

Report on the Annual General Meeting of UCL Chamber Music Club 2023/24

Wednesday 26th June 2024 at 5pm via Zoom

Participants: Andrew Fisher, Sergei Chebankov, Diana Hughes, Dace Ruklisa, Soffia Nicholas, Maria Kiladi, Yvonne Cheng, Gillian Hogg, Chris Waudby, Liz Mooney, Peter Gordon and Roger Beeson.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. Chair's Report, 2023/24

Andrew Fisher presented the Chair's report (included below).

UCL Chamber Music Club Chair's Report, 2023-24

Membership

- The club has 122 subscribing members currently (down from 182 in 2022-23, similar to 138 in 2021-22), of whom 54 are in the 'staff (or other)' category and 68 are students. There are 808 on the mailing list, which includes many former members. There are 4 honorary members.

Concerts

- There were 11 concerts during the year (3 in Term 1, 5 in Term 2, 3 in Term 3), down from 15 in 2022-3.
- This reduction was largely due to the difficulty in booking the Haldane Room, which has now been opened to general booking and is heavily used for teaching and other events during termtime. Many thanks to the UCL Music Society for generously allowing us to use some of their bookings during Term 2 – without this help, the number of concerts would have been even lower. Frustratingly, we had to cancel one concert in Term 3 because of a misunderstanding (mine) about the organization.
- Attendance was variable, as last year, some of the concerts coinciding with strikes in London's transport systems or by UCL's campus unions.
- We were able to take up the majority of performance offers from members received during the year. A large fraction of the offers received come from our piano-playing members and one (Term 2) concert consisted entirely of piano works.
- The committee has retained its target is that all concerts should include at least one work by a female composer; however, we met that target in just three of the concerts this year, with works by Lili Boulanger, Nicola Lefanu and Clara Schumann.
- The concerts included one on the theme of 'Winter', one celebrating the 400th anniversary of the publication of Shakespeare's First Folio and a baroque concert, plus a new performers' concert. As usual, the Christmas concert was slightly larger-scale than the others and included performances from a small string orchestra and the club's choir – this year it was warm enough to return to our traditional venue for this event, the North Cloisters. The final concert of the year celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Gustav Holst and again featured a choir and a string chamber orchestra; it was preceded a couple of weeks earlier by a talk on Holst given in the ASCR lecture series by Roger Beeson. Many thanks also to Roger for rehearsing and directing the choirs for both these events.

Facilities

- Steinway piano (action and pedals) overhauled in August 2023, playing condition much improved.
- Minor repairs to harpsichord in early June.

- Practice room: still paper diary (for now).

Other activities

- Publicity: continued to use Instagram account and The Week at UCL to publicise concerts as well as the club email list.
- We made the Haldane Room piano available to members for playing on two occasions (16 October and 27 November); ten individual members and one ensemble were able to take advantage of this opportunity.
- Taster day: took place on the morning and afternoon of Sunday 17 November 2023. 38 people (mainly students) signed up and played in groups ranging from duos to quintets. It was particularly good to see one group that had met there performing in the final concert of Term 2. A large fraction of pianists signed up so non-pianists ended up with more playing opportunities. Thanks to the Institute for Advanced Study for allowing us to use their space in the South Wing.

Status of committee

- All the members of this year's committee are able and willing to continue to serve in 2024-25, with the exception of Amy Winterbottom who is ending her term as UCL Music Society President. I'd like to thank Amy for her help to the club this year and also to thank the whole committee for their hard work and dedication.
- We welcome Helene Maurice-Jones as incoming Music Society President; she will be an *ex officio* member of our committee.
- The officers (Andrew Fisher – chair, Diana Hughes – Secretary, Sergei Chebankov – Treasurer) are all willing and eligible to serve again in 2024-25.
- New committee members would be welcome; we are currently 10 (including the officers) and the normally expected size is between 9 and 15.

Future plans

- Continue concert programme;
 - Find appropriate venues for performance and instrument storage in view of the forthcoming works in the Wilkins Building for the UCL bicentennial project (and input into the design process for this project in the hope of a good longer-term solution for the Club);
 - Further taster day(s), including potentially baroque and voice-focused sessions;
 - Coached sessions, starting with one focused on piano accompaniment;
 - Improve practice room environment, booking and access.
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Points arising from Chair's Report

Membership numbers are down. In the past more emails were sent out to remind people to join. Also, for GDPR compliance, Liz Mooney said there used to be an annual email asking people if they wanted to stay on the mailing list. This email could be reinstated and combined with asking people to pay their subscription. We should be more consistent about sending reminder emails.

There were no lunchtime concerts as no two-hour slots were available.

Thanks to Soffia Nicholas for her work publicising concerts on Instagram.

Dace Ruklisa suggested getting concert adverts on the CMC website earlier – it is helpful to be able to refer potential new members to the next concert.

Maria Kiladi asked where the harpsichord might go when the Provost's Office moves. Andrew Fisher said that ideally there would be a second practice room.

Parker Gordon said that UCL's Student Life Strategy document included a section on encouraging music, such as an instrument library, but nothing on places to practice.

Chris Waudby suggested reaching out to St Pancras Church – the Music Society has used it sometimes.

Andrew Fisher said that the Garden Room, Housman Room and a space in the Bloomsbury Theatre are all possible venues for next year.

3. Interim accounts/Treasurer's Report, 2023/24

Sergei Chebankov presented the Treasurer's Report on the UCL account and the Barclays account.

Liz Mooney presented the interim statement of account which includes transactions up to 31 March 2024. The final statement of account covering the period until 31 July 2024 will have to be adopted in the autumn.

The balance is £17,174, down from £18,526 last year. The deficit of £1,352 is due to instrument repair.

Only £10 has been received for piano/harpsichord hire, but this should increase to £80 by the end of the financial year. Liz Mooney suggested we should publicise piano/harpsichord hire in our emails. Andrew Fisher said that the main user is the Music Society, but we have not charged them this year. Dace Ruklisa commented that the OCMC found the hire of the Haldane Room very expensive, so there was less demand for the piano.

Roger Beeson reminded the committee that the final accounts should be circulated to the membership in the interests of transparency – this was not done last year.

Proposed: The outgoing committee should delegate the approval of the accounts to the new committee.

Proposer: Dace Ruklisa; seconder: Roger Beeson.

Motion carried.

4. Election of officers

The AGM participants proceeded to elect a committee for the next season. The Chair (Andrew Fisher) was elected for three years and has one more year to serve.

Secretary: Diana Hughes.

Proposer: Liz Mooney; seconder: Dace Ruklisa. Declared elected.

Treasurer: Sergei Chebankov.

Proposer: Dace Ruklisa; seconder: Soffia Nicholas. Declared elected.

5. Election of other committee members

Proposed: All previously elected members of the retiring Committee not shown as resigned or standing down and not elected to an Officer position shall continue to serve (i.e. Yvonne Cheng, Liz Mooney, Dace Ruklisa, Maria Kiladi, Soffia Nicholas, Chris Waudby).

Proposer: Roger Beeson; seconder: Parker Gordon.

Motion carried.

No new committee members were elected. The committee can co-opt new members throughout the year if anyone wishes to participate.

The AGM noted that Helene Maurice-Jones, incoming President of the UCL Music Society replacing Maria Khopkar, would be a member of the committee ex officio.

Thus a committee of ten people was elected.

6. Election of Independent Scrutineer of Accounts for 2023/24

Proposed: Jenny Godfrey – UCL Finance.

Proposer: Liz Mooney; seconder: Dace Ruklisa.

Declared elected (assuming she is willing to accept).

7. Subscriptions 2024/25

Proposed: The subscription fees should remain as £6 for students and £12 for other members.

Proposer: Diana Hughes; seconder: Parker Gordon.

Motion carried.

8. Any other business

Parker Gordon commented that the concerts including a social occasion afterwards were particularly enjoyable. Dace Ruklisa said that it would not be expensive to have more social occasions – the refreshments typically cost c. £40. It was agreed to try to include a social occasion in Term 2. Gillian Hogg suggested that the New Performers' concert would be a good opportunity.

Sergei Chebankov reported that the development of the online booking system for the practice room has come to an end as the developer is no longer available. None of the readymade systems he has seen so far have all the right features for us. Maria Kiladi mentioned two possible systems that could be investigated. Liz Mooney made the point that we need to consider the potential admin burden on UCL Security of having to look up practice room users online – we would need to look at any system from both sides.

Andrew Fisher expressed thanks to all. He will arrange a committee meeting before the summer break.

The meeting closed at 6.00pm.