School:Bath School of Design

Researcher: Stuart Henley

Project Title: Redesigning Bath Choral Society

UOA: 32

300-Word Statement

This collection documents Henley's pro-bono graphic design project for Bath Choral Society, Bath's oldest amateur choral society, established in 1887, with 120 members and an annual public audience of 2,500. A communications audit in 2016 established a much needed strategy to attract younger members and increase membership and audience numbers. To achieve this Henley decided to reposition the society in the public's perception – to align the society to quality professional cultural institutions, creating greater differentiation from local amateur organisations connecting more strongly to a visually aware younger audience. Three questions were addressed:

1. How can choral music be made accessible to wider audiences?
2. How can graphic design represent choral music through print and screen-based media?
3. How can graphic design be leveraged to engage younger people in choral music as either audience or participants?
These objectives would be driven by a new visual brand presence: a logo, print collateral system and a more dynamic online presence.

Research looked at past and current practice in visual representation of music, looking at choral, classical, rock and pop visual traditions. This led the design process involving concept development, prototyping, final development and presentations before public deployment of key design assets – logo, print system and website.

The logo synthesises two key elements: the date of establishment and interlocking letter forms evoking harmonised voices. The print system is structured on a grid based on the visual representation of music – five horizontal staves creating four rows. The website features interactive and dynamic elements designed to show the emotions and passion of the choir with reference to contemporary music video.

Each of the three visual components are conceived to challenge a perceived notion

of choral music as inaccessible, uninteresting or outmoded and to appeal to a younger potential new audience.