

Sunderland Symphony Orchestra

Formerly: City of Sunderland Millennium Orchestral Society (CoSMOS)

Minutes of Annual General Meeting

7.30pm Wednesday 27th. March 2019

West Park United Reformed Church

Chairman: David Mills

Present: 30 : David Mills (DEM, Chairman), David Milner (DM, Musical Director), Emma Mapplebeck, Ged McCormack, Peter Chapman, Brian Naisby, Joy Lowther, Margaret Andrews, John Harding, Judith Thompson (Leader), Phil Jackson, Sophia Pearson, Sylvia Zalas, Jane Boyd, Ged McCormack, Rhoda Healey, Francesca Sensier, Cristina Macleod, Becky Vickers, Chris Cooper, Alan Cooper, Diana Whaley, Fiona Cudlipp, Paul Judson, Alicia Chadwick, Sheila Rayson, Colin Brannan, Ben Leighton, Jason Cone, Gareth Williams.

Apologies: Kathleen Mills, Mark Greenfield, Matthew Burge, Lynne Dakers, Peter Andrews, Louise Baxter, Mary Palmer, Valerie Hanson, Nicola Moore, Clémance Chenevas-Paule, Yvonne Chiying Tse, David Tallent, Maria Costa, Anna Lockey, Jayne Simpson

Chairman's Opening Remarks: David Mills took apologies and thanked everyone for their attendance.

Minutes of Last Meeting (27.03.18):

The minutes were checked and accepted for accuracy. DEM commented that all matters arising from previous minutes had been progressed.

DEM took the meeting through each section of the Executive Committee Report, commenting and inviting questions. The following is a summary of remarks and proposals/recommendations made during the meeting. Please consult the reports for finer details:-

Main points and comments – arranged for easier reading	Points To Follow Up
Executive Committees Report for the year ending 31 st . December 2018	

<p>Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was some turnover of membership but there was a net gain of ten with a total membership of 57 at the end of 2018. There were also 6 Honorary Members. Two names had been omitted from the membership list in the report. These would be added for the archival copies of the report. • Three members were married during the year and were congratulated. • Membership fees continue to stand at £96 (£63 for students, £60 for patrons (includes tickets) and £30 for ‘friends’ (includes tickets). • New member of the committee, Emma Mapplebeck, was thanked for her contribution which has been very useful. • JL wished to thank all members who regularly volunteer in the smooth running of the orchestra and in taking on organisational roles from time to time when required. • The work of the many helpers, without whom concert days could not run smoothly as they do now, was commended. The committee has agreed to try to widen this group. • At the close of the meeting, Diana Whaley, a relatively new member, commented that she has found the members of the orchestra and everyone involved very enthusiastic, friendly, welcoming and supportive. This is minuted here for all to see. 	<p>Membership list to be amended in archives</p>
<p>Musical Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Judson retired from the post of Musical Director, in April 2018, for health reasons. He is credited with improving quality of performance and attendance and for encouraging young people. Paul was made an Honorary Member and Deputy Conductor. His final concerts with the SSO in July were considered highly successful. We are thankful that Paul has remained as a valued member of the orchestra, playing bassoon. • David Milner was appointed to take up the baton and conducted the Autumn and Christmas Concerts. This has been another successful and popular appointment. DM has quickly established himself in the role and taken on the additional duties associated with the ‘Coming of Age Project’ in a very positive manner. The orchestra is going from strength to strength under his guidance. • Judith Thompson, Leader, was also a leading light in arranging and leading additional performances, supporting workshops and as a stand-in conductor. • All three are also credited with bringing new and returning members and players into the orchestra and being involved in workshops with young people. • We are most fortunate to have so much talent at our disposal. 	
<p>Workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2018, many orchestra members took part in delivering a workshop to the Sunderland Youth Orchestra This project was supported by the SSMEH. Emma Mapplebeck led the workshop, musically, and SSO members were workshop tutors and performers in a final joint concert which included Judith Thompson’s solo during the SSO’s performance of ‘Schindler’s List’. • SSO conductors (above) also took leading roles in a children’s workshop at Nissan in August. • The success of these events has been built upon in more recent work during 2019 with young people and is an important part of our ongoing ‘Coming of Age’ programme. 	

<p>Performances and Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over the year 2018, a variety of themes were explored. Details are outlined in the report. Highlights were three events to mark the Tall Ships in Sunderland. ‘Ships Ahoy!’ featured 17 string members led by JT, The Tall Ships Outdoor Concert featured the orchestra with ten members of RNS at The Town Moor, ‘Music of the Sea’ in WPC included a new composition by Lawrence Chiu entitled ‘Roker Pier’; The Coming of Age: 18th. Birthday Concert, featuring a new composition by resident composer, Phil Jackson, developing the musical theme of the ‘Happy Birthday’ song. A CD of ‘Roker Pier’ was produced by Matthew Burge and presented to the Mayor of Sunderland who thought the piece was very special. This was facilitated by Mark Greenfield who also provided birthday cakes. The new stand covers, purchased with a Council grant were used for the first time. Also of note was the full performance of the ‘Snowman Suite’ at Christmas, featuring a 52 strong choir from East Herrington Primary Academy led by Nicola Hair and accompanied by Graham Brown. The church was particularly festive for the Christmas Concert thanks to the efforts of owner, Barnaby Blacker. The audience was treated to a novel performance of four hands on the piano by Barnaby Blacker and Alan Cooper. It has been lovely to have regular piano accompaniment where it is provided in the score. Community events also included New Springs Church Christmas Carol Service where our new stand lights were very useful. A further planned event at Nissan did not take place having been cancelled by the company. It is a matter of disappointment that having spent much time building a relationship with Nissan and preparing for several high profile events with them, only one has actually taken place. It is assumed this may be due to internal issues within the organization. 	
<p>Constitutional Matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following the March 2018 AGM, Emma Mapplebeck was appointed to the committee as youth liaison member. Emma has taken on board her duties and been enthusiastically involved in planning further work with young people for 2019/20. 	
<p>University of Sunderland Freshers’ Event and Liaison:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A recruitment drive was launched at the University of Sunderland Freshers’ Fayre and resulted in several new appointments to the SSO and to the SYCO. This is considered worth repeating. A useful liaison with John Kefala-Kerr of the US Music Department has been built and has resulted in a composition competition with two submissions for the panel to consider. The winning composition will be performed at ‘Proms at the Point’ in October. Phil Jackson’s composition featuring a local choir will also be performed at this event. 	

<p>Arts' Council England Bid and Grant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bid to ACE for financial support for development and project work over a period of two years from Spring 2018-Spring 2020, was successful, resulting in a substantial grant of £35,00,00. • The preparation work and continuing oversight by Joy Lowther and the practical support of Vicki Taylor (former HR for NHS) in leading the committee through the advertising and appointment process is gratefully acknowledged. • The project is entitled 'SSO Coming of Age' and is being led by Matthew Burge, a freelance Development Manager, who was appointed in May 2018 , beginning his duties in June 2018. MB has been a good appointment and has led the committee through the minefield of legislative procedures which are necessary to remain within the law. Many members have been registered for DBS and all Data Protection permissions are up to date. It was generally agreed that MB's enthusiastic approach to the work has been an asset. • The Sunderland Music Education Hub (SMEH) is also thanked for assistance and support of a financial and practical nature. Their input has been crucial to the work in and with schools and we look forward to collaborating on the Empire Project. • A new website has been developed and much photographic and recording work has been in progress. • Thanks are also due to Sophia Pearson for her continuing voluntary work on the Facebook Page. The orchestra needs other members to bring their SM skills to leadership in other Social Media fields, such as Twitter and Instagram. Anyone who is interested in getting involved, please speak to MB asap. 	<p>Volunteers required to organise additional social media sites</p>
<p>The meeting unanimously accepted the Report as a true reflection of the orchestra over the year 2018.</p>	
<p>Treasurer's Report and Accounts for year ended December 31st . 2018 Detailed financial papers were circulated and discussed. Dr. Christopher May, the independent auditor, has endorsed the reports of Kathleen Mills. She was thanked for preparing these. The accounts are set out according to Charity Commission requirements. DEM led the meeting through the reports explaining the difference between restricted and general funds. It was important to understand that the money from ACE can only be directed to the written bid and must be wholly accounted for by the end of the project. This is being monitored by way of a cash-flow document. We believe we are on target but will need ACE permission to redirect certain funds to cover unanticipated costs.</p> <p>Other Main points made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money carried forward is necessary to safeguard the organisation in time of difficulty and is as recommended by the Charity Commission, to enable the society to continue to operate should its income dry up. The orchestra is on track to carry forward an appropriate percentage from its own funds. • Raffles bring in around £100 every time. Volunteers and Friends are thanked for organisation, prizes and ticket selling. • Gift aid brings 20% so is well worth the time taken to collect it. • Performance fees are paid to additional players to cover vacant desks but these are fewer now and some do not charge at the going rate. • Insurance covers the orchestra at home and in public spaces but members should ensure their instruments are insured away from home. The orchestra's assets are very well insured. • The meeting unanimously accepted the Report as a true reflection of the orchestra over the year 2018. One typographical error on page 7 of the report will be corrected for the archival copies. 	

<p>Election of Executive Committee for 2019/20 : The following nominations had been received and the personnel were reappointed unanimously:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman - David E Mills • Minutes Secretary - Joy Lowther • Treasurer - Kathleen Mills • Membership Secretary - Peter Chapman • Orchestra Manager - Brian Naisby • Co-opted member - Lynne Dakers (Child Protection) • Co-opted member - Judith Thompson (Leader) • Co-opted member - Emma Mapplebeck (Youth Links) <p>Proposed by Phil Jackson and seconded by Cristina Macleod; carried unanimously.</p> <p>The three founders of the orchestra remain interested in its progress and continue to be Joint Vice Presidents of the SSO. Wyn Lundgren is rarely able to attend concerts; John Lennox is a regular attendee at concerts; Mark Greenfield, however, is an active member of the committee who contributes practically to most events and takes a keen interest in supporting developments. He is a member of the ACE Sub-Committee, our spokesperson to the Council and has taken on the role of ‘Press Relations Lead’, over the last three years, resulting in several recent news reports in the local press.</p>	
<p>Election of Independent Checker for the accounts - Auditor / Independent Checker- Dr. Christopher May was reappointed unanimously.</p>	
<p>Membership Secretary's Report (2018) and Subscription Rates for 2021 -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Chapman further discussed the membership. Although there is a net gain of 10 members, the membership takings do not reflect this. Some people joined before Christmas but were not asked to pay a fee until after Christmas once they had established themselves in the orchestra. Membership fluctuates due to people moving on and in and often reduces for a period immediately after Christmas when the new fees are due. • Peter Chapman is thanked for his work in collecting and collating fees. There are a few outstanding membership fees to be collected asap. • Membership fees remain the same and PC proposed the same amount for next year of £96 and £63. 	
<p>Alteration to the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proposal was received to add the category of ‘non-playing member’ to the constitution. After discussion, it was agreed to add the category of ‘helper’ to paragraph 5.2 of the Constitution. Proposed by David Milner, seconded by Brian Naisby and carried unanimously. 	<p>DEM to notify the Charity Commission.</p>
<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnaby Blacker is especially thanked for allowing us to continue to make such wide use of the church and for his enthusiastic involvement and commitment • Concert Dress – GMCC asked the committee to consider men wearing all black like the ladies instead of the current DJ and Bow tie. 	<p>Add concert dress discussion to the next committee meeting agenda</p>
<p>Future Concert Dates –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14th July: Children and Families Concert in Sunderland Empire Matinee, ‘Peter and the Wolf and Friends’, 3pm • 12th . October 2019: ‘Proms At The Point’ (Sharing Event with friends) early evening 7pm • 7th . December 2019: ‘Music By Candlelight’ (WPC) 4pm • Saturday 20th . March: ‘Marching and Waltzing’ (WPC) 7.30pm 	

The Chairman thanked everyone for their contributions. The committee wishes to thank the Chairman and Treasurer for the many roles they continue to fill on behalf of the orchestra. This work, much of which is

unseen and tedious, enables the orchestra to develop and expand its musical outreach with increasingly successful outcomes.