

## **The Friends of St Cecilia's Hall and Museum.**

### **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22 November 2008.**

**Present:** Martin Hillman (Chair), Dianne Fraser (Hon. Treasurer), Dr Anne Leaver (Committee), Pam Jackson (acting as secretary), and 22 members.

The **Chairman welcomed** everyone to St Cecilia's Hall. Before the main business of the meeting Item 9 was moved to the head of the agenda to allow the introduction of Pam Jackson as secretary. This was necessitated by Miss Penelope Carter's wish to step down from office because of continuing health difficulties. A card with thanks and good wishes for her further recovery was circulated for members to sign.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from sixteen members.

#### **2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting**

Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Brian Wade, seconded by Dr Anne Leaver and confirmed by the meeting.

#### **3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

- a) The demonstration harpsichord key, financed by Malcolm Bateson, has been constructed and is now in St Cecilia's Hall.
- b) Professor Arnold Myers reported protracted attempts to obtain clearer signage for St. Cecilia's Hall. He assured the meeting that the Friends and the Music Department will continue to press University Estates and Buildings officials. Lively discussion ensued, deplored delay, as residents and summer visitors alike experience great difficulty in finding the Hall. The status of St. Cecilia's as a listed building is understood to limit the nature of permitted signage, but the conservation architects appointed as consultants for potential refurbishment of St Cecilia's Hall will also address the problem.

The Chairman undertook to write directly to the University Principal urging speedy action on improved signage.

The discussion widened to include concerns over the unpleasant visual aspect of the approach to the Hall from Niddry Street. The Chairman undertook to contact the local councillor over problems of excessive rubbish littering the street.

#### **4. Chairman's Report**

The main report for 2007-08 had been circulated in advance and was approved by the meeting. The Chairman provided further information about attempts to broaden the field of potential recipients of the Friends of St. Cecilia's Bursaries to include performers as well as researchers. In order to uphold standards of performance commensurate with the renown of the instruments of the Collections, names and recommendations of suitable candidates were being carefully sought. Deeply engaged discussion followed the report. Enthusiasm to encourage public performance by young artists was balanced by caution against changing the voluntary, supporting role of the Friends into a more onerous concert-promoting role, particularly as this would involve responsibility for covering uncertain costs. It was agreed that the committee would further consider possible ways and means to benefit young performers.

Lady Balfour, commending the committee for responding alternately to crises and opportunities, suggested the time might be ripe to review the Friends' strategic objectives. The Chairman assured her that these were always pragmatically under review when each committee meeting addressed future planning. He recalled that fundamental strategic objectives were laid down in the constitution, and reminded the meeting that the Friends had recently undertaken a number of initiatives, itemised in the main report.

Professor David Kimbell pointed out that the objectives of the Friends of St Cecilia's were necessarily linked to policies of the Music Department and to the overall strategic planning of the University. Professor Myers further elucidated the structural relationships between the Friends' organisation, the Music Department and the University, stressing the harmonious mutual support which existed at all levels.

Malcolm Bateson suggested that the Friends might consider the appointment of a professional administrator to promote its interests, linking this to ideas of strategic review.

Proposal by Malcolm Bateson, seconded by Brian Wade:

That a Working Party be set up to revisit the strategic objectives of the Friends' organisation, and to report back within three months.

Votes: 3 in favour; 10 against. The proposal was not carried. Nevertheless the Chairman pledged that the committee would further discuss Lady Balfour's idea.

## **5. Annual Accounts**

The year's accounts had been circulated in advance. In her verbal report the Treasurer provided additional commentary, noting a pleasing current membership of 185. Festival Fringe concert attendance and revenues had exceeded expectations. Donations and a series of drawing-room concerts ("Airs of

Generosity") had raised £7,500 which built up the Bursary Fund to more than £11,000. As a result monies would be transferred to take advantage of best available bank terms.

Expenses were incurred during the year to

- obtain good quality storage media for the Friends' document archives;
- re-organise the Friends' computer website; and
- bear the costs of commissioned reports on the 1748 Snetzler Organ and the 1745 Crang Claviorgan.

The Treasurer was commended for her successful strengthening of the Friends' overall financial position. Malcolm Bateson suggested that the committee might consider using some of the banked funds to promote a performance opportunity for young players. Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Anne Leaver, seconded by Pam Jackson, and confirmed by the meeting.

## **6. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts for 2008-09**

Mr. Malcolm MacRae had intimated his willingness to continue as Examiner. His appointment was proposed by Mrs Dianne Fraser (Treasurer), seconded by Martin Hillman (Chairman) and approved by the meeting.

## **7. Director's and Curator's Report.**

The detailed report, which had been circulated in advance, covered acquisitions,

conservation and collection management, instrument maintenance, publications, educational initiatives, international recognition, teaching and research.

Professor Myers, Director of E.U. Collections of Historical Musical Instruments, warmly thanked the Friends for all their assistance in fund-raising and other personal voluntary activities to support music students, the Hall, and the Russell and Mirrey Collections. He noted the success of the 2008 Doors Open Day, and drew attention to the Friends' contribution towards the three-year funding of a Learning Access Officer (Dr.Emily Peppers) to enable musical education outreach. He also acknowledged the Friends' sponsoring of concerts at the 2008 International Symposium held in St Cecilia's Hall. Professor Myers reported that cataloguing of the Roger Mirrey instruments had begun and that Elly Smith would work part-time on this project during 2009. He was pleased to report that the Music Department website, including St Cecilia's, would continue to be maintained. The University Collections Division has joined in bidding for European funding for further website development.

Lastly Professor Myers announced that the Music Department would present three evening concerts in the Summer term. He asked the Friends to assist

in publicising this venture, in hopes that success would lead to similar events in subsequent years.

Dr Darryl Martin, Curator of Instruments, reiterated sincere thanks for the Friends' efforts. He highlighted their practical help at the International Symposium held to mark the fortieth anniversary of the establishing of the Russell Collection. This conference attracted a galaxy of scholars, researchers, makers, performers and early music enthusiasts.

Dr Martin explained the decision not to proceed with the restoration of the Crang Claviorgan following its full inspection and report which were funded by the Friends. The costs involved would be prohibitive. Moreover substantial funds which had been set aside by the Friends for instrument purchase had not yet been deployed. Despite the attraction of possibly the oldest extant English bentside spinet at auction, the bidding rose disproportionately in relation to its intrinsic value. Therefore the monies remained reserved for a future opportunity to acquire an instrument suited to fill one of the few "gaps" in the Collections.

Dr. Martin informed the meeting that further storage space would be created at St Cecilia's, by conversion of the hallkeeper's flat, to house the final group of instruments donated by Dr Mirrey. It was hoped that the Friends' funds might assist with this project.

## **8. Publications Report**

Presenting the report, circulated in advance, the Chairman commented on the pleasing sales of technical drawings and of Sheila Barnes' Brief Guide to the St. Cecilia's instruments. Transference of the drawings to electronic media had begun. Delphian records would shortly commence recording a new CD using instruments from the Mirrey collection. The website for the Friends had been improved and a new web address introduced: [www.stceciliastfriends.org.uk](http://www.stceciliastfriends.org.uk).

The publications report was welcomed by the meeting.

## **9. Date of Next Annual General Meeting.**

The next Annual General Meeting will be held in St Cecilia's Hall on Saturday, 21st November, 2009.

## **10. Any Other Business**

Professor Kimbell complimented Professor Myers and Dr Martin for their sterling work with the instruments of the Collections and their supportive negotiations with the University authorities. He also thanked the members of the Committee for their service through the year.

The Annual General Meeting ended at 4.15pm. It was preceded by an enjoyable members' social reception, and was followed by an informative presentation by Simpson and Brown, conservation architects, tracing the history of the commissioning, development and varied use of St Cecilia's from the eighteenth century onwards and outlining feasible, historically sensitive ways to improve the Hall's facilities to suit 21st century needs.

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