

Gloucester Music Society Annual Report 2019/2020

Charity number 285348

Chairman: Christine Talbot-Cooper, Secretary: Julia Price, Treasurer: John Talbot-Cooper

Committee members: Sally Annett, Jill Davies, David James- died 29 March 2019, Lee Rogers and Mair Shankster

Our aim: to promote chamber music concerts of the highest quality in Gloucester city and beyond. We take pride in engaging some of the finest musicians from around the world, whilst at the same time being noted for our friendly and informal atmosphere. We present innovative and challenging programmes covering a wide range of music and our concerts this season have taken place in the Ivor Gurney Hall, Gloucester.

Annual General Meeting, Thursday 23 May, 2019

This took place at St Mary de Lode Church at 7.30pm at which the Trustees were re-elected. The meeting was followed by a fascinating talk by Martin Lee-Browne on "*The Finzis and the Newbury String Players*".

Concerts for our 90th anniversary season

A season of English music was planned for this special season which involved a huge amount of fund raising together with many generous donations from our members. Concerts again took place on Sundays at 3.00pm, as this has proved to be a popular time which has seen audience numbers continue to grow. The first concert was scheduled for **Sunday 13 October** with the **Fitzwilliam Quartet** joined by tenor **James Gilchrist** and pianist **Anna Tilbrook** for a programme of music by Bliss, Delius, Gurney and Vaughan Williams. However just a few days before the performance, the Fitzwilliam Quartet had to withdraw due to illness and in spite of 24 hours trying to find a replacement quartet this proved impossible. We were hugely grateful to James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook who kindly offered their services for the whole concert, and although this involved a change of programme the concert proved to be a huge success with a capacity audience.

Fortunately there were no such dramas for the second concert on **Sunday 3 November** when the pianist **Maria Marchant** charmed our audience with a programme of piano music by Handel, Britten, Bliss, Howells, Bantock, Ireland, Roderick Williams and Judith Bingham. Also included on the programme was the world première of a new work entitled "Soliloquy" by Adrian Williams which was commissioned by the Society to mark its 90th anniversary and which received excellent reviews in both the local and national press. The final concert of 2019 was a quartet recital on **Sunday 1 December** by the **Villiers Quartet** with music by Alwyn, Whettam and Parry. Many members commented that these were pieces which deserved much wider recognition.

2020 began on **Sunday 26 January** with a concert by the **Carducci Quartet**, which, in addition to quartets by Moeran, Rebecca Clarke and Britten featured Beethoven's Quartet Op 95 "Serioso" in tribute to the 250th anniversary of his birth. As always, the quartet attracted an excellent audience. The concert, held on **February 23rd**, was by the chamber choir **Octavo**. They performed a huge programme of English music old and new with excellent diction and tuning. The final concert of the season on **29 March "In Gloucestershire"**, a celebratory programme of words and music with the **Christa Quartet** and actors **James Bolam** and **Susan Jameson** sadly did not take place because of the corona virus lockdown but it is hoped that it can be performed at a future date.

Fund raising, additional events and general assistance

- As has become our tradition, we agreed to support Gloucester's Heritage Open Days so on 14 September we were pleased to present the launch of a new CD of the Solo violin music of Graham Whettam by Rupert Marshall-Luck, who gave a most illuminating talk on the music.
- During the season we were sorry to hear of the death of Nick Shankster, a huge supporter of our Society whose help in preparing refreshments for our artists was much appreciated. We have also recently lost Trustee David James to the virus and are sad to record also the death of Anne Boden.
- As always we were hugely grateful for a grant from the Langtree Trust and the continued support of Whitehouse Press. We also received support from many trusts including the William Alwyn Foundation, the Bliss Trust, the Delius Trust, Festival Classics, the Finzi Trust, the Herbert Howells Trust, the John Ireland Charitable Trust, the Richard Hall Charitable Trust and the RVW Trust. For this special year a number of members gave very generous donations some of which went towards having our publicity and programmes professionally printed. Others have continued to give regular donations by standing order and Valerie and Kevin Browning have provided and run the interval drinks. We continue to be grateful for these generous donations from members and others, particularly those on which we are able to claim Gift Aid, and to those who have supported the raffles run by Mair Shankster. Our thanks too to Margaret Orritt who has continued to run the popular record stall. Without the financial help we have received from these sources we would not have been able to continue.
- We received much help from Karen Gulley at the King's School. In addition we have been immensely grateful for the unstinting help given by Erik Lewis in so many ways, and to Angela Conder and Lee Rogers who have helped with distributing publicity. Lee Rogers has also undertaken many other duties to help the concerts run smoothly, Michael Pretty and Kok Swee Gan have provided refreshments for the artists and Paul Griffiths has helped with selling the programmes. The Society is indebted to John Talbot-Cooper, the Honorary Treasurer, for the many additional tasks he undertakes, and to Julia Price for her excellent reviews. Christine Talbot-Cooper has continued with the task of making the many funding applications needed for the season, programming, booking artists, dealing with concert arrangements and publicity plus running the website and online box office.
- Ticket prices for the six concerts were adults £20, concessions £18, students £5, children free and accompanying adults £10. Membership subscriptions were £90, concessions £85 and students £20 and membership cards again replaced tickets. Receipts for online bookings replaced tickets, so we were able to print a limited number of tickets for use on the door "in house". Membership was 31 with many people preferring to pay on the door.
- Publicity. We have been pleased to have our publicity and programmes printed by Whitehouse Press and we have continued to advertise in Chamber Music Plus, which reaches a wide geographical region.
- With the uncertainty over coronavirus we hope to be able to resume concerts in January 2021.
- We are unable to vote on a committee for the coming year due to the cancellation of our AGM. Jill Davies is retiring from the committee which now needs further members if the Society is to run smoothly, so we would welcome active volunteers to join us. Any members who are able to offer practical help but prefer not to be on the committee also very welcome.

Christine Talbot-Cooper, Chairman Gloucester Music Society