

Wrablers 6th AGM Tuesday 7 Feb 2017 at Linklaters

Meeting notes FINAL (23 Feb 2017)

Present: Daniel, Duncan, Janette, Juliana, Kathleen, Matt, Maxine, Robin, Wendy

Absent: Kathryn (in California with sick Mom), Louli (at Refugee Event)

There was confusion over how many years we've been around as a group. [We started in Spring 2011- counting the first Warbler rehearsal as the one at Timebank, when we sang 'Moon River' as robots down the phone to absent Wendy and collapsed on the floor in absolute hysterics. Our first AGM was Jan 2012. JB]

1. Rehearsal pattern proposal. See JB's detailed proposal in the Agenda - summarized below:
 - Run weekly and have breaks throughout the year.
 - Key advantage that we can have more time to do the things that we'd like to do to improve ourselves.
 - Spend 9 months in weekly phase and 3 months in bi-weekly or (40 rehearsals)
 - See Louli's email circulated before the AGM (dated 5 Feb): summary: Louli thought that the extra rehearsals on a frequent basis would be hard to manage
 - Janette thinks that if we go to weekly then people might get lazier
 - Duncan says getting more gigs would make people be better prepared overall (less lazy).
 - Juliana wondered if that was the only way to get the Buzzer under the Ass aka come to rehearsals with parts learned as agreed, so to be better prepared earlier on in the process?
 - Matt doesn't want to do more weekly time - prefers doing one or two songs max in a rehearsal and focus on quality. Kathleen agreed with this.
 - Matt suggested have one extra rehearsal a month and have it be almost a masterclass.
 - Kathleen – it has to be created in a positive way

After some further development of the idea, we agreed the following:

- Once a quarter, the song scheduler will add in an extra rehearsal dedicated to a topic where we would use it to finesse current songs, or learn technique/skills.
 - We will continue the weekly and fortnightly as usual, apart from those extra scheduled rehearsals.
 - This new pattern does not come into effect until after the June 17 gig, as we are due to start weekly rehearsals from 14 March as already agreed.
2. Audition process - see JB's notes contained in the AGM Agenda. Discussion took place as to how to possibly adapt our current procedure to serve us better. Generally, it was felt that the two components were both valuable - the audition, to let someone in, and the 'probation period' so that everyone has a 'way out' if things aren't working. The discussion was about how the process might be loosened up or streamlined in some way. Some of the points made were:
- Matt - we need to get people in quicker with a lot less fuss. We do need to see whether or not they do fit in though over a number of weeks.
 - Maxine - for most people, you are just coming to sing, sometimes in the process depending on when it is, you have to realise that people are pressured to get ready for a gig, which is very different?
 - Robin – we should beware recruiting in haste and regret at our leisure
 - Janette - we should trust each other's judgement, particularly when introducing known singers.

The audition choice of song was discussed - it used to be Ide Were and another song - more recently it has been songs from the current set. The pros and cons of these approaches were discussed. Max put forward a new idea that the recruit could bring a song of their own choosing to sing. This would let us hear their voice clearly. So their ability to hold a part would have to be ascertained another way, or perhaps more informally? [I do not recall a definitive decision regarding these ideas, and none was noted at the time - it was more that we had various methods to choose from when setting an audition. JB]

[Louli added her thoughts on the topic in an email circulated subsequently, dated 21 Feb.]

The outcome of the overall discussion of the audition process did not change the essence of our existing procedure, but gave us some flexibility with it:

- We are in favour of acknowledging and having flexibility in the process

- We are in favour of having people as guests in rehearsals with a little notice. Guests are invited to join in singing if they want to (no pressure) and can be provided with music/MP3s to facilitate that.
- We are in favour of allowing people to participate in gigs when and if they decide to join, for as much or as little as they can manage (depending on when they join in relation to a gig).
- We are NOT in favour of a single annual recruitment period. (One of the choirs Daniel knows does this.) Let's face it. We've recruited 5 people in 4 years. There are very few enquiries to advertising on the website and Facebook. Our most likely source is people we already know or who know us (been to a gig.)

Vocal Ranges

- Maxine wants to do more of a voice ranges and update them. They should be done annually or every two years. This data helps people allocating voice parts. We agreed to do this, fitting in a few each rehearsal.

Photos and website update

- Duncan can take more nude photos of me [DD] while I sleep and will take candid shots of the rest of the group to update the Wrablers website. Including portraits [mug shots] of Maxine and Kathryn.
 - Duncan to retrieve photos (of Winter Wonder, Happy, and Are We There Yet gigs) from his ass and after cleaning them hand them over to Wendy.
3. Warbler Jobs - see Wrablers Who Does What for current list of, er who does what of Warbler jobs. (A document 'Warbler Jobs' preceded this and is now out of date. Warbler Wroles is on roles, not tasks.)
 - Subs – Mercedes is happy to continue as treasurer. £20 is still the annual Warbler dues amount.
 - Everyone who was allocated jobs is happy with them
 4. AOB
 - Wendy- 2 points about songs and song allocation
 - Is it permissible for songs to come into a current year after a set is chosen by the rep gang? NO it's not.

- We need to address how we choose small group songs
- Matt thought that we should consider adding a second session of the rep gang to look at small groups songs separately
- [Subsequent to this meeting JB produced a spreadsheet of all small group/Madrigals/Madriguys songs since time began (2011) for use by the rep gang. Many mixed small group songs are also Xmas ones.]
- Duncan proposed that small group songs are set by the rep gang like everything else. That is, the rep gang decides which of the set are going to work better in a small group. Song leaders volunteer to take on songs in the usual way
 - The song leader decides who is to sing in the small group song, and allocates parts as usual
 - Madrigals and Madriguys songs are in a different category. Madrigals are allowed a certain number of songs in a gig, for example, and choose which song they contribute (rather than have that decided by the rep gang).
- Rep Gang were to have a SKYPE meeting to determine which of the remaining un-claimed songs may be small group songs for this forthcoming June gig.
- Robin noticed the Constitution was out of date [dated 2015 - it was sent for Ref to everyone in advance of the AGM]. Duncan volunteered to update it. JB to send him the necessary ingredients to do so.

JB informed everyone that Kathryn was in California for now, caring for her mother who was taken suddenly ill in January, so Kathryn cannot be counted on for the June gig. (Subsequent to the meeting, Kathryn expressed a hope to do 'one or two songs, maybe more' which we were all very pleased about.)

Daniel then told the assembled that he is unable to be involved in Wrablers for the time being, and his job 'is not going to change' and requires so much of him - not just the extensive travelling. So, he needs what spare time he has to devote to himself. [Not sure we heard this correctly - many Wrabs in shock, dismay and denial]

Matt wanted it noted that we wish to thank Daniel for his [add superlative adjective] contribution to Wrablers. [We were a bit lost for words at this point]. Mercedes commented: "We were crap before you came along." Wendy exclaimed: "We can be crap again!!!"

So, we have in effect lost 3 members since Winter Wonder. More discussion on recruitment followed:

- How can men help to recruit more men?
 - Anytime we have a gig we are to ask the audience to get involved?
 - We need to do more networking events
 - Think of people we know who might consider joining, and invite them along as guests, and take it from there.

Duncan was thanked for his chairing, Daniel for note-taking, and we all thanked ourselves for a creative, congenial and productive meeting.

Meeting finished at 9pm.

Notes taken contemporaneously by DD, then a DRAFT was tidied up and sent out by JB on 20 Feb 2017 for comment. Corrections made on 21 Feb. This is the FINAL version 23 Feb. JB