

Issue 4

January 2022

Cantemus News

L e t u s s i n g !



**Virtual Day Conference
Saturday 19th March**

**Annual Conference at Hucklow
12th - 15th August**

***Oliver's Journey Home*
World premiere at Ilkely!
14th August**

Unitarian Music Society



www.unitarianmusic.org.uk



Letter from the Chair

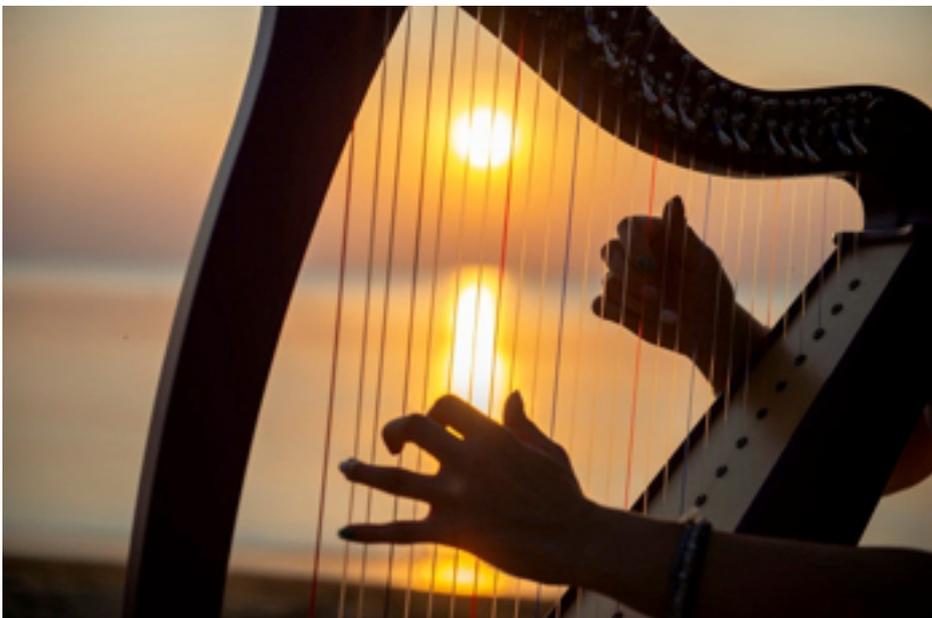
I am preparing to give a talk at GA entitled 'The Life and Works of David Dawson,' and I am incorporating some fascinating old photographs and articles about him which Christine Dawson has lent me.

She also included a cassette tape of one of his compositions called '*Three Insights' for Voices'* (SATB) and Harp or Piano. The work comprises settings of three spiritual texts: '*And Joy is Everywhere*' by Rabindranath Tagore, '*He seized my heart*' by Yunus Emry and '*Lord, make us instruments of Thy peace*' by St Francis of Assisi.

My partner, Adrienne Wilson, remembers hearing and performing this work at a UMS summer conference in the dim and distant past, and I'm wondering whether anyone reading this article also remembers that experience.

Anyway, I consider this little cassette tape a treasure and I would like to play it to everyone at our next summer gathering with a view to performing it again one day. Fortunately it came with the score, so we will have everything we need for a repeat performance.

The three texts indicate the diversity of David's interests in searching for inspiration for his compositions. The work only lasts 15 minutes but it would be worth reviving, bringing back old memories as well as setting new hearts and minds aflame. Does anyone know a good harpist?



Nick Morrice

UMS Secretary' Musings January 2022



Since the last Cantemus Newsletter in October I have continued to singalong with Uni-sing! on several occasions, hymns from Sing Your Faith and Hymns For Living together with other songs and carols. Themes have been: Autumn; Joy; Protecting the Earth; Remembrance; Human Rights (led by Margaret Whitham and myself); Christmas & Mid-winter; and Darkness. But also, with time to chat with others in the break-out groups.

At Stockton I have been hosting the Sunday services on Zoom, both when in chapel, on-line only or blended. It has been an interesting journey, finding out how to do things and improving our presentation. I have also helped organise several services at Stockton, including choice of hymns, music and readings for the Remembrance, Human Rights, Tree Dressing, Carol, Christmas Eve, Bring & Share (*"Looking Back and Looking Forward"*).

I led an Advent service on Zoom for Newcastle Unitarians in November and a service on Unitarian Women at Stockton in-person and on Zoom in January.

Our Yarm Community choir (of which I am a member) started rehearsing again in the middle of October for the annual Community Carol service held in December. It was good to be back singing live with other people. But we are not going back again to rehearsals until mid-February, which I am really looking forwards to. I also attended my grandson's school pantomime "Cinderella" in which he played the part of James Bond (007), he caught the robbers who stole the king's jewels.

I continue to get requests for the UMS hymn CDs and since October I have sold a further eight and have orders for another three. These CDs will be on sale at the GA meetings in April.

I hope you are enjoying listening to the "Oliver's Journey Home" music which I sent out to all UMS members on behalf of Nick. We think this should inspire you to book for the UMS Conference in August 2022.

Margaret Robinson

On behalf of the membership - can I take this opportunity to thank Margaret for sending out the OJH music and special thanks to Myrna for singing it through and to Nick for accompanying her on the piano. So helpful. Lyanne.

2022

A Two Conference Year



After Adele wrote her seminal album *21*, she questioned whether she would be able to write a chart-topper again. Of course, if *30* is anything to go by, she still got it. Dear reader, this author is having the same concerns...

Last year, the Organising Sub-group planned and pulled off a (rather successful) Virtual Conference in August. This year, we are going two for two and hosting a **Virtual Conference on Saturday 19th of March**, as well as our in-person Summer Conference at the Nightingale Centre from **Friday 12th to Monday 15th of August**. There is only one way to find out whether these conferences will be a success... and that's to join us!

The joy of a Virtual Conference is that those who are unable to travel to Hucklow can make music with us from the comfort of their living rooms. I must say, I am rather excited for this year. The fear of the unknown has been replaced by the excitement of possibilities and each monthly sub-group meeting is abuzz with ideas that we can try and execute - with a little patience from our participants! This year you can expect spiritual worship, a pandemic-inspired quiz and a session in preparation for *Oliver's Journey Home*, our main work for the 2022 Summer Conference, as well as much more.

To receive the Zoom link for the VC, please pop an email over to unitarianmusicsociety@hotmail.com and we will put you on our mailing list! The link will be circulated on Thursday 17th of March.

Speaking of the Summer Conference... How joyful that we shall all be together once more later this year! (Hopefully this statement comes true). For those who were at last year's Virtual Conference, you will know that the plans are quite thrilling. Our set work is *Oliver's Journey Home*, written by Nick Morrice with music composed by David Dawson, and on the Sunday of this year's conference, we will be travelling to Ilkey to perform OJH with a band, and in front of a paying crowd!!

Not only does this pay homage to David Dawson, but it gives a little taste of the trips of old. I never went on one of these trips (errr, I'm not sure I had even heard of UMS... or been born) so I am VERY excited for our day-trip away!

Although there will be less time for workshops and general music-making, due to Sunday being taken up with travelling, practising and performing, there will still be a few hours on the Saturday for a small selection.

If you are interested in running a workshop at this year's Summer Conference, please let us know at unitarianmusicsociety@hotmail.com

I do hope that this has given you a little taste of what's to come this year for UMS. If you'd like to join us for our Summer Conference, the booking form will be circulated by our Secretary, along with this issue.



Elizabeth Rosenberg - Organising Sub-group

Good News



Again this year I went home to Ohio to join my family for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

My brother is music director at a large Methodist church here in Cleveland. Up till Omicron hit, services were held there regularly (as well as on-line). Craig has a wonderful choir which had been on hold since March 2020.



They decided to take a chance, (all triple jabbed, and wearing masks) and started practicing for their annual Christmas Concert, which normally also gets performed at senior centers/hospice.

Perhaps due to Covid restrictions (staff shortages as well) the senior center/hospice venues backed out. Still wanting to spread some holiday spirit, my brother and some friends found an organization to do a benefit concert at the church for: the Afghan refugees being re-settled in Cleveland, Ohio. The programme was called "Good News", a mixed bag of gospel, Caribbean, and lovely arrangements of traditional carols.

Thanks to a good audience and wealthy and kind friends of the choir, we raised \$20,000, which will go directly to helping refugees set up new homes here and get started building new lives. The enthusiasm and generosity, not to mention the fun of being able to sing again, was "good news" to us all. Much needed.

Now, once again, choir is on hold, as we all wish for a return to normal. We have proven that making music together does marvelous things, so let us continue in that spirit.

As the designated music director for our UMS production of David Dawson and Nick Morrice's collaboration on "Oliver's Journey Home", I look forward to working with everyone this summer. We have our "Oliver", the orchestra is shaping up, scores are available. We have a few minor details to work out, but we are well on our way.

When I look at the score, I am amazed at the genius and hard work that went into creating "Oliver". I find it a delightful piece, and am so happy we finally have a chance to do something grand in David's memory. It will be lots of fun to perform---and rehearse---and for the first time in many years UMS is again "going public". Please sign up to take part, and please put the word out so that we will have a good audience!

Marcie Mcgaughey



MUSIC at KENDAL

Since September 2021 we now have a Kendal Unitarians Recorder Quartet!!!

We are all bona fide members of the Kendal congregation – and the other three have joined UMS and are hoping to come to our 2022 August conference. We have played for two services so far and which included Introit and Extroit music. We also played at a short informal Christmas concert held on 12th December, and even had an afternoon gig at the local block of flats where Griff Jones (one-time long-serving Minister at Kendal) and Sally now live. This was a fun affair and we raised some money for a local Kendal charity as well.

Some of you may remember Pat, who came to our conference in 2018 and who plays oboe and cor anglais. Pat may have a prior engagement in August and may not be able to come, but Denise (bassoonist) and Sue (tuba) are both hoping to play in Oliver's Journey Home. (What do you call a tuba player? Can't be tubaist or tubist! Must ask Sue). Incidentally I have another friend, Barbara, who is also hoping to come in August. Barbara is a violinist - not a Unitarian at the moment but she is interested in us and has joined UMS.

So having continued in similar vein for the last 34 years since I moved to Kendal, Kendal Unitarians have recently greatly expanded musically! In addition, we have in the last few months had a 'real' organist, Clare, join our congregation (as opposed to 'pretend' ones like John and me) and she will be making her debut in playing for the service on 9th January 2022. It's all systems go for Kendal – long may it continue!



Jo Rogers



The Magic of Christmas

For some reason, I became very nostalgic this Christmas with memories of Christmas get-togethers with family and friends in childhood flooding my mind and the walking and travelling home through the dark, often frosty, misty streets, seeing the beautiful Christmas trees of all sizes in windows lit with mostly coloured lights, my favourites, although some lights were white and lovely too.

The other thing I remember from a very young age was singing Christmas Carols in a local Church near my school, which also always featured a lovely Christmas tree. I was in my primary school choir which was a privilege as not all children got to be in the choir in those days. I enjoyed the rehearsals and loved singing and was told I did it with expression and joy. I remember one concert in a fairly large church, Barclay Parish Church. I was shy and felt very nervous and a bit cold at first but once we started singing the whole thing became magical and memorable. I still find carols magical today apart from perhaps "The 12 Days of Christmas" or "Jingle Bells": my least favourite Christmas songs, and to think I have been singing them for over 60 Years! I also wish that in choirs we would sing one of my favourite carols "In the Bleak Midwinter" to the Holst tune and "O Little Town of Bethlehem" to the Walford Davies tunes sometimes.

When I was in my twenties, I joined an un-auditioned choir. I loved learning all the Christmas Music, which I am sure you all know, arrangements by David Willcocks, John Rutter and Bob Chilcott, and pieces like "The Shepherds Farewell," and excerpts from "The Messiah" and "Bach's Christmas Oratorio." It is live Christmas Music that I have missed most this year, something to look forward to in Winter, CD's and online performances are not the same. I love the big Choral Societies Carol concerts in the Usher Hall and smaller intimate concerts. I have been visualising some of the last performances I attended before lockdown 2 years ago. One in the plainly decorated Canongate Kirk, with a simple crib and a Christmas tree, where I heard Bach's Christmas Oratorio sung so beautifully by Ludus Baroque: the other the ballet "The Nutcracker" by Scottish Ballet. I have so missed these live performances and singing. Christmas has not been the same.

I know there are more important things to deal with, but I worry about the toll the pandemic has taken on all those involved in the Arts and beyond and the effect the lack of live performances and opportunities to sing have had on peoples' mental health. This is why organisations like UMS are so important. I hope that by the end of this year things will begin to improve in every way imaginable.

Margery Mackay

“To achieve great things
two things are needed;
a plan.....
and not quite
enough time”

Leonard Bernstein



In my former life as a graphic designer, DEADLINES were my worst enemies.... AND my best friends! They are what focusses the mind into action, helped along by fear. If a project has no deadline, it sinks to the bottom of the list.

Dreams without deadlines are dead in the water. Deadlines are really LIFEILINES to achieving our goals.

A deadline is a kind of negative inspiration. Still, it's better than no inspiration at all!

Inspiration (from the Latin *in-spir-are*, meaning "to breathe into") refers to an unconscious burst of creativity in a literary, musical, or other artistic endeavour.

The Greeks believed that inspiration or "enthusiasm" came from the nine Muses. Similarly, in the Ancient Norse religions, inspiration derives from the gods, such as Odin. Inspiration is also a divine matter in Hebrew poetry. In the Book of Amos, the prophet speaks of being overwhelmed by God's voice and compelled to speak. In Christianity, inspiration is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the early 20th century, Sigmund Freud located inspiration in the inner psyche of the artist. Carl Jung's theory of inspiration suggests that an artist is one who was attuned to racial memory, which encoded the archetypes of the human mind.

Hmmm - that all sounds very grand - but without a DEADLINE inspiration alone may not get the job done.

Lyanne Mitchell



Inspiration is a guest
that does not willingly
visit the lazy

Tchaikovsky



MindTravels: *Attentions, Reflections, Meditations, & music*

A new project that was considered and experimented in 2019 and 2020, and formally launched in 2021, will develop further in 2022.

MindTravels is a creative pairing of Rev. Mark Hutchinson (minister, Cotswold Group of Unitarians) and Josh Johnston (director of music, Dublin Unitarian Church), Ireland). Meeting at the Nightingale Centre in 2017, Mark asked Josh for permission to use his recorded music as background for prayers and reflections. Mark is well-known in many Unitarian circles for his original poetry of reflection and attention and, with Josh being more than happy for this to happen, the idea grew to look into creating new collaborative works whereby Mark would record himself reading his own poetry and reflections and Josh improvising music in real time. An idea of an album was hatched and an initial exploratory recording session was planned. It came to fruition in Ireland in November 2019.

Further development of the idea was stalled when, of course, the pandemic got in the way. However, every cloud has a silver lining and the duo turned their hand to creating new video reflections every fortnight since December 1st 2020. Using Zoom technology, they have created their compositions, recording their own contributions to video and audio. After the initial session has been edited and mastered, Mark has enjoyed finding complementary video from various sources to illustrate the words and the moods. Finally, Mark and Josh work with video editor Paris Lyons to create a finished product. You can see these videos by searching for MindTravels on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter - Mark and Josh also both have channels on YouTube where the videos are posted.

After a second meeting with producer and recording engineer Anthony Gibney, almost exactly two years after the first one, the album is now being mixed and MindTravels are looking forward to presenting a full album of original reflections in the Autumn. Ahead of that, look out for Mark at GA and ask for a copy of the sampler so that you can get a better idea what it's all about.

Josh Johnston

WORLD PREMIERE!

Oliver's Journey Home

Music by David Dawson
Libretto by Nick Morrice

A Light-Hearted Musical for all the family

Starring Hugh Ameigh as Oliver
with members of the **Unitarian Music Society**
and **New Horizon Orchestra**

Directed by Marcie McGaughy

ONE Performance Only!
Sunday 14th August
at 5pm

**The Clarke Foley
Community Centre**
Cunliffe Road, Ilkely LS29 9DZ

Tickets £10

including buffet supper after the show

**Apply to the Box Office 01943 607016
or Nick Morrice 01904 765424**



... And Finally ...

A huge *thank you* to everyone who has contributed to this issue. Your participation is much appreciated.

The next Issue of *Cantemus News* will come out in the Autumn of 2022

This will be an opportunity to share your experience of our August Conference and our performance at Ilkley.

BOOKING FORMS for our August Conference, including information on OJH arrangements will be circulated separately by our Secretary Margaret.

Many thanks to Isabelle for her help with these. Huge thanks to Elizabeth our amazing Organising Group Leader and to my fellow group members - Isabelle, Jo, Esther and Elly for all their energy and enthusiasm. Our many zoom calls over the last 2 years have been so enjoyable and productive!

Please send contributions for issue 5 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



Looking forward to seeing you in March at our virtual day conference. wishing you all good health and harmony!