

AGM 2016

Chair's Report



Musical achievements

It has been another successful year musically, and the orchestra continues to develop under Leigh O'Hara's direction. Leigh also performed as soloist in Mozart's 24th Piano Concerto in our Spring concert, and we hope there will be further opportunities for him to perform concertos in future. We also enjoyed working with two excellent young soloists, Matilda Lloyd (a former finalist in the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition) and Bocheng Wang. Both were winners of the Croydon Performing Art's Festival's advanced concerto competition. We look forward to continuing association with the Festival.

In 2015-16, we commissioned short pieces from local composers Michael Brooks, David Fielker and Alan Taylor, and we remain committed to playing works by contemporary composers alongside the established repertoire. In 2017, we will play Mark Wilderspin's piece 'not yet a breach...but an expansion'.

Membership numbers remain strong. We had successively 54, 52 and 45 full members for last year's three terms. DSO is fortunate for an amateur orchestra in having a large string section. I would like to acknowledge the continuing work of our leader, Paula Tysall, in promoting the standard of string playing, her work on bowing parts and her contribution to rehearsals. I would also like to thank Jane Howard, Frances Barrett and Nicky Jackson for their leadership of the second violins and the viola and cello sections respectively.

Publicity and outreach

Unusually, we played a fourth concert last season, sharing the bill at the Blackheath Concert Halls with the Blackheath Orchestra in an all Beethoven programme.

During the year, we have looked for opportunities for publicity in the local press, alongside our customary leafletting, Twitter and email channels. We achieved good coverage in the South London Press and the Dulwich Diverter. Nevertheless, we must continue to find ways of raising the profile of the orchestra locally in the coming year. We rely to a great extent on members of the orchestra to work hard in getting people to attend. London is a place where access to concerts of all standards is unparalleled and we cannot expect that a large audience will turn up without energetic work to publicise our programmes.

We have continued to explore links with local schools, with the assistance of the Phillip McKenna bequest, although it was decided to dedicate concert time to the local composers this year.

During the year, the committee undertook to start a new system of making complimentary tickets available via community groups to people who might otherwise not be able to attend our concerts. The scheme will be taken forward in 2016-17.

Archives

Dulwich Symphony Orchestra was founded in the early 1950s, but records of the early period of our history are scarce. During the year, we were very fortunate that Giles Brindley gave us access to his collection of programmes and photographs of the orchestra. These are now available in the DSO website's archives page. This takes our records back to 1977. We are always keen to hear from anyone with knowledge of or materials from our history.

Running the orchestra

The continued success of the orchestra, indeed its very existence, is due to the commitment of the members of the committee, who serve as Trustees of the Dulwich Orchestral Society, which is a registered charity, and who manage the business of the orchestra. In particular, I would like to recognise the commitment of Tessa Crilly, secretary, and Liz Cleary, treasurer. Effective financial management is essential for an organisation like ours, and Liz has once again provided the advice and information necessary to keep the orchestra within its budget. We have continued to look carefully at how we can manage the cost of music hire and extra musicians for concerts. In the longer term, we must continue to look to increase our revenue from ticket sales.

I would also like to thank all those who have undertaken work in support of the running of the orchestra. Nicky Jackson has continued as librarian (locating and obtaining the music), Helen Bartholomew has managed the production of our concert programme notes, Ian Chown and Henry Cleary have taken care of ticket sales at our concerts, and Alan Taylor, Brigid Constantine and Fiona Clarey and friends have ensured our supporters have much needed refreshment during the intervals of the concerts.

Partner organisations

DSO's success depends on successful collaboration with a number of other organisations, in particular our concert and rehearsal venues, All Saints Church and the Elmgreen School. Our Tuesday night contact at the school, Milko Georgiev, has moved on. Mike Kirby is retiring from his post as facilities manager. We wish them well and look forward to successful working with the new management company, Schools Plus. Our new contact on Tuesday evenings, Kevin Jones, is always very helpful in helping rehearsals go smoothly.

During the year, in the course of a discussion about repertoire and publicity, we were reminded of the importance of good relations with David Stephenson, vicar, and his staff at All Saints, especially the parish administrator Wendy Stephens. We were able to play piano concertos last year for the first time at All Saints Church and at any venue since 2005 following the church's acquisition of a new Yamaha grand piano. DSO member, Ruth Holton, who is also Music Director at All Saints, played a major role in this important development. We are grateful to the church for its continuing commitment to providing excellent facilities for local music groups and for its far-sightedness in making this new investment.

Jeremy Crump
Chair, DSO
21 September 2016