

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21st November 2009.

**Present:** Martin Hillman (Chair), Dianne Fraser (Hon. Treasurer), Pam Jackson (Hon. Secretary) and twenty-three members.

**The Chairman welcomed everyone** to St Cecilia's Hall and thanked them for their attendance in bad weather.

Before the meeting commenced, the Chairman paid personal tribute to **Penny Carter** who died recently after long and committed service as Hon. Secretary to the Friends. He extended great sympathy to members of her family.

1. **Apologies for Absence** were received from eleven members.

2. **The Minutes of the 2009 Annual General Meeting** were **approved**.  
(proposer: Peng Lee Yap; seconder: Lucinda McKay)

3. **Matters Arising** from the Minutes: **none**.

4. **The Chairman's Report** was **approved**.

(proposer: Dianne Fraser; seconder: Mary Wetherick)

Presenting the report, Martin Hillman expressed his concern over **slow progress towards effective signage** for St Cecilia's Hall, despite the committee's continuing engagement with the University and with the Town Council. He emphasised the recurrent costs which would be involved in erecting and removing temporary banners at three-monthly intervals, including charges for repeat planning applications, but indicated that so far no permanent solution had been found.

He also drew attention to continuing unpleasant aspects of the approach to the Hall via **Niddry Street**.

The Chairman reported on his meeting with Dr. John Scally, Director of the University Collections, to discuss the recent feasibility study for significantly **refurbishing and upgrading facilities at St Cecilia's Hall**. A formal time-scale has not yet been established for such a project, but there will be consultation with relevant involved parties, including representatives of the Friends and of the Georgian Concert Society, before official planning application for alterations is sought.

**Spirited discussion** followed, with members making many suggestions for improving the external impression and internal comfort of the Hall. In particular, there was agreement that the need for permanent signage should be restated strongly, that lighting in the area should be upgraded, and that the appearance of Niddry Street should be substantially transformed, perhaps with a reversion to its earlier, semi-pedestrianised mode by closing off the junction with the Cowgate. **The Chairman undertook to convey these concerns** to the Principal of the University **and to continue to liaise** with the Town Council and with John Scally.

On an encouraging note, the chairman invited Toni Bunch to give a verbal report on progress towards **publication of an updated History of the Hall**, ideally to coincide with celebrations in 2011 to mark the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Friends' organisation. Recent research by Dr Joe Rock would be incorporated. Friends were asked to support the venture by purchasing copies of the new *History* for themselves and as gifts. Since few illustrations of the Hall in its earlier existence have been found, members were requested to contact Toni Bunch with any interesting and relevant visual materials to enhance the book.

## 5. The Treasurer's Report was approved. (proposer: Bryan Wade; seconder: Elly Smith)

Presenting the year's statement, the Treasurer expressed satisfaction at the continuing healthy level of membership numbers and support, particularly in the current straitened financial climate when interest from the Friends' bank accounts had fallen unavoidably. She highlighted **two major projects** which Friends' funds had underpinned: a) staged contributions, over a two-to-three year period, of £5,000 towards the employment of a Learning and Access Educational

Development Officer for Music; and b) the payment of c.£13,000 to cover the costs of fumigation and transportation of instruments given to Edinburgh University by Dr Rodger Mirrey. These instruments now form part of the complete collection housed at St Cecilia's.

The Chairman expressed thanks for the Treasurer's hard and conscientious work over several years.

#### **6. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts.**

The current examiner, **Mr Malcolm Macrae**, had indicated his willingness to continue in that capacity. His appointment for 2010-2011 was **approved**. (proposer: Martin Hillman; seconder: Toni Bunch)

#### **7. Curators' Reports.**

Professor Arnold Myers presented the formal report for the year, covering Collection development and management; teaching, learning and research; and engagement with the wider public. He also reported on successful acquisition of Heritage Lottery and European Union funding. He was extremely pleased to announce that further summer seasons of university concerts were being planned, with the generous financial assistance of Drs George and Joy Sypert who are keen members of the Friends. As his role had recently changed to Chairman of EUCHMI, Professor Myers explained that he would no longer be engaged in day to day management of the music museums, but would continue teaching, research and documentation in relation to the instruments. Hands-on management of the Russell and Mirrey collections would in future be the responsibility of Dr. Darryl Martin and a team including John Scally, Jacky Macbeath and John Raymond. Finally, he thanked all Friends for their continuing loyal support for the aims and activities of St Cecilia's Hall.

Dr Martin responded by sincerely thanking Professor Myers for his care as Director over five years. He re-iterated thanks to the Friends, especially for bearing the costs of transport and fumigation of the Mirrey instruments, for the awarding of student bursaries, and for much practical assistance in guiding and provision of hospitality for public events and occasions at the Hall. Looking ahead, although few "gaps" remained in the historic keyboard survey provided by St Cecilia's collections, if a significant seventeenth century French harpsichord were to become available for purchase, the Friends would be asked to contribute to its acquisition. Alternatively, they might assist in covering costs associated with loans of specific instruments from other collections.

John Raymond gave a detailed and enthusiastic account of the year's conservation and restoration work. In particular, he described the re-quilling of many instruments, replacing the modern delrin which had been a previous substitute. He

expressed thanks to Willie Hendry for sourcing the crow quills to re-voice the 1755 Kirckman harpsichord. John Kitchen's new CD recording demonstrated its colours. The 1769 Taskin harpsichord, having been fully re-quilled through all registers for the first time since the eighteenth century, had been heard in a recent lunchtime performance. The 1764 Hass had also been totally re-quilled, and featured on a new recording by Michele Benuzzi. The 1766 Shudi harpsichord would be brought up to full playing standard in the near future. Additionally, disassembly of the Parker organ and investigation of its pipes had resolved annoying running problems, while accidental damage to some key levers had been repaired. This organ had also been played in public recently.

The written and verbal **reports of the Curators were received with appreciation** by the meeting.

#### **8. The Publications Report was approved.**

Presenting the report, Martin Hillman drew attention to changes in prices for supplying technical drawings related to the increasing cost of their reproduction. Sales of CDs remained strong, and members were urged to support St Cecilia's further by purchasing the latest recordings made on instruments of the collections.

#### **9. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members.**

The current Chairman, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary were **re-elected to office**

**unanimously.**

(prop

oser: Mary Wetherick; seconder: Isobel Lodge)

Raymond Parks, Willie Hendry, Toni Bunch and Anne Leaver were **re-elected**

**as committee members.** Ian Stirling was **elected** to replace Nicola MacRae who

had indicated her wish to stand

down.

(proposer: Elly

Smith; seconder: Dawn Muirhead)

#### **10. Date of next Annual General Meeting.**

The next AGM will be held in St Cecilia's Hall on **Saturday, 20th November, 2010.**

#### **11. Any Other Business.**

The Chairman advised the meeting that, in an attempt to reduce mailing charges, overseas members would be invited to supply e- addresses for electronic receipt of papers for the AGM and /or for *Soundboard*. This received approval.

The meeting heard that Sheila Barnes, though unable to be present, had sent preliminary details of artist bookings and programmes for Edinburgh Festival Fringe concerts at St Cecilia's Hall. It was hoped that a new CD would be launched to co-incide with the Festival.

The Annual General Meeting ended at 4.18pm. It was preceded by an enjoyable members' social reception, and was followed by a meticulous and stylish **recital by Erasmo Estrada**, currently registered for PhD at Edinburgh University, and the recipient of bursaries from the Friends of St Cecilia's. His programme, performed on the 1764 single manual Hass harpsichord from the Russell collection, consisted of works by Haydn, namely the Menuet from Sonata no.28 in D major, Hob XIV: 5/II (c.1765), and the Sonata no.30, Hob. XVI:19 (written in 1767). The contrasts of power and melodic expressivity demonstrated by these works were relished by the audience.