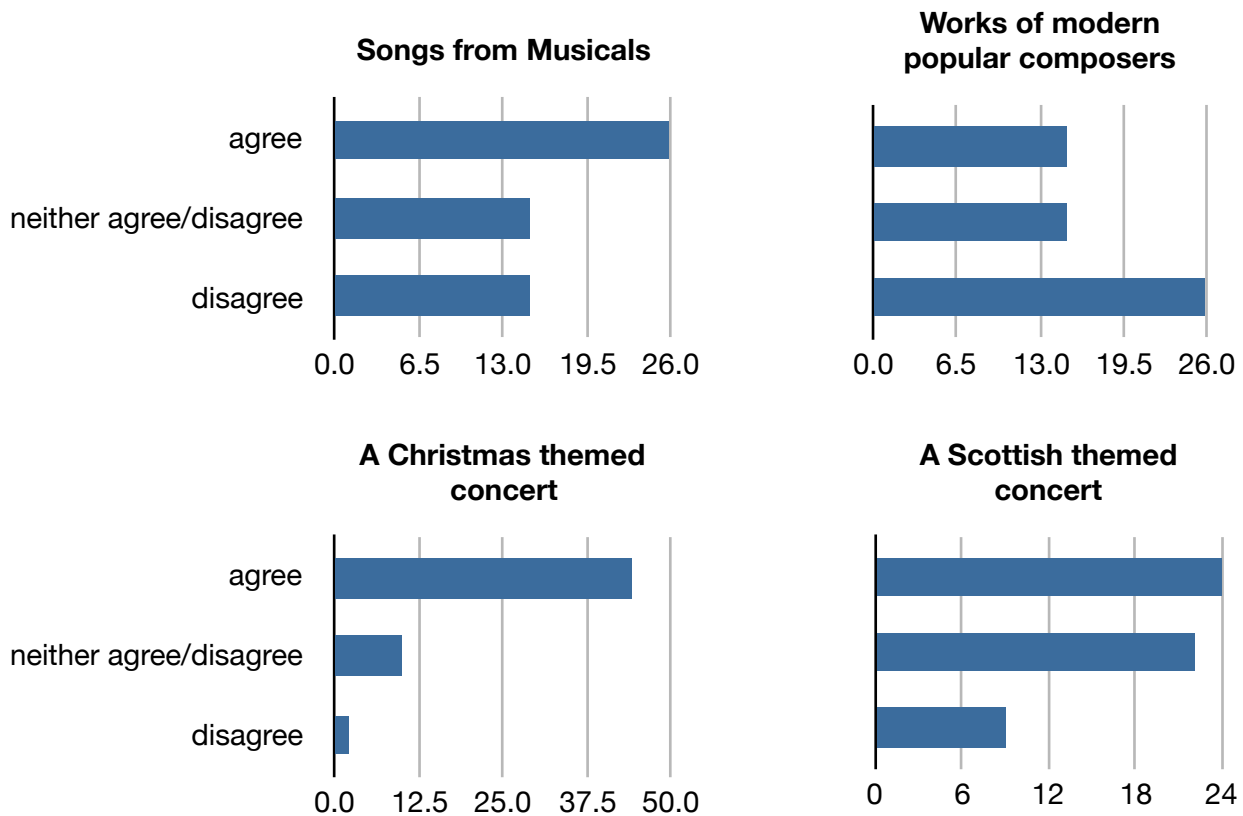


In March 2015 the Colinton and Merchiston Choir conducted a survey to gauge members' preferences for future music programmes. A copy of the survey form is attached. It was issued electronically to 80 members, 50 of whom responded electronically, 2 on paper; additionally 4 replied on a paper survey form issued to members without email. The response rate was 67%.



Responses are summarised as follows:

The responses show an almost overwhelming endorsement for a Christmas themed concert (with carols and audience participation), some support for concerts based on songs from musicals or with a Scottish theme, and an overall indifference to a concert based on the works of modern popular composers.

Many helpfully used the comment boxes to illuminate their choices and share their thoughts and suggestions. Members clearly enjoy coming to choir and are very appreciative of David. Some would clearly prefer to retain the status quo; the majority, while retaining a predilection for classical choral works, would wish to vary the repertoire. Reasons for wanting to broaden music programmes include: attracting bigger audiences; encouraging new and younger members; challenging the choir appropriately.

Some better known works were mentioned as more popular with audiences (e.g. John Rutter's choral music; *Phantom of the Opera*; and *Requiem for the Living*, Donald Swann). Well-known classical choral compositions were also mooted, as was joyful, celebratory music. Younger members it was thought may prefer a looser, more eclectic mix of pieces. Help by way of CDs and other aids was requested, especially for non sight-readers.

Other suggestions and requests included -

- Could we have more information about compositions and composers for the choir at the start of rehearsals, not just printed just in the concert programme for the audience?
- Would a spoken concert introduction be possible telling the audience about the music they are to hear?
- Could we sell tickets in advance at a set price? The non-ticket system with retiring collection was liked too.
- As well as carols at a Christmas concert, a medley of WW1 and WW2 songs might appeal to an Armistice Day concert audience
- Could we have more emphasis on choral singing and less solo work?
- What about featuring choir members as instrumental soloists / accompanists, possibly involving other instruments such as the harp?
- Please keep asking for programme suggestions from us as choir members.
- What about some works by female composers (e.g. Sally Beamish who would also fit with a Scottish theme)?
- Given the different acoustic, additional rehearsal time in the Memorial Hall prior to a concert could be beneficial.
- What about additional input from the school (e.g. Wings of a Dove could have been sung by a boy tenor)?

Suggestions for concert themes included:

- the seasons / botanical
- opera choruses
- music by country across genre (e.g. folk music)
- gospel music / spirituals
- Burns songs in a Scottish themed concert
- 4-part settings of familiar carols at Christmas; traditional / Scottish songs suitable for Christmas and Winter; *St. Matthew's Passion*, Bach, abridged if necessary, at Easter
- well-known classics (e.g. excerpts from Messiah combined with modern pieces such as *Ubi Caritas*, Paul Mealor)
- modern composers themed concert programme eg. Tavener; Rutter; *The Armed Man*, Karl Jenkin; *Child in our Time*, Tippett; *The Jazz Mass*.

The committee is delighted to have such constructive feedback from the choir. Members' views and suggestions are already influencing choice of music programme and David is certainly telling the choir more about the music we're singing - in his own inimitable way. The music chosen has to be within our capabilities: a key consideration that can be limiting!

There are some suggestions which are more difficult to address. For example, without solo work it would be hard to present a full length concert programme twice a year, given the limited time we have for rehearsing. To feature choir members as instrumental soloists is a feasible alternative - volunteers wanted, your choir needs you! Additional rehearsal time in the Memorial Hall will be investigated.

The choir's website - www.colintonchoir.org - now includes a *helpful learning links* page for which choir members have already made suggestions. Thank you. Please do continue to give the committee your feedback and please do try to practise your part at home, all to help make the experience of singing with Colinton & Merchiston choir a really enjoyable one.

C&M Choir: Survey 2015: Music Programmes

Takings from concerts vary: they suggest that some music programmes are favoured more than others.

This survey is to gauge choir members' views about the types of music programme we might focus on in the future.

What changes, if any, would you like to see; what new choir repertoires would you support?

1. Songs from musicals?

- agree
- neither agree / disagree
- disagree

2. Works of modern popular composers e.g. Lennon / McCartney?

- agree
- neither agree / disagree
- disagree

3. A Christmas themed concert... with some carols and audience participation?

- agree
- neither agree / disagree
- disagree

4. A Scottish themed concert?

- agree
- neither agree / disagree
- disagree

5. Ideas for other themes?

6. Any other comments, questions, concerns about music programmes?

Please return to Alison Kennedy (alto section, 2nd front row) by concert day, 29 March 2015