

## **Bromsgrove Concerts Annual General Meeting**

### **Chairman's Review of 2022-23 and Preview of 2023-24**

The 2022-23 Season proved to be one of the best musical mixes that I can recall in terms of variety and the range of music offered by Bromsgrove Concerts. For the first time in many years we featured a vocal ensemble in the form of Papagena; a saxophone and guitar duo with Michael Christian Durrant and Jonathan Radford; and a programme dedicated to music written and performed by women, with Sarah Parkin and the Brompton String Quartet. We also staged our largest scale concert to date, featuring 21 musicians from the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra.

So we are maintaining our ambition to provide more variety in our programming and live up to our motto of "*bringing music alive and music lovers together*". Sadly, however, this ambition has not been matched by an increase in audience numbers (apart from Papagena which drew a pleasingly large audience), and instead we have continued to see a decline in attendance despite the quality of our concerts being at an all-time high. Fortunately, thanks to the sterling work of our treasurer, Joyce Chamberlain, we have managed to attract considerable funding from a number of organisations, including the Elmley Foundation, the Grimmit Trust and the W.E.Dunn Charity which have allowed us to continue to invite world class musicians to entertain us and we are immensely grateful to them for their support.

As we said for the AGM, the full accounts are now available 'from the Secretary' using the email address [bc.info@bromsgrove-concerts.org.uk](mailto:bc.info@bromsgrove-concerts.org.uk).

There is no doubt that we are not alone in experiencing this following the pandemic, which had a devastating impact on attendance at live events. But we realise that it is not only down to this and we have to find more innovative ways of marketing our concerts, further increase our variety, and encourage our audiences to put the word out that being at a Bromsgrove Concerts concert is a great night out. For Bromsgrove Concerts to survive and thrive, we have to find a way of getting our message out there that our concerts are great value with comfy auditoria, a wide variety of high quality music and bar facilities to boot. What's not to like?

So, for 2023/24 we are making some changes to our usual format, starting with reducing our number of Friday night concerts from eight to six, all presented at the excellent concert halls within Bromsgrove School. Reducing our formal concerts from eight to six will help us to reduce our fixed cost base and enable us to continue to be viable as Bromsgrove's flagship concert platform.

However, to make our offering more attractive and innovative, we will then be staging two or three additional impromptu concerts throughout the year at different venues in and around Bromsgrove and on different days of the week (i.e. not Fridays!) to allow us to try new formats featuring shorter programmes, accompanied by food and drink, and collaborations with other arts organisations. We hope that these will become social as well as musical entertainment occasions to make these more appealing to new audiences, and then hopefully attract interest from them in our more formal Friday night offerings.

Our first major collaboration took place ahead of our 2023/24 season with our Housman! concert, celebrating 50 years of the Housman Society, and featuring some wonderful artists including the Dante Quartet, Alessandro Fisher (former BBC New Generation Artist), pianist, Benjamin Frith, and readings given by BBC's Nick Owen. This was a major collaboration with many Bromsgrove organisations including the Bromsgrove Society, the Housman Society, Bromsgrove WORDS, Bromsgrove School and Bromsgrove District Council. I know that many of those who support Bromsgrove Concerts put this in their diary and were happily with us on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July in Routh Hall. It was a night to remember!

Finally, taking a peek at our 2023/24 programme, in which we are thrilled to celebrate our 60<sup>th</sup> Year with a diverse programme of music: We open the season on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023 with a concert that is a tribute to Simon Rattle's iconic Jazz Album, featuring Stravinsky's Ebony Concerto and Bernstein's Prelude Fugue and Riffs. This will once again draw upon the forces of the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra. We are delighted to welcome back the ever-popular and renowned Gould Trio and also the Eblana Trio who include some works by David Matthews who joined us for their concert in 2019. We look forward to a first appearance at Bromsgrove Concerts by pianist, Di Xiao. We have a wonderful Lieder Recital featuring Elisabeth Irvine (mezzo-soprano) and Ariane Jurriaanse Lazarom (piano), and are delighted to feature the Solem Quartet, playing something for all tastes!- Bartok, Beethoven and Edmund Finnis, who is a Professor of Composition at the Royal Academy of Music.

I feel sure that many of these concerts will appeal to you and I know you will come and join us. If additionally, you would like to make a donation towards the costs, or even offer to sponsor a concert in full, we would be delighted to hear from you, as your financial support will enable Bromsgrove Concerts to continue to offer high quality classical music for years to come.

We will be making announcements about our impromptu concerts throughout the season, and are keen to hear from our supporters about any suggestions for music that they would like to see included. If you have a programme of chamber music that you have always wanted to hear performed in Bromsgrove, please let us know!

**Alastair Moseley, Chair,**

**Bromsgrove Concerts**

**July 2023**