



Phoenixsingers

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – 2019-20

I began my report to the Annual General Meeting last year by saying 'this has been a year of significant change for Phoenix Singers'. With hindsight and in the present circumstances, perhaps I overstated what is part of the normal change and development of the life of a choir. Now we are in an abnormal environment in which it is not really possible to second guess the future. We all have our views of course, but most of them are based on a mixture of emotions, opinions, hopes and fears.

Geoff Lavery has written about the curtailed 2019-20 season from a musical perspective and there is no point to be gained by my repetition of what Geoff has written. I would like to build on it though.

As an individual I dislike spending time regretting what might have been, and I have no problem letting go of past things to move on to new ones. In that spirit, I have avoided reflecting on the things that have not happened but were planned, except where doing so helped focus thoughts on people who may be in unfortunate circumstances brought about by the pandemic induced restrictions on our lives.

Geoff referred to our decision to do our best to support those who had been contracted to sing with us last Easter; we are in touch with them and where we can we will prioritise the use of those musicians whose bookings in the summer and at Christmas have had to be cancelled. Professional musicians are among many people badly affected by COVID-19 and that is why we must be grateful to our Treasurer and his predecessor for running the Society's finances with healthy reserves.

It is likely that when we are able to perform again, some of our usual supporters, programme advertisers and sponsors will not be able to be as generous as in the recent past. Our reserves should make it possible for us still to be able to engage professionals and put on concerts and plan a forward programme with confidence.

The five year plan of concerts that we had agreed has been disrupted. The Committee will reorder it once we know how the future looks, but until that is clearer we cannot speculate about what will happen or in what order.

Those are supposed to be positive comments!

As we unwound the arrangements for the Easter and Summer concerts the Committee and I were gratified by Members' generosity which showed real



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commitment to the organisation. First of all, most people who had paid for concert tickets for Saint John Passion converted them into donations; not content with that, when offered a refund of summer term membership almost no one took up the offer. The completion of the hat-trick came when most of the Friends renewed their commitment to our work with the Primary School children by renewing their subscriptions. To all involved in those acts of generosity, thank you.

Thanks are due to our tireless Music Director, Geoff Lavery, for his enthusiasm and confidence in us as a Choir. He has kept in touch with many members who have wanted contact during the last six months and that has, I am sure, been valuable in human terms.

Additionally, thanks to my Committee colleagues for all aspects of their work for and support of Phoenix Singers.

We must trust in the future and wait for the day when we can do what the mythical Phoenix did, coming forth from the ashes, more beautiful than before. COVID-19 is serious, it is a challenge and it is frustrating but it need not be a long term disaster or the death knell of a society like this.

William Glasse.
Chairman