



Croydon Performing Arts Festival 2020 Annual Reports

Chairman of the Trustees

The year, 2020 will, for everyone everywhere, go down in the memory for years to come: CPAF was not exempt in any way.

Our host, for music and speech, Royal Russell School closed down earlier than elsewhere; so, unknowing of the severity of the pandemic, Bridget and I spent several hours building links with alternative venues. In due course, however, the whole festival, in all locations, had to be abandoned without a “ball being bowled”!

From this confusion, though, some heartening moments arose. We have now built relationships with alternative venues in central Croydon, which we hope to use, in addition to Royal Russell School, in the future. We also were very touched by the generosity of our performers who donated part, or all, of their entry fees when offered refunds. We were also touched by the responses from booked adjudicators and accompanists who acknowledged that CPAF was one of a few festivals that had fulfilled its professional obligations by paying cancellation compensation, rather than simply falling back on the *force majeure* excuse. Our dance adjudicator suggested that, in lieu of compensation, we set up a monetary award from 2021 for a senior dancer to use towards tuition costs. We have decided that this will be an annual award financed by the festival in subsequent years. As All-England Dance has altered its qualifying dates for the missed 2020 festival, we expect to have a full and oversubscribed entry for 2021 for our dance session in Fairfield Halls next year.

One prevailing disappointment is that we had no entries from Croydon Music and Arts despite creating several classes and an entry-fee structure especially for them following direct consultation and time-consuming personal face-to-face conversations with CMA’s Director.

In the 2020 syllabus, we had omitted certain music disciplines through lack of support in previous years, but, having done so, we, inevitably received queries from performers in those omitted disciplines. As a consequence, we have reinstated the full discipline syllabus, including the Concerto Competition, for 2021, bringing the syllabus back to the fullness and comprehensive diversity that we knew until 2015. We have also been lucky enough to secure a Saturday evening in the Ashcroft Theatre for our choral session which, as we discovered in 2019, involves too many people to be held at Royal Russell School. This choral evening was available only at Fairfield’s full commercial rate, however, as opposed to the community rate secured for the dance week. The booked date for the choral section immediately precedes the eight days of dance, meaning that CPAF’s profile will be sustained for some time in late May at this prestigious venue.

The bookings in the Ashcroft Theatre for Western and South Asian Dance and Choral are fully contracted for both 2021 and 2022. We have adjudicators booked for 2021 and 2022.

Our 2021 dates are 30 April to 3 May for music and speech, and 29 May to 6 June for choral and dance at the Ashcroft Theatre. The heats for the concerto competition will, as before, be held within each musical discipline’s festival schedule, with the final becoming part of the November 2021 AGM.

As mentioned more than once before, I am hopeful that CPAF can plan some prominent event for the 2023 adoption of Croydon as the London Borough of Culture but my plea for project ideas has, so far, received only one response, but we live in hope!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for their support, patience and understanding, but especially Bridget whose workload, which is normally extensive, increased dramatically in 2020 with all of the re-fundings necessary.

The disappointments of 2020 have fired us up to become even more resolute and exciting in 2021 but we do need much more volunteer support to sustain these practical but ambitious plans. In January, on an extremely wet and miserable day, I gave a talk to the Friends of the London Mozart Players following a kind invitation from Chris Harman, one of our regular stewards. The main objective of my talk about both CPAF and the British and International Federation of Festivals was to spark some interest from the healthy number of attendees concerning volunteer help. In that respect, the talk was a disheartening and spectacular failure and our frighteningly low numbers of volunteer helpers is of great concern. Frankly, if we have insufficient stewards for our sessions — for the events on 1, 2 and 3 May about four to eight volunteers, in addition to Bridget and me, are needed per session (morning, afternoon and evening) — we are legally obliged to cancel the performances. The events in Fairfield in late May are of less concern because we have help from the hall's own stewards. So, could I please beg everyone to help with recruiting for our database of helpers?

Richard Deering

Festival Co-ordinator

This year, we used a (manual) electronic entry system for Music and Speech & Drama. This was a little time-consuming, but we avoided fees for using the online entry system. More importantly, we were able to make a £10 admin charge per family for these sections (choirs excluded), this facility not having been available on the online entry system. The purpose of the fee is twofold: it means that we do not have to charge audience admission, which increases our welcoming atmosphere at the Festival; and, by not charging a fee for audience admission to classes, we do not have to apply to the council with regards to performance licences (BOPA).

We continued to use the online entry system Run My Festival for the Dance sections. There are always some glitches with this, but most of them we were able to resolve quickly. I will be producing a how-to guide/FAQs to put on our website along with the syllabus for 2021.

It was a huge relief, when the process of issuing refunds was confirmed as necessity this year, to have online banking through both NatWest and PayPal. I feel for the treasurer of any festival still accepting payment in cash/cheques etc, and the resulting issuing of cheques in the post.

It was disappointing that our entry numbers were down in music. Most entrants were happy returning customers; and a few were newcomers, including a primary-school band from Epsom, who were very excited to have the opportunity to play at a festival. We worked very hard with Croydon Music and Arts to re-build a relationship with them, but sadly it led to no entries. We were saddened to hear of the death around Christmas of Roger Davies. Roger was the guitar teacher at Royal Russell School who used to enter many solos and groups, including a joint performance with Judy Moseley's recorder group. We send our sympathies and best wishes to his family, friends and colleagues at Royal Russell.

Dance was looking incredibly healthy this year, it being an All-England Dance qualifying year. Entry numbers were very high, such that we were over-subscribed. It was very good to see an increase in entry numbers for South Asian Dance, now part of the whole Dance week. Dancers in this section are also able to take part in the All-England Dance competition, and we hope that they will take this up.

We are delighted to have Liam Swattridge as our Dance Co-ordinator. His knowledge and expertise have been invaluable throughout the Festival year, and we look forward to a full week of dance taking place. We also now have the help of one of our teachers, Pushpa Nagarajan, who, one day, after the 2020 festival had been cancelled, sent an email volunteering to run the South Asian Dance classes. My thanks also to Jenna Manji, who continues to manage the Speech & Drama section, and Ophelia Gordon, who quietly updates the website and sends out mailings.

CPAF is part of the BIFF southern regional group, which meets usually once or twice a year. For the first time, I was able to attend the now annual meeting in January, at which there were many shared experiences regarding all sorts of routine Festival matters. I have now taken on the post as secretary of the region, alongside adjudicator Gary Sieling as chair.

Bridget West

Finance Report

It must be noted that the figures for the previous year were not for the full year 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019, but for the period 19 December 2018 (the date of registration of the CIO) — 31 August 2019.

The summary for the full 2019 financial year is set here, with the figures for this financial year.

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Total income	14,519	6,025
Total expenditure	15,172	8,937
Net incoming resources	-653	-2,912
Total funds brought forward	14,888	17,800
Total funds carried forward	14,235	14,888

(Members are reminded only Music, Speech & Drama and South Asian Dance sections were held in 2019; there was no Western Dance section.)

The Festival was fortunate that the cancellation of the festival cost just £653. There are several reasons for this.

1. Entrants to Music and Speech & Drama were charged an admin fee of £10 per family; these were non-refundable. These covered the majority of the adjudicators' and accompanists' cancellation fees (50% of the fees payable for the timetabled hours) in those sections.
2. Many entrants in all sections — Dance, Music, and Speech & Drama — very generously gave their fees (full or partial) as donations; and a few separate donations were made, also.

The total amount received by the Festival in admin fees, donated entry fees, unclaimed refunds, and

donations from entrants was £2,116.38. One dance school has £97 credit with us for the 2021 Festival.

3. We paid 50% deposit of the hire fee for six days of Dance at the Fairfield Halls. This amount, £7,884, has been transferred to our 2021 booking.
4. We had not paid fees for any other venues. After Royal Russell informed us of their closure to outside bookings, other venues were sourced, and provisional bookings made, but no payments were made.

Income

Subscriptions and donations. This year, we had just 18 members; 15 paying via GoCardless, one by standing order, and two as one-off payments. The GoCardless system does take 1% (30p per £30 full sub, 20p per £20 concession, a total of £4.50), but ensures that subscriptions are made and received, and is a most appreciated source of regular income for the Festival. It is very simple to sign up to at croydonperformingartsfestival.org/give. The donations were made via PayPal, for which there is a charge (see below).

Awards and prizes. Our dance adjudicator, Patricia Snowdon, declined the cancellation fee, of £600. She has very generously given this to us towards a new dance bursary for the senior with the most potential. This will be first awarded at next year's festival, at which she will be adjudicating.

Entry fees. These were very high for Dance, for both Western and South Asian sections, it having been scheduled as an All-England Qualifier. Numbers for Speech & Drama were similar to 2019, but those from Music were down by about 30%.

Expenditure

BIFF, AED, insurance, licences. This year's figure is higher because it includes two years' subscriptions to AED (2019 and 2020) as we had let this lapse in 2019 when there was no Western Dance section. Also included is £78 travel expenses for a BIFF Southern Region attended in January by Bridget West.

Awards and prizes. We are invited to send the winner of our senior piano class to the Emanuel Trophy Piano Competition run by the North London Festival. Ophelia Gordon, our 2019 winner, was all set to represent Croydon this year, but this too was cancelled. We donated the £55 entry fee to them, for which they were most grateful.

Independent examiner's fee. This was higher for 2019 as there were two sets of accounts to be audited; we were kindly given a discount for the two sets.

PayPal fees (in miscellaneous). PayPal is the quickest and easiest way for entrants to pay with the online entry system. Payment is taken at the point of checkout; so all entries submitted are paid in full, and no chasing of payments is required. As a charity, we are charged 1.4% plus £0.20 per transaction. This year, using PayPal for entry fees (and some donations) cost us £55.32.

I continue to cover the Treasurer's post; we remain indebted to Geoffrey Lawrence who has prepared the accounts professionally for us at no fee.

Bridget West