

Artistic Director's Report 2019-2020

As always, it is a great pleasure to thank all the Festival Friends for their loyal and enthusiastic support for our musical endeavours. It was, of course, a huge disappointment when we found, back in March, that our April 2020 Festival would have to be cancelled. We had some splendid events planned, including two performances of Mozart's great opera *Così fan Tutte*. We last performed the opera in April 2000 with a rather wonderful cast and this year's cast would have been on a similar level. As you know, our plans are inevitably on hold at present, but we look forward to performing *Così fan Tutte* as and when that becomes possible!

Our Autumn-Winter Series of Concerts was particularly well supported this year. The opening concert in October showed off our superb string players to great advantage in Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings*, and were joined by Richard Wainwright and tenor, William Blake who gave beautiful accounts of their solo parts in Britten's lovely *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*.

In November our Trumpet players were in magnificent form in Bach's glorious *Suite No 3* – exhilarating playing from all concerned, also in parts of Handel's *Water Music* and a charming little Symphony by William Boyce.

We welcomed the New Year with Italian Concertos. It was particularly lovely to hear our two oboists, Christopher and Claire, playing together in remarkable concertos for two oboes by Albinoni and Vivaldi, while Charlotte Edwards, our distinguished leader, gave a thrilling account of *Winter* from the Four Seasons.

For our final concert in February, we moved to St James' Church, Gerrards Cross for a celebration of Mozart. The orchestra gave me great support in the 25th Piano Concerto and soprano Nia Coleman gave beautiful accounts of several arias and songs. We ended with the *Jupiter* Symphony to which the players brought great skill and panache after a long day of rehearsals. It was terrific to have a completely full church for this joyful concert in the fine acoustic of that building.

A few weeks later it became clear that that was to be our last concert for a while. As you will have heard, we are looking into the possibility of presenting at least some smaller-scale events in the New Year - either live concerts with appropriate social distancing or alternatively live-streaming performances which we hope you would enjoy hearing at home. Of course there are still many uncertainties in the current climate but our enthusiasm remains undiminished and we intend to be in touch with you again before long.

Warmest thanks and best wishes

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