

"And it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless Us, Every One!"

Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol

"God rest ye merry gentlemen, let nothing you dismay" we sang with gusto (for the umpteenth time!) sporting Santa hats, Christmas jumpers and an early festive twinkle in our eyes as we gathered outside an ordinary London house on a chilly late October evening.

Our choir has been fortunate enough to be involved in some exciting and interesting experiences, but I don't think any of us ever expected to feature in a TV film investigating - and attempting to perhaps overturn - Miriam Margolyes' ambivalent feelings about Christmas! But there we were, a small group of us, on that grey October evening, singing carols outside a film location house along with the lady herself!

Our efforts were featured in the TV film *Miriam's Dickensian Christmas* (broadcast on 20 Dec and still available on Channel 4's catch up service) during the closing 5 minutes or so, where we are shown singing and beaming away. The production team requested a sound akin to amateur local carollers who had knocked on Miriam's door; hence our performance is heavy on enthusiasm and light on choral harmony. True professionals that we are, that is exactly what we delivered!

Having not been involved in filming before myself, I'm not sure what I expected, but I can report that there was a lot of standing around relieved by occasional moments of interest and excitement - most notably when Miriam was around! Miriam was charming, fun, very small and a bit swearsy (no surprises there!) She was very gracious and grateful to us for our contribution, and she joined in with the carols with enthusiasm.

There are some lovely still photos and film footage of the choir, and our appearance is certainly not going to do our publicity profile any harm, so take a look at the programme if you can. And if Miriam is not your cup of tea, all you have to do is watch the last 5 minutes or so to see our choir in action!

"God bless us, every one."

A very Happy New Year to us all!

Liz Hazell, Soprano.

C4 programme details

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/miriams-dickensian-christmas>