

Imperial Ladies Choir - 2016

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The Imperial Ladies Choir usually sings music in three parts; soprano, second soprano and alto. Each voice part tends to sing in a different vocal range and the ladies are very happy in their sections with their own singing buddies. Sometimes, however, I feel a bit sorry for the altos, although I never let them know this. Why should this be? Well, the first sopranos usually have the tune and the second sopranos tend to harmonize with them, again with quite a melodic line. The altos, however, often have to suffer bar after bar of the same note as they support the other two voices. Another alto, from a different country, must have thought something similar, as they penned the following verse.

The Alto's Rebuttal (Anon)

**The poor lonely altos,
So mild and so meek,
Forlorn and abandoned,
Forbidden to speak.**

**We've begged and we've pleaded
For lines, with some flair.
We know we can do it
But they just don't care.**

**We want to sing melodies.
We so want to shine.
We're just the support group
And that is just fine.**

**For when we're in heaven,
All singing our parts,
The altos will be there
With hands on our hearts.**

**We'll polish those harps,
If that be our task.
We'll sing not a note,
Unless we are asked.**

Is this true for the alto section of the Imperial Choir? Our altos are definitely not meek, mild or quiet and, as all of the choir are very good friends, they are unlikely to be lonely. They are only quiet when they have their 'sweet' break during rehearsals. No other section does this but, for some reason, the altos are never without sweets. They may be for medicinal purposes but I have my doubts at times! I do try to give the altos the tune when I can, as their parts can sometimes be rather monotonous, but they are so valuable for their supportive bass lines, as are the seconds for their inner harmonies and the firsts for their soaring melodies.

It doesn't really matter what part the ladies sing because, in the end, every part is vital to the overall sound. There are always friendly jibes at rehearsals between the different voice groups but it is all done in good humour and that is what makes our choir such a happy and solid unit.

Thank you to all the ladies for their commitment this year. It has been another busy one with many interesting musical experiences and plans for next year are already in the pipeline. As we approach the busiest time of the year for the choir, I'd like to share the following verse with you. It was found in the vestry at Lichfield Cathedral and penned by one of their choristers but the sentiments are just as applicable to the ladies of our choir in Mellieħa.

Choristers' Confession

**Almighty and most merciful Choirmaster,
We have erred and strayed from thy beat like
lost sheep.**

**We have followed too much the intonation and
tempi of our own hearts.
We have offended against thy dynamic
markings.**

We have left unsung the notes we should have
sung
And we have sung notes we ought not to have
sung.
And there is no breath in us.
But thou, O Choirmaster, have mercy on us,
miserable singers,
Succour the chorally challenged,
Restore them that need extra note bashing,

Spare them without pencils,
Pardon our mistakes,
And have faith that we will follow thy directions
And sing together in perfect harmony. Amen.

May the Imperial Ladies Choir continue to flourish for many years and may they always sing in perfect harmony. On behalf of all of the ladies may I wish you all a very happy festa.

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