

AGM 2019

Chair's Report



My report begins as ever with thanks to fellow trustees and especially to our secretary, Tessa Crilly, and treasurer, Liz Cleary. The orchestra cannot function if these roles are not carried out, and we are all grateful for the rarely glamorous work which they carry out.

Many members of the orchestra who are not on the committee regularly carry out tasks which help make the experience of playing for DSO an enjoyable one, from setting out the chairs for rehearsals and making the tea (Sally Winter) to ordering the music (Nicky Jackson) and producing posters and programmes (Helen Bartholomew). We are all very grateful for this important voluntary effort on behalf of the orchestra.

Concerts

Concerts in 2018-19 were again successful both musically and in terms of audience. In each case, we benefitted from the conducting of Leigh O'Hara and Paula Tysall's leadership.

The autumn concert featured Grieg's Piano Concerto, with John Flinders as soloist, and Holst's *Planets Suite*, the first time the orchestra had played this very popular piece. We were fortunate to be joined for the wordless chorus at the end of 'Neptune' by the Paulina Voices of St Paul's Girls' School and their conductor, Heidi Pegler.

In the March concert, we sought to broaden the repertoire in a collaboration with Chineke! Orchestra. The programme included Coleridge-Taylor's *Symphonic Variations on an African Air* and what we believe to have been the first London performance of the 3rd Symphony by the African-American composer Florence B Price. (The first UK performance was given the week before by the BBC Wales Symphony Orchestra). We also performed Mendelssohn's violin concerto with Sarah Daramy-Williams, who is a member of Chineke! as soloist. The event was very well attended. There is a need for amateur orchestras to look to play pieces from a more diverse range of composers, and in particular to encourage women and BME composers to write music for symphony orchestra which is suitable for amateur performance. We will continue to explore how we can meet this challenge.

The summer concert included another piece by Coleridge-Taylor, movements from his *Petite Suite*, Tchaikovsky's 5th symphony and a performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto by an excellent young soloist, Giulia da Cruz.

Membership was again at a good level - we can of course always use more violins, violas and double bass players. The number of members in each of the three terms was 61, 55 and 57 respectively. The orchestra benefits from the commitment of all sections to recruit new members, and to attract extra players when the repertoire demands. Thanks are also due to Chris Burns, our fixer.

Social media and website

During the year, Julia Hewett set up a DSO [Facebook page](#) and the Twitter account (@dulwichsymphony) is again active. Both are valuable means of reaching potential audience members and players.

The DSO web site continues to be a successful means of attracting new members, sharing information with members and serving as a channel for purchasing tickets through Eventbrite. It has had the same format and technical platform for over ten years and is due for a major overhaul, not least to make the site more easily accessible from mobile devices. During the coming year, we will explore options for updating the site.

Finance

The orchestra made a small surplus (£167) this year with a welcome increase of 17% in ticket sales, reflecting the appeal of repertoire such as Holst's *Planets Suite* and the interest which was shown in our collaboration with Chineke!. Our reserves now stand at £7,895, which is 42% of last year's total expenditure and close to our target for reserves of £8-10,000.¹

We have acted on last year's resolution to take the necessary steps to benefit from Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR). OTR entitles us to payments from HMRC in proportion to our rehearsal costs. A production company, Dulwich Orchestral Productions, was set up on 9 November 2018, with advice from Making Music. The directors of the company are Liz Cleary, Jeremy Crump and Ishani O'Connor. The company's articles of incorporation make explicit that it exists solely to support DSO and that its directors are answerable to the DSO committee.

Rehearsal costs for 2019-20 will qualify under the scheme, and we estimate that this should provide additional income of about £2,400. The payments are made retrospectively and their impact will first be apparent in our income for 2020-21.

We are again grateful to Leigh Whittingham who approved the accounts as an independent examiner.

Education and outreach

There were no outreach activities in 2018-19, although we remain committed to using the funds (amounting to over £5,000) from the Philip McKenna bequest to encourage performance and composition of orchestral music in local state schools.

Privacy and data protection

No applications were made under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in respect of data held by DSO.

Venues

We have again enjoyed the hospitality of All Saints West Dulwich Church for our concerts. The first concert of 2019-20 will be held in the Vaughan Williams Auditorium at James Allen's Girls School, and we are planning to use both All Saints and JAGS for our concerts again in 2020-21. We will be consulting members about their reaction to playing at JAGS after the November concert, and we will of course be interested to learn how attractive the Vaughan Williams Auditorium is for our audience. Venues for 2020-21 are necessarily already booked, so the consultation will inform longer term choice of venue.

We began rehearsing at JAGS on a regular basis sat the beginning of 2018-19 and members quickly expressed a strong preference for continuing to do so. This will be our rehearsal venue for the foreseeable future.

Jeremy Crump
Chair, DSO
30 October 2019

¹ The reserves policy is set out in <http://www.dulwichsymphonyorchestra.org.uk/committeePapers/201802PolicyReserves.pdf>