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# LCMS Strategy Planning

I have been a trustee of LCMS for a year. When I joined the Board I was asked to look strategically at how we are set up and how we operate. I have helped others in a similar exercise in the past, and my way of doing this is to take time, talk to as many people as I can, and try to understand the organisation in depth. It's a slow business, but I'm beginning to feel that I have got to grips with LCMS as a living organisation.



All organisations have to change. Those that try to stand still, in my experience, gradually – sometimes not so gradually – wither away. Those that try to shrink their activities also often tend to shrink out of existence. So, my task is to help the Board identify how LCMS can grow and how it needs to change.

There are two ways to change – dramatically or incrementally. Dramatic change is hard to manage and you need a reason for it, usually because the organisation is in serious decline. That is certainly not the case with LCMS. It is a well-established, well-respected charity with good artistic values and a loyal audience.

Another reason, though, for dramatic change comes when an opportunity arises that cannot be resisted. That presented itself to LCMS with the opportunity to move from Conway Hall to Kings Place, and we can see that this has, overall, been very beneficial although not without its issues. LCMS is a small charity with only one part-time paid person. At Conway Hall, it was a relatively straight-forward exercise in programme-planning and hall-booking. At Kings Place we work in partnership with a complex professional set-up, and what we do has to mesh with the Kings Place activities. We do benefit hugely from the Kings Place professionals, but they are themselves hard-pressed and there are limits to what we can ask of them.

So, it is clear that for LCMS to be able to take advantage of all that Kings Place can offer – including a great hall, a great marketing team and a wide potential clientele – we need ourselves to become more professional and, perhaps, entrepreneurial. At the same time, we don't want to lose the "family" atmosphere that I feel is a distinctive feature of our concerts. We also want to maintain our adventurous artistic policy while building our audiences. That has to be seen in the context of ever-increasing competition – chamber music, while appealing to a relatively small clientele, is growing, so there are more events chasing that clientele. We need to market ourselves, and to do this we need access to skills. Equally, as no classical-music organisation can survive on box-office alone – at least not if it is to have a coherent and satisfying artistic offer with high-quality artists – we need to attract funding that enables us to plan ahead with confidence. Concerts are planned, and committed, up to two years ahead, and that sometimes requires an act of faith.

I think everyone agrees that we need to consolidate our position, so change needs to be incremental. Our strategic planning, therefore, has to be focussed on developing the longer-term sustainability through marketing and fund-raising. We do not have the resources to employ people to do this, and in any case that would go against the culture of self-help that distinguishes LCMS. The drive needs to come from within, but we do not at present have the skills available to us to do this.

So what does this all come down to? A plea for people with ideas, with energy, with commitment and some time to spare to come forward to add to what we have already – a dedicated and devoted team of trustees. We need just that little extra resource to enable us to build on what we have and secure it for the future. Is that you? To discuss or volunteer, please contact me at [ragoldlaw@aol.com](mailto:ragoldlaw@aol.com)

Richard Gold

Chris Bradshaw

# Members' Voices Three Generations



On 2 April 1957 my father, Harold Rich, then in his early 30s and an economics graduate working in the motor industry, wrote to his uncle in Johannesburg. My parents were newly engaged, and my father wanted to tell his uncle something about his wife-to-be. My mother, Dina Kafka, who had come to live in London in the 1950s, had been born in Prague, a city she had left for Denmark as a refugee at the age of 15 in 1939.

My father wrote: "[Dina] shares my passion for chamber music – alas, we are both listeners, not executants. I imagine that when you lived in Bloomsbury you were familiar with the South Place Sunday Concerts at the Conway Hall. These we

rarely miss." My great-uncle's reply hasn't survived, but it's very likely that he did attend the concerts during his years as editor of the Jewish Chronicle in the early 1930s. In his very modest childhood home in Stoke-on-Trent at the turn of the century music would only have come from the wireless and occasional concerts, so it isn't difficult to imagine the influence of the Sunday concerts in the formation of a lifelong music-lover.

This makes me the third generation of my family for whom the concerts have been part of our lives. None of us are "executants" but all of us, of whom I am the only one to have grown up in London, have taken something from the wealth of musical life in London, and from the Sunday Concerts, which introduced audiences to serious music without great ceremoniousness or expense. My parents' copy of 'The Story of A Thousand Concerts', published by the South Place Ethical Society in 1927, explains:

"The concerts were called the South Place Sunday Popular Concerts, but why the word "Popular" was introduced into the title must have been a cause of bewilderment to many. ... [It] was, in fact, a misnomer, for the music has always been of the most consistently unpopolar character. It must also be remembered that when the concerts were first commenced public taste was all for the lighter forms of music, and that actually South Place did a vast amount of spade work in creating an appreciative audience for chamber music."

My parents kept no programmes from the late 1950s, but they would have heard performers such as the Aeolian String Quartet and Dennis Brain Wind Ensemble, before Dennis Brain's early death in an accident later in 1957. In the late 1960s and 1970s we would often make an impromptu Sunday trip to Red Lion Square, a random selection of

miniature scores of well-known works in the back of the car. The interior of Conway Hall would not have changed very much since the late 1950s, and in my adolescent mind its earnest, secular, 1920s aesthetic became indissoluble from the experience of listening to chamber music – the distinctive wood-panelling, the fringed lamp casting a circle of light on the performers, and the large inscription of 'To Thine Own Self Be True' forming a constant backdrop. The audience, although not entirely made up of a certain Bloomsbury intellectual type dressed like Michael Foot at the Cenotaph in 1981, had a similar earnest, secular air about it. I would observe a certain thinning of listeners in the direction of the pub next door during the more avant garde or obscure works in the programme, returning for the more familiar piece with which the concert usually ended. Chamber music had less of the easy tenuous or participatory appeal than the Messiah and Mozart Requiem we encountered at school, or the Bach instrumental works and Beethoven piano sonatas my more proficient contemporaries played, and it was a long time before I really chose to listen to the Sunday concert programme.

All this is a long way in time and place from Kings Place, where the LCMS and the Sunday concerts now flourish. It is a short walk from my home, and far from being the child amongst older people, I am an inconspicuous middle-aged woman in the audience, happy to hear both performers of breathtaking skill and longevity such as Levon Chilingirian, and the enthusiastic and talented younger ensembles promoted by the LCMS. I hope that the next generation of our family will still be listening to them with pleasure in years to come.

Barbara Rich

# Behind the Scenes



My journey with LCMS started in 2008, when the organisation moved to Kings Place and hired me as its Administrator. Over the five years that have now passed, along with such routine jobs as filing, booking rooms and arranging meetings, I have had the privilege of working with a vast range and number of people: musicians, agents, administrators, production managers, and trustees. A useful and enjoyable part of my job has also been developing contacts with people at Kings Place itself.

Publicity is also an area in which I am involved. I email our members to remind them of imminent concerts, and keep our new website up-to-date—this is very important as more and more people are now using this medium.

Occasionally there are problems, such as when the email system doesn't work or the time when I realised that a particular artist was coming in a few days' time and actually she couldn't perform as there was no work permit! I could also add that this job definitely helps with practising patience and kindness. I remember when we were having my daughter Ela's christening one Sunday and artists were calling me minutes before I left for church.

Most important to me is that I have had an opportunity to listen to some of the best chamber music in the world. The performances I remember most vividly include the Carducci Quartet playing the first movement of Mendelssohn's String Quartet No. 6 in F minor, Op. 80, the Allegro assai—Presto, and the Allegri Quartet playing the last movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132, the Allegro appassionato—Presto.

My role as the Administrator for LCMS is a unique combination of jobs: from concert production, administration and marketing, through graphic design, fundraising and management of our website. The role without doubt is a vivid one and changes from hour to hour. I have learned that there is a lot of work 'behind the scenes' when you visit a concert hall to hear music!

I feel privileged to work for an organisation with such a long history. I feel that there is a shared responsibility between all engaged in the management of the LCMS to continue our theme of celebrating some of the best British and international chamber music and sharing this music with London audiences at affordable prices.

Thanks to this job I have started playing the piano myself. I couldn't as yet be a page turner for LCMS, but I'm slowly getting there.

Karolina Ozadowicz

# Books

'Time Will Tell' by Donald Greig. Thames River Press.



The infuriating but lovable 'hero' of this book is a musicologist, Andrew Eiger, who has an obsession, or indeed more than one. He wants to be famous, rich, acknowledged and loved, and his route to success is a 15th-century manuscript he has tracked down. This manuscript is the outline of a lost 34-part motet by Jehan Ockeghem, which Eiger plans to have performed by a group of early-music singers called Beyond Compère.

Such is the bizarre set of circumstances in the plot that I had to reassure myself that Jehan Ockeghem did in fact exist: and, yes, there he is in the music dictionary (c1410 – c1499) along with Compère, du Fay and Desprès.

Andrew is very sensitive and secretive about his find but does eventually manage to gain the musical interest of Beyond Compère's director, Emma, who is in principle willing to arrange a performance. All does not go smoothly, and Andrew's plans are complicated by his extreme jet lag and social blunders, coupled with a drunken evening in Tours.

A love element in the story? Well, yes and no. Andrew's wife is at home in America and Emma's friend is a singer in the group, and their stories are woven into the plot, which descends into farce as we try to keep up with the destiny of the manuscript. I think that the reader like me will wonder quite how the motet, Andrew's ambition and Emma's performance will ever coalesce in the end. We are even introduced to a numerology strand in the story to complicate things further.

In many ways at first I found Andrew quite an unlikeable character, but I warmed to him and his quirky obsession. I really enjoyed reading a novel set in such an unusual musical background. However, it's not necessary to have any in-depth knowledge of music, and the author has achieved a good balance of academic and lay terminology, all very approachable. The background travails of musical performance underlie the plot – the travel, hotel, concert venue, rehearsal, feedback, networking. It's always sobering to think of the behind-the-scenes work of any ensemble when all we, the audience, experience is smiles and, one hopes, some hours of fine music.

Interleaved in the main plot are various excerpts from the memoir of a certain Geoffroy Chiron, which gives insight into the world of 15th-century musicians and especially of Ockeghem, Chiron's 'mentor and patron in music,' not all of it by any means flattering. The memoir manuscript surfaces for real at the end of the book, contributing to a neat ending to this rollercoaster story.

Chris Bradshaw

# CHAMBER MUSIC NOTES

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# The LCMS Newsletter



## Welcome!

Looking over the articles in our Newsletter always reminds me of the importance to LCMS of the cooperation and support we receive from our partners. As both musicians and their audiences know, playing chamber music well entails more than just musical skills. It is no less true that the promotion of chamber-music concerts requires multiple skills, high among them the ability to work in harmony with one's partners. In the 'Getting to Know You' column of *Chamber Music Notes* we always highlight the contributions to LCMS of our multi-talented Kings Place partners. This issue, which focuses on Hannah Cooke and Ruth Shwer, is no exception.

This issue of the Newsletter contains a number of other examples of harmonious relationships. In 'Behind the Notes' Peter Fribbins points out how each of the ensembles taking part in the LCMS International Quartet Series enhances the myriad of different possibilities in the music we hear. Walter Rudeloff's interview of Wahajat Khan, the sarod maestro and composer, illuminates how Khan and the long-time LCMS favourites the Allegri Quartet are bringing together two great musical traditions in our last concert in May.

Esther Ainsworth is a Kings Place duty manager for our Sunday concerts. She is also an artist, and she has written a fascinating piece for us about a project she did recently in Slovakia and Hungary to bring two border towns together through sound.

Richard Gold, an LCMS trustee, reports in this issue on his strategic look at how the Society is set up, how we operate, and how we might need to change. One unsurprising conclusion that he had reached is our need for help with marketing and fund-raising in order to develop our longer-term sustainability. So, let me add my voice to his plea for people with skills in these areas to come forward to add to what we have already – a dedicated and devoted team of trustees.

Finally, I wish you all a harmonious 2014. I hope you enjoy all the articles in *Chamber Music Notes* and of course all the concerts this season.

Neil Johnson  
Executive Chairman

# LONDON CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY



Schumann Quartet. Photo: Kaipo Kikkas

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# Our Neighbours: Kings Cross Update

When you pass the former Central St. Martin's (University of the Arts) building in Holborn, there is a blue plaque recognising the architect William Lethaby, the first principal of the school (1896-1911). The university moved in September 2011 to its new site in the Kings Cross Development next to Kings Place, but the name lives on in the new Lethaby Gallery, providing a link between old and new. And this is a feature of the whole development, a feeling of using old structures for new uses.

Although much of the site is still under construction, there are clear routeways around the area (including "Eat Street"), and it is well worth strolling around the campus to see the great progress being made. A good place to start is the Viewing Platform, which gives a panoramic view of the sweep of steps leading from the canal to Granary Square on one side, and the station development on the other. The university is now 'inhabited' and the huge atrium of the main building, the Granary, is an impressive light-well, with natural light and huge old brick walls recalling the old transit sheds and grain store it replaces. The brickwork provides a warm and interesting texture to balance the modernisation, and you can still see the old shunting tracks and turntables.

The main university entrance leads out to Granary Square and its steps and seats descending down to the canal, the perfect place to watch the world - at least, the canal and its barges - go by. This huge square is completely pedestrian with banks of fountains bubbling away and an enticing café. At the time of writing the summer installation – Felice Varini's "Across the Buildings," a series of geometric shapes crossing nine heritage buildings – had gone, making way for seasonal decorations of large 'snowflakes' in the trees, with more to come.

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