

York Chamber Music Festival 2024

Annual General Meeting 20th January 2025

Present: Stuart Lowe, Alison Gammon Jill Shepherd, Stella Waller, Ray Walker

Absent Robert Gammon, Tim Lowe

Agenda

Apologies for absence

Chair's Report/discussion

2025 YCMF

Artistic Achievement

Thanks to Tim the festival attracts players of international standard so we continue to bring world class chamber music to York. The septet version of *Metamorphosen* last year was truly awesome. This year the level was equally high and I make no apology for including here the unsolicited email from Charles Martindale which does reflect what people told me face-to-face and on email.

Dear Stuart,

My friend and former colleague, David Hopkins, Professor of English emeritus at the University of Bristol, and himself an accomplished amateur musician (with a son who was principal cello in the National Youth Orchestra!), told us he had never enjoyed chamber music playing more (and he has heard most of the top groups in the world). In addition to the choice of programme and other excellences (what amazing pianism, for example) he was struck by the extent to which this was genuine chamber music playing - not a group playing to an audience so much as one listening and responding to each other and fully drawing the audience into their conversation. And the playing had such fire, panache, spontaneity, and sense of enjoyment, beyond what one normally encounters even in a good live performance, simply stellar. We sent them back to Bristol highly contented.

Please congratulate and thank Tim for doing this so generously for York.

We are already looking forward to next September.

All best wishes,

Charles

(Professor of English, University of York)

This message does confirm our aim to bring the highest quality of chamber music to York. We are continuing to work on the 2025 programme (see Appendix A)

Audiences/ticket sales

We had good size audiences but the venues are not full and there is scope to build on our loyal core of supporters given the quality we provide. We have built the email list embedded in Wix to over 500 people. We checked for duplicates and bogus addresses and found very few that were inactive or problems.

Ticket sales were slightly lower than last year. We sold 470 tickets (£8,030) The discounted Festival pass certainly had an impact and is worth keeping now the NCEM box office can deal with it. 35 Passes were issued; 36% of sales.

Website and Publicity

The website continues to be managed technically by Ashley McGovern (Red Bonsai). He also designs the flyer and deals with printing. He designs the posts. He does a limited amount of social media outreach. Many thanks to him.

All the text on the website, the posts and all the programme notes are written by me on a voluntary basis.

I took an 'executive decision' to give up printing concert programmes because the costs were becoming prohibitive. We lost money in 2022 by selling at £1. But I have had quite a few plaudits for the free 'Two sides of A4 notes' which are summaries and key points from the website. Quite a few people had printed out their own from the pdf on the website. I note that the Liverpool Phil also hand out an A4 sheet, (rather uninformative, just basic information)

Blog posts

The occasional blog posts connected to the programme are also popular. Wix analytics show big upticks in people lingering on the website after these are published and a definite impact on ticket sales nearer the festival. They do seem to engage people with the concert series in the months in the build up to the festival.

- We are gradually building the Wix email list. There were 40 new sign ups via the website since the 2023 festival. Perhaps we should be more proactive on this? A large percentage of tickets are bought by people on this list.

Other cost savings were from not advertising in the Ryedale Festival brochure or 'Visit York' saving about £750. My sense of it is that we didn't lose out on ticket sales because of this. Our flyers covered Ryedale events, NYMoors and were distributed around town and at the Unitarian Chapel. We were circulated on the Chapel's lunchtime concerts email list and round the Central York Churches newsletter We were mentioned in the NCEM newsletters. We were belatedly mentioned in the Minster pew sheet.

- We should discuss our outreach strategy. Several people commented that for the standard of music being produced why weren't the halls full up? This is a good question.

Players and their fees

Fees for the festival artists went up by £100 compared to last year. Magnus Johnston also charged VAT. The players arrived in York on Wednesday lunchtime and rehearsed until 7.00pm. On Thursday they rehearsed from 9.30 to 7.00pm. We took them for supper in town each day. The concert days also involved rehearsals before the events. There were a lot of notes played during these five days, especially for the violinists who played in everything. Tim played in both lunchtimes. They seemed to enjoy their visit to York, being

hosted by us and our hospitality. Players of this standard would normally charge more than we could afford for five days and willingly came to us. Great many thanks to them for producing world-class chamber music. “ *...their playing had such fire, panache, spontaneity, and sense of enjoyment, beyond what one normally encounters even in a good live performance.*” I think this says it all.

Ticket Sales Income

Ticket income was £8,030. This was a shade lower than last year but a big advance on 2022 (25% improvement). It accounts for 51% of expenditure and if we can improve on that next time much the better. The discounted ‘All Concerts’ pass was a success (36%) of income.

After last payment for 2024 festival there is **£13,025.00** in the bank to carry forward to 2025 as a reserve.

Audience size

I wonder whether this is a metric worth mentioning. We do need a reasonably accurate account for the Charity Commission, Public Liability Insurance and as a measure of how we are growing or not. Basically each concert has a tickets sold number from the NCEM Box Office but added to this are all of us volunteers, stewards plus occasional friend and relatives, journalist, a few people by invitation.

- This all added up to over 520 in the audiences over 5 events. Cross referencing names I can see that quite a few people came to two or three events and of course the 35 ‘All Concerts Pass’ holders who probably came to everything. The point is that we have a core of about 60 people most of whom come year by year. Some festivals with many more financial and administrative resources than us offer special treatment for sponsors and annual donations. Could we do this? Our core come because they love the music... while the Harriet Trust continue their support we are solvent and are building a reserve in the bank. We have improved our audience numbers year on year.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Event audience numbers

Event One: 49 sales of single seats, 35 ‘All concerts’ passes. We sold 10 seats for cash at the door and there were 8 free tickets for the stewards (3) and 5 for our other volunteers. So the whole audience was 103 (including page turner).

Event Two: 56 single tickets, 35 passes, NCEM stewards (5?), YCMF volunteers (8), a journalist, Ashley McGovern and his wife came at our invitation and a few children with parents. So at least 110 can be accounted for and that seemed about right with 120 seats out.

The same logic for Events Three and Four.

Event Five at St Olave’s on Sunday afternoon there 67 singles, 35 passes, sold 17 for cash on the door and 6 were our stewards and volunteers and Rev Kingsley Boulton. 126 total.

The total for audience numbers was about 517 over the five events. We need to know this for Insurance purposes and as a measure of how we are doing compared to previous years.

Appendix 2

Ticket sales 2022 - 2024

	2022	2023	2024
	£	£	£
Tickets	5,765	7,800	7,395
Cash sales	840	575	635
Total	6,605	8,375	8,030

	n=	£
Single tickets	248	4,790
Pass (35)	175	2,625
Door	47	<u>635</u>
Total		8,030

Appendix 3

The 2025 programme

The 2025 programme will be launched at a cello recital on March 12th 7.30pm at the NCEM.
Tim Lowe and John Lenehan

Programme

Beethoven Cello Sonata in D major, Op. 102 No.2

Bloch Three Pieces from Jewish Life

Rachmaninov Sonata for Cello and Piano in G minor, Op. 19

YORK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL 2025

EVENT ONE

Friday 19 September – 1:00 – 2:00pm £15

Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate

Cello recital

Tim Lowe (cello) and Katya Apekisheva (piano)

Schumann *Fantasiestücke*

Glasunov- *Elegie*

Glasunov -*Chant du menestrel*

Brahms Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 2 in F major, Op. 99

EVENT TWO

Friday 19 September – 7:30pm £20

National Centre for Early Music, St Margaret's Church

Concert by Festival Artists

Charlotte Scott, Jonathan Stone (violins)

Hélène Clément, Gary Pomeroy (violas)
Jonathan Aasgaard, Tim Lowe (cellos)

Haydn String Quartet Op. 76 No.5 '*Largo*'
Shostakovich String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, opus 110
Schoenberg String Sextet *Verklärte Nacht* (Transfigured Night) Op. 4

EVENT THREE

Saturday 20 September 1:00 – 2:00pm £15
Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate

Viola recital

Hélène Clément (viola) and Katya Apekisheva (piano)

Frank Bridge Two Pieces for Viola and Piano: *Pensiero and Allego Appassionato*
Shostakovich Sonata for Viola and Piano, Op. 147
Rebecca Clarke Sonata for Viola and Piano

EVENT FOUR

Saturday 20 September 7:30pm £20
Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York

Concert by Festival Artists

Charlotte Scott, Jonathan Stone (violins)
Hélène Clément, Gary Pomeroy (violas)
Jonathan Aasgaard, Tim Lowe (cellos)
Katya Apekisheva (piano)

Schubert Notturmo in E Flat, Op. 148, D. 897
Schumann Piano Quartet in E flat major, Op. 47
Tchaikovsky Piano Trio in A minor, Op. 50

EVENT FIVE

Sunday 21 September 3.00pm £20
St Olave's Church, Marygate Lane

Concert by Festival Artists

Charlotte Scott, Jonathan Stone (violins)
Hélène Clément, Gary Pomeroy (violas)
Jonathan Aasgaard, Tim Lowe (cellos)

Mozart String Quintet No. 1 in B flat major K174
Brahms String Quintet in G major, No. 2 Op. 111

NOTES

York Chamber Music Festival 2024

Account

EXPENDITURE

Red Bonsai (PR and Website etc)

Website design/links to NCEM box office etc

2,000 flyers/100 posters /design/printing

Blog posts on website and via Wix

Some Social Media/Twitter

Sub-total 1,720 (inc VAT)

Miscellaneous

Hotel (Bar Convent)

154

Piano tuner

180

Public Liability Insurance

301

Alison's catering

119.33

Betty's token for Ridge

50

Double-side programme copying

100

Meals out (Old Siam 301.44) (Prezzo £298.05)

599.49

Parking

58.60

Sub-total 1,562.42

Venues

Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall

500

NCEM (concert hire)

420 (inc VAT)

Unitarian Chapel

400

(2x days rehearsal; 2x lunchtime recitals

St Olave's Church

100

St Bede's (rehearsal space)

61.50

NCEM Box Office @10% of ticket sales

887.40 (inc VAT)

Sub-total 2,368.90

Players fees

Magnus Johnston

1,572.40 (inc VAT)

Ben Hancox

1,310.94

Gary Pomeroy

1,300.00

Simone van der Giessen

1,340.00

Marie Bitlloch,

1,300.00

Tim Lowe

1,666.20

Sam Coles (Flute)

350.00

Andrew Brownell (Piano)

1,300.00

Sub-total 10,139.54

Total expenditure

15,790.86

INCOME

<u>Ticket Sales</u>	£
Tickets via NCEM	7,395
Cash at the door	<u>635</u>
	8,030
Donations via website	213
Refund from NCEM	150
Sub-total	<u>8,393</u>
 The Harriet Trust	 <u>10,000</u>
Total Income	18,393
 Balance of income less expenditure	 2,602

State of Bank Account

After last payment for 2024 festival there is £13,025 in the bank to carry forward to 2025

	2022	2023	2024
	£	£	£
Tickets	5,765	7,800	7,395
Cash sales	840	575	635
Total	6,605	8,375	8,030

Notes:

Ticket income from tickets was 51% of expenditure

We sold 36 'All concert passes' for £2,700 (36% of sales)