

BRISTOL CONCERT ORCHESTRA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Ashton Park School
at 9.00 pm on Monday 8 October 2007

Present: the Conductor, the Officers and 34 members of the Orchestra

Apologies were received from Lyn Harradine and Gareth Williams.

The Chairman, Wendy Lewis, opened the meeting by introducing the members of the committee, asking each one of them to give a brief explanation of their current duties. Wendy then thanked them all for their efforts in helping to run the orchestra.

1/07 Minutes of AGM on 2 October 2006

There were no comments and the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting. (Prop. Kate Brown; Sec. Linda Bearpark; carried unanimously).

2/07 Matters Arising - not already on the agenda

Item 6/06 - Christine Davies has since assumed the role of BCO Librarian, filling the vacancy created when Mike Parks retired from the post. Christine has also become a co-opted committee member. The Chairman, Wendy Lewis, thanked Christine very much for volunteering for this post and said that we had already been impressed by her efficacy.

3/07 Election of Chairman for 2007-2008 (Secretary in chair)

Wendy Lewis stood down and Phil Ellwood took the chair. Phil thanked Wendy for her hard work, dedication and sensitive leadership through some difficult issues over the past year. Only one nomination had been received for the post of Chairman: Wendy Lewis. *Wendy was re-elected unopposed.* (Prop. Sophie Cottrell; Sec. Rosemary Penketh).

4/07 Election of Secretary for 2007-2008

See 8/07

5/07 Treasurer's Report for 2006-2007

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

The Treasurer, Tim Barrett, said that we had generated a profit of over £1,500 in the last year and that there was not much of note, apart from a drop in subscription revenue, by about the equivalent of seven people, of which three could be easily accounted for, with one of these being related to the flute auditions. Two of the three concerts in the season had made a profit and the concerts had broken even overall, which is in line with our general aim.

Brenda Stacey enquired about the line on the accounts showing that Nathan Cole owes £120 to BCO. Tim explained the situation and that we would recover the money in this or a future term.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted by the members. (Prop. Siân Rees; Sec. Rosemary Penketh; carried unanimously).

6/07 Subscriptions for 2007-2008

The Treasurer, Tim Barrett, opened by saying he was not expecting another major dip in revenue, but we should be mindful of the possibility of increased costs - owing to the possible move of BCO rehearsals to Redland Green School, whose charges are yet unknown. He suggested that we should consider increasing our subscriptions by £1 per term, as a precaution, but didn't feel strongly about it as our reserves are very healthy and we could therefore take a small risk.

After considerable discussion on this subject, the proposal was made that we should increase subscriptions by £1 per term to £35 (concs. £24). *The members voted and accepted this proposal.* (Prop. Andrew Stephen; Sec. Brenda Stacey).

7/07 Election of Treasurer for 2007-2008

See 8/07

8/07 Election of Committee Members for 2007-2008

As only one nomination had been received for each of the posts of Secretary, Treasurer and (three) committee members, the Chairman, Wendy Lewis, proposed an *en bloc* vote

Secretary:	Phil Ellwood	Prop. Andrew Stephen; Sec. Lyn Harradine
Treasurer:	Tim Barrett	Prop. Karin Gebhard; Sec. Judy Sutton
Committee:	Linda Bearpark	Prop. David Benson; Sec. Gabriel Laszlo
Committee:	Helen Hook	Prop. Andrew Stephen; Sec. Mike Organ
Committee:	Andrew Stephen	Prop. Kate Brown; Sec. Phil Ellwood

By show of hands, the members voted to accept the candidates as elected unopposed.

Wendy thanked the members of the committee for all their hard work, and was particularly appreciative of that done by the Secretary-Webmaster and the Treasurer.

9/07 Conductor's Report for 2006-2007 and Musical Plan for 2007-2008

Wendy gave great thanks to Stefan and remarked that, after 11 years, she had run out of superlatives to attribute to him! She then called on Stefan to give his report.

Stefan opened by giving a review of the 2006-2007 Season.

For this season, we followed a policy of big rotations of players between the string sections. This proved to be tricky for some, especially those moving from seconds to firsts. Stefan was pleased and proud that players took on this challenge and the results were good. It showed two significant points: players *can* easily swap sections; and that second parts are just as important as first, and must be taken just as seriously.

The season's music was more inspired, exciting and contemporary than we had previously been used to – and the result was mixed:

In the Dec 2006 concert, Stefan was pleasantly surprised with the Prokofiev Romeo and Juliet, to which the orchestra rose to the challenge and it came together very well on the night. In the same concert, Thomas Carroll was fantastic in the Schumann Cello, and the Peer Gynt was great too.

For Spring 2007, the Dvořák Noon Witch was tremendous, Gina's Brahms Violin Concerto was lovely, and the Schumann Spring Symphony was very exciting.

Our final concert of the season, Summer 2007, Stefan found a bit frustrating. The Barber was lovely and the Khachaturian was fun. We had accompanied him well in the Gershwin and only came slightly adrift in one place, a 'rit'. This showed that we had done well in keeping together without a conductor. [*Secretary's Note: I must say, it was great fun to perform with Stefan as both soloist and director; and it was, I'm sure, the driving attraction for our bumper audience at that concert. Well done, Stefan! PE*]. The concert performance of the Rach Symphonic Dances was good, but could have been better. Stefan was frustrated by our attitude to rehearsals. We must move away from the idea that rehearsals are there for learning the notes, then the rhythms, and

so on. We must work on those elementary things at home – leaving the rehearsals for greater things. Stefan felt that people could do much better if they addressed this. He also remarked that the experience made him nervous about programming the more difficult works in the future. This coming year, we have planned smaller scale works but some of these are quite difficult. Stefan warned against complacency, especially for the very short Spring Term, in which we will be doing Sibelius' second, which is a big work. We mustn't think it's easy, because we may have done it before, in BCO or anywhere else. Lots of hard work will be needed!

10/07 Consider Adoption of Charitable Status

The Chairman, Wendy Lewis, explained the situation and why this item been included in the AGM. The main points are:

Following an enquiry about tax situation on bank interest, the Treasurer, Tim Barrett, had discovered that, owing to recent changes in tax legislation, BCO was now potentially liable to 19% Corporation Tax on our profits, as the old zero-rated band for low incomes has been removed. With our current status of 'unincorporated society', we are treated the same as a commercial company in this respect. (Only charities and certain sports associations are exempt from Corporation Tax).

Communications with Making Music (NFMS) on this issue had revealed that most member societies of MM are now in fact charities, as is MM itself. Also, it was discovered that BCO is a full member of MM, but really shouldn't be, according to MM's rules, as we are not a charity. MM has supplied us with advice and template material on how to change to a charity. Some of this will involve minor changes to our constitution – which will need to be agreed by the BCO members, via an AGM or EGM.

It is notable that following changes to other legislation about charities, in 2006, amateur music societies such as us can now very easily qualify our normal activities as a charitable purpose, under the heading of 'furthering the arts'. It is no longer necessary to undertake special projects to qualify. The combination of this new legislation together with the new tax penalties for not being a charity makes a compelling case for us to change.

Over the coming weeks, the committee will study the material and make a proposal, with the object of achieving agreement by the membership by the end of 2007.

11/07 Any Other Business

1. Wendy advised that our nominated charities for 2006-2007 had benefited from the retiring collections as follows: Cystic Fibrosis Trust (£400); YoungMinds (£250); and Lifeskills (£350).

Post-meeting note: For 2007-2008, the charities are: The Grand Appeal - supporting Bristol Royal Hospital for Children (Dec 07); St Peter's Hospice (Mar 08); and Young Bristol (Jun 08). PE

2. The Christmas Party is confirmed: Micawber's, Mon 10 December, tickets £6 - available soon.

3. Christine Davies remarked that, when considering the possible new venue, perhaps we could offer some sort of partnership with the school. *Committee to discuss at next meeting.*

4. Concerning subscriptions last year, Tim Barrett had noticed that some rehearsals were half empty, as far as the string sections were concerned. To this, a number of comments were made:

- Melanie Arnot suggested that reminder letters might be appropriate.
- Kate Brown said that we need to re-state members' responsibilities towards rehearsal attendance.
- Hilary Ross remarked that people who were unable to get to a rehearsal for work, family or other reasons, should contact the section leader, or colleague.
- Martin Partington felt that prompts needed to come from the committee, rather than the conductor.
- Brenda Stacey remarked that some people back off from the early rehearsals of the term.

- Stefan thinks we should be controversial, making sure that the early rehearsals are productive (through obtaining music earlier?) and apply pressure to those that don't attend.
- Linda Bearpark asked if we knew yet who (in firsts and seconds) would be playing in the concert. She suggested making people express a commitment via a Yes/No column in the register. *Andrew Stephen undertook to add this to the register for next week.*

5. Kate Brown asked for people to consider bring their own coffee mugs to rehearsals, to reduce costs and to act in a more 'green' manner.

The meeting was closed at 9.42 pm.

Date of next meeting (proposed): Monday 6 October 2008

Compiled: Phil Ellwood

Approved: Wendy Lewis

15 October 2007