

SEAHAM MUSIC ACADEMY

Annual Report 2016

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 Saturday 23rd April while this year's will take place on Saturday 29th April.

Membership

The membership total was almost static over the past year with 149 members at the close of the year as opposed to 148 members twelve months previously. However, this disguises a large movement of people both in and out of the Academy. Over the year we attracted 49 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. While there have been no major staff changes we must report news of the very sad death of one of our clarinet teachers. Peter wasn't quite 60 years of age when he succumbed to a brain tumour. A very adept instrument repairer as well as a dedicated teacher he is remembered with great affection by staff and students alike.

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.

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 two new half-sized violins to our collection.

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 2016.

On 9th March our ceilidh group played at an "adapted" dance for people with learning disabilities. This event was held in Cullercoats, North Shields and as the dancefloor was packed throughout the evening we can assume that it was thoroughly enjoyed by all participants.

Our traditional end-of-term concert was held on Saturday 19th 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 29th April four of our wind band provided the entertainment during the earlier part of the evening at the Mayor of Seaham's Ball. Guests from our twin-town of Gerlingen in Germany were amongst the audience who paid great compliments to our music-making. This was the fifteenth year in succession that we have been proud to entertain our town's leaders.

We were back at the same venue, Seaham Town Hall, on the following Friday when six members of our ceilidh band provided entertainment during the Mayor's Charity presentation evening. As the Academy received a donation of £400 from the charity fund we were only too pleased to contribute.

Two days later on Sunday 8th May we were asked to provide musical input to an Arts Council-backed event called "Stolen Voices". This presentation was the culmination of work undertaken to draw together sounds, both natural and man-made, of Seaham. We sent along a flautist and a guitarist who made a very strong contribution to an otherwise eccentric affair!

On Sunday 3rd July the Dalton-le-Dale History Society organised a service in St. Andrew's Church to commemorate the centenary of the beginning of the Battle of the Somme. The service was followed by a tea and we were asked to provide musical entertainment as background to this event. Eight of our string players created some beautiful, elegiac music to complement the mood of the day.

We held our end-of-term concert on Saturday 16th July. This concert, with every available audience seat occupied, saw performances from our woodwind, string and ceilidh groups as well as our choir. 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. All in all it was a very pleasing way to conclude our year at Seaview School.

Away from the school our year was not quite concluded as we had two further appointments that afternoon. We sent 23 of our woodwind players to perform a selection of film and musical themes at Seaham Carnival. This is a very well-attended annual event and our group played on a stage erected on the Cenotaph Green which is perched immediately above the cliff tops. Notwithstanding the usual difficulties of playing music outdoors in such an environment our musicians managed to make their sound carry well enough to earn great applause from the large crowd. We performed for an hour in between live outdoor showings of popular films. Our performance will have done much to spread the word about the Academy.

Our second invitation of the afternoon was to play at the Dalton-le-Dale summer fair. Last year our ceilidh group had played at this event. Ideally we would have asked the same group to play again but we found ourselves unable to do this because of serious injuries to two of our key players.

A solution was found when our cello tutor volunteered to do the job. This was a great relief as the last thing we wanted to do was disappoint the organisers of the fair. As Greg is an extremely talented, experienced and accomplished musician it came as no surprise to learn that the organisers were delighted with his performance.

As is usually the case the autumn term was quite busy with performances. The first of these took place on Saturday 22nd October when our ceilidh group provided the music at a function in Shadforth near Durham City. Our musicians were very well received and the promoters of the evening were delighted with the outcome.

Six days later saw our wind band give a film and musical-themed concert at Seaham Town Hall. The standard of playing was very, very good and was greatly appreciated by the audience. Perhaps the highlight was Helen Armstrong's violin performance of the theme tune from "Schindler's List". The concert was a joint endeavour with the Mayor of Seaham to raise money for her charity fund. However, we were very disappointed with the size of the audience which didn't even number one hundred. Nevertheless almost £400 was raised for a good cause.

Our next performance could not have been any more different! It had been brought to our attention that the 17-year-old sister of twin boys who study violin at our Academy is hoping, through her school, to visit Cambodia next summer to do a month's charity work. To do this she needed to raise £4,000.

Although she had already started to raise money herself we offered to hold a ceilidh as a fund-raiser. This dance took place on Saturday 19th November and was a runaway success. The girl's family played their part

with catering and fund-raising ideas so not all of the credit is due to the Academy but the evening was a remarkable example of a community - an extended family - pulling together in a good cause. The only complaint heard was that the dance-floor was not big enough!

Our musicians played really well and, like everyone else, were delighted that the evening's efforts raised a little over £1,500.

The approach of the Christmas season usually means that the performance spotlight falls very heavily on the shoulders of our brass group. This year proved to be an exception. It is fair to say that whereas some sections of the Academy are blooming the same cannot be said for our brass. As a result we were unable to contribute to the ceremony to switch on the town's Christmas lights on Friday 2nd December.

Five days later though our brass group was sufficient in size and strength to play for the umpteenth year in succession at the town's ecumenical carol service. After last year's service we wondered whether the event might not benefit from a little makeover. We met the mayor and made suggestions to alter the format of the service. The result was very well received.

We entrusted the preparation of the service to one of our violin tutors who herself joined the Academy as a six-year-old child. Having returned from university Frances now teaches for us and also leads our choir, Seaham Academy Singers. So between the children from a local primary school, our brass group and our choir we were able to produce a service which was certainly more upbeat and lively than last year's equivalent. Such assessment was confirmed afterwards by many of the congregation.

Our regular end-of-term concert took place on Saturday 10th December. In the early part of the morning our learners reported to their usual classrooms where their parents, other family members and friends were able to listen to and appreciate what has been learned this term. Then, after a break for tea, coffee and chat, our larger groups - strings, wind

band, ceilidh, saxophones and choir - performed for over an hour to send everyone home for Christmas in high spirits.

December 17th saw us give two separate two-hour performances at our local ASDA store on the Saturday before the Christmas weekend. During the morning our wind band 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 £680. As well as collecting we chatted to young people and their parents to encourage them to join us.

Then on 19th December we paid our twelfth annual visit to Parklands Nursing Home. In previous years Seaham Town Band, our brass group, had carried out this engagement but this year we sent along our choir, Seaham Academy Singers. Eight ladies and young women sang carols and other festive songs for just under an hour and provided great entertainment for the residents.

Examinations

This year we had 8 candidates for examination from Grade 1 through to Grade 7 when we welcomed an examiner to visit us in February. We were delighted that one of these candidates passed with distinction and a further three with merit while the remaining four passed comfortably. This was the first time that we have had drum kit candidates as previously this instrument was examined only at regional centres.

A further three Academy members passed Grade exams at other times of the year. 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 patient accompaniment, encouragement and support.

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.

During 2016 we were fortunate to receive grants of £5,000 from The Shears Foundation and £3,000 from The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. As both charities have promised to repeat this same level of funding for a further two years we consider ourselves to be very, very lucky.

We were also granted £2,000 by two of our local County councillors to pay for the services of an additional saxophone teacher while Joseph Strong Frazer Trust granted us £1,000 towards tuition and rent costs.

We also received £400 from the Mayor of Seaham's charity fund.

Our gratitude to our benefactors cannot be overstated.

Finally, to everyone who helped to make 2016 such a worthwhile and productive year - from tutors to parents, from students to helpers and especially our benefactors - thank you very much.

Seaham Philharmonic Society

Summary of Accounts

January to December 2016

Income		Expenditure	
HMRC Gift Aid	4744.73	Grant to Academy	2760.00
Bank @ 1/1/16	5875.64	Bank @ 31/12/16	7860.37
Total	10620.37	Total	10620.37

Thomas Corrigan – Auditor

James Bagley – Treasurer

Seaham Music Academy

Summary of Accounts January to

December 2016

Income		Expenditure	
Subscriptions	12958.00	Stationery/Postage	66.74
Tuck	2320.18	Books/Sheet Music	105.56
Exam. Fees	536.00	Instrument Accessories	590.65
Grants	15940.00	Tuck	445.87
Concerts	796.40	Instrument Repairs	172.50
Raffle	57.00	Insurance	526.51
Donations	1639.55	Tutors' Fees	32790.00
		Premises Hire	4440.00
		Hospitality	98.50
		Exam Fees	517.00
		Instruments	307.60
		Subscriptions	20.00
Sub-total	34247.13	Sub-total	40080.93
Cash-in-hand@ 1/1/16	1723.48	Cash-in-hand @ 31/12/16	1382.49
Bank @ 1/1/16	7550.52	Bank @ 31/12/16	2057.71
Total		Total	
£43521.13		£43521.13	

Thomas Corrigan – Auditor

James Bagley - Treasurer