

# AGM 2022

## Chair's Report



### Tom Hammond 1974-2021

It was with shock and great sadness that we learned at the end of 2021 of the sudden death of Tom Hammond. Tom was DSO's conductor from 2011 to 2014 and a lively and influential figure in London amateur music and beyond. Many of us played under his leadership at DSO, and in many other ensembles too, and will greatly miss his commitment, enthusiasm and inspiration.

### Conductor appointment

Last year, I reported that Leigh O'Hara would be leaving the orchestra and that we would be beginning the process of appointing a new conductor. In September 2021, we used the DSO website, on social media and via our networks to invite applications for the post of conductor. We were pleased to receive 32 applications, from which Chris Burns, Ruth Holton and Ally Rosser produced a long list of 11 who sufficiently matched the published criteria to be appointable. From these, the committee collectively identified three candidates to whom we offered the opportunity to conduct the orchestra for a term each, on the basis of which the members of the orchestra would select our new conductor. The three candidates were Chris Stark, Rupert Bond and Dwight Pile-Grey. The third trial term will culminate in our concert on 3 December. Following a final round of consultation, we intend to make an appointment by the end of 2022 and for the new conductor to be in place for rehearsals from January 2023.

### Concerts

For his final concert with the orchestra in December 2021, Leigh O'Hara chose to give a concert performance with narration (by John Flinders) of a large part of the music for Tchaikovsky's ballet *Swan Lake*. This proved to be one of the most popular concerts which DSO has given, with over 200 members of the audience including an encouraging number of younger audience members. It will be for discussion with our new permanent conductor whether we should plan for similar events in future seasons.

The selection process for the new conductor was such that we needed to plan programmes which would as far as possible make for fair competition between the three candidates in terms of familiarity, resources and difficulty. Ruth Holton and our leader, Paula Tysall, rose to the challenge and created programmes which could be performed with the minimum of additional players and which consisted of standard repertoire which was not unduly challenging to play. We are very grateful to them for what was not a straightforward task, but has produced concerts which have been well received by the audience, orchestra members and the conductors. We have also benefitted from excellent soloists, chosen by the candidate conductors. Ellie Corr played the Bruch violin concerto and Molly Oldland Lalo's cello concerto. We are looking forward to working with Adam Heron in Schumann's piano concerto in December.

Throughout the year, the orchestra again benefitted from the advice and encouragement of our leader, Paula Tysall, to whom our thanks are due. Paula led in two of the three concerts, and Chris Burns ably stepped in at short notice to lead (and play a solo) in *Swan Lake* in Paula's absence.

During the summer of 2022, the committee adopted the suggestion that the December concert should be an opportunity to raise funds for the British Red Cross Ukrainian crisis appeal.

## Membership

DSO had 52, 60 and 48 subscription-paying members the autumn, spring and summer terms respectively, representing a return to the level of membership which was usual before the lockdown in 2020 and a considerable increase on last summer's 36.

In addition to the secretary, Tessa Crilly, and treasurer, Liz Cleary, the committee members for 2021-2 were Chris Burns, Julia Hewitt, Ruth Holton, Ishani O'Connor and Ally Rosser.

## Finances

2021-22 was our first relatively normal year after the pandemic. Our main source of income remains members' subscriptions. Income from concerts varied from over £1,700 for the autumn concert to £762 for the summer concert. This variation shows the need for us to publicise our performances and grow our audiences. Expenditure over the year was generally as budgeted. Taking into account accruals and prepaid expenditure, our reserves at the end of the year were down from £7,406 to £5,338. However this figure does not reflect a payment of £4,270 in orchestral tax relief which we expect to receive in November 2022. This is a larger figure than we budgeted for since the Government doubled the rate of OTR in October 2021 in order to assist creative industries affected by Covid. We should also benefit from this higher rate for some of our concerts in 2022-23 as it will be in force until April 2023.

Our financial position is thus secure for the time being. However, the increased rate of inflation will lead to higher charges for many if not all of the things which DSO spends money on in order to put on concerts. As the extent of this becomes apparent, we will need to review the level of subscriptions and the price of our tickets. Our reserves should be sufficient to absorb additional costs in the short term, but it is quite possible that we will present proposals for increases to one or both at next year's AGM if not before.

We thank Leigh Whittingham who once again was the independent examiner for the accounts, and Liz Cleary for her work as Treasurer. At the 2021 AGM, Liz announced her intention to stand down as Treasurer after ten years in the post. During this time, she has managed the finances of the orchestra prudently and efficiently, achieving and maintaining a sound and sustainable basis for the orchestra. Liz was also largely responsible for the creation of Dulwich Orchestral Productions, the production company which allows us to claim orchestra tax relief from HMRC to the extent of several thousand pounds per year. As well as all this, Liz has been a dedicated member of the committee whose contributions have always been on the side of good sense.

## Dulwich Orchestral productions

Dulwich Orchestral Productions Ltd is the company which we set up in 2018 to enable us to claim Orchestra Tax Relief on the costs of putting on concerts. The

The directors are Liz Cleary, Jeremy Crump and Ishani O'Connor. The company's sole activity is to put on concerts for DSO. We received £612.92 in orchestral tax relief in 2021-22, reflecting our limited programme in the previous year, and applied for £4,270 in respect of DOP expenditure in 2021-2.

### Education and outreach

There were no outreach activities in 2020-1, although we remain committed to using the funds (amounting to just over £6,000) from the Philip McKenna bequest to encourage performance and composition of orchestral music in local state schools. A commitment to outreach work was one of the criteria we used for selection of the candidate conductors and we look forward to developing proposals on outreach once the appointment is made.

### Thanks

On behalf of the orchestra, I would again like to thank our secretary, Tessa Crilly, the members of the committee and all those members who have helped in the preparation and presentation of our concerts.

We are grateful to James Allen's Girls' School and All Saints' Church, West Dulwich for continuing to make available facilities for rehearsals and performances.

Jeremy Crump  
Chair, DSO  
24 October 2021