

MINUTES

The Berlioz Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Berlioz Society,
held on Monday 19 September 2011, at 7:00pm in the Art Workers Guild,
6 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, London WC1N 3AT

Present:

Alastair Aberdare	David Cairns	Rosemary Cairns
Celia Clarke	David Elliot	Tony Fathers
Christopher Follett	Brian Godfrey	Jim Hart
Charles Harvey	Elizabeth Hughes	Harold Hughes
C G Ives	Simon Jones (notes)	Robert Keer
N Jiménea	Shelagh Marston	Dave May
Dorothy May	Helen Petchey	Martin Price
Adam Ridley	Estelle Russell	Sheila Van Santen
Rosie Yacobi		

David Cairns opened the meeting by paying tribute to Ian Kemp, a fine Berliozian, who had passed away that week. An appreciation will appear in the Bulletin.

Harold Hughes took the Chair, at David Cairns' invitation.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Diana Bickley	Margaret Bond	Adrian Brown
Jonathan Burton	Michael Copeland	Mike Drake
Linda Edmondson	William Edmondson	Terry Heard
Suzanne Hinton	David Lass	Jeanne Pingree
Christopher Price	Sylvia Saunders	Geoffrey Warde
David Winter		

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM, HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2010

2.1 The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous AGM.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 Sir Adam Ridley asked about the point raised at 4.10 concerning methods of payment, and suggested variable direct debit. This allows the payable amount to be altered by the Society, and could be useful as increases in subscriptions could be implemented automatically.

3.2 Alastair Aberdare had looked into different methods of payment and several alternatives were now offered on the subscriptions form. Members can now pay

by online transfer, and Dave May has looked into the feasibility of online payments through agents such as Paypal.

- 3.3 The Society is open to options and can look into this at a future Committee Meeting.

4 TREASURER'S REPORT

- 4.1 The Society's finances depend on a small number of variables: subscriptions and donations; Bulletin publishing; the outturn from the Weekend; advertising and promotion costs; and what reserves it feels it needs to keep.
- 4.2 For 2010, the income from subscriptions and donations had risen, but that from Gift Aid had dropped. Other income had been artificially inflated by donations to the Colin Davis LSO Appeal (which were then immediately paid out to the Appeal) and the one-off sales of library items. Expenditure covered printing of three Bulletins (payment for only two issues had fallen in 2009). At the end of the year the Society had made a surplus of £240, with free funds of just over £5,000.
- 4.3 The accounts for 2010 were formally adopted by the meeting.
- 4.4 For the 2011 accounts, the heading "other events" has been changed to "ticket offers, etc". Membership income has risen, mainly due to the increase in subscription fees. The costs for printing four Bulletins will fall within 2011, at about £800 per issue. Advertising and promotion costs are low this year, but will increase in 2012 with the Covent Garden "Trojans" (with accompanying Prom) and performances of "Roméo et Juliette".
- 4.5 As a result of the successful financial outcome of the 2010 Weekend, the Society should emerge from 2011 with a surplus, taking the reserves to something over £6,000.
- 4.6 Sir Adam Ridley asked whether the Society's funds are earning interest. They are not, but conversely Coutts charge no fees.
- 4.7 The Art Workers Guild charges a reasonable fee for use of the premises.
- 4.8 Harold Hughes led the meeting in thanking Alastair Aberdare for all the work he had put in to maintaining the Society's financial records.

5 SECRETARY'S REPORT

- 5.1 The first of the Society's activities since the last AGM had been the Society Weekend on the subject of Shakespeare and Berlioz, which was very successful. As well as many fascinating talks on aspects of Shakespeare performance in Berlioz's time and the composer's response to the plays, focusing on Romeo and Juliet, it included a staged performance of Lelio which made a powerful impression.

- 5.2 In May, Christopher Follett organised and led a one-day walk around Berlioz-related sites in Central London. This started in W1 where a group of over 30 members were shown round 58 Queen Anne Street. Berlioz stayed here in 1851 in connection with the Great Exhibition. The walk finished in Covent Garden, by the Royal Opera House.
- 5.3 In late June Sir Adam and Lady Ridley hosted a summer meeting at their home in West London, focusing on the Liszt Bicentennial. David Cairns gave a talk on the friendship between Liszt and Berlioz, which had lasted over thirty years, and in the afternoon Christopher Follett presented and played CDs of piano transcriptions of Berlioz works by Liszt. The weather was splendid and the Ridleys' hospitality superb as always.
- 5.4 The Society returned to the Festival Berlioz at La Côte Saint-André in August. It was a triumphant success and members were really well received by their contacts in the town. Harold Hughes and Christopher Follett organised the visit which involved 18 members, who mainly stayed in the town this time. Members came and went over the ten days of the Festival. Harold and Christopher liaised with the Festival Berlioz organisers and helped participants with concert tickets and hotel accommodation where needed. A visit round Berlioz sites was kindly staged by the local Tourist Office and the group was given a tour of the Musée Berlioz by Antoine Troncy, the deputy curator, following a mayoral reception in the garden. The Society plans to go back next year, and is looking at the feasibility of a visit to Berlioz's Nice in Autumn 2012.
- 5.5 Membership currently stands at 217, a net increase of four since the last AGM. Eleven new members had joined, and seven had left.
- 5.6 Most members are UK residents, but there are 29 members in the United States, 19 in Europe and 8 elsewhere.

6 ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR

- 6.1 The existing Committee were willing to serve for the next year, with the exception of David Lass who was stepping down. Sir Adam Ridley had expressed his willingness to join the Committee.
- 6.2 No other nominations being received, the Committee was elected, as follows.
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|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Chair (and editor of the Bulletin) | David Cairns |
| • Treasurer | Alastair Aberdare |
| • Secretary | Simon Jones |
| • Media Manager | Christopher Follett |
| • Website Manager | Dave May |
| • Membership Liaison Officer | Martin Price |
| • Ticket Offers | Helen Petchey |
| • Committee Member | Harold Hughes |
| • Committee Member | Shelagh Marston |
| • Committee Member | Brian Godfrey |

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 No notifications had been received. Harold Hughes invited items from the floor.

7.2 Helen Petchey said that the coming Society Weekend, on Berlioz's Sacred Works, is now fully organised. 22 members have signed up so far.

7.3 Shelagh Marston announced the dates for the 2012 Weekend which will be 3 and 4 November. Harold Hughes invited suggestions from any members for topics for future Weekends.

7.4 Jim Hart asked whether the starting time for the Saturday could be put back an hour to 11 am, as people coming in to London might have to pay for an extra night in order to be near the venue. Harold Hughes replied that the committee would consider this suggestion, but stressed that the inevitable reduction in content of the Weekends, for all attending, would have to be recognised.

7.5 The Society had decided to arrange a Study Day immediately preceding the first performance of the ROH's forthcoming production of *Les Troyens* in June 2012 and had arranged a distinguished panel of speakers (including of course the Society's Chairman). The Day would be open to Society Members but also, importantly, the public, especially ticket-holders. With this in mind, and through Alastair Aberdare's excellent contacts, a meeting had been held where he and Martin Price, for the Society, had met (Lord) Tony Hall, the ROH's CEO, and its new Opera Director, Kasper Holten, to propose that the Day should be held jointly with the ROH. The proposition had been enthusiastically received and further meetings were planned. Ideally the ROH would provide the venue, but if this proved impossible other options were available; they would also assist with publicity. The Day would help introduce people to Berlioz and thereby promote the Society as well. The meeting congratulated Harold Hughes and Alastair Aberdare on a brilliant idea.

7.6 Harold Hughes will investigate the possibility of another visit to the Festival Berlioz at La Côte Saint-André next year, and will write to members when details of the Festival programme become available. The provisional dates for the Festival are 20 August to 2 September, and the subject (again provisional) is "Berlioz, Italy and the Mediterranean". Alastair Aberdare said the last visit had exceeded his wildest expectations, and Sir Adam Ridley thanked Harold Hughes, upon whose initial vision and work all these visits were built.

7.7 Sir Adam Ridley announced he will be happy to host another Sunday meeting at his home next May.

7.8 Christopher Follett will look into the possibility of organising a walk in Nice, ideally linked with an opera or concert performance, in the Autumn of 2012.

7.9 Jim Hart reminded the meeting that Gergiev will be conducting two performances of the Grande Messe des Morts in St Paul's Cathedral in July 2012.

7.10 Sir Adam Ridley asked whether the Society had made any contacts with the French Institute, or any other French organisations. Harold Hughes said that David Lass, and Alastair Aberdare, had tried to make links with the French Institute but had not had any specific responses. Alastair Aberdare has also contacted the Franco-British Society, but with no positive result yet. Shelagh Marston had spoken to Christian Wasselin of Radio France at the Festival and he is very keen to establish links.

The meeting concluded. After a break, members were shown a DVD recording of the first British performance of the Messe Solennelle under John Eliot Gardiner, from October 1993.

