

MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH ON WEDNESDAY 24 May 2017

1. **Apologies for absence:** 20 apologies received. Members Present: 33.

2. **Minutes of the AGM of 18 May 2016 and subsequent EGM on 15th October 2016**

These had been circulated before the meeting; after a proposal by Joanna Rand, seconded by Tom Connor, the Minutes of the AGM were approved and signed. The Minutes of the EGM were also approved and signed having been proposed by Cherry Eddy and seconded by Maria Luisa Mapleton.

3. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

4. **Chairman's Review of the 2016/2017 season**

After welcoming members, Chairman Chris Mapleton reported that the Society had once again enjoyed a season of wonderful music. He said that Suzanne is to be congratulated on "doing it again" in spite of having to struggle with a back problem. The season began with The Dover String Quartet who performed with huge attention to detail. Pianist Alexei Grynyck had to perform alone as cellist Leonard Elschenbroich was unwell; he provided an excellent concert in spite of not being fully fit himself. In November members enjoyed the playing of The Trio Gaspard, winners of 3 international competitions since their formation in 2010. The Pelleas Ensemble, a young ensemble with the unusual combination of flute, viola and harp, provided an excellent concert before joining us at the New Year Party which was enjoyed by 70 members and guests. In February we were fortunate to hear up-and-coming pianist Vitalyi Pisarenko perform. The season ended with celebrity Julian Bliss showing us what a stunning repertoire can be squeezed out of a clarinet. This concert was attended by several young clarinetists who were delighted to be photographed with the master after the event!

This year the Publicity Sub-Committee, joined by Fiona Martland, has been very active in producing ideas for promoting the Society. One of these was the successful selling of memberships at the final concert; they are also looking for sponsorship in new areas and would welcome members' views on this.

We say goodbye to Glynis and David Kortright who have run the Membership side of OCMS for over 10 years and we owe them a huge debt of gratitude for all they have done. Cherry Eddy has agreed to take on part of the job but we still need people to deal with the production of tickets – and, in due course, the control of the website.

Our membership stayed firm during the season – but we know of many local organisations where it is a struggle to survive as numbers fall – so please encourage friends and relations to join! Flyers are available about our first concert when winner of last year's Young Musician Competition cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason will perform, so take them and encourage friends and relations to come along.

A full copy of the Chairman's report is filed with these Minutes.

5. **Treasurer's Report on the accounts for the year to 31 March 2017**

The Income and Expenditure Account for the year end March 2017 was tabled, and a copy is filed with these Minutes together with the Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer Robert Thomson told members that because of Suzanne's skill in creating a series of attractive concerts by outstanding musicians he is able to report that the Accounts show another good year with a surplus of £2,163. Four unpredictable events contributed to this increase on last year.

1 and 2), the Society received two generous donations, totalling £1,200 and we are most grateful for this support. 3) October's concert had to be rearranged at very short notice because the cellist was unwell; Suzanne negotiated a £500 reduction in the artists' fee. 4) the application to the R C Sherriff Trust for an underwriting grant of £500 was successful.

Although it may appear that we often receive such a grant one cannot presume that every application will be received favourably; if the concert turns out to be a box-office success and the concert results in a surplus, no grant will be paid. This was the case in March 2012 when we had a very expensive recital by Simon Trpceski when there were so many visitors that the concert paid for itself and no underwriting grant was paid. Without these unpredictable events there would have been no surplus.

He then went on to explain some of the expenses. The musicians' fees are about £2,000 less than the previous year. Apart from Leonard Elschenbroich's absence in October, Suzanne negotiated a very favourable fee for the Russian pianist Vitalyi Pisarenko who provided February's recital. We spent considerably more on publicity, encouraged by the two donations mentioned above; we wait to see if this publicity will produce an increase in membership numbers. Finally, miscellaneous expenses increased because of two donations, each of £100 – one was to the Aidan Woodcock Trust, recognising the long period of support from the Trust which has benefited OCMS, and the other was to the Holy Trinity Church Tower repair fund. Given that we have held six concerts a year at the Church for at least the past twelve years, that was a donation of £1.40 per concert.

He pointed out that the Accumulated Fund represents slightly more than two years expenditure by the Society, a normal target for a “not for profit organisation”. Given how far ahead Suzanne has to work to secure such high quality musicians, as well as the unpredictable nature of our income, two years is a prudent target. He said that the Accounts do not show the wide range of voluntary assistance enjoyed by the Society which enables it to run smoothly, this includes our normal concerts as well as the New Year Party. He thanked members for their support, including bringing visitors to concerts and for looking after the musicians. He stated that the Report would be incomplete without thanking Suzanne for her continuing success in providing members with the opportunity to hear a wide range of chamber music performed by remarkably talented musicians – this being one of the distinguishing features of OCMS.

There was some discussion about recruiting new members and sponsorship. OCMS has advertised in *Arts Focus*, *Your Elmbridge* and the Surrey edition of *The National Garden Scheme* as well as taking a stand at the West End Show; it is hoped to target the Claygate Flower Show. All these activities require contacts and volunteers. Full-time students up to the age of 25 have free tickets at concerts, but contacting Schools and Music teachers has not been particularly productive. The Chairman said that there would be a new banner for the forthcoming season. Asked if there was any mileage in appearing in Church magazines, he said that a concert report or review would be better.

Treasurer Robert Thomson then proposed the adoption of the Accounts which was seconded by Joanna Rand and carried unanimously.

6. Subscriptions and Non-member Fees for the 2017/2018 Season

On behalf of the Committee, Robert Thomson proposed that the subscriptions, visitor tickets and Patrons’ donations for the 2017/2018 season remain unchanged. David Martland seconded the proposal and it was approved.

7. Election of Officers, Committee Members and Independent Examiner

The re-election of the current Officers and Committee members - Chris Mapleton, Suzanne Connor, Robert Thomson, Margaret Sale, Cherry Eddy, Sara Fraser, Jane Muir, Judith Woods, David Martland and Michael Woods - was proposed by Jerry Symonds, seconded by Bronia Snow and unanimously agreed. The election of new Committee members Fiona Martland and Joanna Rand, proposed by Margaret Sale and seconded by Cherry Eddy, was approved, and the re-election of Tom Eddy as Independent Examiner, proposed by Chris Mapleton and seconded by Joanna Rand, was also approved.

The Chairman invited members to join the Committee for a glass of prosecco or shloer before resuming their places for the Artists’ Liaison Report and news of the 2017/2018 season.

8. Artists’ Liaison Report and 2017/2018 Programme

Suzanne said that she hoped that being able to relax with a glass of wine would allow members to really enjoy the music which would follow!

She thanked all those who give up their time and energy at, or before and after concerts to assist with the many small jobs which help the Society to present a professional front to the general public. She said that our existence is becoming more reliant on the Internet, and that means that we often have visitors coming to sample one of our concerts. We need to put on a good show so volunteers are needed. She urged members to talk to visitors – chat to their next door neighbour at each concert. – making them feel welcome and inviting them to come back to enjoy another concert.

She told members that in a change from previous practice, instead of saving the announcement of the following season’s artists until the AGM when it was hoped that by creating anticipation and having a possible bumper number of members attending a successful occasion, it had been decided to circulate the programme before the final concert. In this way it was hoped that having heard an excellent concert guests would see the line-up of artists for the next season and would become new members. She pointed out the pressures of trying to finalise the next programme whilst still in the throes of the current season, and believed that many members would have to bring guests for there to be a notable increase in membership. Feed-back on the success of this scheme would be interesting.

For the 2017/2018 season instead of finding a good selection of artists representing the various styles of composition and types of instruments diversifying where possible, finding Celebrities who will attract and help cover costs, etc, she has asked the people in the 4th and last concerts to provide something different from their usual format. These decisions are governed by the availability of artists coinciding with the availability of the Church, and one must take into consideration how many will attend a particular programme or if we can obtain an underwriting grant. We are a business run by volunteers and we need to make the books balance and have money for the coming two seasons. If we lose on the first season, some other strategy can be tried so that the following season alters the situation.

As the membership subscription only covers the artists’ fees and none of the running costs, it would be ideal if all members determined to bring at least one new member to the Society for the coming season. Birthday and Christmas present

subscriptions for a family member or a ticket for our opening concert for a good friend are useful ideas; suggest at the same time that they might like to join, and remember that grandchildren, the audience of the future, get in free.

The season opens on **September 30**, when **Sheku Kanneh-Mason**, winner of the BBC Young Musician of 2016 will appear. He has shot to the top of a “Most Wanted Musician” list, and has played on TV, at the British Academy Film Award ceremony, and in the Proms, with numerous orchestras and in a short while he will fulfil engagements abroad. Only 18 years old, he recently appeared in the Times Supplement as the classical musician nominated for the Annual Times South Bank Show Breakthrough Award. She wondered whether the Society would be able to afford him in four or five years’ time. Members then heard him play the **1st movement, Allegretto** from his award winning performance of the **Shostakovich cello concerto no.1**. This not to be missed concert will probably have a packed audience, especially if members do their best to advertise it for us. On **November 4** we have the eagerly anticipated return of the Russian **Atrium Quartet**, winners of the Bordeaux, and London String Quartet competitions. Accommodation will be needed for these players so please let Suzanne know if you have a spare bed or two for that evening. Members then heard the well-known second movement from the **Tchaikovsky String Quartet no.1 Andante Cantabile**. The **December 2** concert will feature a group of musicians from Europe and Britain – they come from Hungary, Romania, Lithuania and Russia, and are led by British clarinettist Matthew Scott. All have been students in this country and supported by the Countess of Munster Trust. They will play some lively Bagatelles by Finzi, and the really enjoyable **Overture on Hebrew Themes** by **Prokofiev**; we will also have the chance to hear **Dohnanyi’s second Quintet**. Because there is often a negative view of hearing unknown 20th century works, and because she has a mission to educate everyone musically, Suzanne has arranged for this concert to be preceded by a talk given by Roy Stratford. This will have illustrated excerpts given by the musicians so that we will know what to look out for. The topic is based on the final work of the concert the masterpiece **A Quartet for the End of Time** by **Olivier Messaien**, written in 1941 when Messaien, aged 31, was a prisoner of war and wrote this work for the available musicians – a pianist, a violinist, a cellist and a clarinettist. The Quartet was premiered in the Polish camp, outdoors and in the rain on 15 January 1941. According to the story handed down, the musicians had decrepit instruments and an audience of about 400 fellow prisoners and guards. The cello was bought with donations from camp members, but Messaien later recalled “ Never was I listened to with such rapt attention and comprehension” Brüll, a friendly guard, had provided paper and even isolation for composing, had helped to acquire the other instruments,. By forging papers with a stamp made from a potato, he even helped the performers to be liberated shortly after the performance.

On **13 January** the **Njordt Wind Trio**, prize winners from the Royal College who have this year travelled to perform in Japan, will provide a really varied programme. On **17 February** Hungarian born **Daniel Lehardt**, who has astounded juries by winning not only the Paris, and the London Young Concert Artist Trust competitions, but has gone on to win the coast to coast New York Young Concert Artist Trust competition as well – this has never previously been achieved. This means that he is lined up for concert tours across the USA, Britain and France. Members then heard a sample of his playing the **Rondo** from **Beethoven’s Sonata no.16 in G major**. **Daniel** will also appear with the **Castalian Quartet** on **17 March**. This Quartet has been invited to appear at concerts across the year showcasing the String Quartets of Joseph Haydn at the Wigmore Hall – a tremendous privilege for such a young ensemble. Members then heard the first movement of **Haydn’s op.76 no.1 Allegro con Spirito**

Before concluding the Meeting, Suzanne said that there may be further additions during the Claygate Festival.