



Upbeat

The Newsletter of the London Gallery Quire

New Version – November 2014 - No. 9

Doctor's Notes: November 2014-11-23

On Saturday 22nd November (St. Cecilia's Day) I worked as hard as I ever have on a West Gallery project. Some months ago I heard from a contact at the BBC that she wanted to record a Sunday Worship programme using West Gallery music, for broadcast on 28th December at 8.10 am.

Now that date is Holy Innocents day, and could I provide a choir and choose suitable music? I received the confirmation that the recording was to take place only about three weeks beforehand, and LGQ couldn't take on the commitment at such very short notice. So I offered to raise an ad hoc ensemble. As for the music, no I couldn't, because in the WG period such festivals as Holy Innocents were regarded as Papist and unacceptable. Compromising on repertoire took some negotiation.

I contacted all the WG quires within striking distance of London. In the end I had 50 singers and instrumentalists. Some drawn from LGQ, but also Bedford Gallery Quire, Immanuel's Ground, Marsh Warblers, Madding Crowd, Sussex Harmony, and Thomas Clark Quire, as well as a number of unattached singers. The date clashed with a rehearsal by Chiltern West Gallery Quire, or we might have had even more.

Rehearsing a group, which had never met before was in itself a challenge. I had sent out all manner of IT aids to rehearsal, and people were pretty well prepared as far as knowing the notes was concerned. What took up time and effort was satisfying our producer, especially in the matter of diction. I think we all learnt a lot that day about its importance.



On a number of occasions he was heard to say words to the effect of: "You must watch Francis". It is a constant source of wonderment to me that singers who know a piece will still feel that they can give a better rendition by slavishly following each note in the music, rather than by lifting up their heads and communicating their love of the music.

Perhaps my 50 supporters will return to their quires with renewed determination to watch their conductors, and to give as much attention to the words as to the music.



I went home that day exhausted. But I do not begrudge the effort.

It is difficult to get the airtime that WG music deserves, because our repertoire does not fit any of the slots into which broadcasters choose to divide music. It is not classical, so it doesn't suit Radio 3 or Classic fm. It is not part of the pop/rock genre (perish the thought) so doesn't suit most other music channels.

It really belongs along with Jazz/ Folk/World Music as a genre of its own, but has yet to find a suitable niche. Anyway, Radio 4 is as good as anywhere. Let us hope that this broadcast brings in a few more devotees of our splendid genre

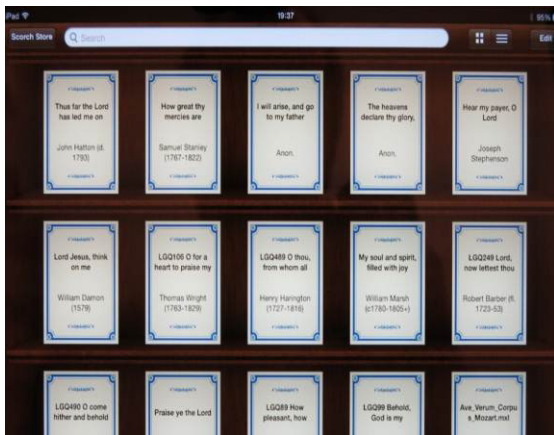
Francis Roads

Scorch for PCs and iPads - Part Two

Avid Scorch is its younger sibling (the name reflecting the new ownership of Sibelius) and runs on Apple iPads (including the iPad Mini, but not the iPhone or other tablets at present). Reviews of the first version were pretty bad, but the latest is much better: I recommend it and its only bad reviews were from people who unrealistically thought it would let them edit music like the £100+ Sibelius.

You need to install Avid Scorch from the Apple App Store for a small charge and then it will run directly on the iPad (not in a browser).

Getting LGQ music on to the iPad used to be a bit fiddly but is now very simple: go to the Current Repertoire web page in Safari, click on the new "iPAD" link and then on "Open in Avid Scorch". Once opened, the files are saved on your iPad and you can listen to any of them anywhere, even in a deep Tube tunnel, though I do recommend using headphones and not singing along in the rush-hour.



It looks quite different to its sibling, but has all the latter's main features plus a couple more.



My favourite is that it includes a mixer. You can vary the volume of each of the parts to emphasise yours and, if you are using headphones, adjust how each part is distributed between the ears.

The first thing I do when I've loaded a piece is turn the bass up and push it to my right ear and push everything else down and to the left. With a couple of taps you can also hide lines of the score that are not yours, though that is likely to interest musicians more than singers.

It also includes a "music stand" view for playing or singing in a quire. The menus disappear to give more space for the score and page turning is easier. The iPad then comes into its own as it is back lit, with crystal clear imagery, so you never need to worry about the lighting in whatever venue you perform in. You are always able to see what you are reading/singing.

The transpose feature, came to the rescue in another WG quire: one of the members of our band was without the transposed music she needed for some new pieces, but a few taps on the screen later and she was happily playing away and turning pages on my iPad more quickly than using normal paper.

The only clue the rest of the quire had was me scuttling across the room between pieces to help her load the next piece for her as this technology was completely new to her.

If your singing tastes stretch beyond West Gallery into the classical choral repertoire, then this version of Scorch will also let you import and play the Music XML (.mxl) files, which are becoming available for free download on the Internet.

Its main limitation is that occasionally the sound stops working or the score disappears. Turning the iPad off and on cures it though so it is not a big problem: just more what you expect in Windows than on an iPad.

At just £1.49, the App was certainly well worth the money, perhaps even worth the cost of the iPad to run it on! I usually have my iPad with me at rehearsals, so just ask if you would like to see it in action.

David Furber

The rehearsal dates for next term:-

January 7th & 21st
 February 4th & 18th
 March 4th & 18th
 April 1st

Our Epiphany party will be held on Sunday 11th January 2015 at the Scout Hut in South Woodford.

During the Spring Term we will be singing a concert at St Mary's church Richmond on Saturday evening 7th February 2015.

IF YOU CANNOT MAKE ANY OF THESE DATES PLEASE LET STELLA HARDY KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.