

# BRISTOL CONCERT ORCHESTRA

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2004

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Ashton Park School  
at 9.00 pm on Monday 4 October 2004

Present: the Conductor, the Officers and 37 members of the Orchestra

Apologies were received from Andrew Rees and Chris Storey.

The Chairman, Wendy Lewis, opened the meeting by thanking Andrew Stephen for providing the PA system. She then introduced the members of the committee and gave a brief explanation of their current duties.

### **1/04 Minutes of AGM on 6 October 2003**

There were no comments and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

### **2/04 Matters Arising - not already on the agenda**

There was one matter arising: from item 5/03 - Treasurer's Report for 2003-2004. Wendy advised that Andrea Jenn's husband had completed the auditing of the 2002-2003 accounts. A letter was produced to this effect.

### **3/04 Election of Chairman for 2004-2005 (Secretary in chair)**

Wendy Lewis stood down and Phil Ellwood took the chair. Only one nomination had been received for the post of Chairman: Wendy Lewis. *Wendy was re-elected unopposed.* (Prop. Robert Watson; Sec. Sophie Cottrell).

*[Post-meeting note: Phil meant to thank Wendy for her hard work and leadership over the past year – but unfortunately didn't say so. Apologies. PE].*

### **4/04 Election of Secretary for 2004-2005**

Wendy thanked Phil Ellwood for his hard work as Secretary and Webmaster over the last year. Phil gratefully accepted these thanks. Only one nomination had been received for the post of Secretary: Phil Ellwood. *Phil was elected unopposed.* (Prop. Lyn Harradine; Sec. Colin Bloch).

### **5/04 Treasurer's Report for 2003-2004**

Copies of the Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss Account and Concert Breakdowns were circulated prior to the meeting.

Concert Breakdown: not too good, with a bottom line loss £378. The main factor for this was the expensive music in the Dec 2003 and June 2004 concerts. For the 2004-2005 season, the outlook is better due to: increased ticket prices (top two price bands increased by £1); and less expensive music required over the whole season.

Profit and Loss Account: a reasonable year, with an operating profit of £675 - despite the losses on the concerts. Tim explained the reasons for this: there was one less rehearsal than normal (therefore one less rental and one less fee for Stefan); we didn't lose any music; and we had an increase in revenue from subscriptions (from both an increase in the subscription rate and an increased number of full payments received). Tim remarked that the healthy operating profit would be useful to increase our reserves.

A question was raised from the floor, about the state of our reserves. Tim answered by explaining where to find this information on the Balance Sheet, and in more general terms, how balance sheets worked. [*Post-meeting note: for reference, the figures were: current a/c - £2451; deposit a/c - £2706*].

Tim accepted an action to organise the auditing of this year's accounts.

*The Treasurer's Report was accepted by the members.* (Prop. Nigel Boosey; Sec. Terry Evans; carried unanimously).

#### **6/04 Subscriptions for 2004-2005 (and rehearsal venues)**

Tim remarked that, on the face of it, subscriptions didn't need to rise. However, there were factors that we needed to take into account that would point us towards a modest rise. The first of these is the variability of numbers of rehearsals from year to year; the second was the consideration of changing venue, from Ashton Park School (APS) to Red Maids' School (RMS).

A general discussion then took place on the respective virtues of APS and RMS. Stefan remarked that he prefers the acoustic properties of the main hall at APS, when it is available. Tim informed us that the costs are £40 per evening at APS and £50 for RMS – and also that this was blurred by inconsistent approaches to charging us for additional rooms for sectionals. He also remarked that sectionals in RMS were not as good as in APS as far as second violins were concerned, owing to their location being uncomfortably close to where the woodwind and brass were rehearsing.

Tim remarked that subscriptions would need to increase by at least £1 per person term if we were to move to RMS on a permanent basis.

Mary Ingram suggested contacting a member of APS staff to find out the dates when we will not be able to use the main hall. Lisa McMaster (ex-member of staff from APS) suggested no member of staff was actually responsible for this. Mary volunteered to help Tim by visiting the school bursar in daytime, preferably accompanied by her dogs!

A show of hands was taken on a proposal that we should stay at APS for Autumn and Spring terms, and that we use RMS for the Summer term, as we have done for the last two seasons, but we should try to have better information on APS hall availability. This was carried.

With the decision on venue taken, further discussion took place on subscription levels. Mary Ingram proposed that the concessionary rate should be increased to 2/3 of the full rate, rather than the present 1/2 of the full rate. She remarked that City of Bristol College had no concessions at all for their evening classes. *Julia Belyavin seconded this, and then the members voted and accepted it.*

Finally, Tim recommended a £1 increase in subscriptions. As well as being a sensible thing to do, he added that it would make the maths easy for the 2/3 rate. The new subscription rates are therefore £33 (conc. £22) per term. *This was put to the vote and accepted unanimously.* (Prop. Nigel Boosey; Sec. Melanie Arnot)

Tim was asked about the success of the 'late payers penalty' for subscriptions, introduced last year. He said it had been quite successful.

#### **7/04 Election of Treasurer for 2004-2005**

Wendy thanked Tim Barrett for his hard work as our Treasurer over the last year. This work included preparing the accounts, liaison with school bursars at both Ashton Park and Red Maids. Only one nomination had been received for the post of Treasurer: Tim Barrett. *Tim was re-elected unopposed.* (Prop. Rebecca Galvin; Sec. Howard Knight)

#### **8/04 Election of Committee Members for 2004-2005**

Two committee members (Helen Hook and Andrew Stephen) came to the end of their three-year term; and one member (Melanie Arnot) had decided to stand down from the committee. Wendy

thanked Melanie for her contribution to the running of the orchestra, in the form of selling tickets, organising drinks and licences, and taking her turn as minute-writer at committee meetings.

For these three vacancies, there were four nominations:

Hugh Barnes	(Prop. David Benson; Sec. Mary Ingram)
Linda Bearpark	(Prop. Brenda Stacey; Sec. Jay Suntharalingham)
Helen Hook	(Prop. Judy Sutton; Sec. David Benson)
Andrew Stephen	(Prop. Mary Ingram; Sec. Sue Tyley)

*After a secret ballot of the members present, Linda Bearpark, Helen Hook and Andrew Stephen were duly elected.*

[Post-meeting note: on re-checking the voting papers after the meeting, it was found that five papers had been missed. As all votes on these papers were for the three (already) successful candidates, it had no bearing on the result].

#### **9/04 Conductor's Report for 2003-2004 and Musical Plan for 2004-2005**

Wendy thanked Stefan for an excellent year of musical direction of BCO then called on Stefan to give his report.

Stefan opened by commenting that last year had been very exciting – and that this was a now an established trend!

The Autumn 2003 concert was very exciting, especially with all the unusual extras in 'Pictures' and 'Kijé'. We suffered a small breakdown in 'Kijé', but recovered from it very professionally. 'Pictures' was very well played; and the whole concert was very enjoyable for the audience.

For Spring 2004 we played Elgar 1, which made this concert the hardest we had ever done. Stefan sensed that the orchestra was shocked by the difficulty of the music at first, but settled down with it quite quickly. The concert performance was very musical and intense. Stefan said he was very proud.

For our final concert of the season, we had a much lighter affair, complete with wand and silly hat! The great successes of this concert were: getting the audience *interested* in the music; introducing young people to music; and providing the important function of *enjoyment*.

Stefan remarked that we had made a big shift since moving to St George's Bristol; and that now we had extra responsibility to maintain and if possible increase our performing standard.

This coming year, we have a very exciting line-up of music. For Spring 2005 we have a top-rate international soloist, Mirela Lancovici (originally from Romania); we must do well for him. In Summer 2005, the Vaughan Williams 2 is a hard work and will require much dedication.

Stefan remarked that we must all go beyond our 'comfort zones' and also that perhaps we have got used to having too many rehearsals and that maybe we could do just as good a performance on 6 rehearsals. He asked us to all work harder privately, on the notes; we could then make best use of our luxurious number of rehearsals, and give an even higher standard of performance.

Stefan said he was very excited by the recently organised *Prom in the Park* on 21 May 2005. He feels that given the right programme we should be able to do it on three rehearsals. This could be a 'dangerous' precedent – revealing that we *can* prepare for concerts on fewer rehearsals!

For the future, Stefan said he wants to introduce us to more difficult works; and to re-investigate alternative venues to be able to perform bigger works. He also gave his opinions on dress code – but this is fully covered in item 11.

#### **10/04 Minor amendments to the Constitution**

Some minor amendments to the Constitution were proposed, following comments made by Stefan at last year's AGM, and after checking guidance provided on the Making Music (NFMS) website. The change is to Rule D6 and D7 - duties of the committee concerning appointment and re-appointment of Conductors and Professional Leaders.

*The Secretary summarised the main points of change in the draft revision and the amendments were accepted. (Prop: Nigel Boosey; Sec: Linda Bearpark; carried unanimously).*

#### **11/04 Concert Dress – proposal from Andrew Rees**

Andrew Rees had submitted a proposal by e-mail, which Wendy read out. Basically, Andrew suggests we adopt “all black for all” with no jackets for men. He was open-minded as to whether men should wear bowties or not.

A lively discussion ensued – on this very emotive subject. Stefan said he liked the idea of the less formal look, but thought it would not look good if both men and women were in all black; he preferred coloured tops for the women. Linda Bearpark suggested we should all wear black with white tops. Others disagreed, remarking that it would make us look like a school orchestra. Julia Belyavin thought that all black for men looks fine. Many other views and variations came out. Nigel Boosey thought it would be best if the black shirts came from the same supplier. Others said that this didn't matter.

*A proposal was made for the dress code for men: all black with open-necked shirts. This was carried. (Prop: Andrew Rees; Sec: Julia Belyavin).*

*A second proposal was made for the dress code for women: that we will try two different approaches – one in December (coloured non-patterned top with black bottoms) and one in March (black top with black bottoms) and will review things after the March concert. This was also carried. (Prop: Ida Miller; Sec: Andrew Stephen).*

#### **12/04 Any Other Business**

1. Wendy advised us that our nominated charities for 2003-2004 had benefited very well from the retiring collections. We had received letters of thanks from all three: Samaritans (£375); Grooms (£310); and CancerBACUP (£500). For 2004-2005, the charities are: The Julian Trust, for Dec 04; and CancerResearch UK, for Mar 05 and July 05.

2. The Christmas Party was confirmed: Micawber's, Mon 6 December, tickets £5 – available next week from Mary Ingram.

The meeting was closed at 10.15 pm.

PE 10/10/04