

# AGM 2024

## Chair's Report



### Concerts and repertoire

Our December concert consisted of a performance of a substantial part of Tchaikovsky's music for the ballet *Sleeping Beauty* with narration spoken by John Flinders. This repeated the formula which had been very successful in December 2021 when Leigh O'Hara conducted *Swan Lake*. This time we used a text derived from a translation of Perrault's original story, a retelling of the Brothers Grimm version and stanzas from Tennyson's 'The Daydream'. *The Nutcracker* remains if DSO to perform all three of Tchaikovsky's great ballet scores.

This was the first season in which we began to put into effect our plans to broaden our repertoire. In spring 2024, we played William Grant Still's *Threnody: in Memory of Jean Sibelius* and in summer Grace Williams's *Violin Concerto*. These were both composers whose works had not previously been played by DSO. In the Grace Williams concerto, we were particularly fortunate to be joined by Stephen Bryant, who is the leader of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and who had previously played the piece with the London City Orchestra and the Bristol Concert Orchestra. In the spring concert, our soloist, in Ravel's Piano Concerto in G, was an up-and-coming young French pianist, Antoine Pr eat, who demonstrated astonishing flair and great fluency. Antoine treated us to a piano solo version of Ravel's *Chanson hebraique* as an encore.

2023-24 was the first complete season with Chris Stark as conductor, and we were again very grateful for his enthusiasm and energy. The orchestra was once again most ably led by Paula Tysall. Thanks also go to Olivia Tait who conducted rehearsals with great enthusiasm and attention to detail on two occasions when deputising for Chris Stark, and to Chris Burns who stood in as leader on the rare occasions when Paula was committed elsewhere.

### Joint concert with Dulwich Choral Society (DCS)

The initial discussion with DCS which I mentioned in last year's programme have proved fruitful, and this November's concert will be the first time these two well-established Dulwich musical societies have performed together. We are looking forward to a spectacular evening, which both organisations hope will be the first of many collaborations.

### Membership of the committee

I am grateful to all members of the committee for the work they have done on behalf of the orchestra over the year. The members of the committee in 2023-24 were Liz Cleary (secretary), Sam Wise (treasurer) and Chris Burns, Ruth Holton, Ishani O'Connor, Claire Richards and John Paul de Soissons. Claire Richards took over the roles of music librarian and editor our concert programmes.

## Membership, subscriptions and finances

During the three terms, we had 51, 47 and 48 subscribing members respectively. The corresponding figures for 2022-23 were 42, 52 and 54.

The handover of management of DSO's finances was the occasion of some delay in the preparation of accounts for 2022-23, which were not presented at the 2023 AGM. These accounts are presented, together with those for 2023-24 at the 2024 AGM. The detailed accounts will be circulated separately, but the overall position of the orchestra's finances at the end of the two years covered by these sets of accounts is. The detailed accounts will be circulated separately, but the overall position of the orchestra's finances at the end of the two years covered by these sets of accounts is considerably improved. On 1 September 2024, the orchestra's principal bank account (excluding the education fund) stood at £6,536 against £4,624 on 1 September 2022.

The committee's aim in the management of DSO's finances is to ensure the maintenance of good reserve whilst funding as ambitious and engaging a programme as we can. The delay in compiling financial information during the year led to our taking a very cautious approach to programming for the first two concerts in 2024-25. The biggest drivers of our costs are music hire and extras and the committee has been careful to keep both these within strict limits in agreeing with the conductor options for those two concerts. A ballot of members to choose between options was held at the beginning of the summer.

[I hope that we will be able to return to more adventurous programming from the end of 2025. In support of that aim, we propose to increase ticket prices for our regular – which were last raised in November 2014 – to £15 (concessions £12). Note that the tickets for this November's concert will be at DCS's usual level of £20.

## Education and outreach

Thanks to an initiative by DSO member Alan Taylor, members of DSO performed Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* at the Herne Hill Festival on 19 October 2024, with Chris Stark conducting and John Flinders narrating. The performance included participation by year 5 pupils from the Judith Kerr Primary School, Herne Hill, who represented a whole pack of wolves, hence the performance is entitled 'Peter and the Wolves'. This was DSO's first collaboration with the Judith Kerr school and our first appearance at the Herne Hill Festival and the event sold out. The cost of the production were expected to be covered by grants and ticket sales.

There were no outreach activities in 2022-3, although we remain committed to using the funds (amounting to just over £6,000) from the Philip McKenna bequest to encourage performance and composition of orchestral music in local state schools.

## Thanks

On behalf of the orchestra, I would again like to thank all those members who have helped in the running of the orchestra and the preparation and presentation of our concerts. Nicky Jackson has again taken the lead in co-ordinating work on concert days, and in ordering music. Helen Bartholemew's has again designed the concert programmes and produced excellent artwork for posters.

We are grateful to James Allen's Girls' School and All Saints' Church, West Dulwich for continuing to make available facilities for our rehearsals and performances.

Jeremy Crump  
Chair, DSO  
22 October 2023