

Artistic Director's report

Back in March 2020 we were all set to present an ambitious Festival a month later, to include two performances of Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* along with many other lovely events. Suddenly the lockdown meant that everything had to be put on hold and it wasn't until May this year that the Festival promoted a couple of concerts online – an Organ Spectacular, recorded in the chapel of the Royal Masonic School and a song recital by Nia Coleman and myself, recorded in St James' Church, Gerrards Cross. From the performers' point of view it was a real delight to be able to make these recordings and I am extremely grateful to Jane Partridge and Gill Minikin for all they did to ensure that the concerts were available on YouTube. Our sound engineer, John Carr, did a remarkable job and filmed the performances in a very interesting and imaginative way. I hope that the concerts gave a good deal of pleasure to any of our Festival Friends who heard them.

Now that the situation has relaxed somewhat, we are very much looking forward to presenting two small-scale concerts in St Mary's Amersham:

i) on Friday 15th October music for Piano and Wind instruments featuring four principal players from our Festival Chamber Orchestras and concluding with Mozart's glorious Quintet for Piano and Wind

ii) on Friday 12th November Baroque masterpieces by Bach, Handel and Pachelbel, played by principal string players from our Orchestra along with the brilliant flautist Jennifer Stinton. The programme includes Bach's 2nd Suite and the wonderful Brandenburg Concerto No 5.

In January 2022 we will present a concert of Italian Concertos for the New Year and in February, Symphonies and Concertos by Mozart and Haydn.

Plans are already well underway for our Festival in April 2022 to include Beethoven's Violin Concerto with the hugely talented Nazrin Rashidova, chamber music at Chenies Manor House, the wonderful jazz singer Clare Teal (postponed from 2020), South Bucks Choral Society in "Elijah" and two very fine local groups - the award-winning Amersham Town Band and the Band from Chiltern Music Academy, which does so much to encourage young musicians in our area.

As always we look forward to welcoming our loyal Festival Friends to these events.

Iain Ledingham