

Review of the year

Introduction

Although our 2020/21 season was all but wiped out by the Covid Pandemic, I am very glad to say that our 2021/22 season was almost normal, despite the face masks! Again, it is to the credit of committee, thanks largely to the excellent work of our Honorary Treasurer and some very welcome further donations and grants that we have remained in good financial health.

Review of the season

During the full season we have experimented with our new venue partner, Bromsgrove School. The facilities open to us have been two excellent auditoria, Routh Hall and the Cobham Theatre, including live-streaming for which a reduced ticket price was charged. We underpinned our commitment to our artists by making huge efforts to re-engage those whose concerts had to be cancelled or postponed in 2020/21. Thanks to the prolonged liaison and negotiation work by Alan Cook, these efforts were wholly successful. They were much appreciated by our returning audiences and by the artists themselves at this difficult time for the music industry.

We are still enjoying the new book, authored by our Secretary, Joyce Chamberlain. This was launched at the start of our 2021/22 Season and received good reviews, particularly from Christopher Morley, Birmingham's long-serving music critic and arts editor. Chris also offered a complimentary review of Craig Ogden's brilliant guitar recital in Routh Hall.

This was the highlight of our season. Artistically we were pleased that our performers not only gave works from the standard repertoire but also offered some sadly neglected pieces, among them those by Rebecca Clarke and Erno Dohnyani. We were delighted to give a live performance of Robert Simpson's String Quartet No 1, having previously streamed a filmed performance on 2 March 2021 for the composer's centenary anniversary.

We continued our policy of widening our offerings by putting on concerts by a brass quintet of young players studying at Birmingham Conservatoire, and by a chamber ensemble of about 15 players from Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, who played wind serenades.

We benefitted from very welcome grants from the Elmley Foundation for our innovative season and from the RVW Trust for our programming of works by contemporary British composers.

We have a new committee member to confirm at our AGM, Janine Parsons. She is an experienced musician who has already made a contribution to our work as a co-opted member.

We now know that we can offer our concerts both in person, and virtually over the internet. The committee has been at pains to review the way the new regime of concert delivery has progressed with our concert goers. These lessons will be carried forward to our next season.

I am therefore very optimistic that we have a great future ahead and I hope that music lovers of all ages will continue to discover what we do and join us on an exciting journey into next season.