

SEAHAM MUSIC ACADEMY

Annual Report 2015

Seaham Music Academy is a not-for-profit organisation operating within Seaham but drawing membership from neighbouring towns, too.

Mission Statement: "To promote participation in and enjoyment of music in the local community without barriers to access".

Committee

The committee comprises:

President: Milton Britton B.E.M. (Non executive)

Chairperson: Steve Williams

Vice-Chairperson: Helen Armstrong

Secretary: Jane Lowes

Treasurer: Jim Bagley

Members: Joan Bell Gareth Brown

Annual General Meeting

Last year's AGM was held on 25th April while this year's will take place on Saturday 24th April.

Membership

Membership increased over the past year with 148 members at the close of the year as opposed to 145 members twelve months previously. However, this disguises a large movement of people both in and out of the Academy. Over the year we attracted 41 new members while a significant number also left our organisation. This is a good sign as it dispels any suggestion of stagnation. We are delighted to attract so many new members but not too downhearted about so many people leaving as the main reason for our existence is to give people the opportunity to learn how to play a musical instrument. It is inevitable that people will leave us both as they discover that playing music is not as easy as it looks and also as their circumstances change and they progress from school to college, work or university.

Staff

The Academy currently enjoys the benefit of seventeen tutors. Over the course of this year we have lost the services of a brass tutor and a clarinet tutor, the latter due to serious illness.

We are also grateful to two volunteers: Peter Lodge, who teaches our guitarists, and Milton "Battler" Britton who supports our saxophone tutors week by week, but is also happy to teach clarinet and conduct our woodwind ensemble.

Last year's report spoke of Battler's decision to retire before old age led to a decline in his playing ability. We are now very pleased to report that Battler's resolution proved to be short-lived and we are thrilled that he is now back working at full throttle.

Over the past year we have lost the services of two other volunteers. Janie Lowes, who, as well as giving theory lessons, was always willing to supplement the work of our brass tutors while Dr.

Zsuzsa Horvath taught our youngest members the rudiments of music. Zsuzsa is in the process of relocating to Manchester with her husband and young family while Janie is taking a well-deserved rest.

It is with great sadness that we must record the passing of one of our original and most faithful volunteers. There has been no more active supporter of the Academy than Roy Horabin who passed away in November at the age of 92.

From its inception in 1992 Roy worked as a volunteer at the Academy. He turned up every week for almost twenty years until he finally succumbed to old age.

Over that period Roy gave theory lessons and provided piano accompaniment for countless rehearsals, concerts and examinations. It would be impossible to overstate Roy's contribution to the development of the Academy. We will be forever in his debt.

This is also an appropriate time to thank the adult volunteers and youngsters who stock and run our "tuck shop" each Saturday morning for their cheerful hard work. Profits from the tuck shop make a significant contribution to our annual income.

Instruments

It is Academy policy to loan instruments to members who do not possess them. So far it is our experience that we can never have too many instruments.

This year we added a brand new trumpet to our collection before a grant from the County Durham Community Foundation allowed us to purchase four brand new Yamaha alto saxophones. This same grant also afforded the opportunity to buy over £800 worth of equipment and accessories to improve our six drum kits.

We are also pleased to report a steady increase in the Academy's library of sheet music and tutor books.

Concerts

As well as our three regular end-of-term concerts we gave a good number of other public performances during 2015.

Our ceilidh group played at a St. Patrick's Day function in Seaham and then very soon afterwards performed to great acclaim at a boisterous event in the Lindisfarne social club in Wallsend.

Our traditional end-of-term concert was held on Saturday 28th March. A good cross-section of our musicians gave very pleasing performances and the event was rounded off with some rousing singing from our choir.

On Friday 24th April our Woodwind group provided the entertainment during the earlier part of the evening at the Mayor of Seaham's Ball. This event was for the first time held in Seaham's new Town Hall. Guests from our twin-town of Gerlingen in Germany were amongst the audience who paid great compliments to our music-making. This was the fourteenth year in succession that we have been proud to entertain our town's leaders.

Saturday 16th May saw our beginner musicians who attend our "Music and Movement" classes take part in a Family Fun day on Seaham beach. These very young children sang two songs to entertain the crowd.

Our end-of-term concert was held at Seaview Primary School on 18th July. This saw very strong performances across the whole spectrum of instruments and ensembles. We were also entertained again by our choir who are making very, very good progress under Frances' guidance and encouragement. Our choir was only formed in late 2013.

The real benefit of these concerts, apart from the pleasure derived from the social gathering, is that they give our young people the opportunity to play in public. Granted that the audience is very supportive and sympathetic but nevertheless we feel that these first steps are crucial in building confidence amongst our youngsters.

That same afternoon our ceilidh group provided the musical entertainment at Dalton-le-Dale's summer fair. Their performance was very good and very much appreciated as live music altogether alters the atmosphere of such events.

As is usually the case the autumn term was quite busy with performances. The first of these took place on Saturday 21st November at Seaham's new town hall. This was the first concert we have ourselves held at this venue. The building has a low ceiling which does not help the music to travel, so it is far from ideal. Nevertheless there is such a lack of performance spaces locally that we had to make the best of a bad job.

This concert was held as a result of Peter, our clarinet teacher, asking us to raise money for The Sir Bobby Robson Foundation which has supported a lot of the help and treatment that Peter has received during his own illness. The Academy's woodwind and string groups provided the majority of the music but there were also solo performances from young clarinet players who were Peter's pupils before he took ill. On an evening when the music was purely secondary we were very pleased to raise £850 for the Foundation.

With the approach of the Christmas season the performance spotlight fell very heavily on the shoulders of our brass group. On Friday 4th December these musicians performed at the ceremony to switch on our town's Christmas lights. Their efforts were much appreciated by both the townspeople and the council officials.

Twelve days later saw the same players performing at the town's ecumenical carol service. Then on 22nd December we paid our eleventh annual visit to Parklands Nursing Home. The carol playing brought great pleasure to residents and staff alike so much so that we have already been invited back next year!

On 18th December eight of our musicians performed at a ceilidh in a local church hall and, as well as providing very good publicity for the Academy, raised £171 for our cause.

Our other musicians got their chance to shine when we held our own Christmas concert on 12th December. A fine cross-section of the Academy's musicians gave a heart-warming performance to help put many people in the mood for Christmas.

Our final appearance of the term saw us give two separate two-hour performances at our local ASDA store on the Saturday before Christmas. During the morning our woodwind group and choir performed while our string group entertained during the afternoon. The store was delighted with the atmosphere generated while we were equally pleased to raise over £750. This was also a great way for us to let more people know that we exist.

Examinations

This year we had 18 candidates for examination from Grade 1 through to Grade 7 when we welcomed an examiner to visit us in February. We were delighted that 8 of these candidates passed with merit while all but one of the remaining ten passed comfortably.

These results reflect very well on the attitude and application both of the students and their tutors. Well done to all concerned! A special word of thanks must go to Derek Shute for his tireless accompaniment during a long day of examinations.

A further trio of our pupils passed examinations at other times of the year. One of these young men is a clarinettist who takes his music examinations at one of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music regional centres and he passed with distinction his Grade 8 exam in November. Daniel had taken his Grade 7 exam earlier in the year and gained the top mark throughout the entire country. When Daniel joined the Academy in March 2011 he had never even touched a clarinet!

Partnerships

We still meet in Seaview Primary (Deneside) school where for £120 per week we enjoy the use of fifteen separate classrooms, a hall for our main ensemble group to use for rehearsals and a cupboard to store our instruments and music. We are both very happy with the accommodation and very proud of our relationship with the school.

Grants

Since one of the Academy's main aims is to ensure that music-making is accessible to all, we deliberately suppress the membership fees. A consequence of this policy is that we must seek some financial help to guarantee the proper payment of our tutors.

2014 proved to be one of our most successful years for fundraising. To begin the year The Shears Foundation honoured the final year of its three-year pledge by donating £5,000.

As the year progressed we also received £4,000 from The Sherburn House Charity; £1,000 from The Hadrian Trust; £4,000 from The 1989 Willan Charitable Trust; £1,000 from the Persimmon Homes Community Champions scheme; £3,000 from The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust; £500 from The Barbour Foundation; £4,000 from The Foyle Foundation and £2,400 from The St. James's Place Foundation.

We also received £300 from the Mayor of Seaham's charity fund.

In addition we received over £4,000 from the County Durham Community Foundation to purchase the instruments mentioned earlier in this report.

Our fundraising year then ended on an extremely high note. In November the Chair of The Shears Foundation, which had been supporting us with £5,000 grants for the previous three years, paid us a visit. Suffice to say that this lady was so impressed by our organisation and the work we undertake that the Foundation subsequently agreed to repeat their three-year pledge to support us. A fortunate year indeed!

Our gratitude to our benefactors cannot be overstated.

Finally, to everyone who helped to make 2015 such a worthwhile and productive year – from tutors to parents, from students to helpers and especially our benefactors – thank you very much.

Seaham Music Academy

Summary of Accounts January to

December 2015

| Income | | Expenditure | |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Subscriptions | 12608.00 | Stationery/Postage | 12.81 |
| Tuck | 2231.57 | Books/Sheet Music | 65.47 |
| Exam. Fees | 836.00 | Instrument Accessories | 1157.58 |
| Grants | 32724.68 | Transport | 20.00 |
| Concerts | 892.50 | Tuck | 437.38 |
| Donations | 946.57 | Insurance | 509.68 |
| | | Tutors' Fees | 30430.00 |
| | | Premises Hire | 6000.00 |
| | | Hospitality | 100.00 |
| | | Exam Fees | 796.25 |
| | | Instruments | 3275.50 |
| | | Subscriptions | 20.00 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Sub-total | 50239.32 | Sub-total | 42824.67 |
| Cash-in-hand@ 1/1/15 | 1656.08 | Cash-in-hand @ 31/12/15 | 1723.48 |
| Bank @ 1/1/15 | 203.27 | Bank @ 31/12/15 | 7550.52 |
| | | | |
| Total | £52098.67 | Total | £52098.67 |

Thomas Corrigan – Auditor

James Bagley - Treasurer

Seaham Philharmonic Society

Summary of Accounts

January to December 2015

| Income | | Expenditure | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| HMRC Gift Aid | 3918.99 | Grant to Academy | 8949.68 |
| Grants | 6400.00 | | |
| | | | |
| Bank @ 1/1/15 | 4506.33 | Bank @ 31/12/15 | 5875.64 |
| Total | 14825.32 | Total | 14825.32 |

Thomas Corrigan – Auditor

James Bagley - Treasurer