



Annual report 2012

Foreword by Tom Hammond

A most enjoyable first full year for me with DSO. Some fantastic repertoire taken on and performed, plus lots of energy and enthusiasm from within the orchestra - not least for our developing outreach work which is so important for all of us who love orchestral music to support. Individuals are to be thanked for support in all areas, however, from marketing to concert programmes and all in between.

Clearly some financial challenges have arisen and in some senses clipped our artistic wings, but the efforts of all those who have had to deal with this mean that we are once again on a much firmer footing and better placed to plan ahead.

Musically I felt the highlights were the Berg Violin Concerto and the summer concert with Elgar, Tchaikovsky and Brahms. Thanks to our committed leader Paula Tysall, the string sound has developed and we have taken on an impressive number of new violinists. Other section leaders have also invested time, effort and talent to lead sectionals and generally help get as much from our rehearsals as possible.

Of course we still need to develop in some core ways as an ensemble, and it would be great to see every single concert sold-out if possible, but DSO is an orchestra in good health – and improving.

Tom Hammond

Chair's report

2011-12 was the first full year with Tom Hammond as our conductor. It has been a successful year, with another well attended concert season at All Saints, a stable membership, and some significant developments in our relationship with the wider community through our outreach work. At the same time, we have taken steps needed to stabilise our financial position. This was also the first year under our amended constitution.

Repertoire and performances

The concert season began with Leigh O'Hara deputising for Tom Hammond in a programme which included Berg's violin concerto, beautifully performed by Amanda Lake and with the orchestra rising to the challenge of a difficult modern work. We were fortunate in working with the singers Joanne Mayling and Nicholas Moodie in Mozart arias in our spring concert, when they also sang the wordless solos in Nielsen's 3rd Symphony. In the summer concert, we were particularly fortunate to work with Felicity Smith in Sea Pictures and Jonny Byers in the Rococo Variations. Jonny had performed the piece in the previous week with the Ulster Orchestra. We are particularly grateful that he was able to support the orchestra by waiving his fee for this appearance.

For the 2011-12 season, we introduced a new system for selecting programming, which allows the membership to vote on options for programmes suggested by the conductor but informed by members' suggestions for individual pieces. The system proved successful and has been repeated for 2012-13.

During the year, we were successful in obtaining a grant of £400 from the Vaughan Williams Charitable trust to defray the cost of hiring the music for VW's 5th Symphony, which we will perform in November 2012. We are very grateful to the Trust for this support.

Outreach

Tom Hammond has been keen to develop our outreach work, particularly the collaboration with The Elm Green school. During the year we agreed a programme of work with The Elm Green School which will enable us to run an after school activity with pupils from the school to develop their experience of playing music and composition. There were 25 students involved in the first cohort and that number is slightly higher in autumn 2012. A Very positive consequence of the work has been to help the music department at the school in their successful bid to introduce GCSE music as an option for senior pupils. Ishani O'Connor has led the outreach work on behalf of the committee, and she has been ably assisted by volunteers who have attended

sessions with the pupils.

Our outreach work is supported by the bequest made in memory of Philip McKenna. We have succeeded in obtaining £2,000 match-funding from The Michael Marks Charitable Trust for our work with The Elm Green school, and continue to discuss with the school how we can secure a sustainable basis for the work beyond 2012-13.

In 2011-12 we enjoyed the benefits of our collaboration with the Croydon Music Festival for the first time. Mezzo soprano Felicity Smith won the Croydon Festival soloists prize in 2011. Tom Hammond was one of the judges and the opportunity to perform with DSO was part of the prize. Tom was a judge again in 2012 and we look forward to continuing links with the festival.

We have continued to collect for St Christopher's Hospice at our concerts, and have received appreciative letters of thanks on each occasion. Members of the audience generally contributed over £300 to the collections at our three concerts in 2011-12.

Membership

DSO is a membership organisation and depends for its continued success - and indeed its existence - on maintaining stable numbers in all sections. This was largely achieved in 2011-12. Numbers of members in the three terms were respectively 46,52 and 47. We have been successful in attracting the interest of potential new members, and continue to recruit violins, violas, double basses and horns.

Venues

We continue to enjoy good relationships with our concert venue, All Saints Church, and with our rehearsal venue, The Elm Green School. We are particularly grateful for the very good customer relations maintained by Mike Kirby and Milko Georgiev at the school. We are always made to feel welcome, and they are most accommodating of our various needs for rehearsal space.

Website

The DSO web site (www.dulwichsymphonyorchestra.org.uk) remains our principal means of communication with members and to the public. The revenue we receive under the Amazon Associates programme has continued to grow so that 2011-12 was our best year yet, raising over £200. The site benefitted from the addition of a new set of photographs of the orchestra in rehearsal which were taken by Ingrid Beazley.

Summary of financial position

The full financial accounts are contained in the Treasurer's report. The charts at the end of this report show where our funding (other than for outreach) comes from and where it goes to. This shows again the importance of members' subscriptions as the basis for our success.

We began the year with a deficit from 2010-11 and have taken a number of steps to turn this round. Subscriptions to members were raised in autumn 2011 and ticket prices in March 2012. Neither had been raised for a considerable period before then. We also took steps to control expenditure by reducing our dependence on paid extra musicians for concerts, through the choice of repertoire (and hence the cost of music hire), saving expenditure on tutors for sessional rehearsals and by reducing the number of rehearsals per term from 10 to nine.

The consequence was that we were able to pay off the deficit in the main orchestra account brought forward from last year. If membership and concert takings continue at the levels of 2011-12, we expect that there will be scope for cautious easing of the tight controls on expenditure in the coming year, for example through additional play through sessions.

Prospects for next year

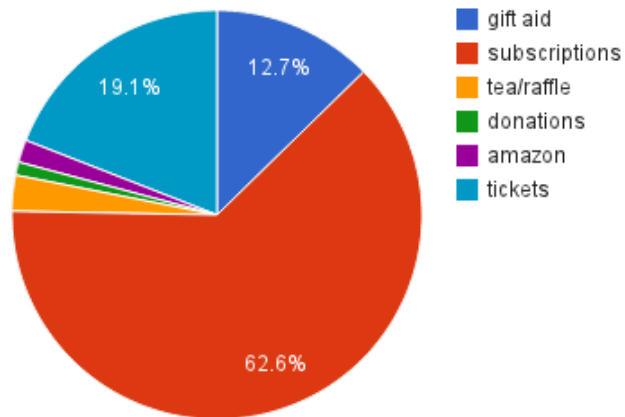
The prospects for 2012-13 are good. We have an excellent programme, including the London premier of James Francis Brown's concerto for clarinet and strings, participation in joint concert with the Lambeth Music service at the Herne Hill Festival, and some ambitious work with The Elm Green School. Sustaining this activity requires input from members, and I am grateful for all the work done by committee members over the year and the commitments of members to work in the future.

Russell Ashley-Smith
Chair

Appendix

Summary of income and expenditure

Income



Expenditure

