

Principal Musical Director's Review of the Year October 2021

Before the new academic year had even officially started, Dark Peak was off the starting block with a frenetic programme of activities, heralding the beginning of a new chapter in our story.

Having barely drawn breath from our online Summer Celebration Concerts and the Young Musician of the Year, we were into our first ever Summer Music Camp. Funded by the Bureau Wellbeing Fund, 30 young people from across of our age spectrum enjoyed playing together, learning circus skills, samba drumming and the crazy "Dark Peak Olympics". And when the heavens opened on the last day (putting pay to our planned open-air performance!) Rachel Whibley set up a full-size cinema screen and they were treated to an impromptu private viewing of "Wallace and Gromit in Concert". The whole thing was such an uplifting experience that we resolved to run similar events every two years.

This was followed almost immediately by a "House-Warming" reception to mark our move to the Victoria Hall. After 20 happy years at Bradbury House, we were sad to leave, but looking forward to the excellent rehearsal facilities of the new venue, as well as playing a more prominent role in the broader picture of arts development in the town. Some of our senior players provided musical interludes for a champagne reception attended by the Mayor of High Peak, Councillor Paul Hardy and representatives of the Friends of Victoria Hall and Glossop Creates.

Now, five weeks into the year, all our ensembles are thriving. We feel very at home in our new rehearsal studio at the Victoria Hall, with much more space, ample storage facilities and a great acoustic to practice in. We are also back to a full programme at Glossopdale School, which gives us plenty of space for distanced rehearsals for our strings, orchestra and chamber groups. All our ensembles are back to their pre-pandemic configuration and preparing for the Christmas performances on December 12th, the Octagon Concert on 8th April and of course the big event of the year, Poland 2022. A whole generation of players has moved on and new players are rising to the challenge of leading roles, but amazingly many of our ensembles are actually larger than they were.

This year we have launched two new initiatives, each extending opportunities to different age groups. Mini Music is a parents and toddlers music class run by Helen Parkes on Tuesday mornings at Bradbury House. It builds on our successful Dalcroze Eurhythmics classes (run by Emma Dixon) to engage children at an even earlier stage in their musical development. We see this as an investment in the future of music education in the area, giving children grounding in basic musical skills prior to playing instruments.

At the other end of the age-range we have started the Dark Peak Light Orchestra – an ensemble for players of all ages and standards, extending our activity even more into the wider community. The community orchestra is a set up as a free-standing organisation with its own funding stream so that there is no conflict with our educational purposes for school-age children.

In the spring we are delighted that Carl Raven will be running a Big Band project leading up to a performance in the Octagon concert. This will be open to all instruments and levels and builds on the innovative ideas developed through the Biggest Big Band online projects.

Whilst we are aiming to be economically thrifty, Dark Peak has a policy of investing in the future of music in the area. Through our Joint Instrumental Development Strategy with Derbyshire Music Partnership, which we are currently reviewing, we aim to play our role in preparing the ground for a healthy music education scene in the years to come, working with the Music Partnership to build on good practice and to increase opportunities for children to learn instruments and play together.

The past two years have been tough, but we are thrilled to be back and as strong as ever. The pandemic has tested the resilience of many organisations and I am so pleased that we have passed the test with flying colours. As a relatively new organisation we have never been afraid to evolve and react to changing circumstances, often breaking new ground and regularly reviewing our practices as the educational and musical scene changes.

The pandemic has shown us the importance of teamwork and creating an environment where everyone's creative strengths can be maximised. It has shown us what a talented and creative team of directors we are so lucky to have, each bringing their own specialisms and diverse professional back-story to the organisation. It has shown us how important it is to have strong leadership. Our trustees under the professional guidance of Andy Zuntz have given nothing but positive support, whilst always emphasising the need for flexible planning to ensure everyone's safety and well-being. It has shown us how vital it is to communicate and to keep everyone engaged, providing activities in whatever form and by whatever means possible.

But above all we have come to realise more than ever how important it is to play together – to be part of something bigger than ourselves – and why we enjoy working with young musicians so much; their enthusiasm, dedication and the support and encouragement they give to each other is the most crucial thing which secures this music centre for future generations. When we come to look back, this period will be seen as a time that brought out the best in everyone and I would like to thank all involved, directors, tutors, trustees, parent helpers and most importantly the children for their support and dedication.

Music is important not just as an entertainment or pastime. It is not just about passing exams or having an impressive CV. In the evolution of mankind, it was never a luxury to indulge the better off – although it may seem to have been hijacked at some points in history by society elites. I believe the instinct of music evolved early in human development as a vital form of communication, a means of transmitting culture from one generation to another, a bonding social experience and a way of enjoying each other's company through shared expression. It enables us to grow and develop as individuals. It is a visceral

communication which goes deeper than the verbal, and as such music speaks to everyone, audience and participants alike.

As we look forward to the next chapter in the story of Dark Peak Music Foundation we should carry with us the lessons from this difficult period and redouble our efforts to provide the best we can for our young people, whilst also extending the enjoyment of music to the whole of our community.

Jeff Snowdon

October 2021

DARK PEAK MUSIC FOUNDATION
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS SUMMARY 2020/21

Income and expenditure for 2020/2021

INCOME		
A	Subscriptions	11554.00
B	Theory/Supertonic	917.00
C	Ticket Sales	1175.00
D	Grants/Donations	13781.75
E	Gift Aid	2636.25
F	Fundraising	255.41
G	Other	584.81
H	TRIP	1268.00
I	Total (Sum A to H)	32172.22
EXPENDITURE		
L	Directors/Administrator Fees	27302.70
M	Venue/Storage	3952.05
N	Supplies/Merchandise	1720.81
O	Misc	954.65
P	TRIP	3915.00
Q	Total (Sum L to P)	37845.21
SURPLUS		
R	Surplus on Year (I minus Q)	-5672.99
V	Trip Account Balance (H minus P)	-2647.00
	Year Surplus/LOSS(-) Excluding Trip (R minus V)	-3025.99
BANK POSITION		
	Opening Balance	46752.39
	Closing Balance	41079.40
	Surplus	-5672.99

In summary, there was an expenditure of £37,845.21 against an income of £32,172.22. Within these figures is the balance for the Poland trip.

Taking this into account, The Foundation made a loss of £3,025.99. Fortunately, last year's surplus of £3,197 has assisted with this year's loss. However, this isn't a sustainable situation.

We are grateful to our members for their subscriptions in another difficult year and to The Derbyshire Music Hub for their continuing support, financial (£12,380) and otherwise.

It is recommended that the AGM Notes and Accepts these Accounts.

“In my opinion, the annual accounts for Dark Peak Music Foundation, (charity number 1167654), give a true and fair view, in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice, of the state of affairs of the charity as at 31st August 2021 and of the income and expenditure of the charity for the year then ended”

Guy Hurst FFA

24th March 2022