

13th August 2020

Dear Chamber Music Lovers, Music Society chairmen and Artistic Directors,

This has been a very unsettling time for us all and as we continue to assess how things can move forward my colleagues and I want to get in touch to offer our support and encouragement.

Some of us have had conversations with yourselves. We know there are difficult discussions going on about the feasibility of your next season going ahead and concerns about the health and safety of your audiences. It is indeed a dilemma that you must be facing, so we want to support you in whatever way we can.

Some larger commercial venues remain closed for the foreseeable future, but of course they will employ a huge staff and have enormous operating costs. It is no small thing to appreciate that your societies are run by armies of extraordinarily generous volunteers and for this reason you may actually be the lucky ones who *can* continue to present your series. The last resort we feel would be to cancel concerts and to see the musical impetus in your wonderful concert societies die away.

Our artists are very happy to perform to a smaller audience and you may already be implementing these ideas:

- Artists offer a shorter programme without interval. Possibly play it twice, so if (due to social distancing) audience capacity is reduced there is an opportunity for more to hear the concert
- Amend start times to the afternoon so if queuing is unavoidable it will avoid the cold and dark of an evening
- Streaming: we appreciate this sort of decision will be in your hands, but interviews/interaction with artists on a streamed event could enable your audience members, who cannot attend, to enjoy their music making and further insights from a distance

All colleagues signing this letter represent the artists who perform on your series. These musicians may have already benefited from your chamber music society in the past. We know many of you pride yourselves on having been the first to present an artist who has gone on to have an illustrious career, or an established artist who still loves to return to the wonderful setting that you provide. You are a vital part of their musical *raison d'être*! Thanks to your hard work and the opportunities that you present, you enable these artists to perform in and around this country. It is a vital part of their career development and exposure, and also supports their livelihoods, which currently of course is near to non-existent.

Whilst we are all still in the hands of Government guidelines we understand you will make your decisions as appropriate but our artists want to get out and bring their music making to your audiences. We know the power of music as a healer and an inspiration, so it would be a tragedy if the extraordinary network of concert societies failed to find a way through these challenging times.

We are happy to consider doing whatever we can to keep your societies, the musical fabric of this country, going.

With best wishes and on behalf of all the following signatories,

Emma-Jane Wyatt / ej-arts.com

Signatories:

Libby Abrahams / keynotemanagement.com

Aude-Marie Auphan, Nicolas Papageorgiou, Victoria Rowsell / victoriarowsell.co.uk

Sarah Bruce / lomonaco-artists.com

Catherine le Bris, Eva Pires / clbmanagement.co.uk

Etta Morgan and Mel Moulton / askonasholt.com

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