

CORK ORCHESTRAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1938 by Aloys Fleischmann (1910-1992)

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Prepared for the 2017 Annual General Meeting of Cork Orchestral Society

Thursday 5 October 2017

The 2016 – 17 season offered a superb selection of music, thanks to our Artistic Director Tom Crowley. It started a little earlier than usual which presented a challenge in terms of marketing and promotion and it was a very full year with more concerts than usual keeping the team on their toes throughout the year. Feedback for the quality and choice of our concerts was excellent. Tom, who joined the company Board at last year's AGM, has booked concerts with seasons completed up to 2019 and continues to welcome suggestions from members.

Our investment in the previous season in hiring Paul Veale as part-time administrator paid off in 2016 – 17, with the Arts Council increasing our annual funding in order that he may be kept on. In particular, thanks are due to Tom Doyle, our treasurer, for making a very solid case for this increased funding to the Arts Council as part of our annual funding application. Paul's diligence and enthusiasm in so many areas of our activities are hugely appreciated by the Board and the membership.

With the addition of two more members to the team this year, and a new volunteer for marketing work coming onboard in the coming days, I have included a list of the society's personnel in the handouts for today's meeting. In addition to that list we have seventeen volunteers signed up for the concerts team managed by Hugh.

Work continued during the year on the Constitution which has been developed over the past number of years. A special General Meeting of the society membership was held in December to consider an earlier draft, and members' concerns and suggestions were considered carefully by the Board and the draft changed accordingly. We will have an opportunity to adopt the final draft later in today's AGM and thank you to the Board, and the members who put great thought and time into this document.

Since Allin Gray, who has put in the lion's share of work on the draft Constitution, has signalled that he'll be stepping down from the Board this evening I would like to offer sincere thanks to him on behalf of the Board and all the society's members. In his term as treasurer Allin introduced new levels of transparency and accountability in line with new required practices, and he effected a seamless handover of that role to Tom Doyle. Allin went on to bring a wealth of understanding of company law and a great deal of patience to putting together a Constitution that is fit for purpose in terms of Arts Council and Revenue's Charity requirements to bring us to where we are today.

During the season we piloted online booking and online payment of subs, something we have been determined to implement since the Board took over. It took some time to find a system that would work with our current systems of Box Office and membership discounts, and thanks especially are due to Hugh and Paul for all their work in this area. The online booking is now fully up and running and we are delighted with how it is working for the society, easing queues and giving members

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Directors (Sep 2019): Tom Crowley (chair), Nicola ffrench Davis, Tom Doyle, Ciara Glasheen-Artem, Maria Judge, Pax Ó Faoláin, Joan Scannell

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who have to travel a distance to concerts the assurance of a seat!

We ended the season on a high note with a wonderful concert when Greg Ellis led the Vanbrugh Quartet for the last time. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the special programme booklet which we produced for the occasion, and to the gift with which he was presented. I think we honoured Greg's contribution to the society appropriately.

Our new season got off to a flying start last week, with the Box Office for the Irish Chamber Orchestra concert up significantly on last year's concert, and an increase in membership numbers signed up by the first concert bodes very well for the 2017 – 18 season.

Nicki ffrench Davis
Chairperson
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