**CHAIR’S REPORT**

Following the easing of the lockdown restrictions we planned a full festival for 2022 in our new time slot of late January and early February and launched the syllabus in September 2021. We also planned to hold our usual full week at Fairfield during the late May school holiday but, discovering that All England Dance had, as a result of the pandemic, switched their qualifying years from the even-numbered years to the odd-numbered, we replaced some of the days of that week – which had been booked with Fairfield in October 2019 – to include our Choral classes, final of the Concerto Competition and hold a Gala Concert.

In early October 2021 we received the payments from the very generous Geoff Shaw bequest and, on the advice of Geoffrey Lawrence, invested a sizeable proportion of those funds into 2 CCLA managed investment funds. At the same time entries were beginning to arrive for the festival but the ease of progress was suddenly side-tracked by the unexpected resignation of Bridget. This brought into truly sharp focus the fact that the strength of our non-committee structure was also our failing and that we had relied upon Bridget too much and had little understanding of the ways in which things worked nor where necessary information was stored. This disruption to our understanding of matters forward looking was further disturbed by a brief, but very concerning accusation of falling foul of money-laundering regulations, which demanded 2 days of anxious activity on my part to solve.

Bridget had been a tireless servant of the festival and a truly impossible act to replace, and we thank her profoundly for everything that she has done for us. However, as everything was in place, we had no alternative other than to continue somehow. Despite the enormous upheaval and little knowledge of where to find information, we managed to keep on track, and I would like to thank everyone who helped me in that concerning and stressful time. In the process of having to learn new ways of implementing the set-out plans for the 2022 Festival we have learned new ways of working for going forward. Likewise, we are currently working upon new definitions of Membership and the opportunities attached to Membership.

It is clear to all that the 2 weekends at Royal Russell were a resounding success in all aspects – save the very concerning complete lack of entries for South Asian Music - and using the coffee-shop facilities at the school simply aided the atmosphere and greatly helped our expenditure in relation to previous years, as well as being conveniently located within the PAC building thereby avoiding cold transitions out to the previous coffee-cart location. We also added some prize-money awards – funded by the investment income - instead of trophies and attracted some conservatoire students to our Coleridge-Taylor class by offering a substantial money prize and a Fairfield appearance. The final of our Concerto Competition was held at Fairfield and included 4 outstanding performances. The jury, which included LMP members, chose the oboe player and, as a result, Chris Vettraino will be playing the Mozart Oboe Concerto with the LMP on January 21st, 2023, and will be a very worthy representative for us. During August 2022 I held meetings with the new team at the helm of LMP with a view to strengthening and expanding our partnership, initially by developing our ideas for involvement within Croydon’s London Borough of Culture events.

As regards the May/June week in Fairfield we were now left with nobody to run the intense Dance section, as Liam had, for very understandable reasons felt that he could not assist us as we had hoped. However, Pushpa accepted the task of organising the colourful South Asian Dance section. The Choral section, which we scheduled at Fairfield, included a healthy group of school choirs, one of which had never performed outside of their school before. We, therefore, with great and valuable help from the Fairfield staff, decided to run just 3 days there, and. although volunteer help was very limited, we created a very positive atmosphere within the events and certainly received very strong and very positive feedback from everyone after the highly successful and very exciting array of musicians, actors, and dancers, of all ages, in the Gala Concert on June 4th. As a result of that we also spent our hefty non-refundable deposit lodged with Fairfield and broke even over the 3 days, despite the disappointing support from Members.

In March, Julia Desbruslais, following her retirement from her position within the London Mozart Players, found that she was spending a lot of time in Cornwall and would not be able to devote sufficient time to CPAF matters so offered her resignation. We thank Julia for what she has done for us and am pleased that her LMP successor, Flynn Le Brocq, has agreed to stand for election as a Trustee.

In July, the Trustees met to reassess the process of moving forward and we agreed to run the 2023 Festival at Royal Russell similarly, and to include the South Asian Dance, run a Choral section slightly later, and continue with the idea of a Fairfield concert of selected performers during late May. Therefore, the festival in 2023 will be at Royal Russell School on January 27th-29th and February 3rd-5th, while the Choral section will be held at Croydon Minster on February 11th with the Gala Concert in Fairfield Halls on May 28th.

I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for their support and wisdom and, on their behalf, thank the volunteer helpers and, especially, Liza, Barry, Judith, and Chris Harman for the hours that they helpfully spent with me at both Royal Russell and Fairfield Halls. I also wish to thank Ophelia for, yet again, her irreplaceable and unfathomable knowledge concerning the website administration, entry system and all matters beyond my limited comprehension in computing. Finally, an important thanks to our auditors for their invaluable help in preparing the accounts, the mysteries of which are far beyond my own comprehension and, as a result, I would like the membership to focus upon the very urgent need for acquiring a Treasurer as a matter of some immediate importance.