

Chairman's Report for the AGM, 3rd February 2023

2022 was a year of Covid-free successes and one which continued to see growth for Howdenshire Music. During the year we presented nine live Thursday lunchtime concerts, three live weekend events and two schools outreach workshops. Post-Covid our total live audience numbers rose from 1098 in 2021 to 1840 in 2022. This is a very encouraging increase and we have also continued to have many thousands of online viewers on our YouTube and Facebook channels.

The 2022 lunchtime concert series opened with a performance on 21 April by internationally-renowned violinist Michael Foyle and pianist Julian Jacobson, and the calibre of performances remained high throughout the year. As well as monthly free lunchtime concerts between April-December, we also presented three special free weekend events. The first of these was a free lunchtime concert on Saturday 26 March by respected pianist Duncan Honeybourne, who gave the premiere of a new Yorkshire-themed work by composer Sadie Harrison. This concert was favourably reviewed in *Musical Opinion*, helping to raise the profile of Howdenshire Music. On Saturday 9 July we presented a free evening concert with internationally renowned pianist Martin Roscoe and string ensemble I Musicanti, featuring Schubert's 'Trout' Quintet and a chamber arrangement of Beethoven's 'Emperor' Piano Concerto. On Saturday 8 October we presented a free Chopin Day, featuring four concerts and a talk by members of the McLachlan family including Murray McLachlan, a pianist of international renown and Director of the Chetham's International Piano Summer School, with on-site refreshments provided by Howden-based cafe That Tea Room. All of these special events were very well attended and the performances were enthusiastically received.

The 2022 series featured a wide variety of instruments, from violin and piano to less commonly-heard instruments such as solo bassoon and classical guitar. We continued to encourage musicians to present accessible programmes, including popular classics as well as less well-known works. This, along with brief accessible programme notes, has continued to enable us to widen audience members' knowledge and appreciation of different musical instruments and classical music repertoire. In June 2022 we carried out two very well-received school outreach concerts for Newport Primary School and Howden Junior School with violinist Boglárka György and pianist Amy Butler. A class from Howden Junior School went on to attend the lunchtime concert given by the duo in July 2022.

We have continued to maintain an excellent working relationship with our venue, Howden Minster. Our live audience numbers in 2022 almost doubled from 2021 and we currently have an email mailing list of 600. We undertook an audience survey in November and received predominantly positive feedback, with much to continue building upon. All of our concerts remained free of charge, accessible and inclusive, with a range of age groups attending from children to people of retirement age. We noticed that during school holiday periods many young people attended our lunchtime concerts. Audiences are predominantly local, but we also regularly see people attend from 50+ miles away. Local businesses have continued to benefit from our concerts and have reported increased footfall on concert days.

Although with the lifting of Covid restrictions it was no longer necessary to continue using a booking system, we continued to list our concerts on TicketSource, with advance audience booking being both free and optional. This has worked well and continued to be a good resource for gathering email subscribers and analysing audience catchment area. We have also noticed

an increase in audience members turning up on the door. We produced a 2022 series brochure, posters for all concerts and A1 boards for special events, and also continued our good working relationship with the Goole Times, Visit Hull and East Yorkshire, the Yorkshire Post and Polyphony Arts, all of whom have been very supportive. We continue to advertise all our concerts on social media and share information with other music groups and societies.

Engagement with Howdenshire Music via our website and on social media has continued to be strong and we expanded our social media to include Instagram and Twitter. These channels continue to be useful online promotional tools and continue to allow audience members to engage with our online concert videos if they cannot attend in person. We have built up an excellent relationship with our audiovisual engineer Steve Brookfield, who produces first-class videos of our concerts which have been very well-received by online audience members. With permission from the Minster, he has fitted a catenary wire, LED spotlights and LED bulbs in the Minster's chandeliers to aid lighting and filming during concerts. These installations were paid for by Howdenshire Music. Concert videos have continued to be valuable promotional assets for performers' careers, fulfilling our aim of supporting emerging young professional musicians. During 2022 several of our young performers have gone on to win prizes in international competitions.

Howdenshire Music's FEURICH 218 grand piano has continued to meet with universal approval from the pianists who have played it. FEURICH have continued to promote our concerts and share our videos. The relationship with our piano technician John Tordoff has continued to flourish and he has maintained the piano to a very high concert standard. As well as being used in every concert, exams and promotional videos have been recorded using Howdenshire Music's piano and recording equipment. We continue to be very grateful to Steve Brookfield and Howden Minster for the use of the space. The piano has also been utilised by Howden Minster in several weddings, funerals and the occasional Minster concert.

Our contacts within the music sector have developed further, allowing us to reach out to increasing numbers of professional performers. During 2022 we established good relationships with IMG Artist Management and Cambridge Creative Management, and we continued to be active members of the Regional Tours Active Planning Committee and members of Making Music, through which organisation we have access to subsidised artists and through which we also manage our Performing Rights fees and insurance. We were accepted onto the Countess of Munster Musical Trust Recital Scheme, which also will allow us to book subsidised artists for the future. During 2022 we continued our commitment to pay musicians fair fees in accordance with the Musicians' Union pay scale. The goodwill, talent and dedication of our artists has been an integral part of the success of the 2022 concert series.

Our financial situation has remained healthy throughout the year, with grant funding received from East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Howden Town Council, Active Towns, the Postlethwaite Music Foundation, the Golsoncott Foundation and the James Reckitt Trust, and much appreciated gifts from several private individuals. Small donations from audience members at our concerts also continue to make a substantial contribution to our finances, and our charity status continues to enable us to further increase revenue by claiming Gift Aid on donations.

Looking to the future, we have also commissioned a piano duet from rising young York-based composer Frederick Viner, a graduate of the University of York, the University of Oxford and a former Eton College Composer in Residence. This will be presented in a special event in

2023 to mark the 650th anniversary of the Portugal-UK alliance. Howdenshire Music is listed as a partner on the website: portugal-uk650.com/en. The duet will combine aspects of British traditional music and Portuguese fado. This prestigious commission will help to raise the profile of Howdenshire Music and also fulfils one of our aims of supporting emerging young professional composers.

We have a very exciting programme of concerts in place for 2023 including 'celebrity' appearances by Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, Martin Roscoe and Fenella Humphreys.

There is also a concert scheduled for 6 April 2023, featuring students of the Hull Piano School. As well as a couple of educational events, in addition we have a community concert in the pipeline to put on in one of the local village halls, as a family introduction to classical music etc. This will be dependant on extra funding, if and when it becomes available.

I would like to thank all of our committee members and trustees so very much for their hard work and efforts in service of Howdenshire Music during the last year. I would also like to acknowledge the wonderful team of volunteers who helped with front of house at our events this year: Anne Mepham, Janet Wise, Gwen McHugh and Paul Thompson.

Here's to another successful year of music in 2023!

Steven Goulden
Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Steven Goulden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Goulden".