

Sunderland Symphony Orchestra

Formerly: City of Sunderland Millennium Orchestral Society (CoSMOS)

Established October 1999 Charity Registration Number 1082431

Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 31st December 2018

Holding Trustees

John A Lennox Mark Greenfield Winifred Lundgren

Charity Trustees

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Lloyds TSB,
Fawcett Street,
Sunderland.

Sunderland Symphony Orchestra

The Executive Committee present their report with the financial statements of the orchestra for the year ended 31st December 2018.

The Committee met seven times during the year to deal with the necessary business.

Membership matters

There was a total of 53 members at the end of the year (43 playing members, 4 non-playing members and 6 patrons), compared to 47 the previous year. There were also 6 honorary members. Three students from the University joined at the start of the year, and went home to their respective countries after completing their degree courses: Chua Jes Sie (Jessie) (Violin, from Malaysia), Chiu Peng Chong (Lawrence) (Flute, from Malaysia), Vivien Chien (Oboe, from Taiwan). We thank them for their excellent contribution to our music while they were with us. (Note – One honorary member is also a playing member).

Members who left the orchestra during the year were Stephanie Brown (French horn), Adam Wilkinson (Violin) and Rachel Blackhall (Violin). We thank all of them for their service and friendship, and wish them well.

We welcomed the following as new members during the year: Sarah Blackhall (Clarinet) – re-joined, Nikola Zalas (Violin), Barnaby Blacker (Violin), Leanza Wong (Violin), Yvonne Tse (Flute), Mary Palmer (Clarinet), Maria Costa (Trumpet), Diana Whaley (Oboe), David Tallent (French horn), Fiona Cudlipp (Oboe), Caitlin Williams (Viola), Chris Cooper (Viola) and Jason Cone (Trumpet).

The Mayor of Sunderland Councillor Lynda Scanlan, graciously consented to be Honorary Patron of the orchestra for the duration of her term of office.

Weddings

Three members of the orchestra were married during the summer:

Joyce Brown married Steven Hogg, Natasha Males married Jamie Kendrick, and Cristina Tyley married Jamie Macleod.

We wish them all the very best for the future.

Annual General Meeting - Wednesday 28th March 2018.

The existing committee members were re-elected and Dr. Christopher May re-appointed as independent examiner for the accounts. Membership fees for the forthcoming year were kept at the same level as for the current year, ie £96.00 for a playing member (£63.00 for students), non-playing members (friends) £30.00, and patrons £60.00.

An alteration was made to the constitution, whereby the number of co-opted members of the committee was increased from two to three. This was to give the opportunity of appointing a younger member to the committee.

New Musical Director

At the end of April, Paul Judson decided, after much consideration and with regret, to stand down as Musical Director and Principal Conductor of the orchestra. Following four years in the post, Paul unexpectedly developed problems with his hearing.

We express our gratitude to Paul for his sterling work in this post. We note that under Paul's baton, attendance at rehearsals was more consistent, the quality of performance had risen and audience numbers were rising. David Milner, from Whitley Bay, accepted our invitation to take on the responsibility for the musical side of the orchestra on 12th July. David has a long association with the orchestra, playing French horn as a guest musician on numerous occasions in order to fill a vacant desk. He also conducted the October 2017 Concert and took the rehearsals immediately prior to the event, when Paul was unable to be present. We give him a warm welcome.

Paul has accepted the post of Deputy Conductor, and was made an Honorary member of the Orchestra following the 18th birthday Concert in October. He was presented with an engraved vase and a commemorative certificate. He will continue to play bassoon with the orchestra on a regular basis.

Workshop with the Sunderland Youth and Community Orchestra (SYO)

Members of the orchestra held a workshop with members of the SYO on 10th March 2018 and provided musical guidance. This activity was facilitated through finance from the Sunderland Music Education Hub (SMEH).

In order to encourage a love of music among young people, the Youth Orchestra received complimentary tickets for each of the SSO concerts – allowing one youth member, together with one adult, to attend free.

In a further act of collaboration, two members of the SSO played in the SYO Christmas Concert.

Performances

The March concert was entitled '**Music from Stage and Screen**'. Judith Thompson was the violin soloist in the 'Theme from Schindler's List' and Fiona Preston played the oboe solo in 'The Watermill'.

Tall Ships Celebrations

The orchestra had a busy time in the summer providing entertainment for hundreds of people at the start of the week-long celebrations for the Tall Ships Race, being hosted by the town.

First of all, seventeen members of the strings section of the orchestra played in the bandstand at Barnes Park, Sunderland, on Saturday 30th June, in the afternoon. This event, on a beautiful summer's day, was a family fun day entitled '**Ships Ahoy**', which was organised by the West Area of the City.

Following this, our Summer concert, held one week later in West Park Church, on Saturday 7th July, entitled '**Music of the Sea**', had music, all of which had a nautical connection.

Lawrence Chiu (Flute) had written a piece of music entitled 'Roker Pier' especially for the orchestra. This was given its première performance, to great acclaim.

On the following Wednesday, 11th July, the orchestra played a concert entitled '**Music for the Tall Ships**', in a specially built arena on the Town Moor at Hendon, Sunderland. This concert had an appreciative audience seated outdoors, again on a beautiful summer evening. For this performance, the orchestra was enhanced by ten members of the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

18th Birthday Concert Saturday 13th October. This was very well attended, and the Mayor of Sunderland, Councillor Lynda Scanlan was present with her consort, Micky Horswill.

This concert marked the start of the orchestra's 'Coming of Age Development Project' and was the first concert to be devised and presided over by our new Musical Director, David Milner, who was very well received by the audience. The programme included music selected from concerts held during the previous eighteen years, and included the 'Finale' from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which had been performed as the closing item of the very first concert in the year 2000.

Specially written for the event was a version of 'Happy Birthday'. Phil Jackson (Trumpet) composed this piece using themes and rhythms from a number of well-known pieces.

A celebratory birthday cake was provided by Alderman Mark Greenfield (Vice-President). The cake was cut by the Mayor, ably assisted by the leader of the orchestra, Judith Thompson. The audience sang 'Happy Birthday' during the ceremony, accompanied by David Mills (Chairman) on the organ. Pieces of cake were distributed throughout the audience.

The new music stand banners, provided for by a grant from the Community Chest fund of the Sunderland City Council were displayed for the first time at this performance.

The Christmas concert on Saturday 15th December, again welcomed the East Herrington Primary Academy Choir, with their musical director Mrs. Nicola Hair and accompanist Graham Brown. In addition to singing their own selections, the members joined with the orchestra in 'Walking in the Air', and also performed the dance from 'The Snowman Suite'. There was a record attendance of about 200 people in the audience.

The atmosphere inside the church was greatly enhanced by the superb decorations supplied by the owner, Mr. Barnaby Blacker, who had also had his grand piano tuned especially for the occasion.

Four hands on the piano during the playing of The Snowman Suite was a first for the orchestra and generated a lot of complimentary praise from the audience.

New Springs City Church Christmas Carol Service at Fulwell, Sunderland. Ten members provided accompaniment for the Christmas Carol Service at the church on Sunday 16th December, led by David Mills. The new music stand lights were used for the first time on this occasion.

Collaboration with Nissan UK

At the invitation of the General Manager of the Social Section of Nissan (Gary Collins), the Chairman, and Musical Director (Paul Judson) met with Mr. Collins in his office at Nissan to discuss ways in which our two organisations could work together to our mutual benefit. The outcome of the meeting was as follows:

Nissan Holiday Club Workshop

On Wednesday 1st August, ten members, under the leadership of Paul Judson, delivered a two hour workshop and afternoon concert event at Nissan, Washington. The Sunderland Music Education Hub provided support for this event and prizes for the participants.

The event was for 6 - 12 year olds, and embraced a nautical theme. The children were asked to dress as pirates or other sea characters and were given a varied programme of songs, games and practical music-making activities.

Nissan Christmas Concert Wednesday 12th December 7-9pm.

The orchestra was invited to perform for Nissan families at their annual Christmas musical evening. Unfortunately, circumstances at Nissan caused them to cancel the event at short notice.

Nissan Summer Concert Saturday 25th May 2019.

We have been invited to take part in a promenade concert in the Nissan grounds, on a large outside stage.

University of Sunderland Fresher's Event

On Wednesday 26th September a group of seven orchestra members manned a display and stall at this large event in the University premises. Thanks to our Development Manager, Matthew Burge, for organising our participation. Interested students were invited to visit the orchestra prior to the actual rehearsal on the same night, meet the members, and partake of refreshments. Several interested students attended. The orchestra now has four new playing members.

Collaboration with the Music Department of the University of Sunderland

A link has been developed with John Kefala-Kerr of the University Music Department, and a competition has been launched for the students to write a new piece of music for the orchestra. The winning composition will be performed at the orchestra's Promenade Concert in October 2019.

Arts Council Bid and Grant

The Committee prepared a two year development plan for the orchestra, and submitted a bid to *Arts Council England* for financial support. The bid was successful and a substantial grant (£35,000.00) was awarded to facilitate the orchestra's 'Coming of Age Development Project'. This allowed the appointment of a Development Manager (Matthew Burge) who will facilitate the programme. Matthew will work freelance/self-employed in this role for the two years. We welcome him to our orchestra.

Matthew has settled into his new role, and is enthusiastically working with the orchestra committee to enhance the awareness of the orchestra throughout the local community. Among his many tasks, he has worked to develop a new web site and has been busy photographing and recording the orchestra in action. He is also developing publicity material and education packs for our outreach programmes.

The preparation of the bid took over twelve months and represented many hours of work. We give a special word of thanks to our secretary, Joy Lowther, for organising and preparing the huge amount of documentation that was required.

A special word of thanks goes to Mrs. Vicki Taylor, previously Human Resources Director for NHS Sunderland, who assisted the committee in preparing the advertising material, shortlisting the candidates and guiding the interview process.

In connection with the bid, The Sunderland Music Education Hub/Together for Children gave match funding re the outreach to children in schools.

Financial matters

The orchestra again received a number of anonymous financial donations, including one of £2,000.00. These are greatly appreciated.

A substantial bequest was received from the estate of Mr. Albert Amiss, of Sunderland.

Musical instruments.

A tuneable tambourine and a stand for the glockenspiel were purchased.

An 'A' clarinet was donated to the orchestra, by a friend.

West Park Church None of the parties who showed an interest in purchasing the church came forward with an acceptable offer, and the building was put up for auction in March 2018. A private individual made the winning bid and purchased the building. An excellent relationship developed between the new owner and the orchestra, and conditions were agreed whereby we may remain in residence for the time being. We extend our thanks to the new owner, who has subsequently joined the orchestra, playing violin and piano.

The orchestra has been given the use of one room on the ground floor of the building for storage of instruments, music etc. Facilities have also been made available for the holding of committee meetings, and use of the kitchen and toilets.

Eight members came to help one Saturday morning in April with the move of all our belongings from various rooms, to the new 'office'.

Thanks

The Orchestra once again extends grateful thanks to all the people and groups who have supported its activities over the past year. The volunteer help given by so many is greatly appreciated. Special thanks must be given to the orchestra's Honorary Members, members of Stockton Road URC Church and family members of orchestra players, who look after most of the 'back stage' work associated with running the concerts.

The goodwill of orchestra members in taking on additional tasks, is also appreciated.

The committee also wish to record their thanks to David and Kathleen Mills for all the unseen background work undertaken to facilitate the smooth running of the orchestra.

MAJOR RISKS FACING THE CHARITY

Ticket revenue has increased as the audience size has increased but still can not provide sufficient cash to provide for the essential running costs of the charity, and so the orchestra remains dependent on outside sources of revenue to remain solvent.

The orchestra has still been unable to find a sponsor during the year. This matter is being given continuous attention.

STEPS TAKEN TO MITIGATE RISKS

The orchestra continues to provide a varied and innovative programme of concerts in order to attract as wide an audience as possible.

External sources of funding are continually being approached.

A Business Plan to the year 2022 is being developed, and it is anticipated that the work being carried out by the Development Manager will result in larger audiences from a wider area.

RESERVES POLICY

It is intended that the cash balance in the bank at the end of the financial year (December 31st) should be at least one year's (preferably two year's) anticipated expenditure. This was achieved this year.