



Committee Meeting 20 December, 7.30pm

Venue: 28 Ryecroft Road, SW16 3EG

MINUTES

Present

Russell Ashley-Smith (chair), Jeremy Crump (secretary), Caroline Annesley, Emma Gant, Charles Mackworth-Young.

The Chair welcomed Tom Hammond and Paula Tysall who attended for items 1-5.

Apologies were received from Chris Burns, Graham Vernon and Ishani O'Connor.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the October meeting were accepted and signed.

It was noted that two actions remained to be completed - the annual calendar to be produced by the **secretary** and arrangements to be made by the **treasurer** for the inspection of the accounts by a qualified person.

2. Conductor's views on future direction of the Orchestra

Tom Hammond identified a number of approaches for building on the sound foundations of the DSO and helping its continued success.

i) Recruitment. The health of the orchestra both musically and financially depended on building a stronger membership. He cited another London orchestra as an example of successful recruitment - to the extent that there were waiting lists for string vacancies - and consequently large audiences. He accepted that there was not much to be done about our location but suggested that membership might be more attractive if we had fewer, more concentrated rehearsals and if we built up the social side of the orchestra.

In discussion, it was agreed that the secretary should discuss with Elm Green whether it would be possible to extend rehearsals to 10pm and how much that would cost. We could then consider reducing the number of rehearsals per term. There was no clear agreement about

social activities.

There were particular issues about the recruitment of violas and horn players, and of the retention of violinists. It was agreed that Graham Vernon and Frances Barrett should be asked for their suggestions about how we should build their respective sections. (**Russell** to raise this with Frances). Paula and Robin would continue to ensure that new violinists were made welcome, and to give consideration to seating plans which would best use experienced players.

Tom commended the new web site, Lamnet [details now circulated to committee and posted on the web site] as a recruitment and fixing tool.

ii) Dulwich Festival. Tom was very keen to establish a relationship between the orchestra and the festival, and had suggestions for how an event might be developed which was aimed at involving children and parents. This would help engage with a new and wider audience. **Jeremy** to contact Festival organisers with a view to a discussion about 2013.

iii) Choir collaboration. Tom's suggestion that we should explore the possibility of working with a local choir was unanimously endorsed. **Tom** would explore with Aidan Oliver and the Dulwich Choral Society.

iv) Outreach. Tom had a number of suggestions for a more radical approach to engaging Elm Green School which he would put to them at a meeting on 11 Jan (Tom., Russell and Ishani representing DSO). He hoped that it would in time be possible to link this to the Young Composer's Award. This was welcomed by the committee.

v) YCA. Tom thought that it was worth looking again at the way the competition was run, suggesting that it would be good to get the top 3 entrants to attend a rehearsal at which the orchestra would play through their composition - and perhaps vote on the winner. This was welcomed. The committee agreed that it was desirable to maintain the current synchronisation of the final concert with the school year. **Russell** will find out from Frances/Ian what publicity has been undertaken in previous years inviting entries.

vi) rehearsal schedule for Spring 2012. The committee noted that there would be no funding for extra tutors in the forthcoming season. The draft schedule which Tom submitted before the meeting was agreed, subject to the substitution of a strings only rehearsal on 7 February for sectionals plus full orchestra.

3. Finalisation of programme for June 2012 Concert

It was agreed that Felicity Smith, winner of the Croydon Festival Soloists' prize, should sing 'Sea Pictures' and that Jonny Byers' offer to play 'Rococo variations' should be accepted. Tom would continue to consider the inclusion of a brass piece before Brahms 4. In discussion under a later item, it was agreed that the winning piece for the YCA should also continue to be played at the summer concert. **Tom** will contact Felicity and Jonny. The suggestion that we

include Arne's version of the National Anthem in this concert was not accepted.

4. Repertoire 2012-13

The committee agreed that the first five options identified in Tom's paper should be put to the members for on line voting after Christmas. The sixth was removed on grounds of likely cost for extras and music hire. **Tom** was asked to send a short description of each of the five options to **Jeremy** who would set up the online voting in the first week of January.

5. Concert arrangements for March and June 2012

A number of members were reported to have had said that they preferred a longer rehearsal on the Saturday afternoon of the concert. The Rehearsal for 10 March will therefore be from 2.30 - 5.30, with a break.

It was agreed that the seating of the orchestra in the church should give full recognition to the need to provide enough seating with good sight lines for the audience. it was noted that Lambeth Symphony Orchestra had used the choir gallery for seating at their concerts. Although this would not be possible in March whilst work was being done on the new organ, it should be considered for future DSO concerts.

6. Treasurer's update

a) Includes report on cash flow and overall budget forecast for 2011-12, and options to address each.

In Graham's absence, Jeremy presented an overview of the current cash flow and underlying financial position. Graham's note reported that the adjusted accounts for 2010-11 showed an overall loss for the year of £2943, excluding expenditure from the education fund.

The committee accepted Graham's four suggestions for controlling expenditure and increasing revenue in the remainder of this year, namely,

- ticket prices to be raised to £10 and £7.
- no additional paid rehearsal advisors
- continued efforts to reduce the number of paid extras
- further efforts to recruit fee paying members

For the future, programming decisions should be informed by consideration of affordability.

In discussion, it was further agreed that

- committee members should consider paying their remaining membership fees for 2011-12 in advance. Four had already done so. This would help manage cash flow in year.
- **Emma** would speak to Ishani O'Connor about developing proposals for marketing our remaining concerts this year, working with Jo Duggan.

- We should make a concerted effort to get commercial sponsorship. This was also for Discussion with Ishani.

It was noted that the accounts for the education fund did not show any interest. Graham to consider whether this was right and, if it was, to consider whether we could put the money in an interest bearing account.

b) annual report to Charity Commission.

Jeremy to discuss final preparation of accounts with **Graham** prior to submission in the annual report to the Charity Commission. It was agreed that the accounts should clearly show the advance of cash from the education fund to the general fund, with an understanding that it should be clearly identified in successive accounts and given priority to be paid back.

7. Correspondence received

Jeremy drew **Paula's** attention to an application from a violinist to rejoin the orchestra.

8. Any other business

There was no other business.

9. Date of next meeting.

Wednesday 22 Feb at 19.30, same venue.

Jeremy Crump (Secretary)

Russell Ashley-Smith (Chair)