**Cambridge University Music Society**

**Away Morning – Old Combination Room, Wolfson College**

**Saturday 3rd February 2018, 10.00 – 13.00**

**Minutes**

Present: Adam Phillips (AP), Chris Lawrence (CL), Isaac Barkway (IB), Laura Alexander (LA), Ed Liebrecht (EL), Ellen Berry (EB), Chloe Davidson (CD), Katharine Ambrose (KA), Helena Moore (HM), William Barnes-McCallum (WB), Tom Else (TE), Naomi Woo (NW),

## Apologies for absence

1.1 Sam Barrett, Lawrence Wragg, Edward Reeve, Alice Greenwood

## 2. Report on Questionnaire to CUO and CUS

* 1. KA and CD reported back some of the statistics:
* 92% thought the balance in repertoire this year in terms of ambition and realism
* 88% enjoyed their time socially.
* only 1/47 said they wouldn't recommend CUMS to a fresher next year.
* 59% said it was important for them to work with a famous conductor they might not have a chance to play with again.
* 57% like the current balance between the styles of conductors and the repertoire played.
  1. CD reported that she thought these were very positive responses considering CUMS is trying to do a lot of things for a large number of people.
  2. A questionnaire after the CUO Mark Elder concert that AP conducted showed that almost exclusively players enjoyed working with Mark Elder even though he worked them very hard.
  3. The current model of a more pedagogical-style conductor such as Sian Edwards at the beginning of the year, then a world class conductor mid-year, then someone who leads from an instrument later in the year works well.
  4. CD said more 20th century music can be incorporated into next year’s programme.
  5. Approaching and fixing people earlier on needs to be addressed (see section 4)
  6. The social side of the orchestras could be helped by having a social event before rehearsals start in Michaelmas. A tea and biscuits session, for example. Encourages everyone to get to know each other. For this to happen a room big enough for the whole orchestra needs to be booked in advance. **Action: each president for the following year needs to book a room in June**
  7. There was the suggestion of having a formal for each ensemble each term.

## 3. Discussion of performances outside Cambridge and “varsity” projects

* 1. ER was approached by Oxford Music Society about organising a joint concert between them and CUMS. This had mixed reception in the room. While it would be fun, it would take significant organisation. It would also be difficult to find a time to do this (having two days during term-time is not feasible, hard to organise peoples’ availability in vacations.) A logistically easier way of doing this would be if each orchestra took half of the concert. However, players wouldn’t get to play with the other university’s orchestra which raises the question of what is the musical point of a joint concert. It was thought that we need to concentrate on planning a concert on our own outside Cambridge before a varsity concert.
  2. Perhaps there could be a social event that encourages both university orchestras to meet each other instead
  3. Other possible venues to take CUMS outside of Cambridge are Snape Maltings, Birmingham Symphony Hall and London
  4. It was acknowledged that we have successful tours but with professional support our summer tours could be more ambitious. Chris suggested it would be good if CUMS could perform in a prestigious concert hall such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.
  5. The Choirs are very keen to join CUMS in a performance outside Cambridge.
  6. **Action: realistic organisation of the orchestra going outside of Cambridge for 2019/20 (CD)**

## 4. Report on the running of ensembles, restructuring and “self-management”

CUO and CUS

* 1. More organised management of committees is needed to spread out the work.
  2. Potential reason for lack of help from orchestras is there is a big CUO/CUS overlap of players so perhaps they don't feel so invested in the ensemble. (However, there are plenty of other players in each orchestra who are only in the one orchestra who could help)
  3. CUWO has a great committee and is working very well.
  4. AP reported that finding some jobs such as social secretary and section reps are easy to find in CUO. Roles like stage manager are very difficult. He often has to result to confronting someone to do the boring jobs
  5. CD said each committee should aim for 7 people even if they don’t have official titles and they should have meetings. This will allow the President to call on them if he/she needs help and when discussing programming and other important decisions for the orchestra.
  6. IB reported that perhaps the committee is formed too late in the term when people have already committed to other things. All agreed that it would be better if committees were appointed in Easter term (CUWO already does this and it works well). IB raised that the orchestra isn't fixed at this point. However, these would only cause a couple of alterations to be made in the following term, rather than having to find a whole committee. CL suggested putting feelers out for who might be interested on being part of the committee earlier on in the year.
  7. We need to generate excitement for being part of committees. A possible way is having elections for the roles. Even if the roles are uncontested it will generate interest.
  8. Having a document defining the roles of members of committee would be helpful and make it more likely people will want to help. **Action: IB and AP to write such a document together to ensure unity across the orchestras. EB could perhaps help with this.**
  9. Timescale of finding committees: CD suggested during the week of the last concert of this term (Lent). This can be at the same time of president elections. Then, if various people want the president role they can all be given committee positions.
  10. NW suggested the principle players of each orchestra could have a role within the committee assigned to them because they are principle players.

CUCC and CUCM

* 1. Having presidents for these ensembles is useful and is working well.
  2. Having one/two extra people designated to help each ensemble would be useful additions.

**Action: KA**

NME

* 1. Need to have a president.
  2. Judith Weir concert was badly attended concer. by students
  3. EL spoke that there is a lot of NM being performed in Cambridge, but few get healthy audiences.
  4. There was a suggestion of incorporating a student composition into each CUMS concert, even just a 4/5-minute piece.
  5. It would be good to have a separate fixed lunchtime concert for NME. **Action: CD**

General

It would be nice to have blogs written about concerts and being in CUMS ensembles. Perhaps a blogger can be recruited in each committee for each ensemble.

## 5. Discussion of the auditions and fixing process

* 1. This year there was confusion over which players were offered what. A simpler and more efficient way would be if just one person fixes the orchestras rather than four people. Oneperson will be paid to do this for two days. CD used to do it - two days is enough. KA is likely to be the most suitable person to do it this coming year.
  2. More preparatory work can be done prior to auditions to reduce stress over the audition weekend
  3. Phone calls will be made to players saying their designated position in an ensemble with details of the concerts they will play in (mostly likely during the Sunday evening of the audition weekend) This will be followed up with an email with all the protocol, which they will be asked to reply to and accept.
  4. Joe Cowie wrote extremely thorough notes about how to do the auditions. This should be read and taken notice of when planning next year’s auditions. As Joe’s notes confirm the role of the auditions manager is crucial and this year’s manager didn’t fullfill the role. We would like this role to be taken by a student who has been at the auditions before but they do need to be prepared to do the whole role.
  5. Google sheets would be a useful medium for arranging orchestra lists and audition times.
  6. There needs to be a sign in the faculty over the audition weekend that tells players to keep their phones on and be available to talk to during the period that phone calls will be made. In addition, students manning the desks can mention to each prospective player as they leave the building.
  7. **Action: ER to recruit the auditions manager in Easter term. IB, TE & KA to prepare the spreadsheets for the orchestra list**

## 6. Report on Performance Review

6.1 CD gave a summary: The university requested a performance review, being led by the school of Arts and Humanities with Martin Millet heading it. There is a panel of stakeholders and independent professionals to look at extracurricular performance in the university and also the Music degree and performance in the Tripos. The Performance Review has been going on for about a year, and we are now at the end of it. A final draft has been submitted which goes to the board in May with a list of recommendations.

The main recommendations that have been made:

* 1. A more centralised performance office comes into being called the Office of Musical Performance supporting extra- curricular performance throughout the University.
  2. Governance of this Office hasn't been finalised but the board should include stakeholders, including a representative of CUMS, a representative of the Faculty of Music, a representative for the Colleges and External professional advisors.
  3. CUMS would benefit from support by CUDAR.
  4. The report has requested that student ensembles have more access to West Road Concert hall and that practice rooms are available for non-music students
  5. The faculty is planning to create more space in the Cudworth room so that CUWO and CUO (Chamber) could perform there. **Action CD will keep the committee updated**.

## 7. Discussion of three-year plan and long-term ambitions

* 1. CUMS ensembles to give concerts outside Cambridge- London, Snape Maltings, Birmingham Symphony Hall
  2. Hoping for more practice rooms. These practice rooms will be available for booking by non-music students as well as music students. Proposal of music students being able to book rooms a longer period in advance than non-music students.
  3. An online booking system for practice rooms would be very helpful.
  4. CL thinks it is great that Cambridge is moving towards developing better communications
  5. New concert hall, with stage and audience capacity, similar to Saffron Walden
  6. CUMS will keep students at the heart of the society, maintaining its entrepreneurial spirit. The office is to support that.

## **8. Discussion** of CUO and CUS rehearsals

* 1. CUO sectionals. It would be more useful to have upper and lower string sectionals rather than full string sectionals
  2. Players need to be have learnt parts before the main week of rehearsals for CUO/CUS concerts. Proposal of having one full rehearsal two weeks before, a sectional rehearsal one week before, then the full week of rehearsals. This would give scope for more social events and good moral amongst the orchestra.
  3. Better planning of bowing of string parts. Currently it varies between each orchestra and concert. Some conductors give bowed parts (like Mark Elder), others don’t. A suggestion that the section leaders take responsibility for bowing their parts, and they coordinate these with the leader of the orchestra.
  4. There was discussion over having concerts with a canonical large work like a symphony in the 2nd half of a concert, and the first half of the concert could include a more obscure work. The Tom Poster concert was very successful
  5. It was commented that the CUS Elgar concert in Michaelmas was too difficult for CUS- This would be a very good CUO programme
  6. CUWO would like CUMS to organise coaching from professionals (-They have two organised for this year but this was done by themselves). CUWO don't currently hold sectional rehearsals. This could be useful. **Action: CD and KA**

## 9. Any other business

* 1. It was agreed that Management Committee meetings happen the right number of times in a year.
  2. It was agreed that committee members could be involved in one meeting in the year- the second one of Michaelmas. A bigger room for this will be needed. **Action: LA find a bigger room that would be suitable for this.**
  3. CD reported back on recent CUMS competitions. They were very successful. Fantastic level of candidates. The audition panel thoroughly enjoyed listening to them. The final of the Concerto Competition will be on Tuesday 13th February.
  4. The CUMS Social Event will be a dinner held on the evening of Wednesday 14th March. **Action: LA to confirm venue**
  5. Many thanks to ER for his preparation for this meeting and to AG for putting together the CUMS questionnaire.