**Secretary’s Report on the 69th UCL CMC Season**

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The CMC has not been dormant at any time during the 69th season. When one type of activity was not feasible the committee quickly switched to something else. Various techniques of music making, recording and broadcasting have been mastered by CMC members – these allowed sharing chamber music performances and insights into works by several composers.

Four evening concerts, each lasting for an hour (not counting chatting and discussions afterwards), were presented this season. All of them were broadcast online via Zoom and were very well attended, often attracting around 40 listeners. The programmes contained names of less known composers, such as Agustín Barrios and Alexander Tcherepnin. Accomplished performances of pieces for solo instruments (piano, flute, organ and guitar) could be heard. Furthermore, performers were inventive when rehearsing and recording duos during lockdown periods – sometimes accompaniment was recorded separately; many types of keyboard were used depending on the piece. Our Honorary President, Professor John Irving, offered a special programme of preludes and fugues from the first volume of J.S. Bach’s *The Well-Tempered Clavier* – all six prelude and fugue pairs were in major keys and sounded surprisingly diverse; John Irving provided many informative and interesting comments about their form, texture and musical context.

Online concerts created some technical challenges. It was necessary to ensure reasonably good sound quality of recordings; the sound volumes had to be adjusted to consistent levels before broadcasting. Finally, performances had to be introduced and played via Zoom. Special thanks go to Sergei Chebankov for successfully and seamlessly dealing with recordings, offering plenty of technical advice to musicians and for putting together concert programmes.

The committee has done a lot of work behind the scenes. One of the most important tasks was to ensure that recordings of performances were played, stored and published only with full consent of participating musicians. To achieve this aim a subcommittee devised a consent form to be submitted together with recordings before a concert. Among other things this form allows performers to specify whether a recording can be made publicly available for a fixed time period after the event. In addition the committee ensured that the Club’s commitment to the GDPR initiative and to our privacy notice remains unaffected. Many thanks to Liz Mooney, Roger Beeson, Sergei Chebankov, Yvonne Cheng and Tabitha Tuckett for disentangling subtleties of consent, copyrights and privacy in the context of recordings.

The numbers of CMC members have shrunk this season to 38 individuals -- 20 staff, 16 students and two honorary members. It seems that the main reasons are the lack of access to the practice room and many people being abroad. Current and former members are not removed from the CMC mailing list unless they themselves ask for it – a few might stay in touch with the Club this way and resume their membership next season.

Unfortunately the Club’s practice room could not be made available to CMC members this season. It wasn’t possible to access UCL rooms during lockdowns unless for urgent work reasons. The committee consistently communicated with Estates and carried out risk assessments, but Covid-related regulations across UK and UCL campus did not allow much leeway for music practice at UCL. According to current government plans it should be possible for any CMC member to get into the room and the UCL campus from 21st June onwards. The new piano is installed now (thanks to Liz Mooney for organising its movements around UCL). Work is ongoing to set up an online booking system for the practice room.

The Club’s harpsichord is currently kept in a cupboard in Provost’s office. The CMC was informed that the office will undergo a rearrangement in the foreseeable future. The incoming Provost, Dr Michael Spence AC, expressed support for the Club and assured the committee that the current storage setting will not change until the layout of his office is altered in a major way. It is important to keep communicating with the Provost’s office and administration in order to remain up to date about the developments of this space.

The CMC account statement reveals decent reserves of money. There has been almost no expenditure this season; a moderate income has been gathered from membership fees. It means that after purchasing a new practice piano the Club is in a position to fund varied smaller scale initiatives. Thus the range of CMC activities is not going to diminish due to practical constraints.

The committee has discussed potential ways of spending the £7,500 bequeathed to the Club recently. Quite a few people suggested pursuing ambitious projects, such as repairing or replacing the Steinway piano in the Haldane Room. It was decided to carry out a detailed survey of the piano’s condition. A subcommittee was appointed to deal with keyboard instruments – they will resume activities as soon as it becomes possible to get into the UCL campus and into the Haldane Room.

The CMC Newsletter continues being a platform for sharing diverse thoughts on chamber music and other musical matters. Its editors have prepared one issue this season and will soon distribute it online. It would be nice to engage a broader set of authors next year.

Covid related constraints made collaborating with other clubs and societies more difficult. However, quite a few members of the Oxford and Cambridge Musical Club (OCMC) could be seen and heard at our concerts. The committee hopes to renew the tradition of arranging a joint concert with the OCMC musicians next season. The well-established collaboration with the UCL Music Society could become more active when both clubs have greater opportunities for organising concerts. It is important to maintain connections between committees and to offer opportunities for participating in chamber ensembles to musicians. Rather unexpectedly, the committee managed to devise a concert at Lamport Hall in Northamptonshire, to be presented in late June -- its programme involves eighteenth-century and later music and period instruments.

I am very much looking forward to live concerts next season. The committee aims to present 16 concerts in total, although it is necessary to be cautious in predictions, because room bookings might not be confirmed for some of the anticipated events. The joys of meeting other musicians in and around UCL and rehearsing chamber ensembles seem to be just around the corner.