



## Musings from the Chair

I am writing this three days after our successful 'From Tallis to Tavener: 500 years of English Choral Music' concert at St Denys Church in Rotherfield. We owe Mark a debt of gratitude for his encouragement. It was a difficult programme and there were moments in rehearsal when it seemed as if we would never get it. But Mark patiently persevered and we were able to rise to the occasion in performance. A number of the audience, whose choral opinion I respect, told me at the interval that we sounded really good. We owe our improved sound to Mark and his development of our vocal technique and I want to record our thanks to him.

Thank you also to everyone who helped with the organisation of the concert. Your efforts are much appreciated. Well done everyone!

Next term I look forward to joining you in preparing for 'A Night on Broadway'. This will include selections from shows such as Oklahoma!, South Pacific, Carousel, West Side Story and The Sound of Music.

It is good to have a complete change of style and I look forward to being taken out of my comfort zone!

We are also planning a social evening, to be hosted by once again by David and Irene McNab, to whom we are very grateful. We are in the process of

finalising the date, but it will be in June before the concert, so look out for one of Jane's emails.

Thank you all for your commitment to the choir. I hope that by the time you read this you will have had a wonderful Easter break and I look forward to seeing you at the first rehearsal of the summer term on Wednesday 1st May.

With best wishes

**Keith**  
Chair



Photo: Nigel Casford

You can see more photos from our Tallis to Tavener concert on our Facebook page. If you haven't done so already, why not follow us on Facebook.



### Dates for your diary

First Rehearsal Summer Term	1 May
McNab Evening—Social Event	tbc
A Night on Broadway—United Church, Croft Road, Crowborough	22 June
Bach Christmas Oratorio—with Rellinger Kantorei at All Saints	23 November

# A Night on Broadway

**B**roadway refers to the area around 42nd to 53rd Street and from 6th to 8th Avenue in Midtown Manhattan in New York City. For a show to be 'on Broadway', it must be presented in one of Broadway's 40 professional theatres, each with 500 or more seats. The majority of Broadway shows are musicals, and the 'Broadway musicals', in particular the productions of Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein, many of which feature in our concert in June, were enormously influential in American popular culture and have made Broadway what it is today.

The origins of Broadway in New York did not begin until 1750 with the opening of a theatre on Nassau Street large enough to hold 280 patrons. This typically put on Shakespearian plays and ballad operas. More theatres followed at the beginning of the 19th century and in the 1840s an entertainment complex was opened in lower Manhattan by PT Barnum.

Musicals were first performed in the middle of the 1900s but the 'modern musical', with dance and original music, did not appear on Broadway until 1866 with the opening of *The Black Crook*.

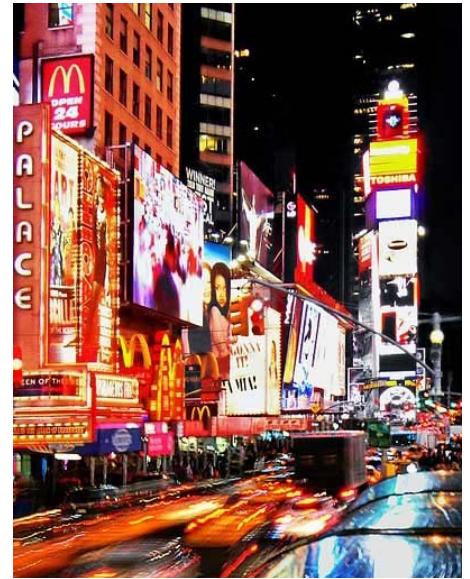
In the second half of the 19th century the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan became very popular and there were many copycat productions.

At the start of the 20th century, shows written by Victor Herbert, Guy Bolton and PG Wodehouse were fashionable, and during this time the famous Broadway electric signs began. White lights were used because coloured bulbs burned out very quickly, leading to the nickname 'The Great White Way'.

During the 1920s one of the biggest threats to Broadway theatres came from motion pictures. Many feared that the 'talkies' would reduce theatre audiences significantly, and some theatres found themselves converted to movie houses during this time. To compensate, music productions without plots kept the doors open for many theatres, with the Ziegfeld revues of mainly song and dance performances being very popular.

The decline was short-lived, however, with the return of musical theatre and the dawn of Broadway's golden age ushered in at the end of the Great Depression. During the 1940s, hit shows were created by many of the best known musical composers, including Cole Porter, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Noel Coward and Rodgers and Hart. Broadway changed dramatically at this time, with writers focusing on creating interesting plots with songs and dances that developed the characters.

In 1957, *West Side Story*, by



Leonard Bernstein with lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, transported Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to modern-day New York and converted the feuding Montague and Capulet families into opposing gangs, the Jets and the Sharks. *West Side Story* will also feature in our concert in June.

During Broadway's Golden Age many blockbuster hits ran for more than a thousand shows. *Oklahoma!* is one of the longest-running musicals with 2212 performances. Shows from this era still provide the core of today's musical theatre repertoire.

## Next term's music

Next term's music is unfortunately not available to hire and so will have to be purchased by everyone. The cost of buying the six pieces of music will be £10 in total. The Trustees have agreed to the use of Choral Society funds to subsidise the actual cost so that this price can be offered, as they wish to keep the financial contribution of individual members as low as possible.

One of the pieces of music is the medley from *Carousel* which we performed with Colin several years ago. If you can find your copy then you will reduce your music payment to £9, so get looking!

**Sheila**



## 100 Club news

I hope you had a lovely Easter, enjoying the best of Crowborough weather after a great concert.

Our next 100 Club draw will take place in the second week of term. It will be a bumper Spring Draw with four prizes, the first prize being £60! There will then be one more draw in the 100 Club season, before our next concert.

We have had 13 different winners so far this season. It's always nice to spread the good fortune widely amongst our 100 Clubbers.

Good luck everyone.

**Joyce**



## Piano for sale

One of our members is downsizing and unfortunately will no longer have room for this well-loved Bentley piano (see picture below), which is therefore for sale. If anyone is interested in buying it, please let me know, and I will put you in touch with the owner.

**Jane**

