

# MINUTES

## The Berlioz Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Berlioz Society,  
held on Tuesday 9 April 2024  
at 6pm BST, remotely via Zoom

### Present:

Alastair Aberdare	Diana Bickley (Chairman)	Anne Bongrain
Adrian Brown	Jonathan Burton	Linda Edmondson
William Edmondson	Christopher Follett	David Glynn
Martin Grossel	Terry Heard	Gareth Jones
Simon Jones (Notes)	Robert Mansell	Melinda O'Neal
Helen Petchey	Martin Price	Julian Rushton
Christopher Sims	Lucie Sims	Molly Skardon

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were received from:

Ed Elsey	Stuart Hamilton	Jeremy Hayes
Shelagh Marston	Mark Noble	Peter Payne
Adam Ridley	Alan Taylor	

### 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM, HELD ON 4 APRIL 2023

- 2.1 5.7 'A donation of £1,000 *for* the Society...' should read 'A donation of £1,000 *from* the Society...'
- 2.2 6.10 Simon Jones was recorded as standing down as Secretary at the next (i.e. this 2024) AGM. This is no longer the case: he will stand for re-election.
- 2.3 With these amendments, the minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the previous AGM.

### 3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 There were no matters arising.

### 4 CHANGE TO CONSTITUTION: ELECTION OF NON-TRUSTEES TO THE COMMITTEE

4.1 Some of the current Committee wished to resign as Trustees but remain as members, a provision not allowed for in the Society's original Constitution. An

amendment would therefore be needed to allow non-Trustees to be co-opted. Alastair Aberdare and William Edmondson had drafted just such an amendment, at these points in the Constitution (deletions are struck through, additions shown in italics)

- Section 17, The Appointment of Trustees: new paragraph (6).  
*The Trustees may co-opt additional members of the Charity on to the Management Committee at any time, providing their number does not equal or exceed that of the existing Trustees. Such co-optees shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting, when they may be reappointed. They may vote at meetings of the Management Committee, and fulfil specific roles required by the Charity (such as Membership Secretary or Marketing Manager). They may not, however, be appointed as Officers, form part of a quorum, or exercise powers reserved to the Trustees. A co-optee may be removed by the Management Committee at any time.*
- Section 16, Officers and Trustees: the following amendments to paragraph 1.  
The Charity and its property shall be managed and administered by a ~~committee~~ *Management Committee* comprising the Officers and other members elected *as Trustees* in accordance with this Constitution, *together with members co-opted in accordance with sub-clause (6) of clause (17) of this constitution.*
- Section 23, Minutes: additions to paragraphs 1 and 3.
  - (1) appointments of Officers and Trustees (*including co-opted Management Committee members*) made by the Trustees;
  - (3) meetings of the Trustees and committees of Trustees including:
    - (a) the names of the Trustees *and co-opted Management Committee members* present at the meeting;
- Section 7, Membership: addition to paragraph 4.  
The Trustees must keep a register of names and addresses of the members. *Members' personal details (including addresses, telephone numbers, email addresses, social media addresses, etc) must not be made available, including to other members, except with the permission of the member him/herself.*

4.2 A vote to accept these amendments was proposed by Adrian Brown and seconded by Julian Rushton. It was passed unanimously.

## 5 SUGGESTED MERGER OF BERLIOZ SOCIETY WITH BERLIOZ 150

- 5.1 Berlioz 150 had been set up in the sesquicentennial year 2019 with a focus on generating teaching resources for primary schools, centred around the *Symphonie fantastique*. The result had been a very good resource but after five years the project no longer had the capacity and funding to continue.
- 5.2 As Berlioz 150 and the Berlioz Society shared very similar aims it was proposed that Berlioz 150 merge into the Berlioz Society, the project's remaining resources and website transferring to the Society to create one Berlioz charity in the UK. This would take place by the start of 2025.
- 5.3 Terry Heard asked what responsibilities would be attached to maintaining and running the ongoing legacy of Berlioz 150, and who would take them on. Alastair Aberdare explained there would be reserve funds to assist with this, and that he hoped Julien Planté and Josh Pearcey, both currently involved in Berlioz 150, would be amenable to being co-opted onto the Society's Committee.

- 5.4 Melinda O'Neal asked whether they were volunteers or paid. Alastair Aberdare said they were paid, and in addition any teachers taken on in any advisory capacity would likewise be paid.
- 5.5 The meeting agreed the merger in principle.

## 6 SECRETARY'S REPORT

- 6.1 The Ridley Day was held in June and was a great success as ever, though the number attending was lower than on previous occasions. Nicholas Payne spoke in tribute to our long-standing member Nicholas Snowman, who had died suddenly after an accident in March, and Madeleine Mitchell played a short piece composed by Michael Berkeley in his memory. In the afternoon selections from DVD recordings of numbers from concert performances of *Les Troyens*, *La Damnation de Faust* and *Roméo et Juliette*, all under the baton of John Nelson, were played.
- 6.2 The Members' Weekend in November was held as usual at the Art Workers Guild, with *Benvenuto Cellini* as the subject. David Cairns revisited the first recording of the opera in 1972, Julian Rushton compared the different versions of the opera and Adrian Brown talked about the practicalities of conducting such a complex and inventive score. Other areas covered included operas on the lives of artists and the original Cellini and his Autobiography. At the dinner on Saturday evening, veteran reporter John Simpson looked back on his career and his relationship with the music of Berlioz.
- 6.3 Membership of the Society stood at 167. A combination of declining attendance numbers and increasing costs meant that the 2023 Weekend was the final one in this incarnation. The Committee would be looking at future permutations, including the possibility of filmed webinars and single day events, and welcomed any ideas from members.
- 6.4 Melinda O'Neal suggested making the Bulletin available digitally. The Committee was looking into this. Martin Grossel and Terry Heard, from the Havergal Brian and Dvořák Societies respectively, offered advice as they used digital documents. Jonathan Burton flagged up the existence of the Berlioz Society Facebook page.

## 7 TREASURER'S REPORT

- 7.1 The overall financial result for the year was a deficit of £1,029, leaving the Society with free funds of £15,792. This approximated the Society's annual expenditure, a satisfactory position.
- 7.2 The accounts for 2023 were most heavily influenced by the financial results of the Study Weekend. The number paying for the event was 30, and this drop in numbers had increased the total deficit on the Weekend from £1,954 in 2022 to £2,767 in 2023. The format of events would need to be changed to avoid such deficits in future.
- 7.3 Subscriptions and donations for the year totalled £5,350, compared with £4,468 in 2022, although subscriptions and donations paid in advance for 2024 were £716 higher than a year earlier.
- 7.4 Total Bulletin expenses for the year, including postage, were £4,820, compared with £4,621 for 2022.

- 7.5 Sales of the audio book based on David Cairn's translation of the Mémoires totalled £154, slightly higher than in 2022. Details to download the audio book are given on then Society's website.
- 7.6 Receipts from Gift Aid (a UK tax reclaim scheme) of £1,251 are for 2 years, covering subscriptions and donations for both 2022 and also 2021.
- 7.7 There was a small deficit on the summer Members' meeting.
- 7.8 To avoid significantly increasing bank charges, the Society changed bank during 2023. However the transition was not smooth, and for time wasted coping with problems, £450 has been received as compensation. However the new account does attract charges for cashing non-sterling cheques (£5.50 for Euro cheques and £10.50 for US\$ cheques) and so members would be encouraged to pay subscriptions using electronic bank transfers if possible. There were resulting bank charges of £22 during the year.
- 7.9 The annual cost of renewing the Society's website ("advertising and promotion" in the accounts) increased from £192 to £264.
- 7.10 Martin Price was happy to continue as Treasurer for the coming year, if elected, but would stand down as Treasurer at the 2025 AGM.
- 7.11 The meeting thanked Martin for all his work as Treasurer over the years.

## 8 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- 8.1 The past year had been Alastair Aberdare's last as Chairman, though he would be continuing as a Committee member and Trustee if re-elected.
- 8.2 The Members' Weekend had been a success, though sadly the interview with Gareth Davies, principal flute with the London Symphony Orchestra, had not been recorded and could not be made available as a transcript in the Bulletin.
- 8.3 The Ridley Day had also hosted a performance of the *Réverie et caprice*.
- 8.4 The Festival Berlioz had been excellent.
- 8.5 One of his last acts as Chairman had been to welcome David Glynn, Gareth Jones and Alan Taylor to the Committee, and he was delighted to have them on board.
- 8.6 Diana Bickley, as incoming Chairman, thanked Alastair for his excellent chairing of the Committee in previous years. She also thanked the Committee and the attenders for representing the membership at this AGM.
- 8.7 Bruno Messina had been due to come over last year but had been prevented by an accident. He would hopefully be visiting in the coming year – ideally this would coincide with the Ridley Day which would include a preview of the 2024 Festival Berlioz programme.
- 8.8 David Glynn was arranging a recital at 2:30 on 7 September, in St Pancras, with Hamish Brown on piano and Beth Taylor (mezzo-soprano), a finalist in the Cardiff Singer of the Year. Details were yet to be finalised but the programme would include *Les nuits d'été*. More details would be given nearer the time.
- 8.9 The new format single Study Day in November would take as its subject Lord Byron, 2024 being the bicentenary of his death.
- 8.10 Study Weekends in the past have provided a great deal of the material for subsequent Bulletins: a single day event will provide less, and so Julian Rushton would appreciate ideas for future content. The Bulletin might perhaps contain more informal content alongside the scholarly articles. The next mailing would include a questionnaire canvassing members' opinions.

- 8.11 Melinda O'Neal noted that some journals were offered in both digital and hard copy versions. Martin Grossel suggested any newsletters could be distributed digitally.

## **9 ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE FORTHCOMING YEAR**

- 9.1 No nominations having been received for any Committee positions, the existing Committee expressed its willingness to serve for the next year.

- 9.2 The Committee as re-elected was as follows:

• President	David Cairns
• Chairman	Diana Bickley
• Vice Chairman	Adam Ridley
• Treasurer	Martin Price
• Secretary and Website Manager	Simon Jones
• Membership Secretary	Peter Payne
• Editor of the Bulletin	Julian Rushton
• Media Manager	Christopher Follett
• Weekend Coordinator	Helen Petchey
• Summer Event Coordinator	Shelagh Marston
• Technology Manager	William Edmondson
• Member without portfolio	Linda Edmondson
• Member without portfolio	David Glynn
• Member without portfolio	Gareth Jones
• Member without portfolio	Alan Taylor

## **8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 8.1 There was no other business.