

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2022

This is the Chairman's Report for the Chopin Society's Financial Year ending 31st March 2022, as well as the Artistic Director's Report.

I will try and keep it as short as possible, because many things concerning this year had to be mentioned in the Chairman's Report for the Year 2020-21, which was read at the AGM which took place in November 2021. Held so late because of Covid restrictions, this was the first opportunity the Society had to actually hold a live meeting rather than one by correspondence, as we had to do for the Year 2019-20.

Because there was virtually nothing to say about 2020-21, as the Society had been completely dormant during that time, I had no choice but to talk about things concerning this Financial Year – which was, of course, the year of the Society's 50th anniversary.

The concert for May 21 with Melvyn Tan at Hatchlands Park, the June Gala at Strawberry Hill with Angela Hewitt, and most of the Celebrity Series we had planned had to be cancelled, but we were very lucky in that the 50th Anniversary Gala at Wigmore Hall planned for 17th October 2021 was able to go ahead.

In 2018, John Gilhooly OBE most generously offered us the Hall for a celebration in 2021, and with his encouragement we went ahead with it. Attended by our Royal Patron, HRH Princess Alexandra, HRHN The Duke of Kent and the Earl of St. Andrews, as well as our Honorary President Murray Perahia and his wife, the event was as big a success as we could have hoped for.

We started with 80 tickets at a special price of £100 to include the Reception, but were able to increase this number to 130, and the concert was a total sell out.

We also had enough Patrons and Advertisers to virtually cover the cost of the complimentary glass of champagne for everyone in the interval, the Reception and the printing of the Gala Programme, as well as Alec Cobbe's design for the programme cover.

Once the final £500 advert has been paid for – thanks to John Gilhooly donating not only the Hall but the Box Office too, and the artists giving their services – the Society will have made a profit of £23,297.

Our grateful thanks go to John Gilhooly and the Wigmore Hall for their wonderful generosity, to the artists Gemma Rosefield and Nicola Eimer, Joanna Mac Gregor, Martin James Bartlett, Lucas Krupinski and Piers Lane, and to the Patrons and Advertisers for supporting the Society in this way, as well as to those who gave extra support by buying the £100 tickets, and indeed, to all our members and Friends who came to the event.

The concert was also a great artistic success, as everyone played exceptionally well, pleasing even the great Murray Perahia! All the pianists will perform concerts in the following year; indeed some have already done so.

The first event presented by the Society following lockdown was actually the Members' Matinee held in July 2021 at Petersham Lodge, thanks to Princess Josephine Loewenstein.

There was no difficulty in finding the audience and pianists, and it was a particularly happy afternoon.

The 50th anniversary Celebrity Series meant to start at the beginning of 2021, actually kicked off on 21st November with Piers Lane. I had been concerned that we might have problems getting audiences for our subscription concerts, but need not have worried. Piers had a very good house, and audiences have been growing steadily as we progress with concerts.

In January, the 2021 Leeds International Piano Competition winner Alim Beisembayev played for us, unsurprisingly to a very full house, then in February Joanna MacGregor CBE gave one of the most interesting programmes we had had. She was followed by the great Stephen Kovacevich in March, and Martin James Bartlett played with amazing style in April.

The May concert has proved to be problematic. We had engaged a former Leeds winner, a wonderful pianist, Anna Tsybuleva, to play. But as she is Russian and coming from Russia, many of us thought that because of the Ukrainian situation it would be the right thing to cancel her concert.

I wrote to her agents Knight Classical to cancel, and said that because of the situation it would displease many of our Members if she played. I even questioned whether she would turn up. The agents emailed to say that we would have to pay her fee of £2,000 anyway. As we cannot afford to pay 2 artists' fees in one month, I replied at the end of March to say in which case we would not cancel her concert, but that we could not guarantee it would pass without unpleasantness, and we even doubted that we would get an audience. We actually had another excellent pianist to replace her, but I did not mention that.

We heard nothing from the agents, so after 10 days went ahead and printed the Newsletter with Anna Tsybuleva's name down for the May concert. I told the other pianist that we did not need him now but would engage him later.

Then, a month after I sent my email, the agents sent a very disagreeable email, personally offensive to me, saying that Tsybuleva was cancelling her concert with us, but they still expected a cancellation fee of £2,000. I replied that there was no question of us paying that, and was extremely grateful to Valentin Schiedermaier for agreeing to play at 2 weeks' notice.

We can discuss this matter later in the meeting.

We also had a problem with the June concert, as Westminster Cathedral Hall is closing all Summer to refurbish the kitchen and we had to find another venue. As we have used it before, we decided to hold Ian Fountain's concert in the Princess Alexandra Hall at the Royal Over-Seas League premises in St. James's. As the hire is expensive, we have had to charge for this concert, but do hope our Members will come, as at £12 (with tea, coffee and cakes) this is good value.

In March we also held a Members' Matinee at Leslie MacLeod-Miller's flat in Carlisle Place. This is of course an ideal place for these events and over 70 attended. Leslie is a perfect host and the tea was spectacular, so many thanks to him.

A Members' Matinee is being held at Petersham Lodge on June 19th, and is already over-subscribed.

Following the Summer break, as the Hall will still be unavailable, Professor John Rink from Cambridge University will give a talk about his experiences on the Jury at last year's Chopin International Piano Competition in Warsaw at Ognisko Polskie on 25th September. We hope to return to Westminster Cathedral Hall for Gemma Rosefield & Nicola Eimer's concert on 30th October, and this will be followed on 20th November by Lucy Parham with Dame Harriet Walter and another actor in a programme about Chopin and George Sand.

I am also hoping that Lucas Krupinski will start off 2023's concerts. Then all the Wigmore Hall Gala artists will have performed a concert for us.

Further artist for 2023 will include most of those who were scheduled for 2020 and had to be cancelled due to Covid 19.

The Society also plans to organise some concerts for young artists at Steinway Hall. These will have to take place on a weekday evening and will be organised by our Assistant Artistic Director, Adam Repa.

This is part of a plan to do more for young pianists, and it will also enable us to give slightly fewer concerts with top level professionals, which are expensive to put on. This year's concerts with the Celebrity Series have proved to be particularly costly and 2023 will have to be more carefully budgeted.

As mentioned in the most recent Newsletter, we have lost valued Members and Supporters of the Chopin Society this year.

Yvonne Clarke, a distinguished musician, was one of our most loyal long-term Members, as was Gillian Miller, who had been a Member of 10 years and whose membership runs to 2023.

Halina Silinicz was a Member of the Chopin Society from its earliest days and an invaluable Committee Member when I became Chairman. Together with the Wittmans, Denis Dumbreck and Margaret Caven – all now gone – she was someone who could always be relied upon. She remained on the Committee almost to her 90s, and died one month short of her 100th birthday.

Sir John Craven was not a Member of the Society, but for several years hosted Members' Matinees at his house in Eaton Square. A former Director of Reuters and the Deutsches Bank, amongst many other distinguished positions, he was a brilliant man, a great music-lover and a kind and congenial host. We were very sorry to hear of his death.

I have just also heard of the death of Sarah Richardson who was a Life Member and joined many years ago.

In my last Chairman's Report, I had to mention with sadness the resignations of 8 Committee Members, due to ill health, re-location, or too many other commitments. Since then, Roger Press has also resigned from the Committee.

However, at this meeting we hope to vote on 4 new Members, who I know will be very helpful.

Vice President Deniz Gelenbe has a nasty accident when she was hit by a motorbike while out walking. She was hospitalised for some time, but is now recovering at home, where I visited her.

We looked at an online property website and saw there was a ground floor flat for sale immediately under the “Chopin” flat at 99/97 Eaton Place – the building where Chopin performed in June 1848 and in which the Society has always taken an interest, hoping that it could one day be acquired for a Chopin Museum.

I went to see the flat and recognised the possibilities it presented, so immediately wrote to the Polish Minister of Culture, Piotr Glinski, and the Director of the Chopin Institute, Dr. Artur Szklener, who had both written to me to express their interest and support for the project. We know that the Polish Government has a large budget that they are prepared to direct towards things related to Chopin and his heritage, but I am still waiting for a reply.

It would be wonderful if they are really interested. Certainly there is not much point in acquiring the “Chopin” flat, without also having the flat directly below it, and if the Polish Government doesn’t react now, of course, someone else will buy it. In which case the whole idea will have to be scrapped.

I hope that we will not have to relocate from Westminster Cathedral Hall in the near future, but one can see that a complete refurbishment is needed, so it is not out of the question. In which case there are quite a few possibilities we can look at.

In any case, 2023 will be a year where we rethink the activities of the Society and its future.

Meanwhile I would like, on behalf of the Chopin Society, to say a particular thank you to Secretary Gillian Newman, who has worked so hard on bringing in audiences – with great success. Also to Angela Delbourgo the Treasurer, who has also hosted Committee Meetings and has come up with so many good ideas.

Almost every Member of the Committee deserves a special mention, but I have been told to be brief. So a very big thank you to all of them, to Steinways for its continuing support and to Westminster Cathedral and Peter McNulty for allowing us to use the Hall. And also of course to John Gilhooly of Wigmore Hall.

The Chopin Society (London) – Registered Charity No.271562

Income & Expenditure for Main Chopin Society A/c at Lloyds for Year Ending 31 March 2022

Balance at Bank on 31 st March 2021		10,048.23
<u>Add INCOME</u>		
Subscriptions	6,350.00	
Concert Income	2,574.57	
Members' Matinées (2)	1,206.00	
Mailings	135.00	
Advertisement in Newsletter	700.00	
Merchandise, Sale of special music stand	2,460.00	
Donations	1,570.00	
Miscellaneous	93.00	
Wigmore Hall 50 th Anniversary Concert	41,967.50	

Paid into Main A/c during Year Ending March 2022	57,056.07	57,056.07

		67,104.30
<u>Less EXPENDITURE</u>		
Venue Hire (including £2040 for hire of ROSL in June)	3,260.00	
Artists' Fees (larger than usual because of 50 th Anniversary)	11,300.00	
Post Office, Printing & Stationery	1,956.97	
Steinways voicing & tuning	1,182.60	
BAFM Membership & NFU Insurance	470.00	
Lark Piano Insurance not incl. in accounts owing to RC paying by credit card	-	
BT	799.59	
Secretary's Honorarium (for year, reduced from £14,000)	10,000.00	
Artistic Director's Honorarium & Office Rent (for year)	4,000.00	
Website & Computer	339.95	
Extra Help & Cakes	304.00	
Adoption of Chopin Pleyel Piano at Hatchlands	1,000.00	
Marek Ostas Honorarium	1,835.00	
Miscellaneous	328.19	
Advert	24.00	
Wigmore Hall Gala	19,170.00	

Total Expenditure paid out of Main A/c in Year Ending 31 st March 2022	55,970.30	55,970.30

Balance in Main A/c on 31 st March 2022		11,134.00

The Chopin Society (London) – Registered Charity No. 271562
Income & expenditure for Main Chopin Society Account at Lloyds
for Year Ending 31st March 2022

Income for Main Chopin Society A/c for Year Ending March 2022
Beside Income for Year Ending 31st March 2021

	2021-2022	2020-2021
Subscriptions	6,350.00	3,462.50
Concert Income	2,574.57	-
Mailings	134.00	-
Members' Matinées	1,206.00	-
Advertisements	700.00	-
Donations	1,570.00	500.00
Merchandise, Sale of special music stand	2,460.00	-
Miscellaneous	93.00	-
Wigmore Hall 50 th Anniversary Gala Concert	41,967.50	Not Applicable
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	57,056.07	3,962.50

Between March 1st 2020 and 17th October 2021 the Society was dormant, hence the lack of entries for Income 2020-2021. Activities were resumed after the 50th Anniversary Gala on October 17th 2021.

A £40,000 allocation was made from the Gala A/c in the year 2019-2020. No allocation was needed therefore in 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 was further boosted by profit of £23,000 from the Wigmore Hall Gala.

An allocation has since been made for the year 2022-2023, not included in these Accounts.

The Chopin Society (London) – Registered Charity No.271563

Income & Expenditure for Main Chopin Society A/c at Lloyds
for Year Ending 31st March 2022

Expenditure for Main Chopin Society A/c for Year Ending 31st March 2022
Beside Expenditure for Year Ending 31st March 2021

	2021-2022	2020-2021
Venue hire (the £2,000 was for concerts held in the previous year)	3,260.00	2,000.00
Artists' fees* (No concerts were held in 2020-21. The £1,000 was for the previous financial year)	11,300.00	1,000.00
Post Office, Printing & Stationery (not incl. Wigmore Hall Gala)	1,956.97	1,099.34
Steinways voicing & tuning	1,182.60	129.00
BAFM membership & NFU Insurance	470.00	452.00
Lark Piano Insurance* (£198.05 not included in accounts)	(198.05)	252.37
BT	799.59	1,099.14
Secretary's Honorarium (halved in 2020-2021, reduced in 2021-2022)	10,000.00	5,250.00
Artistic Director's Honorarium & Office Rent (reduced in both years)	4,000.00	3,000.00
Marek Ostas Honorarium	1,835.00	-
Extra Help	304.00	660.00
Website & Computer	339.95	571.92
Accounts Check (2021-2022 still owing)*	-	-
Adoption of Chopin Pleyel Piano at Hatchlands	1,000.00	-
Miscellaneous	328.19	88.99
Advert	24.00	46.27
Wigmore Hall Gala	19,170.00	Not Applicable
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	55,970.00	15,899.83

*The artists' fees for 2021 and 2022 are much higher than usual. This figure of £11,300 is for just 4 concerts. This is because we are holding the 50th Anniversary Celebrity Series this year, as we had to cancel it in 2021. Funds were raised in 2018 for the 50th Anniversary. These were spent on the Wigmore Hall Gala and the Celebrity Series which continues until the end of 2022. Thanks to funds raised at the Wigmore Hall Gala, we have not needed to boost funds with an allocation from the Gala Account during the year. The Lark Piano Insurance was paid for with the Artistic Director's credit card and will be paid for by the Society. The Accounts Check cost of £250 is also owing and will be paid in year ending 31st March 2023.

The Chopin Society (London) – Registered Charity No. 271562

Income & expenditure for Gala A/c at Lloyds
For Year Ending 31st March 2022

Balance in Account on 31 st March 2021		169,250.44
<u>Add INCOME</u>		
Subscriptions	65.00	
Wigmore Hall Gala	100.00	
Concert Income	78.00	
Members' Matinées	28.00	

Paid into Gala Account Year Ending 31 st March 2022	271.00	271.00

Balance in Gala Account 31 st March 2022		169,521.44

All Income items should have been paid into the Main Account and will be transferred there in the coming financial year.

The Chopin Society (London) – Registered Charity No. 271562

The Chopin Society Gross Income for Year Ending 31st March 2022

Main Chopin Society Account Gross Income	57,056.07
The Chopin Society at St. Nicholas (Gala) Account Gross Income	271.00

Chopin Society Gross Income	57,327.07

The Chopin Society Expenditure for Year Ending 31st March 2022

Main Chopin Society Account	55,970.30
The Chopin Society at St. Nicholas (Gala) Account	Nil

Chopin Society Total Expenditure	55,970.30

Balance in Main Chopin Society Account on 31 st March 2022	11,134.00
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Balance in Gala Account	169,521.44
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The Chopin Society owns assets to the value of approximately £115,000, including a Model B Steinway, a letter of Chopin's, a pastel portrait of Chopin, several valuable medals and other items.

16 Newenden Road
Wainscott
Rochester
ME2 4NJ

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have examined the attached financial statements.

In my opinion they appear to show a true and fair view of the state of the
Chopin Society's affairs as at 31st March 2022.

Yours faithfully,

B Hepplewhite
15 June 2022