



Warwick A Singing Town

May 2021 | Issue 1

Dear Friends and Supporters

Contents

Aims

Announcing our Choral Entrepreneurs

Research and Delivery Lead

Participation Experience

Formal Launch

A great deal has happened since the inception of **Warwick – A Singing Town** and the first meeting to explore what this could mean for our town, which took place in September 2019.

There have now been a number of seminal moments which have enabled us to make the vision for our nation's first 'Singing Town' live.

The first was the appointment of Jeremy Dibb as our Research and Delivery Lead. Working with the many stakeholders in the town has built momentum for the project, and established that it has the support to make it a success.

Funding for the first three years of the project has also been secured, which has allowed us to recruit a team of 'Choral Entrepreneurs'.

Thank you for the support you have given for what we know will be a transformational journey: life-affirming, life-enhancing, and life-changing.

Richard Nicholson

Principal of the Warwick Independent Schools Foundation

Aims

1. To celebrate the joy of singing.
2. For singing to be part of the artistic and cultural post-pandemic renewal in Warwick.
3. For all residents to have access to high-quality singing and choral opportunities.
4. For on-going, high-quality singing and choral opportunities to be part of every school pupil's entitlement.
5. For the therapeutic benefits of singing to be better understood, and promoted for our residents.

Above all **Warwick – A Singing Town** should create a positive and exciting project for all Warwick residents that will inspire and generate optimism and enthusiasm.

Announcing our Choral Entrepreneurs

We are delighted to have appointed three outstanding Choral Entrepreneurs.

Each have their own areas of responsibility, drawing on their rich and diverse experience.

Ben will be working on a range of educational and community projects, with Cerys and Mariana leading initially on the work in primary schools.

Benjamin Hamilton



Benjamin Hamilton is a conductor, animateur and artistic leader most at home when using his singing to introduce musical experiences to everyone – there’s nothing better to feel great!

He trained first with Paul McGrath (Warwick), is mentored by Mark Heron (RNCM) and Toby Purser (RCM), and cut his teeth conducting and translating operas, mentored by Kit Hesketh-Harvey (Kit and the Widow), for Warwick Arts Centre (*Hansel and Gretel*, *La Cenerentola*, *Carmen*) and Hampstead Garden Opera (*Don Giovanni*).

He now artistically directs the Warwickshire Choristers (the UK’s largest un auditioned children’s choir), Ex Urbe (chamber choir) and the Hampton Singers (community chorus) and sits on the board of Retrospect Opera (a charity recording label charged with recording forgotten gems of British opera) and co-founded HighTime Opera (which, whilst resident at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry, used storytelling to introduce new audiences to classical music).

Cerys Purser



Cerys Purser began her professional career as a mezzo soprano after graduating from the Royal Academy of Music, taking lead operatic roles in productions in the UK and abroad. As a singer and vocal specialist she has lead workshops with national opera companies, schools and in universities.

With training in music education and vocal function, Cerys has worked as a singing teacher, conductor and music educator and has considerable experience in teaching children and young people of all ages, adults, and young professional singers. Cerys is also passionate about working with people choosing to explore singing to help recover from illness or to find a greater sense of wellbeing, those pursuing a career in singing and those who simply need to experience the joy of singing.

Cerys has boundless energy for her belief that all should have a ‘voice’ and access to life enhancing, high quality singing opportunities.

Research and Delivery Lead

Mariana Rosas



Mariana Rosas is an Argentinian conductor based in the UK. She is currently Music Director of the Colla Voce Chamber Choir and Birmingham City Council Choir, Conductor of the London Youth Choirs Girls' Choir, and Choral Director at the City of London School for Girls. She also works regularly with Birmingham Opera Company, West Midlands Inclusive Choir, Crouch End Festival Chorus, and the Royal Opera House in London.

Mariana was educated in Italy and Argentina, and in 2018 transferred to the UK to study at the University of Birmingham with Simon Halsey. Prior to her move, she was Assistant Professor of Choral Practice at the National University of Arts in Buenos Aires, and worked as a guest conductor in Denmark, Canada, Italy, and Switzerland.

She now works on a diverse range of projects across many musical disciplines, and is regularly engaged as a guest conductor on projects across the UK.

Jeremy Dobb



Jeremy Dobb gained his BMus at Manchester University and studied trumpet and composition as a post-graduate student at the Royal College of Music.

He worked in music education for 35 years; most recently as Director of Warwickshire Music, the music service for Warwickshire County Council. His first role with the music service was as the County Choral Organiser and Jeremy has extensive experience and expertise in the music curriculum at primary level and in particular the role and value of singing.

He completed an MA by research at Warwick University, based on his teaching across Warwickshire schools, and is the author of *Get The Singing Habit* a practical guide to the use of singing to support music education for children aged 4-11.

Since retiring in April 2020 Jeremy has retained an active role in music education and is delighted to be the Research and Delivery Lead for **Warwick – A Singing Town**.

In the next issue we will announce our team of Patrons and Ambassadors!

Participation Experience

Matthew Watson, Head of Westgate Primary School, Warwick, was on the appointing panel. He writes:

“The Westgate pupils were enthused and energised by their sessions with our new Choral Entrepreneurs. They focused on the children and quickly established a rapport which enabled them to build the children’s confidence and the quality of their singing after just 20 minutes of input was incredibly impressive.

The pupils loved their experience and carried on singing after the sessions had ended. Without prompting, our Year 3 children had

established their own ‘singing playground’ and two of our Year 6 pupils conducted the whole class in an impromptu singing session during a wet playtime the following day.

This goes to demonstrate the power of music and singing and, when done extremely well, the ability to lift children to take singing beyond the classroom and into their own free time.

*I am extremely excited about the **Warwick – A Singing Town** project and I am keen to see what we will achieve across three years if this is what can be achieved after just one twenty minute session.”*

Formal Launch

Covid restrictions permitting, we will be formally launching **Warwick – A Singing Town** on Thursday 8 July at Warwick Castle.



For any further details, please contact:

- Jeremy Dibb: jeremydibbmusic@gmail.com
- Richard Nicholson: r.nicholson@warwickschools.co.uk
- Matthew Watson is also very happy to speak to any Head or school leader about the project: head2322@we-learn.com