



Report of the Committee for 2011

This annual report is the first from Strings Attached. For this reason it tells our story from the beginning (in Spring 2010) for the benefit of members who may not know our origins.

We were formed in response to evident financial difficulties at the Old Market, where Coffee Concerts had been run for over a decade. Our formation followed a meeting of well-wishers who determined to form a group to try to help. Our intention was to form a membership organisation to take on some of the financial risk involved. Our efforts were too late – the venue was sold very soon after our formation and the Hanover Band Foundation decided to take the Coffee Concert series to St Nicholas Church under its own independent management on Sunday afternoons for the 2010/11 series.

We decided to continue to meet and seek ways of representing the interests of chamber music lovers in Brighton and Hove. We were concerned lest the initiative at St Nicholas Church might also fail, and wanted to stand ready to do whatever we could to ensure that high quality chamber music in Brighton and Hove might continue. We undertook a survey of the audience at St Nicholas Church which established that the audience on the whole preferred day time concerts and that whilst a traditional chamber music repertoire is of primary interest, there is an appetite for some more recent music, and for a range of types of ensemble (though the string quartet remains the most popular).

We were fortunate in securing Levon Chilingirian as our president and planned a launch concert with kind support from the Brighton Dome and Festival in the Autumn of 2011 with the Chilingirian Quartet with a view to hosting a chamber music festival, perhaps in the early Spring, to supplement the efforts of the Hanover Band Foundation in 2011/12. In April 2011, however, we were told that the Hanover Band Foundation would not be offering a 2011/12 season, so we changed our plans and set about trying to ensure that there would be a Coffee Concert season in 2011/12 elsewhere.

Our established relationship with the Dome and Festival and Director Andrew Comben's personal love of chamber music, meant that he was prepared to pull out all the stops to help us. We were delighted that his swift action secured top class musicians for the Dome's current season despite the short notice. We determined to do our best to ensure that there would be a strong audience for the

series because we wanted to make sure that the provision of regular chamber music concerts would not find itself in crisis again. To this end we decided to revert to our original idea of becoming a membership organisation and set about recruiting everyone we knew and ensuring an attractive season ticket offer was available at the new Coffee Concert season for our members.

Our launch concert took place very successfully in October 2011 and the 2011/12 Coffee Concert Series is now well established and has proved successful. Andrew Comben and the staff at the Brighton Dome and Festival are already planning a season for next year. The current committee hope that the incoming committee will continue to try to boost membership of Strings Attached and thereby ensure that the future chamber music concerts is assured.

We will also seek to be a vehicle for information sharing about chamber music. Our website contains information about music from various providers in Brighton and Hove and the surrounding area and a calendar of local concerts. It also has a section putting amateur musicians in touch with each other.

We also seek to increase understanding and share thoughts about music we listen to. To this end we provide programme notes for the Coffee Concerts (prepared by committee member Chris Darwin) and provide space on our website for comment. There is also opportunity at our annual general meeting for members to provide feedback about the concerts, which we will share with the Dome.

The idea of planning a chamber music festival has been put to one side by the current committee as we have been fully stretched building Strings Attached as a membership organisation. Future committee members may however decide to revisit this and other ideas for promoting chamber music.

At the time of writing this letter we are in the process of registering with HMRC as a Small Charity.

The current committee would like to put on record its gratitude to Andrew Comben and the staff at the Brighton Dome and Festival for their co-operation and support over the past year, without which the success of the current season would not have been possible. We would also like to thank many other people who have helped and advised us, including the Brighton Early Music Festival, David Botibol who has offered IT support tirelessly, and several of our members who have offered ideas, advice and help.

On 31 December 2011 we had 97 members.

Current committee:

Mary McKean (Chair)
Christine Moon (Treasurer)
Margaret Polmear (Secretary)
John Bosowski
Chris Darwin
John McKean



(Chair)