

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MINUTES OF AGM ON 26TH JUNE 2020

As a result of the restrictions of Covid-19 it was not possible to hold our usual meeting so this year we had a Zoom, online, meeting of the RTWSO Committee. Reports from the officers were circulated to all subscribers, Patrons, Friends and Players before the meeting. Members of these groups were invited to send in comments by post or online before the meeting and to nominate Giles Clarke to use their proxy vote.

PRESENT: Giles Clarke, Peter Mansfield, Gale Smith, Barrie Crowhurst, Helen Pye, Frances Armstrong, Anne Parker, Libby Summers, Rod Dunk, Alexandra Woollard, Andrew Muir, Yvonne Smith, Becky McGibbon, Neil Cumming, Zoe Hayward.

MINUTES OF AGM 2019

- These minutes, which have been available on the RTWSO website, were considered and approved at the meeting of the Orchestra committee held on 18th September 2019.
- There were no questions arising.
- The meeting approved them as a correct record.

ORCHESTRAL MANAGER'S REPORT Anne Parker

This was another good and varied season for us, but sadly cut short. Rehearsals continued with enthusiasm until the lock down in March although the change to the concert timetable meant that additional rehearsals were added in November to both ensure continuity for Friday nighters and to help both prepare for Concert 6 in May, which would have included Bruckner's 7th symphony, and to prepare a piece composed by Philip le Bas (principal bassoon) which will be played in our November programme, all being well, next season.

Friday night membership continues to increase, and we have been very fortunate to have 2 new cellists, Alice Ketley and John Lacy, viola player Barney Walters. 2nd violinist Erica Cini and 1st violinist, Mike Parkin. As ever we are still on the lookout for double bass players!

Despite the short season our 4 concerts were very successful and enjoyable with some lovely solo performances from Howard Shelley, Amy Harman and Martin James Bartlett. Martin James Bartlett gave a dazzling performance of the Ravel piano concerto, and despite promising to perform the 3rd movement at a slightly slower speed, it took off! We held our 2nd opera gala in February, which was great fun and very well received. The 4 soloists did a magnificent job; the 19 pieces were not without difficulty and certainly kept the orchestra on their toes.

Many thanks to our 2 conductors this season, Rod Dunk and Barry Wordsworth. Rod has done an amazing job again as musical director and has kept morale high throughout this difficult time for the orchestra. Thank you also to Giles and members of the committee for their support, in particular Libby and Tony Summers the librarians, Andrew Muir, Helen Pye and the tea makers for their help on concert days. Last but not least a big thank-you to Nichola Napleton and John at Holmewood House school for their continued help and support with the setting up of our rehearsals.

- The report was approved.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT ON TICKET SALES. Gale Smith

At the beginning of the season we had sold 360 season tickets. ^[SEP]As a result of very generous donations a further 47 seats were allocated to our Patrons and ^[SEP]7 more to our Honorary members. We sold 3 season tickets after the first concert so our final total number of seats occupied by RTWSO subscribers was 417. This total of 417, compared with 467 in 2018/19, and 491 in 2017/18, indicates a clear and worrying trend.

The seating capacity of the Assembly Hall Theatre for our concerts is 948.^[1]^[SEP] The average audience for the first three concerts of the season was 567 (60%).^[1]^[SEP] At what turned out to be the final concert ticket sales increased by 100 as a result of the fantastic effort of our Education Outreach programme. Over the four concerts 87 discounted tickets were sold to subscribers and Orchestra members, and 479 were sold by the Assembly Hall Theatre.

Sadly, in the current circumstances, it is not possible to predict what the 2020/21 season will bring.

- The report was approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT Peter Mansfield

This has been an extraordinary year in several respects. We have received Orchestra Tax Relief for the first time, and are currently applying for our second year. This has involved a major up- date to our financial arrangements which had not been completed at the time of last year's AGM. It also involved the setting up of an associated company, RTWSO Productions Ltd, through which the tax relief could be claimed. Since the 2019 AGM, the 2018-19 accounts have been submitted to the Charity Commission and are attached for your inspection, along with the Independent Examiner's report on them.

And now we have lockdown, which cancelled our concerts in April and May 2020. The result is that we have not this year needed to ask for any subsidy from the Friends, and yet end the year with a surplus of over £21,000. This is partly because we did not have to pay soloists or players, or hire a venue for April or May, but also because most of our subscribers have generously donated to the Orchestra the refunds they could have claimed, for which we are very grateful. This places us in a much better financial situation to face the future than might otherwise have been the case.

The following are available on the RTWSO website:

- *The report and accounts for the year ended 30 April 2019, which have already been lodged with the Charity Commission, along with the Independent Examiner's report on them. These are presented here in order to conclude the business of the 2019 AGM.*
- *The consolidated accounts of both the Orchestra and the Production Company (RTWSOPL) for 2019-20, as presented to the Charity Commission, making clear how all our funds were spent last year. Our Independent Examiner's report on the 2019-20 accounts is due to be with us during June and will appear on the RTWSO website when it arrives.*
- *The Trustees' report to the Charity Commissioners for 2019-20.*

Now that our concert season runs into May, there is a very tight schedule for the Treasurer to prepare all the accounts for an AGM in June. It has proved unrealistic to expect an Independent Examiner to have carried out the necessary scrutiny in time for the AGM so, in order that my successor has enough time to prepare the accounts for presentation to a June AGM, I propose formally that future AGMs should receive accounts that have been drafted for the Charity Commission and are in the course of examination; and that the meeting should approve them 'subject to the Examiner's report'.

You are invited to vote to accept this proposal.

This is my last appearance as Treasurer and Trustee, posts I will relinquish at the AGM. I will support Alexandra Woollard in the background as she adopts both roles, and will for the time being remain a Director of RTWSO Productions Ltd. Meanwhile I wish you all well, and look forward to the next season of concerts.

Both the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 accounts, as presented to the Charity Commission, were circulated in advance, along with reports on them from Independent Examiners.

- The accounts and reports were accepted.
- The proposal was accepted.

MARKETING MANAGER'S REPORT Barrie Crowhurst

As ever, we continue to use a diverse set of actions and tactics to target our audience and promote awareness of the Orchestra, utilising our skills in marketing, advertising, on-line activities, social media and public relations, whilst appealing to a new audience without alienating our first priority - our loyal core audience.

2019-20 Season Marketing Activity: The Mailing/Brochure Campaign /Press Advertising/ Deliveries of 20,000 flyers to households and offices in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge area via the Town Crier Magazine and leaflet distribution/ Outdoor Posters - located on Platforms at Tunbridge Wells Station plus Marketing via the Assembly Hall Theatre. The reformatting the Concert programmes without losing quality and reducing the cost to our audience for just £2 which increased sales.

2020-21 Season - Proposed Marketing Activity: Summarising 2020-21 marketing activity, I feel confident that by building on from our activities last season plus a special focus on on-line activity and increased Poster Advertising in Central Tunbridge Wells we will continue to achieve greater awareness of the Orchestra especially aided by the new programme of star quality Soloists and our excellent Orchestra under the superb direction of Rod Dunk. as we start the run up to our Centenary season in 2021-22.

Online strategy and media: Social Media-Twitter and Facebook Further general engagement to be carried out on Facebook and twitter. As in 2019/20 information regarding items beyond the concerts to be included such as the Fundraising events, Chamber Concerts, AGM and other items of interest. It has been agreed that on one of the Friday night rehearsals a quick 'how to' training will be given to the orchestra with respect to twitter. This will be aimed at those who rarely or never use twitter. The aim is to get the members of the orchestra to engage more with the official profile and become advocates of the Orchestra.

Media Getting coverage in the media cannot be guaranteed. It will depend on what else is going on and their politics. Paying for advertising whilst sending in copy can work but even this is not guaranteed. Over the 2019/20 Season the Orchestra managed to build a good working relationship with Times of Tunbridge Wells, achieving good coverage. For 2020/21 the plan is to leverage this relationship in order to keep up the momentum. The Town Crier which (until the virus outbreak) was delivered to thousands of households in the Tunbridge Wells area, has also been a good promotion for the Orchestra. The Sussex Express and East Grinstead Courier has likewise also been supportive of the Orchestra. The editor of Times of Tunbridge Wells attended the Martin James Bartlett concert and will hopefully join the Orchestra at more concerts in the future.

Radio The Orchestra is now on the 'go to' list for BBC Radio Kent thanks to the marvellous job Andrew Muir did at short notice. Whilst his return visit was cancelled due to the lockdown implementation the Orchestra should have many chances to 'plug' concerts, the Outreach Programme etc. in the future. It is also a prime example of grabbing a media opportunity when it comes along even if it is last minute – the results can be fantastic.

- The report was approved.
- Current difficulty is the need to sell advertising space in the programme at least a month before a concert. Barrie will circulate a sales sheet to all present at the meeting in the hope that they can forward to possible contacts.

EDUCATION OFFICER'S REPORT Yvonne Smith

This season we visited 2 schools in Tunbridge Wells: St James' CE Primary School and St Mark's CE Primary School. Pupils at St James' were joined by children from the school orchestra at Langton Green Primary School and at St Mark's, pupils from Speldhurst CE Primary school orchestra joined in. Altogether 530 children watched or participated in the 2020 workshops.

The chosen work was Simple Gifts from the Appalachian Spring Suite by Copland, featured in our March concert. 15 members of the orchestra kindly volunteered their time to visit the schools for 2 hours each for

the workshop. Many thanks to all of them especially Dave Lee and Philip le Bas for conducting the massed orchestra of pupils and Rowena Wort for teaching a whole class composition lesson at St James'. Both schools were very appreciative of the visit. Musical instruments were also donated to schools this year thanks to the generosity of some players.

102 tickets were sold through the programme to pupils from these schools and their families. Many thanks to Gale for kindly administering these extra ticket sales. One family bought 7 seats!

RTWSO members were also helping to run the annual Tunbridge Wells Primary Schools Orchestra Workshop in July 2020. However, this workshop may now be cancelled due to the Corona pandemic.

Next season the featured concert for Education Outreach will be March 2021 and the set piece will be Fantasia on Welsh Nursery Tunes by Grace Williams. The schools which have signed up are St Matthew's CE Primary School and The Mead School.

Finally, some good news: for several years I have thought we could offer more Education Outreach if it were funded as currently all our players have to attend voluntarily. We could do more school visits if the players could be paid to compensate them for the time they take out from work. In 2021 and 2022, I hope to be able to secure sponsorship from a Charitable Trust to cover our expenses, tbc very soon.

Finally, a few figures:

Number of RTWSO Education Workshops so far 10

Number of primary age pupils who have seen a RTWSO Workshop 2630 Number of RTWSO players who have volunteered 30

Number of tickets sold to children and their families 347

Schools visited: Langton Green Primary School, Bishops Down Primary School, Speldhurst CE Primary School, Claremont Primary School, Pembury Primary School St Pauls Rusthall CE Primary School, Temple Grove Academy, Rose Hill Preparatory School. St James CE Primary School St Marks' CE Primary School

- The report was approved.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

- Giles Clarke (Chairman) is stepping down and the Committee has nominated Frances Armstrong as his replacement. Zoe Hayward has been nominated to replace Frances Armstrong as Editor of The Score. Peter Mansfield is retiring as Treasurer and Alexandra Woollard has been nominated by the Committee to take his place. Miriam Kuikman is retiring as Concert Day Manager and the Committee has nominated Pamela Mansfield to take her place.

Nominations for membership of the Committee have been invited but no other candidates have been put forward so the following have been elected nem con:

Chairman:	Frances Armstrong	Treasurer:	Alexandra Woollard
General Secretary:	Gale Smith	Orchestral Manager:	Anne Parker
Librarian:	Libby Summers	Players Representative:	Helen Pye
Deputy Chairman:	Andrew Muir	Concert-Day Manager:	Pamela Mansfield
Editor:	Zoe Hayward		

Roderick Dunk (Music Director), Yvonne Smith (Education Officer) and Barrie Crowhurst (Marketing Manager) are appointed by the Committee. Neil Cumming (Chairman of the Friends of the Orchestra) is also a member of this Committee.

APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY VICE PRESIDENTS.

- According to our Constitution, the Committee may appoint up to three Honorary Vice Presidents to serve a renewable five-year term. Nina Bentley and Jane Taunton have served a full term and are eligible for re-appointment. Giles Clarke is proposed as a new addition.
- Proposed: Frances Armstrong Seconded: Andrew Muir
- All three appointments were approved by the Committee.

Giles took this opportunity to say how much he appreciates all the work that the Committee has done.

NEW CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- Again, a huge thank you to Giles for the time and effort he has put into the orchestra over the years.
- Although he's not here, thanks to Peter should also be minuted. I'll admit that I struggled to follow the accounting side of things on occasion, but I do understand that he put a lot of work into the job, particularly in setting up the Orchestral Tax Relief which has made a significant difference to our bank balance.
- We're in a very different situation to the one I envisaged when I agreed to take this role on, and as far as plans for the immediate future go I think we all just want to get playing again as soon as possible! That will happen at some point, and with any luck we will be back up and running properly in time for the build-up to launch our Centenary year, which promises to be a very exciting celebration and a really good opportunity to promote the orchestra on a much larger scale.
- For me personally, one important aspect that I'd like to build on is our people. Players, subscribers, supporters and our general audience all need to feel that they're a real part of the orchestra community in one way or another, and do I feel this can be improved on significantly. We need to work to attract new audience members and players by increasing our online presence, targeting a slightly younger clientele (which of course nurturing and keeping hold of our current supporters) and becoming a modern, vibrant orchestra at the heart of Tunbridge Wells.
- Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

AOB

- In terms of the coming season Alexandra reports that the Assembly Hall Theatre is closed until 30th September. An announcement is expected in the next three weeks.
- It is impossible to make plans for rehearsals and performances until we know the Government's next move.
- The majority of orchestral websites are advertising the next season's concerts but adding a proviso that it depends on the government.
- Rod expects it will be mid-July before we get more information and, meanwhile, it is important to keep in touch with each other.
- We need to think creatively - some possibilities for moving forward could include smaller concerts to reduced audiences in smaller venues.

The meeting finished at 8.00pm.