

CHELTENHAM MUSIC SOCIETY

COMMUNICATION TO MEMBERS IN LIEU OF 2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Because of the Covid-19 situation it is not possible for us to hold our AGM in May or June as specified in our Constitution, which makes no provision for such an exceptional situation. Accordingly the Committee of Trustees have agreed, and formally recorded, that our Annual Report and Accounts should be distributed to members with a set of recommendations for the continuing governance of the Society until next year. This approach is consistent with guidance from the Charity Commission. The Report and Accounts are attached.

On behalf of the Committee I ask members to agree to the following propositions.

1. That the attached Annual Report be accepted and used as the basis for our report to the Charities Commission.
2. That the attached Accounts be accepted, and after formal independent examination (when that is possible) be submitted to the Charity Commission.
3. That the current Trustees and Officers, as listed below, should continue in office for another year.
4. That Mr Michael Paish be re-appointed as Independent Examiner for 2020-21.

Any objections to these propositions should be sent to me not later than 31 May 2020. In the absence of any objections they will be deemed to have been accepted.

David Pepper
Chairman

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2019-20

Because of the abrupt truncation of the season as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions, which forced us to abandon the final two concerts, the main season had only five concerts. Three of them were string quartets. The opening concert by the Esmé Quartet lived up to the expectations created by their success at the Wigmore Hall. The Takacs Quartet gave us yet another excellent evening. Finally the Chiaroscuro Quartet set the Pump Room alight with wonderful performances of two Beethoven quartets; and into the bargain they attracted one of the largest audiences we have ever had. In a welcome return visit, we enjoyed the Pomegranate Trio's programme of Mozart, Faure and Ravel. The January concert should have been given by Tasmin Little, but a hand injury forced her to cancel many weeks of engagements; fortunately her pupil Christian Grajner de Sa was able to join John Lenehan at short notice, and played an interestingly varied concert for us. We were very sorry to lose the chance to hear Leon McCawley and the Magnard Wind Ensemble.

The two events in the mini-series of Cheltenham Contemporary Concerts again proved successful, with audiences of around 40 and great enthusiasm for the music they heard. The Scordatura Women's Music Collective, who play exclusively music by female composers rather than being themselves all women, played a fascinating mixture of music from late 20th and current centuries for various combinations of piano, clarinet, violin and viola. The second concert was given by the young Fitzroy Quartet who gave us unfamiliar music by Lutosławski and Benedict Mason for the familiar ensemble.

Disappointingly membership fell again this season, though not by as much as the previous year. As a result we were expecting to show an even bigger deficit than in 2018-19. We therefore did some detailed projections of our financial future, and I wrote to all members warning them that if this trend continued we had to expect to use up all our reserves within 7 or 8 years. All plans for this year were, of course, demolished by the enforced truncation of the season. I asked members to consider allowing us to retain the unused portion of their subscriptions, and almost all members agreed to do so. I am very grateful to them, as that allowed us to make the partial payments to the artists that the Treasurer mentions in his report. We initially expected the truncation to result in a larger deficit, but in the event, as the Treasurer reports below, a combination of the nugatory expenditure we were able to avoid (such as Pump Room hire) and much better single ticket sales than expected for the rest of the season, especially for the Chiaroscuro Quartet, led instead to a small surplus. This is of course welcome. However, unless the steady fall in membership stops or single ticket sales increase substantially, the fact remains that the Society has only a limited lifetime, and the uncertainty over Covid-19 is not helping. On a more positive note, I am pleased to report that thanks to the intervention of the Chief Executive of the Cheltenham Trust we have been spared the effect of their decision to impose a substantial increase in Pump Room hire charges, which would otherwise have been another serious blow to our finances.

As I write, we simply do not know what the prospects for next season are. Everything is booked, and the brochures were printed and ready to distribute just as the lockdown happened. We decided that we could not proceed to advertise the season and sell subscriptions until we had some idea when the restrictions would be lifted, and some sense of whether our members would want to attend concerts while the virus is still active. We will have to make a decision during the summer, in the light of the government's strategy for exit from the lockdown once it is known. We will make an announcement as soon as we feel able to do so.

Our concerts happen only because of the hard work of the Trustees who form the Committee. On behalf of our members I would like to thank them all for their contributions, and particularly the officers – Penny McCracken, Andrew Ellis and Mike O'Connell – and John Mumford who produces the brochure. I am also grateful to Jo Miller for once again organising the refreshments for our artists, and to those members who have distributed brochures for us.

David Pepper

TREASURER'S REPORT

I realise that most of you will not be familiar with the accounts as they are normally only distributed at the AGM. Some of the items do therefore require further explanation:

- Ex Trust - For many years the society was in receipt of the income from a will trust administered by the Office of the Public Trustee, by undertaking certain annual duties as specified in the trust. Some time ago we were approached by the OPT. The result was that the investment was transferred to trustees acting on behalf of the society and we were freed from our obligations under the trust. The income continues to be paid into our bank account.
- Commission - This is the amount charged by the Cheltenham Trust for handling all single ticket sales for each concert.
- PRS Levies - These are payments to the Performing Rights Society (collected by the Cheltenham Trust) for any concert where royalties are due. At the moment this is 4.8% of the total income (ie: a proportion of membership fees plus single tickets). Last season the levy only applied to the January concert, due to a change of programme. There would, however, have been a charge for the final cancelled concert.

- Administration - Covers items such as subscriptions, insurance, postages, AGM costs and for the first time in these accounts Paypal charges (£147).

The accounts show a rather misleading position but the committee is aware that the surplus arises from unspent members' subscriptions and will take this into account when making future pricing decisions after the present emergency has ended. Had the season not been curtailed then I calculate that the accounts would have shown a deficit of more than £1,000.

The small reduction in membership was outweighed by the actual increase in subscription prices. Single ticket sales for the full season would have been in excess of £8,000 although the total sold for the Takacs concert was rather disappointing.

In view of the present situation and the impact on our artists' finances it was decided to pay a proportion of the fees for the final two concerts. Since last November VAT has been levied on the Pump Room hire charges, but the additional cost was not passed on in our case as the bookings were made some time ago. However from now onwards VAT will be added, which makes the offer from the Chief Executive, as mentioned by David, even more welcome.

Andrew Ellis

Officers and Committee 2019-20

David Pepper	Chairman	Penny McCracken	Secretary
Andrew Ellis	Treasurer	Mike O'Connell	Membership Secretary
John Beard		John Mumford	
Penny Steer		Lindsay Tyndall	
John Wright			

Cheltenham Music Society

Statement of Financial Activities for the period 25th April 2019 to 15th April 2020

	<u>2019/20</u>	<u>2018/19</u>
<u>Incoming Resources</u>		
Concerts		
Subscription Tickets	14804	14205
Single Tickets	6845	5565
Programme Sales	266	416
Other Income		
Friends Donations	2775	2778
Ex Trust	1131	1084
Interest and Investments	357	335
CCC (please see note)	2640	1150
	<hr/> 28818	<hr/> 25533
<u>Expenditure</u>		
Artists Fees and Expenses	18237	16589
Pump Room Hire	2936	4116
Commission	1026	835
Piano Hire	528	792
Programme Production	198	294
PRS Levies	186	640
Publicity	785	1066
Administration	824	782
CCC (please see note)	2560	2813
	<hr/> 27280	<hr/> 27927
Net Incoming (Outgoing) Resources	1538	-2394
(Decrease) Increase in Value of Investments	-272	633
	<hr/> 1266	<hr/> -1761
Balance, brought forward	32148	33909
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance, carried forward	33414	32148

Cheltenham Music Society

Balance Sheet as at 15th April 2020

	<u>15/04/20</u>	<u>24/04/19</u>
<u>Assets</u>		
COIF Income Units	8375	8647
Bank Current Account	10752	27000
COIF Deposit Account	11211	10854
Debtors	4263	2404
	<u>34601</u>	<u>48905</u>
<u>Less Liabilities</u>		
Income in Advance		12695
Other Creditors	1187	4062
	<u>1187</u>	<u>16757</u>
	<u>33414</u>	<u>32148</u>
<u>Represented by</u>		
Accumulated Fund		
Main Series	32965	31779
CCC	449	369
	<u>33414</u>	<u>32148</u>

Note

Cheltenham Contemporary Concerts

Income

Ticket Sales	640
Grant – The Runge Trust	2000
	<u>2640</u>

Expenditure

Artists Fees and Expenses	1800
Room Hire	575
Other Expenses	185
	<u>2560</u>