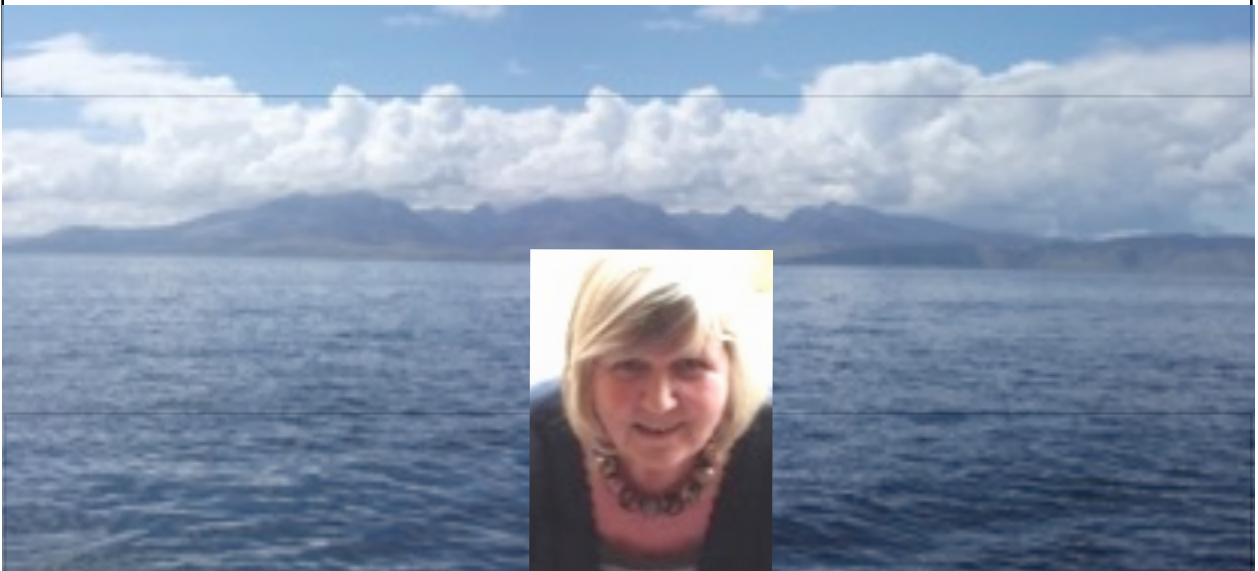
I like to think that our Cantemus News keeps has connected between Conferences.

Our UMS Sub Organising Group's plans are all set for this year's Summer Conference - 9th to 12th August 2024.

This is our 8th issue. I hope you enjoyed reading it. If you wish to continue to support *Cantemus News*, the next issue will come out in the Autumn.

Please send contributions for issue 9 of *Cantemus News* to -
lyanne.mitchell.rothesay@gmail.com
(Please note change of email)

or post to 49 Mount Stuart Road, Rothesay,
Isle of Bute, PA20 9EB



Best wishes, Lyanne
Cantemus News - *Editor / Designer*