



Croydon Performing Arts Festival 2019 Annual Reports

Chairman of the Trustees

Our festival was formed in 1913, and was one of the Founding Festivals of the, then, British Federation of Festivals in 1925. Over the past three or four years, we have worked hard to recapture that early sense of innovation, and develop from the original format to strive toward a new structure that suits the performing and educational demands and aspirations of the present day.

Almost at the conclusion of the last calendar year, we received approval for the charitable status change to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation), as voted upon at the 2018 AGM, and the Trustees met on 3 January to approve this transition. We then set about the seemingly easy task of changing the banking credentials, but that took no fewer than 101 days to complete. In this respect, I have to pay tribute to Bridget's fortitude and determination, as I was all prepared to cry "beaten", but, in the process, we became firm online and telephone friends with a lady in the bank's complaints department. All is now resolved and we have full online facilities and access, with a vague feel of now being in the 21st century!

The 2019 Festival continued successfully, overall, with the new entry process, and such was the success of the no admission charge for music events that, now we have addressed the administrative concerns, we will introduce this to other sections in 2020. The more relaxed box-office experience, together with the free coffee facility was an undoubted PR success, although we must strive to find a sponsor for the coffee facility.

Sadly, we had to turn away a few performers who had not completed the performance licensing form, which had to be approved by Croydon Council, and that was carried out very sensitively and professionally by Jenna in my presence. We are hopeful that proposed modifications to the entry system for 2020 prevent that from happening, as the teething and understanding problems associated with the online entry system lessen.

For me, the highlights of 2019 were the stunning choral singing of group of eight- and nine-year olds, and, lingering long in the memory, will be the experience, together with one of my Trustee colleagues and a full to-the-rafters hall, the combined singing and clapping of 400+ people on the "Road to Amarillo". I was also greatly moved by one young lady in the Carnatic Vocal solo with a simply stunning vocal technique. Within Music, the performances in the workshop format classes simply changed before our eyes with the input of our skillful and charismatic adjudicators.

Although they are smaller sections, the energy and sheer excitement of the younger Speech performers was captivating, and the South Asian Dance was simply colourful and beautifully artistic.

Malti Patel has decided to stand down from the Festival, and I would like to pay tribute to her quiet and long-serving contribution to CPAF. As a result of that further loss of manpower, we will be absorbing the two South Asian sections into Music and Dance respectively.

In the South Asian Music section of 2020, we expect to be back with a full quota of performers, such as we remember from 2015 and earlier, because we have developed an important relationship with Vijay Venkat, one

of the 2019 adjudicators, with whom we have since met, and who has accepted the role of advisor to us over this important and unique section within our festival. The exciting format of the syllabus, that has proved so successful in the Western music classes, has been modified by Vijay for use also in the South Asian music section; so all our music disciplines are now streamlined.

On a practical level, I have advertised the need for a treasurer in numerous outlets, but, as yet, there have been no offers of help. This continues to be a great worry, as it is a further burden upon Bridget and me; neither of us has the expertise to carry out this important function. As regards this year's accounts, we are indebted to Geoffrey Lawrence for his professional accounting help in preparing the accounts, and his practical assistance in retrieving the accumulated paperwork necessary for the preparation of the financial records.

We had planned a major Concerto Competition in Fairfield Halls with the LMP for early November, as well as a proposed major choral event. I wrote to my counterpart at Coulsdon & Purley Festival asking that we pool our manpower, financial and contacts resources to facilitate these major events, but received no response. Therefore, sadly, we cancelled them, but hope to resurrect the idea, especially the Concerto Competition with the LMP when the financial resources and manpower are forthcoming. Hopefully, this will be done with Coulsdon & Purley Festival, as they, too, are intent upon restructuring their Concerto class, as I understand.

As regards the proposed 2020 Festival — 24-26 April and 3 May — we are putting the Choral section on hold because of lack of necessary manpower, and are not offering percussion or vocal because, over the past two years, we have simply not had adequate entries. Although there was a great reduction last year in interest for our guitar classes, we shall run this section next year and review the situation concerning guitar after the 2020 festival similarly.

When Jenny Jarvis resigned from her positions last year we were left with two important posts to fill, with the Treasurer's role being still a concern. However, we were assured that Jenny would use her contacts within the Dance world to help us find a suitable person for the demanding role of Dance organiser, with the duties involving arranging the chaperones and licences on top of the usual scheduling and queries from participants. From Jenny's contacts, we had one interested party who, almost immediately, withdrew their offer of support, similarly with a contact that I made. Throughout the year, it has been a source of personal anguish that we were failing to get help with this important part of our festival, and concerning as to why.

However, within hours of Bridget placing a message on Facebook, as late as early October, we immediately had no fewer than three interested and highly experienced offers of help. Through a series of agreed discussion points we "interviewed" the parties by e-mail and telephone, and now have a valuable and committed organiser team for Dance, as well as confirmed dates for Dance at Fairfield in late May 2020, contracted dates for 2021, and, incredibly, a senior and highly experienced adjudicator who replied to my e-mailed invitation accepting within five minutes of being asked!

We continue to be immensely grateful to a select group of people who I am pleased to embarrass by naming — Trixie Muirhead, Ophelia Gordon, Judy Moseley and Jenna Manji — who work quietly behind the scenes throughout the year and, at festival time, who are valuably and tirelessly supported by our dwindling, but highly devoted, group of stewards. I have been invited to talk to the Friends of the LMP in January about the Festival, and will do my best to encourage others to join us for 2020. Volunteering seems not to be fashionable but our resources do need refreshing due to age, health and moving away; so please help us in gaining more names to add to our stewards' database.

We also continue to be greatly appreciative of the support received from Royal Russell School, and I would like to put on record our thanks to Chris Hutchinson, David Selby and their staff, for the practical help and resources offered to us so willingly and economically. We have the dates booked for 2021 to guarantee this continuance of the relationship that benefits both parties.

Finally, on behalf of everyone connected with CPAF, I would like to thank my fellow Trustees for their support, experience and wisdom and, above all, thank Bridget who, in her officially titled role as Festival Co-ordinator, has paid tireless attention to detail and without whom there would be no festival at all. Although I spend several months of the year out of the country, Bridget and I have maintained a virtually daily e-mail connection, and it is to her that my first e-mail was sent whilst on a plane using this new facility on major airlines.

Richard Deering

Festival Co-ordinator

With planning and organisation well underway by the summer of 2018, we were pleased to return to an autumn launch for the 2019 festival. The syllabus was distributed via email to all our on mailing list — former entrants, teachers, parents, plus schools in the boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, Merton, Surrey and Bromley — and hard copies printed and sent to local schools from 1 November. The online entry-system opened a couple of weeks later.

We were more familiar with RunMyFestival this year, having moved onto it for the 2018 festival. Its use certainly gave us a good outward-facing platform, but there were still difficulties to be managed, trouble-shooting for most of the journey. Some of these problems were easily resolved, others required more time and work. I am grateful to users for their patience and understanding, particularly those from whom I had to request extra payment for the official accompanist, as a bug in the system meant that they had not been charged for this when they placed the entry.

This was also our second year of managing the performance licences, which also involved a considerable amount of work, owing to the details required by Croydon Council (each authority has their own process). We had to make additional contact with each performer to gain these, and, despite the systems we put in place from the start of the entry process, and our continually chasing some performers, we did, unfortunately, have to turn away a few performers from whom we had not received details and so were not on our licence. This was a very sad situation for all involved, and one we had tried so hard to avoid.

We ran music, speech and drama, and South Asian music and dance classes this year. We are very grateful to Malti Patel and adjudicator Shruti Sriram for agreeing to run some South Asian music classes along with the South Asian dance section. The return of this section was welcomed by previous entrants and those on our database; entry numbers were high, such that we had to hold an extra session on the Saturday, a date which had not been advertised, and call upon a second adjudicator, Vijay Venkat.

Numbers in the music classes remained on a par with 2018, when we reformatted our music offering. We had many returning performers for these workshop-based classes, and were delighted to hold almost a whole day's worth of strings workshops, there having been just one or two entries in 2018. Our thanks go to our Trustee Julia Desbruslais for making contact with local teachers and encouraging them to place entries.

Again, we had high-class BIFF adjudicators for the music sections: Graeme Humphrey (piano), Kay Tucker (strings), Paul Harris (woodwind, brass, percussion), Christopher Daly (guitar) and Jeffrey Wynn Davies (vocal and

choral). Together with our accompanists, Alan Brown and Craig White, they brought so much enthusiasm, support and advice for all the performers that our vision for the workshop-style classes was truly brought to life. In the speech and drama section, Carol Schroder, also a BIFF adjudicator, ensured that our competitive classes continued at their high standard, and valuable adjudications were given for all involved. Performers across all these classes were certainly not short-changed, particularly our one guitarist and two singers this year, with the amount of advice and individual support that they received. The choirs afternoon and evening was a true delight, high-quality performances, high-class adjudication, fun, and a packed auditorium.

Equally high-class was our venue, Royal Russell School. We send sincere thanks to our Trustee, Royal Russell Headmaster Chris Hutchinson, and all his staff for their support, hard work and commitment to ensuring the success of the festival on their site for another year. This really is most appreciated. Alongside the favourable weather, what was also appreciated by all — stewards, adjudicators, performers and audience alike — was the coffee cart. This provision enabled us to offer everyone who attended the festival a complimentary hot drink each day. Our thanks to Chris and his team at the Mobile Coffee Cart.

The major change we made this year to the music classes (choirs excepted) was to increase the entry cost for each class by £10 to cover the audience admission charge of two adults. This meant that when performers and audience arrived at the venue for these classes, there was no charging for admission, all were welcome for free. This eased the load on the stewards in the reception foyer for the majority of the classes, and enhanced our already friendly, professional atmosphere.

Having reflected on this, how it affected entrants and their families, and considered its application for the South Asian music (now part of the music section) and speech and drama sections, in which performers enter several of the competitive classes, the decision has been made to remove the £10 fee, and then charge an administration charge of £10 per family. We hope that this will cover our costs — audience admission will be free to all for these sections — and not deter parents and teachers from making the same number of entries as in previous years.

We had just over 20 stewards to support and run the two weekends. I am hugely grateful to each and every one of them for all their help, smiling faces and commitment to CPAF, be it for one session or all four days. Numbers available for the second weekend, when we ran three sections on the Sunday — including a full day of South Asian dance and music and the numbers of stewards that that required — were low, such that we were only just able, practically and legally, owing to safeguarding requirements, to run the festival. Again, huge thanks go to those stewards who offered help at the eleventh hour, in particular, Gwen Russell, the administrator of the Coulsdon & Purley Festival, who stewarded the full day for us.

In addition to those mentioned above, I cannot end without giving thanks to the quiet and hard work of several individuals during the course of the year and across the festival weekends themselves: Ophelia Gordon; Jenna Manji; Gillian Bibby; Trixie Muirhead; Judy Moseley, Graham Moseley, Ellie Moseley and Chris Moseley; and Barry Nicholson.

For the 2020 festival, we do require more stewards, particularly as, after many years of true commitment, Roger Strong has been unable to continue his work with us this year. Please put the dates in your diaries now: Friday 24 April (evening), Saturday 25 April, Sunday 26 April and Sunday 3 May.

Bridget West

Finance Report

There are two sets of accounts for the financial year 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019, owing to the dissolution of CPAF the charity (registered number 1039606) and the formation of CPAF the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO, registered number 1181262). The first set of accounts covers the period 1 September 2018 – 3 January 2019, during which time CPAF was run as a registered Charity. The second set covers the period 19 December 2018 (the date on which CPAF the CIO was registered) – 31 August 2019, the end of the Festival's financial year.

In practical terms, CPAF operated as the charity until 3 January 2019, on which date, at a meeting of the Trustees, it was dissolved, and all its assets and liabilities were transferred to the CIO.

To view the financial map of the whole year and total income and expenditure, and to compare with the 2018 financial year therefore requires looking at both sets of accounts. This may be a helpful summary of pages 5 of both documents (the statement of financial activities):

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Total income	6,025	29,566
Total expenditure	8,937	15,724
Net incoming resources	-2,912	13,842
Total funds brought forward	17,800	3,958
Total funds carried forward	14,888	17,800

The figures for 2019 are significantly different from those of 2018 for two reasons. In 2018, we received a donation of £10,000. Also, we ran a full dance section in an All-England qualifying year; there was no dance section in 2019.

In large, the 2019 Festival pretty much paid for itself. The new fee structure in music classes (choral excepted) of an increase of £10 to entry fees, and free audience admission was financially positive as expected.

The overall loss of £2,912 was due mainly to the provision of the Coffee Cart (£2,208). A sponsor needs to be found so that we can continue to offer this hospitality to all attending the festival.

The adjudicators' fees and expenses for the South Asian section were higher than anticipated, owing to the entry numbers' necessitating a second day and second adjudicator, with associated travel and accommodation costs, at short notice.

All expenditure has been looked at carefully. Administration costs for 2019-2020 have already been cut, as we have stopped paying for several (now unused) email addresses connected to the website; gmail addresses are free. There are charges for using the online entry system, and for various administrative reasons, we will be trying a different entry system with minimal financial cost for the music and speech and drama sections of the 2020 Festival.

We are still without a treasurer — Richard Deering and I are now managing the banking and record-keeping — and so we are incredibly grateful to Geoffrey Lawrence who has prepared the accounts professionally for us at no fee.

Bridget West, Festival Co-ordinator