USING THE UXBRIDGE CHORAL SOCIETY WEBSITE TO HELP YOU REHEARSE

or: *An End to Ordering Practice Tape Misery*

You may be aware that our choir now has its own website. The full web address is:

http://www.uxbridgechoralsociety.org.uk

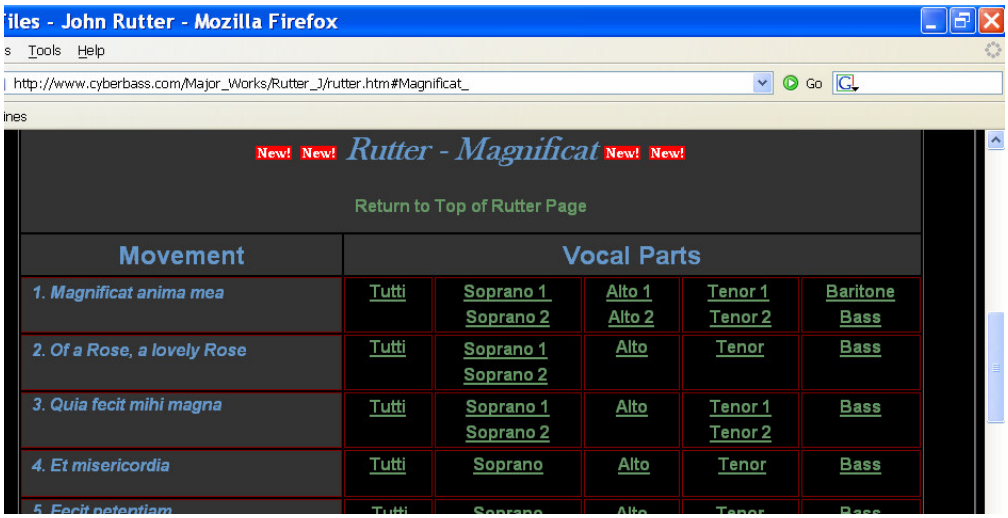
I have now added a Choir Noticeboard tab to the website, and on this I have put some links to web pages that allow you to download midi files. You can use these midi files as an aid to note-bashing, while reading your score (provided that you have a computer!)

*What and where are midi files?*

"Midi" stands for Musical Instrument Digital Interface (which I am told is a computer language used to store music in such a way that it doesn't take up too much memory). Your computer is able to play music and synthesise instruments (up to a point). You can find midi music on the Web by typing the words choral midi (not underlined) followed by the composer's name into Google, e.g. choral midi Rutter, and almost certainly this will lead you to www.cyberbass.com (which you should perhaps add to your Favourites). There are many other such sites.

*How to play midi files*

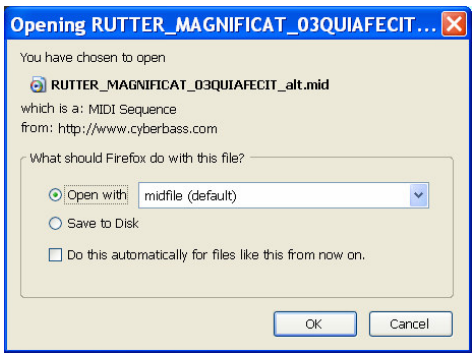
Before you start, make sure that your computer has a speaker (one is enough for our purposes), that the speaker is plugged in and switched on, and that (if you use earphones) the earphones have been unplugged. Also, check that the sound controls on your computer have not been muted. All of these things have caught me out in the past. You'll find a sound control icon at the bottom right-hand side of your screen (in the System Tray, to be precise); you can also access sound controls in the Control Panel, (Start, Control Panel, Sounds and Audio Devices, Advanced), and finally there are volume controls etc in the Windows Media Player itself. Windows Media Player usually comes free as part of the Windows package but there are other paid-for programmes that you can use (you could try Melody Assistant from http://www.myriad-online.com/melody.htm

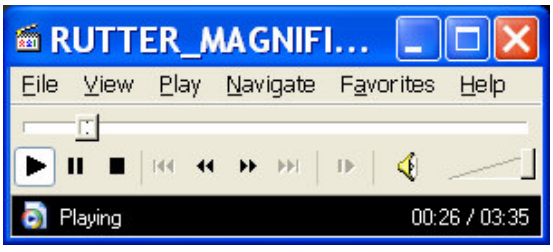



Single-click on the link for Rutter's *Magnificat* (for example) on the Choir Noticeboard page, or go straight to Cyberbass. Your screen should then look like this:

Click on one of the underlined links. For my example, I clicked on the alto vocal part in the third movement, so you will see that the filename reads:-

RUTTER_ MAGNIFICAT_03QUIAFECIT_alt.mid




You should then see the last box appear:- and providing you have done the right things to your volume controls and speaker etc you should be able to hear the music playing. You can choose either individual voices, or tutti. Don't expect a concert performance; what you *can* expect is a faithful reproduction of the notes and tempi.

You can save these midi files for future reference by clicking the button Save to Disk and then choosing the My Music folder in My Documents. To close them, just click on the big X in the right-hand corner.