

CAMBRIDGE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 20 September 2005 in the Farnsworth Hall, Chesterton Community College, Gilbert Road, Cambridge.

1. Election of Chairman of AGM

In the absence of the President of the Society, Lindy Beveridge was elected as Chairman of the AGM for 2005.

Lindy introduced herself to the Society members outlining her professional background and experience

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sir David Willcocks (President), Tim Brown, Graeme Jenkins, Raymond Leppard, Hugh Macdonald, Russell Keable, Steve Bingham, Nick Tippler, Alison Deary, Mary Hancock, Martin West and 15 members of the Society.

3. Minutes of the 2004 AGM

These were adopted.

4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Secretary's report

The secretary, Jan Moore, said how pleased she was to welcome Vice President Mary Rose Clark to the meeting and Lindy Beveridge as Chairman. She wished to thank the members of the Society for their support and the Committee for their unceasing hard work. She explained that Lindy Beveridge had joined the Committee as Chairman during the 2004- 5 season.

Jan explained that she had taken over as Secretary in January 2005 as Rachel Dunlop was unable to take up the post. Jan had previously been Concert Manager and Airie McCoy now filled this post. She thanked Chris Stewart for all of her work and support during the transition.

As usual the Society had had a very busy season with concerts that shoe-horned us into OLEM, the chorus visiting St John's Chapel with Chris Whitton and finishing with a flourish in Ely Cathedral.

Not only had we performed but had also found time to audition potential conductors in June. There had been over 50 applications and the sub committee short-listed seven to conduct the orchestra and chorus. Using member's scoring from the audition and comments, the committee chose three candidates for interview. We were pleased to offer the job to Timothy Redmond.

Martin West resigned from the post of conductor to go to San Francisco Ballet. He intends to be back to conduct the War Requiem in July 2006 as his final concert with the Society. It is hoped that Timothy Redmond and Gerry Cornelius will be able to conduct those concerts that Martin cannot.

Jan would like to thank Martin for the joy of working with him and his friendship. She will miss the Tuesday visits to the station.

6. Conductor's Report

Seven years is a long time to be the conductor of any society, but the great thing about the Phil is that overall it gives me great pleasure to say that NOT much changed while I was in charge. Of course, I'd like to THINK that the overall standard of the playing and singing improved, but when I am asked which was my favourite concert I always have no hesitation in pronouncing it to be October 1998 in King's Chapel: My first. Not because it was the best performance or the best programme, but simply this: After a few weeks of hard rehearsals which at times seemed to be getting nowhere, the Phil improved beyond recognition in the last week and produced a performance of fantastic quality and commitment which left me in no doubt that I was conductor of a team of musicians who were not only talented, but were determined to perform at the peak of their potential; able to raise their game beyond that, which (to paraphrase our regular

reviewer, James Day....) "could be reasonably expected from a group of amateur musicians". I knew at that moment that as long as I was your conductor, you would always surprise yourselves, as well as me, in what you are able to achieve, and I believe that your capacity to set yourselves the highest goals is what places you, as a society, amongst the highest achievers in the country. It was that mindset which allowed me to push you at times almost to breaking point, but always knowing that you would almost invariably go beyond my demands when it came to it. Certainly there were many highlights and I'm sure we all have our own ideas of the best bits – Lloyd's Requiem, Mahler 9, Dvorak Cello Concerto, Tippett String Concerto, Belshazzar's Feast are but a few of mine.

It hasn't happened without a great deal of effort behind the scenes. I still believe that most of you can have no idea of the amount of work that the committee do on your behalf and I wish Lindy, Jan and their team, a great deal of luck in their task of keeping the wheels well-oiled. My thanks go to them as well as all past members of the committee, Chairpeople and others who have put so much work into making my crazy ideas possible. I am particularly pleased to see that last year we managed to perform an interesting and varied programme, whilst again being able to show a healthy profit. My first year with the society was on the back of a £10,000 loss, so it is no small achievement that over the past 7 years, the committee have managed the budget so well that the reserves are in such a healthy position; especially as the subs have barely gone up in the past 7 years.

We said goodbye to a long standing member of the society last year in Andrew Black, who had been chorus accompanist for many many years - almost 20 I think. I'm sure that we will all wish him success and happiness in his future projects. We welcomed Oliver to replace him, who fitted in well, and we were pleased to ask him to continue this year. I am happy to report that, from my point of view at least, the appointment of Chris Whitton as chorus master was nothing short of a total success. It was fabulous for me to be able to turn up to Chorus rehearsals, full of energy and not have it deflated by the nitty gritty of note bashing!! He certainly made it possible for me to remain as conductor for the past year. The same is true of course of Steve Bingham, who has always been a great ally, and I am so pleased that his concert directing the orchestra was such a success. I think that is an experiment well worth repeating. Tim is lucky to have such a good team to work with.

It only remains for me to say three things: One, thank you once again for my generous leaving present. I didn't buy a Rolex... but did buy a really lovely watch which I wear everyday and which will always remind me of my time with the society; Two, to wish Tim as much fulfilment and happiness for his tenure as I had during mine; and last, but certainly not least, to say that I look forward with a huge grin to seeing you all in a few months to conduct the War Requiem.

My fondest wishes to you all.
Martin

7. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the Society had made a surplus of more than £5,700: all the season's concerts had exceeded their budgeted ticket income, resulting in £6000 of extra income. It was likely that this good result was due at least in part to the new publicity material and its greater distribution, and the Publicity Officer was thanked for her efforts. Audience research would be carried out in the season 2005- 6 to find out what brought people in to the concerts.

Subscriptions had brought in £3000 more than budgeted; the Treasurer thanked the Orchestral Representative for his efforts in obtaining subscriptions, particularly from new members joining partway through the year. The Garden Party had brought in a net sum of £1500, but this was much less than had originally been hoped for as a result of the planned Brahms Bonanza, which would now take place in season 2005- 6.

The expenses for hiring the new conductor came to just over £1000, of which nearly half was taken up by the advert.

The Society's reserve now stood at £47,720, compared with a planned expenditure of £51,500 in the coming season.

Following a question at the previous year's AGM, the Treasurer confirmed that a COIF Charities Deposit Fund account was to be opened shortly. This was paying interest at a rate of 4.3%, compared with the 3% being paid for the Northern Rock deposit account.

The Treasurer was asked about the Society's debtors, with outstanding payments listed at over £9,000 in the accounts. A large part of this was due to late payment of box office receipts by both Ely Cathedral and Cambridge Arts Theatre Box Office, which had since been received. The figure also included the outstanding Gift Aid payment, which usually arrives in October.

A member pointed out that the interest gained on the society's accounts was nearly three times higher in 2004-5 than in the previous year; the Treasurer promised to report back on why this had occurred.

A member suggested that if funds were healthy then would it be possible for the Society to programme Bach St John Passion in a future season. The Secretary agreed to note this.

8. Appointment of Chairman of Society and Officers and Election of Committee

The Chairman and Committee were elected unopposed.

9. Members' annual subscriptions 2005-6 and election of auditors

The Treasurer proposed that the subscriptions should remain at £85. This was seconded by Jan Moore and agreed by the meeting. The Treasurer proposed that Whitmarsh Sterland should be the auditors and this was seconded by Al Morfey and agreed by the meeting.

AOB

1. There was concern about the drinks machine noise in the hall during rehearsals.
2. David White suggested that the Mayor, as Honorary Patron, should be invited to the AGM and a concert. This was agreed.
3. Performing in Prague – this is fixed for the last weekend in October 2006. Accommodation will be £25 and David is looking for airline support.
4. Martin Scutt expressed concern about recruitment particularly in the chorus tenor and bass sections. It was agreed to start a poster campaign.
5. Al Morfey asked for some information about Tim Redmond and his appointment. This was given.
6. A member asked about the collection for Andrew Black. Sarah Willingale was handling this and vouchers would be bought and sent with a signed card.

There was an informal buffet to complete the evening.

Jan Moore

September 2005