

# Annual Report

## Year Ending 31st December 2016

Established October 1999. Charity Registration Number 1082431

Co-Founders and Vice-Presidents:

John A Lennox, Mark Greenfield, Winifred Lundgren

The Executive Committee present their report with the financial statements of the orchestra for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

The Committee met regularly during the year to deal with the necessary business.

### Membership matters

There was a total of 45 members at the end of the year (36 playing members, 4 non-playing members and 5 patrons), compared to 43 the previous year. There are also 6 honorary members.

A number of members left the orchestra during the year: Americo Dos Santos (Clarinet), Kate Dimmock (Flute), Dan Lawrence (French Horn), Victoria Dawson (Violin), Caitlin Williams (Viola). We thank them for their service and friendship and wish them well.

We welcomed the following as new members during the year: Dr. Jim Moodie (Violin), Francesca Sensier (Clarinet), Dr. Layla Buckham (Violin), Rhoda Healey (Violin), Alicia Chadwick (Violin), Rachel Blackhall (Violin), Natasha Males (Violin), Emma Mapplebeck (Cello), Sarah Blackhall (Clarinet), Jasmine Pickering (Clarinet), Rebekah Vickers (French horn).

### Annual General Meeting - Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

As an experiment, the AGM this year was held on a Wednesday rehearsal night (7.30 – 8.30pm), followed by a shorter rehearsal. This proved successful, with a doubling of numbers attending.

The format will be followed in the future.

The existing committee members were re-elected and Dr. Chris May re-appointed as auditor. Membership fees for the forthcoming year were increased to £96.00 for a playing member (£63.00 for students); non-playing members (friends) and patrons fees were held at the same level as for the present year (£30.00 and £60.00).

### Performances

Concert programmes continued to offer different themes and to feature orchestra members in the soloist role.

The **March concert** featured orchestra member Cristina Tyley playing the *Adagio* from *Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A major*. The **Summer concert** featured music to commemorate *The Battle of the Somme* with guest choir *Voices Together*. *Tunes from the Trenches* and *The Nineteen Twenties* were specially purchased for the occasion. A video presentation, which complemented the music of *Tunes from the Trenches*, was shown during the playing.

Orchestra member, Phil Jackson (trumpet) sang two baritone solos, which he had arranged specially for orchestral accompaniment. The programme also included Phil's own arrangement of a medley of songs by *The Beatles*.

The **Autumn concert** was entitled *For Queen and Country*, and celebrated the year in which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II attained her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Soprano soloist was Teresa Dewhurst.

The **Christmas Concert**, entitled *Festive fun for families and friends*, was designed to be attractive to younger people and children. Guest singers were the Middle School Choir from the local independent school, Argyle House, with their musical director (and music teacher) Teresa Dewhurst. A dance scene, by the children, was included during the playing/singing of *The Snowman*.

The orchestra extends grateful thanks to the visiting musicians who played in each concert, when there were otherwise vacant desks.

## Other musical activity

In December, nine members of the orchestra provided accompaniment for the Christmas Carol Service of the Monkwearmouth Christian Fellowship, in their church at Fulwell. (Eight members provided this service last year).

## Musical Director

Paul Judson has continued to provide entertaining and original programmes for the enjoyment of the audiences. Paul frequently re-writes or arranges parts to make the music more attractive to both players and listeners, and has been able to fill vacant desks at concerts through contacts he has elsewhere in the musical world.

Paul was unable to direct the Christmas concert owing to his wife being admitted to hospital unexpectedly. A friend of the orchestra, experienced musician Alan Price, stepped in at short notice and took the final rehearsals and the concert. Many thanks to Alan for his help.

## Civic involvement with the orchestra

Councillor Barry Curran, last year's Mayor of The City of Sunderland, showed such enthusiasm for the orchestra, that the Town Hall authorities have agreed that civic patronage of the orchestra can be ongoing, subject to the personal approval of each succeeding Mayor. We are greatly honoured by this, and have welcomed the present Mayor, Councillor Alan Emerson as Honorary Patron for the duration of his year of office.

## Newsletter

Two editions of the orchestra's newsletter were again produced during the year. These were distributed to interested parties and are available for viewing on the web site.

## Financial matters

The orchestra still has difficulty in finding a major sponsor, and all grant applications for funding towards running costs were unsuccessful.

The **Sunderland City Council** once again supported the Society through the '**Community Chest**' with a grant for the purchase of music stands, music desk lights and music storage bags.

In addition to a number of financial donations, (including an anonymous one of £2,000.00) the orchestra has been given a **Clarinet** and a **Violin** during the year. These are greatly appreciated.

Following an experiment at the March concert, the committee decided to continue with a **raffle** at each performance. This idea was put forward by our secretary, Joy Lowther, who has arranged the obtaining of prizes and for the organisation on the day. This has proved financially beneficial, and thanks are expressed to Joy and the helpers who sold the tickets.

A number of **redundant assets** were disposed of, by sale, during the year.

**Local businesses** are to be approached with a view to obtaining direct sponsorship, donation of raffle prizes, display of posters etc. Thanks to committee member Lynne Dakers for organising this.

## Future of West Park Church (As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016)

An offer to purchase the building has been accepted by the church authorities, subject to the prospective purchaser obtaining permission to change the use of the building, and subject to English Heritage approving the requested alterations to the fabric.

Negotiations with the owners of West Park and with the prospective purchaser have resulted in the orchestra being allowed to continue in residence, and to use the building for subsequent concerts. We are very grateful to both parties for this.

The committee continues to explore alternative venues, should the need arise to re-locate.

## Publicity

Publicity has improved, with details of concerts being included in the 'Vibe', on 'Seeitdoit Sunderland', on 'SunFM' and eventually in the 'Sunderland Echo'.

Prior to the Christmas concert, the orchestra's chairman gave a short live interview on *Radio Newcastle*.

The orchestra's **web site** has continued to be a popular source of information with the public.

The '**Facebook**' page continues to receive much acclaim for the quality of photographs and the video clips. Many thanks to Lloyd Watson for his work and enthusiasm in maintaining this site.

The committee approved the production and distribution of a **flyer** for city-wide distribution, with the aim of increasing membership of, and promoting knowledge of, the orchestra. We give thanks to orchestra member Sophia Pearson who designed the flyer. Part of the design is now being used as a logo for the orchestra, and fifty per cent of the cost was met through a private donation.

**Inserts** were placed in the programmes of two concerts, outlining the financial position of the orchestra, and inviting sponsorship of individual pieces of music or regular contributions by way of bank standing orders. Positive results have been obtained, with a standing order having been set up and the cost of a number of pieces of music already met. Thanks to the donors for their support.

#### City of Sunderland Music Link Officer

A link was established with Rebecca Pedlow, the City of Sunderland Education Music Link Officer, to explore ways in which the orchestra and the Local Authority could work together to progress the musical education of young people in the town. Discussions are ongoing.

#### Cultural Spring/City of Culture 2021/Arts Council funding initiatives

Links have been established with personnel from these groups with a view seeing how the orchestra can be involved, in the work being undertaken to engage with the public, regarding music in the city.

#### Thanks

The Orchestra once again extends grateful thanks to all the people and groups who have supported its activities over the past year. The volunteer help given by so many is greatly appreciated. Special thanks must be given to the orchestra's Honorary Members, members of West Park Church, and family members of orchestra players, who look after most of the 'back stage' work associated with running the concerts.

David E Mills, Joy Lowther, Brian Naisby,  
Peter Chapman, Kathleen A. Mills, Lynne Dakers.