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Dear Friends,

Here is the first issue of an occasional e-newsletter. Just how occasional and how many issues it runs to will depend on how many contributions you send us!

Ideas for your contributions could include coping with Corona isolation; memories of your time as a member of WPS (plus photographs if you have them in a usable format); 'alternative' lyrics to well-known pieces which I hope will be inspired by **Tim** with **John & Sheila Malin**, all of whom do these things brilliantly. We are hoping to run a regular musical appreciation column led by **Graham** which could recommend recent concert items available on the BBC iPlayer or YouTube and **Nikki** has suggested contributing your very own Desert Island Discs from which we might extract the two most popular pieces for consideration in a future concert programme. Let us know if you think this project is worth doing and please send **YOUR** suggestions to me in the first instance – no reasonable offer refused! And if anyone's better at formatting and graphic design than I am, please get in touch!

It would be good to have a small team of compilers/editors, so the task doesn't fall too heavily on one person's shoulders. I've received one such offer so far – thanks, **Chris Robinson**.

As well as feature items, each issue will carry news items and where appropriate, refer you to our website or our brand new Facebook page for more information.

Stay safe and well, everyone, and let's do what we can to stay connected.

Judy

NEWS

- **Our website** (www.watfordphilharmonic.co.uk)

Our website is proving an invaluable resource for posting information – thanks to **Tim Pettigrew** for keeping it up to date. Recent posts include **David's** message about the rest of the season; our Messiah Miscellany Quiz; downloads of the music Michael has chosen for our very first virtual choir practice (see below) and an entire catalogue of concerts performed by the Society from 1935 to the present day, compiled from our archives by **Margaret Burke** – a truly marathon effort!

- **Virtual rehearsals**

Michael has recorded a trial rehearsal session on YouTube from his home studio for us to join in and practice singing to a little piece called 'Get on the Bus.' Sheet music and words for all 4 parts can be downloaded from our website, where you will also find a link to the YouTube recording - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pv5UvCOArVU&feature=youtu.be>

- **Zoom**

We're also experimenting with using Zoom as a means of running virtual rehearsals. Many of you will have discovered already how useful it is for participating in your favourite exercise class/Pilates session. If you would like help in setting it up before we start making use of it, **Eleanor Anderson** has offered to give one to one telephone tutorials paced to suit every level of techie competence and phobia. Eleanor can be contacted on eleanor.anderson@gmail.com. Massive thanks, Eleanor!

- Other virtual practice sessions are available such as Gareth Malone's Great British Home Chorus www.greatbritishhomechorus.com and the Making Music supported www.carryonsinging.com

No doubt many others will spring up in the next few weeks. Let me know if you come across anything interesting.

- **New closed Facebook page for WPS members**

We now have a closed Facebook page for exchanging messages and sharing content, set up and administered by **Sophie Crump** - thanks, Sophie. 46 people have already signed up <https://www.facebook.com/groups/625783124932009/> to join.

- **Cancelled concerts**

Following cancellation of our April and June concerts, we are delighted to confirm that all our 4 Messiah soloists and guest artist Tristan Fry have agreed to perform with us in October when we hope to reschedule the April programme. All have expressed their gratitude for the percentage cancellation fees we felt able to offer them.

- **Zinco's Italian Restaurant**

Many of you will have enjoyed Zinco's food and hospitality in the gap between dress rehearsal and performance on concert days. Currently unable to trade, we have been advised that the family has decided not to re-open when restrictions are lifted and will retire from the business. **Rosemary Mackenzie-Corby** has written to them, expressing for many of us our appreciation for their years of service.

JUST FOR FUN

- **Inside the Venner kitchen**

Pinning a map of the world to the kitchen notice board, Tim said to Rosemary 'Throw this dart and wherever it lands, we'll book ourselves a holiday when the pandemic is over.' Turns out they will be spending two weeks behind the fridge!

- **W.S Gilbert on Social Distancing**

I am the very model of effective social distancing.
I listen to the experts on the topic of resistance-ing:
I know that brunch and yoga class aren't nearly as imperative
As doing what I can to change the nation's viral narrative.

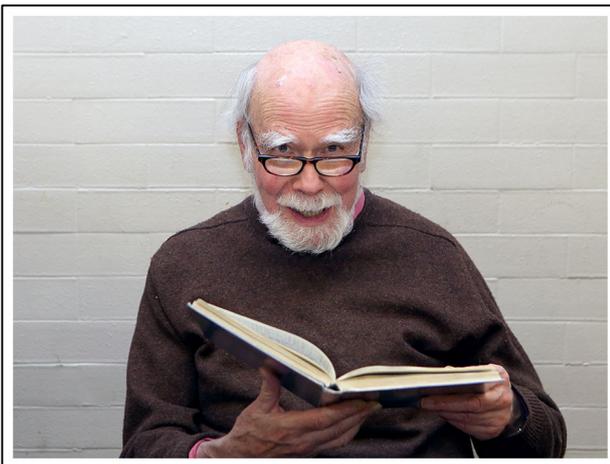
I'm very well acquainted too with living solitarily
And confident that everyone can do it temporarily.
Go take a walk or ride a bike or dig into an unread book;
Avoid the bars and restaurants and take-aways and learn to cook.

There's lots of stuff to watch online while keeping safe from sinus ills
Better to enjoy your Netflixes minus chills!
Adopt a pet, compose a ballad, write some earnest doggerel,
Or help demolish Donald Trump before the next inaugural.

Pandemics are alarming, but they're not insurmountable
If everybody pitches in to hold ourselves accountable.
In short, please do your part to practise prudent co-existence
And be the very model of effective social distancing!

**Contributed by Nikki and Tim, though each denies having written it!
More pastiches, please.**

HAPPY MEMORIES



Our photographer, **Rachel Piper**, has just received confirmation that two of her stunning photographs have made it to the final of Bird Photographer of the Year. Her photographs of people aren't too shabby, either! See her work at <http://www.rachelpiper.me.uk/photography/>