

# BABS Directors' College DCVII

## Coventry January 5 – 7, 2007

### Prospectus

#### **Introduction**

BABS Directors' College - the place to be for current, new and aspiring directors, with the prime objectives to enhance their directing skills, and to facilitate their musical and leadership development. Enhanced skill levels in these areas will help directors enthuse and motivate chorus singers and make them want to return to their club week in and week out. As well as being an educational experience, the College is also a forum where directors can share aspirations, concerns and ideas with like-minded people, who are keen to improve music making in their choruses. There will be sessions on Directing Techniques, Leadership and Management, Video Analysis with Feedback and Warm-up/Rehearsal Techniques. There will be an underlying thread of on-going self assessment through video analysis, review and evaluation undertaken by directors. Several sessions will be useful for anyone taking a teaching role within the club.

If you have any aspirations to be a director, you need to be there. Everyone is welcome.

#### **Rationale**

The very essence of chorus directing is in the performance of a song; the unification of the individual voices, expressions and emotions of the chorus members into a clear and unambiguous communication with the audience. We are all involved with our chorus in many ways, some as coaches, some as planners, some as recruiting officers etc. However, directors are THE most instrumental group of people in the life and well being of our choruses. They are probably involved in many aspects of a club's life. They need to develop leadership and management skills, have singing ability and possess a range of non-verbal communication skills. Combined, these skills should enable them to facilitate a musical performance from the singers to the audience, from rehearsal to performance. We all possess these attributes in varying degrees. Directors College will endeavour to strengthen yours. The primary aims of DCVII are to address the issues of Directing Techniques and Rehearsal Techniques. Other skills for the director such as singing ability, musical literacy and presentation awareness are taught at Harmony College and other workshops. DC will focus on those skills that are not taught elsewhere. Directors' College has been designed so as to encourage everyone to attend as well as encouraging more experienced directors to come along and learn from the extensive knowledge and expertise of our visiting educator Mike Brewer together with the DC VII Faculty.

#### **1. College Content**

##### **Friday Evening**

The College will start on Friday evening at 6.30 with dinner followed by a Keynote Speech by Mike Brewer. It will be inspirational and motivating as we will experience the learning and teaching of a new song, together with some rehearsal techniques for us to consider.

##### **Saturday Morning**

The morning session will be given over to Directing Techniques, video review, observations, analysis, feedback and preparation for the coaching sessions on Sunday.

##### **Saturday afternoon**

There will be a session on Leadership and Management and Pick and Mix sessions for everyone. The afternoon will end with a session looking at the college song, its musical/performance issues and how they impact upon directing techniques.

##### **Saturday Evening**

All students will come together for a modified repeat of last year's successful 'Coaching under glass' session.

##### **Sunday**

All students will get a chance to direct, with coaching back up and video recording. Novices will direct the guest quartets and the others will direct one of the guest choruses. There will be an underlying thread of on-going assessment through video analysis, review and evaluation undertaken by all delegates.

In parallel with the directing sessions, there will be other teaching sessions to address further aspects of being a director. All delegates will attend these.

## **2. College Song**

The college song, to be used for the directing techniques sessions on Saturday will be 'Once upon a Time' (arranged by Rob Campbell). The song will be performed by the delegates acting as the College Chorus on Saturday after dinner. The chorus will be warmed up by Mike Brewer and then 2 delegates (selected by draw from volunteers) will be given a 20 minute coached slot with the College Chorus.

## **3. Streaming**

Students will be streamed as Novices and Not-novices based on their own self assessment prior to the College.

There will be no requirement, this year, to submit video tapes in advance of the college.

Instead, students wishing to be in the Not Novices group are requested to make a video recording of themselves directing 2 contrasting songs. These videos will form an important part of the course and the preparation for the delegates working with the College Choruses. Details of what to include on the video and how to shoot it are given in a separate note.

These videos and those made at the College may be left with the College Faculty for further analysis and assessment as part of the CD Certification scheme. Please make sure that your video is labelled appropriately. While there is no specific requirement for Novices to bring along a video, if they wish to do so they will get feedback on the content.

### **Novices**

Novices at DC VII will benefit new and aspiring directors, assistants, music/performance team members, coaches or, indeed, anyone who finds themselves out in front of a chorus from time to time. This stream will provide the solid foundation of basic skills which is the starting point for becoming a proficient director. What you need to know: No prior experience necessary! What you will learn: The course will help you to develop your directing skills in the following areas:

- Posture/body language
- Meaningful Eye contact
- Hand and Arm Position
- Planes of directing
- Ictus
- Prep beat
- Down Beat
- Onset of sound
- Release of sound
- Clarity of Patterns
- 4/4 pattern
- 3/4 pattern
- 2/4 pattern
- Facial Expression

Please note that this list is independent of your experience as a Director. If you have been directing for years but have never been taught these fundamentals, you shouldn't be afraid to take the opportunity to learn the basic skills

If you are unclear about what any of these mean, there is a detailed description on the Directors' website at

**[www.babs-education.info/directors/certification/curriculum/dt1\\_theory.php](http://www.babs-education.info/directors/certification/curriculum/dt1_theory.php)**

## **4. Classes**

## **Saturday**

There will be six or more classes on offer for all delegates. They will run twice. Students may be guided to attend at least one of these sessions in preparation for their coaching session on the Sunday. There will be an opportunity to choose the second session from those on offer.

## **Sunday**

There will be sessions run in parallel on Sunday for delegates to attend.

## **5. Certification**

In order to support the development of aspiring directors, DCVII is designed with the BABS Director Certification Programme in mind. The programme provides a structured certification process for all levels of Chorus Directing. Attendance at Directors College will be part of that programme. Those skills not addressed at the College will be detailed for delegates to work on at home, or at other BABS educational events.

It is envisaged that the Certification process will take place over several years and each Director's College will provide suitable classes, at all levels of ability, to enable individual directors to achieve higher and higher level of certification. The administration of the Certification Program will be web based on the Directors website. To participate, you need to register but, even if you don't, there are lots of resources there to help you develop your skills.

## **6. Visitors & Visiting Educators**

### **Mike Brewer**

Mike has been the Music Director at Chethams, Britain's largest music school for gifted children for twenty years. He has been prominent in the country's choral life, as conductor of award winning choirs (he won the worldwide competition 'Let the Peoples Sing' twice) and as musical director of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain and Laudibus. Latterly he has worked regularly as adjudicator, guest conductor and workshop clinician worldwide. His annual tours include South East Asia, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, and he also has a busy programme of workshops and concerts in Britain and Europe.

### **Manvinder Rattan**

Manvinder studied choral conducting with James Wild, John Coates and Jill Wild within the Sing for Pleasure organisation and then continued with Laszlo Heltay and Mike Brewer. He studied orchestral conducting with George Hurst and Colin Metters, professor of conducting at the Royal Academy of Music. He is the Musical Director with the John Lewis Partnership. His tenure has seen the establishment and rapid development of The Cavendish Ensemble and The Cavendish Singers along with the substantial growth of Voices in Partnership. Manvinder now teaches conducting himself and was instrumental in gaining ABSRM accreditation for the Sing for Pleasure conducting syllabus. He is also a representative on the TONSIL group. Manvinder will be specifically looking at and advising us on the Certification Programme.

## **7. Supporting Choruses and Quartets**

The following choruses will be providing the vocal support for your video sessions on Sunday.

The Sounds of Three Spires, the BABS men's chorus from Coventry and The Belles of Three Spires LABBS ladies chorus from Coventry.

They will be working with not-novice directors on Sunday.

Retro and Cadence two quartets from the Grand Central Chorus will form an octet to work with novice directors on Sunday.

## **8. Guidance on Self-Assessment**

To help you decide whether you should enrol as a Novice or not please refer to Novice directing skills in section 3.

### **9. Internet Support for Directors**

The BABS Directors website is one of our main means of communication with you, disseminating information, providing news updates and document downloads. Visit it regularly at **[www.babs-education.info/directors](http://www.babs-education.info/directors)**

The BABS Bulletin Board has a Directors Forum which has replaced the old CDNet mailing list. It provides a way for the directing fraternity to talk to each other, ask questions, get answers, broadcast the news in a relatively secure environment. If you are not already registered with the Bulletin Board, it will take only a couple of minutes. If you are, visit it regularly. **[www.babs-education.info/msge\\_bd](http://www.babs-education.info/msge_bd)**

Most of the administrative details of the Certification Programme will be web-based. To subscribe to the programme, you need to be registered with the Bulletin Board and then visit the BABS Directors website where, under the Certification menu, you'll find Register/Login. You might want to read the Help file which you'll also find under the Certification menu.

**[www.babs-education.info/directors/register/help.php](http://www.babs-education.info/directors/register/help.php)**

**PLEASE SEND IN YOUR APPLICATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE>**

**Rhiannon Owens-Hall**