



Minutes of the Special Committee meeting held via a Zoom conference on 23 April 2020 at 7.00pm

Participating: Tessa Cox (Chair); Siân Rees; David Roberts; Ian Smith; Peter Snelling; Jeremy Hopkinson; Julia Dickens; Susanne Minocha; Vanessa Skelton (minutes secretary)

Action

1 Apologies and welcome

Tessa welcomed members to the second committee meeting via Zoom. There were no apologies.

2 Re-scheduling concerts in the light of current circumstances

Tessa had circulated an email from the Chair of the Milton Keynes Chorale concerning possible dates for the joint performance of *Dream of Gerontius*. There was discussion about forthcoming concerts for 2020 and 2021, in particular the pros and cons of the *Gerontius* concert taking place on 23 May 2021, the date MK Theatre had suggested for the concert to MKC, including:

- There had been no response to Peter's many efforts to get in touch with The Grove to pursue the *Carmina Burana* idea for November 2020.
- There was now a fair possibility of the Choir being unable to commence full rehearsals again until January, given both outside circumstances and the demography of the members.
- The Choir had already got the items for the Vivaldi concert well rehearsed – this would only need 'revising', so if we performed this concert in Spring 2021, followed by *Gerontius* in May, there would be plenty of time for more work on the *Gerontius*, with then five weeks to prepare for a June concert.
- There was the possibility of 'note bashing' rehearsals taking place via Zoom – the last Zoom rehearsal had shown good promise. The Chorale would probably start rehearsing *Gerontius* on-line very shortly – we could do the same.
- Julia reported that she had the *Gerontius* scores, though in fact we had ordered too many – many members had their own copies.
- There was a possible issue as to whether sales for three concerts in quick succession would be feasible. However, the Choir's financial position was strong, so a loss might not be so serious, and there was the fair possibility that many of the Choir's supporters would be very pleased to see us back in action and would be happy to buy tickets – the prices could be lower than normal.
- Putting the spring concert back to February might make the sales stronger – but there was the counter-argument of the prospect of a chilly church and even of having to cancel at the last minute because of winter weather.
- While ideally it would be better to have the joint concert back in its old November slot, the signs from the Theatre in recent years had indicated they were unlikely to offer this.

It was agreed:

- the planned November 2020 concert should be cancelled. **Julia** would cancel the *Carmina* scores that were on order.
- The December carol concert should be left as a possibility for the time being.

Julia

- If the only date forthcoming from the Theatre was the 23 May 2021, we would agree to this.
- **Tessa** would inform the Chair of MK Chorale of the Danesborough thoughts on concert rescheduling.
- **Tessa** would inform the Choir of the deliberations so far.
- **Julia** would hang onto the Elgar, Vivaldi and McDowell scores until things became clearer.

Tessa
Tessa
Julia

3 Financial Report

Peter had circulated his latest budget to the committee. It showed a surplus for the year of around £9000.

There was discussion as to whether subs should be returned. Peter said this would cause many problems with the tax position – a better way forward would be to offer lower subscriptions for next season. The exact amount should be agreed once the programme for next year could be finalised. The question of the sponsorship from Nevilles was raised – returning this would also be complicated. **Tessa** would discuss the situation with them directly.

Tessa

Peter reported he had given a donation of £200 to Aspley Guise Village Hall – their position was extremely difficult given their total loss of letting income, and of their usual fundraising methods (Open Gardens etc). The secretary of the Village Hall committee had expressed sincere gratitude. Peter felt the position should be revisited in the Autumn.

He confirmed that he was proceeding with setting up the new bank account as required now the Choir's Charitable Status had been changed. He felt it was time to change the signatories on the account, and proposed the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, together with David Roberts (Peter occasionally needed a signatory who lived close by, for signing cheques quickly). This proposal was agreed unanimously by the committee. He also confirmed that the account would be operable online – this had been proposed some time ago, but once it became apparent that a new bank account would be needed, he had decided to leave setting up the online account until it could all be dealt with together.

Ian said he felt it would be advantageous to pay for the 'professional' version of Zoom – he intended to discuss this with Peter.

Ian

4 Any other business

- The matter of Sarah and Jonny's wedding was discussed. It was of course unclear if it could go ahead – even if it does, the social distancing measures that would then be in place were unknown at present. A suggestion of making a recording for them was discussed – it was difficult to make any firm plans about this until more was known about the easing of lockdown restrictions.
- **Ian** reported that he was only aware of one member who had had the virus, but he believed she was now recovering.
- No-one else was aware of any other members who were unwell.
- **Tessa** had received enquiries as to obtaining the music for **Ian's** Monday evening sight-reading sessions which he was running for the Bedford Choral Society but had invited Danesborough members to join. He said that it would be best if those members who wanted to join in contacted him and he would email the music as required
- It was agreed that a meeting of the Programming Committee should take place in the near future – **Ian** said it would suit his schedule best if it could be in about a month's time.