

It is nearly four years since an historic first encounter between Pegasus and TBS. The writer was not present for that concert but deeply regretted his absence when he heard from fellow members about the extraordinary quality of the visiting choir. Since then, Pegasus has sung for TBS for three major choral works and, now, for four members' evenings.

Pegasus gets better, and better. The choir is now a mix of old and new faces, which is excellent news as it means the choir is not in the short life cycle that might have occurred when it started as a kind of choral alumni association of Robinson College, Cambridge. The membership has broadened.

The event this time was the popular summer concert, which starts early and includes a break for a full-blown supper, ideally consumed on the lawn of Farnham Castle overlooking the town. The weather put paid to the meal location, but the large audience was easily accommodated inside the castle. Pegasus also had supper, but worked really hard for it as a small choir circulated during the meal singing madrigals to the munching music lovers.

The concert programme was an exciting mix of madrigals and part songs, grouped into a variety of themes or composers. English, French, Canadian and Swiss composers were included in the main programme. The first group were all English starting with *My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land* by Elgar, a moving opening piece which was very well received and set a good tone. Four French songs from Ravel and Debussy were followed by two quite different settings of *I Sing of a Maiden* by Lennox Berkeley and Arnold Bax.

The second half of the concert was equally exciting – Vaughan Williams *The Cloud Capped Towers* was followed by Swiss composer Frank Martin's *Songs of Ariel*. Andrew Hope is a member of Pegasus who composes music in a medieval style and the audience greatly enjoyed his piece *Sovranna Ne Sembante*. The final items were two pieces by the Canadian composer Eric Whitacre. The compulsory encore was the extremely moving *Tebe Poyem* (We praise Thee) by Rachmaninov.

During this feast of both food and music, the audience heard solos from of a majority of the 26 choristers, in various pieces. This makes apparent what must be one of the choir's most extraordinary features – they are excellent, strong voices, all with very good sense of musical pitch, but which also blend perfectly. They clearly listen to each other as they sing so that individual voices do not dominate. The credit for this probably goes in large part to their conductor Matthew Altham who is clearly a very talented musician.

Come back soon, Pegasus!

*Ian Sargeant*  
12 July, 2008