



## **Post-concert feedback, Crowning Glory 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

This report sets out the results of the online survey of members immediately following *Crowning Glory*, the concert to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on 5th June 2022 at Milton Keynes Theatre. An audience of approximately 500 attended the performance, with a number of VIPs including the Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Countess Howe and the Mayor of Milton Keynes, Cllr Amanda Marlow.

The choir was made up of 96 singers drawn from Chorale and other choirs, as follows:

Milton Keynes Chorale: 60, including one guest and the Conducting Scholar;  
Oxford Pro Musica: 20;  
Polymnia: 11;  
Musica: 4;  
Danesborough Chorus: 1.

The post-concert feedback survey was sent only to the 58 members of Chorale, who were asked to provide feedback on the rehearsals for the concert, the performance itself, the venue, and the practical organisation of the concert. Any other general comments were also invited.

The 39 members who did not sing in the concert received a separate questionnaire asking them whether they had attending any rehearsals for the concert, what their reasons were for not singing, and the most important of those reasons. If they were in the audience at the concert, they were invited to provide feedback on the performance.

Both questionnaires were anonymous and were open for responses from 9th to 20th June.

## MEMBERS WHO SANG IN THE CONCERT

The overall response rate to the survey of members who sang in the concert was 76%. The response rate by voice section is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Response rate by voice section**

	Singers	Responses	Response rate
Soprano	23	18	78%
Alto	23	18	78%
Tenor	5	2	40%
Bass	7	6	86%
Total	58	44	76%

## REHEARSALS AND THE PERFORMANCE

Members were asked to respond to seven statements about the rehearsals for the concert and the concert itself, on a five-point scale. The results reported below in Table 2 combine 'Strongly Disagree' and 'Disagree' responses into a single 'Disagree' category. Likewise, 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' responses are combined into a single 'Agree' category.

**Table 2 Summary feedback on rehearsals and the performance**

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Overall, I liked the music chosen for this concert	0	3	41
	0%	7%	93%
When rehearsals started, the part felt within my ability	1	8	35
	2%	18%	80%
By the performance, I felt confident with my part	0	2	42
	0%	5%	95%
Overall, I enjoyed rehearsing for this concert	0	2	42
	0%	5%	95%
Overall, I enjoyed performing on the day	0	0	44
	0%	0%	100%
As well as knowing the notes and rhythms, I felt able to put detail into my performance	0	1	43
	0%	2%	98%
Rehearsing and singing in this concert helped me extend my musical skills	0	8	36
	0%	18%	82%

Members were invited to offer any comments they wished to on their own performance and on the choir's performance as a whole.

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## MY OWN PERFORMANCE

Seventeen commented on their own performance:

*Come the day did pretty well, always room for improvement.*

*I was away for 3 rehearsals and so I never sang Confortare until the day!! I did listen on Spotify and hope for the best. Increasingly I find I need to sing through a piece from beginning to end to really learn it at home. Slightly too much tiny snippets in rehearsals. But it is good for my taking control of my own part.*

*I did more homework, felt more confident, and enjoyed the performance more because of it.*

*Too long standing - especially when Mark was explaining about the music.*

*My own performance was the best I've ever achieved.*

*I found the Walton Te Deum difficult.*

*It was such a joy to be there. I found myself swept up and giving a really confident performance. It wasn't perfect but I am happy that I didn't let the choir or myself down. I found myself coming in more confidently than during rehearsals, for example.*

*I had to concentrate very hard to stick to my part sitting immediately behind the percussion!*

*Felt confident that I knew my part well. Voice affected by hay fever, but still able to sing.*

*I felt less confident on the day of the concert (and made more mistakes!) than I should have done for two reasons, both of which were under my control: I had only attended 6 of the 9 rehearsals, one because of illness and two because of a holiday. But the music was very enjoyable & interesting, particularly the Walton Gloria (sic)- stunning!*

*I found it difficult, being placed where I could hear mainly sopranos. I am not confident enough to feel comfortable with this.*

*I've always wanted to sing National Anthem as part of a choir....so achieved.*

*I felt better able to perform after the rehearsal. it was useful to know how much of the orchestra one could hear and how to blend with other singers. My performance was adequate but rest of choir sounded great.*

*It was great to be performing in the theatre again and with such an appreciative audience. I felt that the concert went really well and had appropriate content.*

*I felt more confident than I have in some concerts in the past!*

*By the time of the Walton in the second half, I felt I sang this with more sparkle in the rehearsal - I was flagging a bit.*

*I'd have felt more prepared with a couple more rehearsals of the Walton. I also felt some of the links with 'other' guests/semi chorus bit quite tricky I understand/appreciate the challenges of putting several invited singers/choirs together.*

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## THE CHOIR'S PERFORMANCE

Seventeen members commented on the choir's overall performance:

*Friends thoroughly enjoyed, orchestra excellent, very good programme.*

*Together with the other choirs, I think this counts as one of our best performances since I joined the choir nine years ago.*

*It was a blockbuster! Everyone sang with emotion and commitment and real joy.*

*The orchestra was outstanding. 3 of the 4 soloists wonderful. I love British orchestras who can sightread. Walton Te Deum. Stars! Loved Mark's chats to the audience. And WELL DONE BOARD . YOU DID AN ACE JOB.*

*I felt the semi chorus group was not quite up to performance standard which was a shame.*

*Shame about the number of people unable to sing.*

*We probably need to practise getting on/off stage, stands and sits, and when to open/close music. Those things were a bit untidy.*

*I think we could have been tighter, particularly in the Walton, which was better in the afternoon than in the evening.*

*Sitting on the back row it's difficult to tell how the choir performed as a whole, but it seemed to go well. One of the semi-chorus (2nd sop? - not sure) didn't seem very secure in her part - shame the opportunity couldn't have been offered more widely as there are a couple of good sops in MKC. I felt the choir sang confidently and enjoyed the stirring pieces. The sopranos are very good and soared up to the high notes with ease!*

*I thought it sounded really good; all the singers from different choirs combined to produce a really good sound. Chorale could not have done it on our own.*

*I felt the Dyson was under-rehearsed.*

*Needed a little bit more practice with links in but we did really well.*

*I had feedback from several people who bought tickets. It was all favourable and those in the audience enjoyed the experience.*

*A combined rehearsal(s) with the guest choirs before concert day would have been helpful.*

*One of the best ever!*

*MK Theatre is a challenging venue to sing in - if you are on the end of a row or indeed, the back row, you do not get the feedback from fellow singers to get and maintain a sense of balance and it is hard to appreciate volume difference and adjust accordingly. This understandably makes the performance less enjoyable to a degree. That said, the atmosphere was amazing and the orchestra wonderful! Lovely to be able to sit down and listen for a while too!*

*Overall I think we got away with any less confident moments!!*

## **VENUE AND ORGANISATION**

Members were asked to respond to a statement about the venue for the concert, and a statement on the practical organisation of the concert and the final rehearsal on concert day. The results are reported below in Table 3, with the same merging of responses as in Table 2 above.

**Table 3 Feedback on the venue and practical organisation of the concert**

	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Overall, the venue worked well for this concert.	1	13	30
	2%	30%	68%
Overall, the practical organisation of the concert and the rehearsal on the concert day was effective.	3	10	31
	7%	23%	71%

18 members offered written comments on the venue and the organisation of the concert. Comments focussed on praise for the quality of organisation by Board members, views on the backstage facilities, and concerns about the lack of precision in some aspects of the choir's on-stage presence. Members' comments that cover more than one theme have been split and re-grouped by theme, hence the total number of comments below exceeds 18.

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### QUALITY OF ORGANISATION

*Organisation brilliant.*

*A bouquet of flowers to the backstage boys and girls ... one called Anne?!!!!*

*A fantastically well organised concert and a wonderful venue, really hope we can perform there again soon.*

*Members of the Board had done an excellent job in organising the concert day rehearsal, event and VIP reception. Thank you!*

*Thanks to those organising for all their hard work, not an easy task.*

*Incredible amount of effort well done Board.*

*Very well organised by our team.*

*Organisation done by the board was excellent thank you.*

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## BACKSTAGE

*Venue plenty of space, very accommodating.*

*Just that I was surprised how tired the back stage facilities are - quite a few broken loo locks and tatty looking dressing rooms but I suppose it's understandable after lockdown.*

*There was no mirror in the green room which would have been very helpful. It would have been nice to be able to have a tea or coffee.*

*Facilities backstage could be improved. Due to the nature of the building there is very weak intermittent phone signal inside (at best). I think performers backstage should be provided with wifi so that they can communicate. There was no mirror in the green room, and it was a long walk to find bathrooms from there.*

*Notices on doors identifying rooms for sops, altos etc should have been much larger. Back stage is very confusing.*

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## ON-STAGE PRESENCE

*Stands and sits should all have been pencilled in beforehand. Mark has so much to think about we were left standing like lemons on a couple of occasions.*

*It might have been better if the back row was used so that the front row of singers were not exposed to loud instruments.*

*We really should have had a proper chance to practice getting on and off the stage, perhaps we could have done this while the orchestra were having their break? As it was, it was all too hasty and caused grumbles and misunderstandings.*

*Our entrance and exit to the stage felt untidy ... clearer instruction for standing and sitting would have been helpful.*

*A lot of people to organise I realise but some of the choir 'discipline' needed looking at/clarifying, e.g. people from other choirs didn't follow our norms - when standing we don't applaud. There were people on the front row looking behind for when to stand to sit. We needed some clarity on when each row should come off stage etc.*

*Stands and sits were scrappy and could have benefitted by more direction earlier in the term.*

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#### OTHER COMMENTS

*MK Theatre is better as a theatre than as a concert hall. However it is better than most other venues we could use.*

*It seemed that some members of the guest choirs hadn't received all the information - did they receive the Newsletter texts that we did?*

*There could have been more announcements for the choir e.g. that the tea at the interval was only for the orchestra. Oops.*

*Difficult to sell enough tickets. Good idea to close the upper circle.*

#### OTHER COMMENTS

26 members offered other written comments on the concert. These are given below, grouped by theme. Because many comments cover a number of themes, members' comments have been split and re-grouped by theme, hence the total number of comments below exceeds 26.

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#### A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR MEMBERS

*This was a brilliant experience to be part of. Thank you.*

*An absolutely wonderful occasion - I'll never forget it.*

*It was a real thrill at last to be back on that stage with a full orchestra and an enthusiastic audience. To hear them joining in with Land of Hope and Glory & see them waving flags was lovely, and it did indeed make a wonderful end to the Jubilee weekend.*

*I enjoyed it so much!*

*Really upbeat evening. Great to sing in the theatre again and with a large orchestra.*

*A very enjoyable concert.*

*An absolutely wonderful occasion - I'll never forget it.*

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#### AUDIENCE REACTION

*Very well received by the audience.*

*The audience participation made it extra special. I could not believe it when they started waving their flags!*

*Great to see the audience so responsive and appreciative of the music.*

*I must say that I have had many really positive, congratulatory responses from members of the audience for the whole event - praise for both choir and orchestra, and for Mark's communication with the audience -always much appreciated! One person particularly loved the Butterworth, others enjoyed the Walton Te Deum (as something exciting they'd not heard before) but I think overall the feeling was that it was a really rousing event.*

*My guests are still raving about the concert and feel it was a very fitting finale to the Jubilee celebrations.*

*Friends who came to the concert thoroughly enjoyed it.*

*My guests thought there was too much Walton, and should have been more of the choir and less of solely orchestral pieces although the orchestra were great.*

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#### PRAISE FOR MARK AND ALEX AND THE BOARD

*Huge thank you to Mark & Alex for their never ending encouragement, & another huge thank you to the Board.*

*Well done to Mark, Alex, the Board and everyone involved in the organisation of a great concert. Your hard work is very much appreciated.*

*Mark's explanation of the music to the audience was great and made it more enjoyable.*

*Congratulations to Mark for a very successful programme & to the Board for implementing it!*

*Thank you to Mark and Alex for supporting the Jubilee parade ... it was over and above on a bank holiday ... your investment in us as a choir with everything else you do is really appreciated and you've taken us beyond where I thought we could go.*

*I felt really comfortable with Mark's conducting. He was really relaxed, which helped with nerves, and very clear to follow.*

*And a big thank you to all - a lot of work.*

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#### THE PROGRAMME

*The choice of music was brilliant.*

*Very well put together programme which I feel the choir enjoyed singing and the audience hearing, being so right for the Jubilee Celebrations.*

*Great programme, first time I'd heard some of these works live.*



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## THE ORCHESTRA

*The orchestra played phenomenally well.*

*The orchestra were excellent.*

*The orchestra were excellent, with many familiar players from MK City Orchestra included.*

*The orchestra was very good.*

*Enjoyed the excitement of singing with an orchestra again.*

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## ASPECTS OF STAGE PRESENCE AND ORGANISATION

*Thoroughly enjoyed the music but thought uniform perhaps needs addressing for future concerts - a few pairs of jeans noticeable and lots of different styles looks messy.*

*One negative point made was that the choir and orchestra all being in black made the stage look very sombre. My friend asked why we could not have worn a splash of colour in some form (a buttonhole, or a scarf?) to make it look more celebratory - or at least a flower arrangement on each side of the stage.? A thought perhaps.*

*I had feedback from a lady who used to be part of MK City Orchestra organisation as the chair of 'Friends of the Orchestra'. She said that some more colour on the stage, either as part of our uniform or bunting/ floral arrangements would have given it a more festive feel. Black uniforms seemed too miserable for bright celebratory music.*

*My guest wanted to buy a programme but could not find anyone selling them, either at the bar or at the door. She was there at 6.50.*

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## MARKETING

*It was a hard sell. Too much competition but well done publicly. A great effort.*

*For future reference, I think it would have been worth mentioning that Land of Hope and Glory is part of Pomp & Circumstance - on the flyer perhaps. A surprising number of people don't seem to know that. It might have helped sell more tickets.*

*The bank holiday probably affected ticket sales - it could have gone either way though.*

## REHEARSALS

*I believe that a little less talking from Mark and a little more regular, unbroken singing through of the complicated pieces (and a quick sing through every rehearsal of the bit we learnt the last time before moving on) would mean less last minute worries for everyone. Some of the rehearsals were a bit slow and we didn't get done what we should have done. It's fine working at home on pieces, and we should, but not because we didn't cover it in the first place in rehearsal!*

*Some initial entries would have benefitted from more rehearsal.*

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

*I would like to do more ceremonial community based opportunities if they come up e.g. Full Last Night of Proms as its music my whole family can enjoy and participate in.*

*Enjoyed collaborating with other choirs. Hope we do that again.*

## MEMBERS WHO DID NOT SING IN THE CONCERT

20 members responded to the questionnaire for those who did not sing in the concert, giving a response rate of 51%.

## REHEARSALS

16 (80%) of respondents attended some of the rehearsals for the concert. Respondents who attended any rehearsals were asked to rate their enjoyment of rehearsals on a five-point scale, from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. (85%) All members who attended any rehearsals agreed or strongly agreed that they had enjoyed them.

## REASONS FOR NOT SINGING

Respondents were given a list of ten pre-set reasons for not singing, and could also list any other reason. They were first asked to select all reasons that applied to them. The results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5 All reasons for not singing**

All reasons for not singing	N	%
I had another planned commitment on the concert day.	5	25%
A change of circumstances meant I had to pull out at short notice.	1	5%
I was not able to attend enough rehearsals.	1	5%
I found the music too difficult to sing.	0	0%
I didn't like the music.	0	0%

The venue did not work for me.	0	0%
I was unwell, but not with Covid-19.	4	20%
I had Covid-19 shortly before the concert	9	45%
I was concerned about the Covid risk at rehearsals	0	0%
I was concerned about the Covid risk at the performance	0	0%
Other	6	30%

The other reasons identified concerned family commitments across the term, the long term consequences of an accident and a medical operation, being pressed to confirm participation in the concert earlier than desired, and not wishing to participate in the Jubilee celebrations.

Respondents were also asked to identify the single reason which was most important in them deciding not to sing in the concert. The results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6 Most important reason for not singing**

<b>Most important reason for not singing</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
I had another planned commitment on the concert day.	5	25%
A change of circumstances meant I had to pull out at short notice.	0	0%
I was not able to attend enough rehearsals.	2	10%
I found the music too difficult to sing.	0	0%
I didn't like the music.	0	0%
The venue did not work for me.	0	0%
I was unwell, but not with Covid-19.	3	15%
I had Covid-19 shortly before the concert	7	35%
I was concerned about the Covid risk at rehearsals	0	0%
I was concerned about the Covid risk at the performance	0	0%
Other	3	15%

Ten respondents offered written comments on why they did not sing:

*Absolutely devastated that I wasn't able to attend.*

*I had Covid and was devastated that I couldn't attend due to the choir rules.*

*I was very sad not to be singing.*

*I would have loved to participate in this concert but healthwise I was unable to.*

*Very disappointed to miss the concert as it was a great mix of music.*

*I had tonsillitis which precluded me from singing, even though I would have liked to.*

*I'd tested negative by Sunday but didn't think my voice was up to it. My Covid symptoms were very like a bad cold, nothing worse, but I didn't want to sing at less than full voice. (No way of knowing but the timing was right for me to have picked up Covid at the previous Tuesday's rehearsal on 24th May - were there others?)*

*I was really disappointed not to be involved.*

*Need to have confidence in voice and slightly worried about ability to clamber about on stage.*

*The music wasn't entirely to my taste, but mainly I was just too busy to commit to rehearsals or concert.*

## **AUDIENCE FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS**

Three respondents attended the concert in the audience, and offered the following comments:

*Generally excellent. Occasionally, when the orchestra was going full blast with all the brass, the balance was not quite right and the choir didn't always come through. To pass on to venue organisers: I'm sure more programmes could have been sold if it was more obvious where to buy them (there were no signs or information that they were behind the bar) and/or there were people holding bundles for sale in the foyer and auditorium.*

*Very good all round! The pieces I knew were sung well, and I didn't spot any problems with the pieces that were new. Very good orchestra too. My friend who came with me was also impressed.*

*I enjoyed it all very much*