

Nottingham Youth Orchestra

Chairman's Report 2009-2010

The last year has certainly been challenging for the organisation, trying to continue with our full range of musical activities against a back drop of ever more financial uncertainty. That we have been able to do so is due to the efforts of many people and organisations who have given either financial or personal assistance to help run the many different musical groups that now fall within our remit.

Firstly, can I record the Committee's thanks to all the parents who send children to our orchestral and jazz groups. The sacrifice is not only financial but involves a great deal of time in fetching and carrying. As someone who has gone through this albeit many years ago, I can see with hindsight what the value of your investment is, not merely musical, but in providing a much wider development opportunity for your children. They benefit enormously in their personal and life skills development in ways which should enable them to better cope with the challenges that lie ahead of them. In addition to this, they will make some lasting friendships and have a great deal of fun, all for less than ten pounds a week!

The committee continues to carefully monitor the activities undertaken by the organisation, and in the last year, we have held a strategic review to fundamentally question what we do, and how we do it, to ensure that the organisation continues to offer the best musical development opportunities for all our children and young persons. Following this review, with great reluctance we have decided in 2011 not to put on our February concert in The Royal Concert Hall. This event has lost significant sums of money over the last couple of years, and so we have decided to experiment with using this venue on a bi-annual basis. This will hopefully enable us to keep subscriptions from rising too quickly in these cash strapped times. Most children will if they become members of the senior orchestra get an opportunity to play at least once during their membership at the concert hall.

Arising out of the review of our activities we were also conscious that a better degree of collaboration between the different musical groups was important for both the children and the musical tutors. It is intended to develop this over the next year.

2010 has seen the first year of our revised audition process, where we have sought to rely on continual assessment of our existing members. Almost inevitably there were some teething problems, but the revenue savings have been substantial, and with a few exceptions the committee have judged it to be a welcome improvement.

It is pleasing to note that the activities of NYO continue to be promoted both in and outside Nottinghamshire, with a very successful summer tour to Northern France by the senior orchestra who played to very large audiences, and an equally successful appearance by our jazz arm NYJO who took the Edinburgh Festival by storm. Particular thanks to all the staff that made those trips possible, especially Margaret Chadwick, the administrator of the senior orchestra without whose immense efforts the annual tour would not take place. Similarly, a sincere thank you to Carl Billson and members of the NYJO committee for their enthusiasm and commitment.

The activities of NYO have only been possible by the efforts of many people. On the fund raising front can I especially thank Mrs Whittle for both the stunning venue for the summer garden party, and the enormous effort in hosting the event, which mercifully was held in ideal English summer conditions. Also, can I record the Committee's grateful thanks to all those individuals and organisations that have helped in providing much needed additional income by way of charitable donations. The committee have this year had the help of Wenna Thompson on the committee who has been very active in sourcing contributions from various trust funds which have enabled us to continue to offer bursaries to those children who would not otherwise be able to attend NYO sessions.

Can I also record the Committee's thanks to the High School for enabling us to use their premises for rehearsals. We are aware of the potential difficulties of their letting their premises for use by almost 300 children, particularly when they themselves have a significant usage of premises out of normal hours. We remain very thankful for their support and help.

In concluding this my final annual report , I would like to pay tribute to a number of people conscious that by doing so I run the risk of forgetting someone. Firstly, a huge thank you to members of the committee. Most of whom do not have children in NYO. Members of the committee work phenomenally hard , and if it were not for their selfless giving of their time, the organisation simply could not continue. If the organisation is to remain as successful going forward, it is vital that a number of enthusiastic and dedicated parents of current members come forward to provide the continuity for the future. I hope some members of the committee will not take offence if I delicately point out that they will not be doing what they are for ever. They deserve the chance at some stage to take a back seat and make way for a new generation to build on the achievements of the past.

The Committee during my time as chairman has seen the appointment of a highly skilled and conscientious administrative assistant . The organisation is fortunate to have Paula Watt and on behalf of the Committee and if I can be so bold the parents, I record our sincere thanks and appreciation for her dedicated and highly efficient service.

The Committee would like to record its thanks for the hard work undertaken by its tutors. Their role in developing the musical talents of the children is self evident. We can all see the fruits of their labours in the wonderful concerts we attend. A special mention should be given to the musical director and joint founder who this year celebrated his 25th year at the helm. It is a tribute to Derek Williams that he remains as committed and passionate after all this time and I wish him and all the staff and committee every good fortune for the future as they continue to provide a vital service in promoting the highest quality of musical opportunity for the children and young people of Nottinghamshire, whose talents would remain untapped or under developed.

Finally on a personal note, thanks go to the committee who have given me the chance to become involved in the work of NYO, and given their support during my period of Chairmanship.

Anthony Desbruslais. Chairman