

Chairman's report 28/09/2007

I can summarise our activities for the years as:

- Performing concerts at three venues
- Moving to a new rehearsal venue, Queen Alexandra College
- Representing ourselves at Birmingham Artsfest by manning a stall and performing

...and, attracting several new members to play with us

In a bit more detail, the concerts were as follows. At Christmas we played at Sell Oak Methodist Church in a programme including Mozart's 40th. I for one very much enjoyed playing this, and also listening to the two young singers who performed solos. At Easter we were back at our regular venue of St Mary's Church Harborne with a programme including Haydn's Surprise Symphony, again very nice to play. The highlight of the year for me was performing Beethoven 1 in our summer concert at St Mary's Bearwood. This was a challenge, but we rose to it, and feedback from my own tame audience was very positive. As always we were made very welcome there – they really seem to like having us and we should maintain our links with them.

The move to QAC was forced on us, but has worked out very well. I feel that we enjoy rehearsing here, the acoustic is better, and it hasn't got that dead feeling of the Martineau on a Friday night, even if lack of a bar means slightly less socialising. We did have to get rid of some of our music, but we still seem to be playing good pieces. Overall it seems to have been a good move.

Artsfest was a new venture for us but worked out very well. The stall was in pole position right opposite Kerrang's stage – I don't think my ears have stopped ringing yet! There was steady interest shown and we picked up a whole list of potentially interested players, even including some violists. We performed in the Water Hall – a wind quintet consisting of Ian, Tracey, Chris, Pat C and myself. It seemed to go well though the muffled acoustic didn't help, and the background art was somewhat inappropriate (with luck there should be some pictures on the website for you to judge for yourselves). A fair sized audience came and heard us – thanks to anyone who came along, and to all those who helped man the stall.

Regarding new members, there has been a healthy input of new blood through the year, particularly recently. This is very much for our good, and there seems to be no danger of our getting set in our ways and stagnating. Far from it: I feel that we are progressing as an orchestra and taking on new challenges, as well as still very much enjoying what we do.

A series of thanks are appropriate to underline the contributions everyone has made:

First and most importantly I really want to thank Conductor Pat for another enjoyable year. I have certainly enjoyed the repertoire he has put in front of us, and I sense that

others have too. He has helped us progress as an orchestra by getting us to play more difficult and more extended pieces, and more substantial music. But at the same time he keeps the atmosphere good, so that we look forward to Friday evenings and enjoy working together.

What can I say about Chris? Chris is a real dynamo – I don't know where she gets her energy from. Apart from the usual Treasurer's jobs she has put in a huge amount of work this year, particularly into Artsfest where she did all the liaison with the organisers, got the wind quartet organised, and created a really effective display for the stall. Every week she's reminding me of things I need to do, or actually doing things I should have done – all the bits of documentation that keep you informed about what's going on. Last but not least there is the special relationship with our sponsors Monitoring and Control Services who have put a lot into the orchestra this year! Thanks Chris for everything!

Thank you to Catriona and Teresa for their Librarians' work, which has got more difficult now that we don't have a music store after the move. They also put a lot of work into sorting out the music and deciding what to keep and what to let go.

Thank you to Michael for all his work on the website. If you haven't been there recently, do have a look, as it is very good and shows us off well. Recent new members all seem to have found out about us through the website, which shows how important it is to us.

Secretary Caroline hasn't been able to be quite so involved this year, but it's good to see her back, and it's thanks to her that you have the documentation for this meeting in front of you. Also I believe it was Caroline's suggestion to look at QAC as a rehearsal venue, so we're all very grateful for that.

Thank you too to Leader Chloe (and Ellen for the Christmas Concert) for leading so ably, and for your lovely performance of the Meditation from Thais at Easter. Thanks to the Artsfest flier Chloe is now famous beyond her wildest dreams – though she made the mistake of wearing the same outfit on the stall as in her photo from the summer concert, so now everybody thinks her Mum doesn't buy her any clothes!

Finally thank you to all of you for the effort you have put in throughout the year, in playing, in PRACTISING, and generally in making it an enjoyable orchestra for everyone to play in. Keep it up for another year!

Richard