



THE  
COBWEB  
ORCHESTRA

## Silver Trumpet!

### The Cobweb Orchestra 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Newsletter

Well, it's not long now until our Silver Anniversary Weekend. We're sure you, like us, are encouraged by the recent relaxation of guidelines regarding performing arts and trials are underway to determine how we can all start to meet again safely, in person. Unfortunately this has come too late for us to confidently plan a physical 'big play' for our Silver Jubilee and so we've come up with some remote alternatives, which we hope you'll support:

Please attend as many of the planned events as possible (full details will follow, along with event registrations). Also, if any of you are able to provide financial support (perhaps a pound for every year Cobwebs has existed, or for every year you've been a member?) as this will help to fund our proposals. To do so, simply make a BACS payment using the following details: A/C: 65560297 Sort Code: 08-92-99 Reference: "SILVER/your surname".

#### PROPOSED 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

##### Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October from 7pm - Silver Concert Party

Inspired by the success of recent Virtual Concert Parties, we're inviting all members old and new to join us in an extra special evening of entertainment. Everyone is invited to 'dress up' for the occasion in their concert waistcoats and to add a 'silver shimmer' to everything in view of their Zoom camera! An enrolment form will be issued in September, but in the meantime, players please plot and prepare.....do you have any 'silver' related pieces to play? or anything you can share which has a special 'Cobwebs' related memory? (whether that be 12 months or 12 years ago!) Subject to the updated guidelines, we especially encourage small groups, as well as soloists. All are welcome!!

In Sedbergh Residential style – cocktails or other celebratory glasses are encouraged as we'll definitely be toasting 25 years of musical bliss!!

25<sup>th</sup> August 2020



#### Sunday 4th October alternative 'BIG PLAY'

We're planning a 'live' concerto performance in the afternoon. The professional soloist (details to be confirmed) will join us on Zoom, with their accompanist and we will provide the full orchestration remotely (the beauty of doing this at a distance, is that only WE know whether we're playing the 'right notes, in the right order'?!)

#### Sunday 4th October evening reminiscing

We're hoping to commission a short film to encapsulate our last 25 years! A tall order, which can only be achieved with your support. We're seeking archive materials which Howard Locke will 'triage' before sending on to our film-maker. Howard explains "As part of our silver anniversary weekend we plan to produce a digital record of Cobweb memories. Hopefully the end result will be a short film about the orchestra. There is lots of material out there: posters, flyers, newsletters, recordings, videos, photos so the difficult bit will be deciding what to include. If you have anything that you think merits inclusion please select the 'best bits' and send them to me as soon as possible, at [howardlocke@yahoo.com](mailto:howardlocke@yahoo.com). It might be something that hasn't been circulated before or just something you think would be suitable to include.

If you have technical issues, let me know and I'll find someone who can help!"

#### Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 7-8.30pm

##### BLOW THE COBWEBS OFF YOUR MUSIC STAND

Join us on Zoom, exactly 25 years since the very first Cobwebs event '....designed to encourage players who do not currently have an outlet for their talents to take their instrument out of its case again....'

That historic invitation is still as relevant today as it was 25 years ago. So help us mark this special anniversary by brushing any cobwebs off your own instrument cases/music stands to join us as we recreate the first ever Cobweb Orchestra rehearsal with a virtual scratch performance of Beethoven's 5th Symphony!

## Founder Member Feature #4

### Howard Rocks



*Why did you go along to 'blow the cobwebs' off your music.....what were you expecting? Has it lived up to your expectations?*

I had seen the posters but had decided that it was too long since I'd touched my cello so had decided I wasn't going. Then I bumped into my daughter's violin teacher, Ben Armshaw, at a school event. He remembered me mentioning I'd played at school so asked if I was going and basically told me not to be silly but to go and he expected to see me there. I really didn't expect I'd be able to play after a gap of 22 years, and I couldn't. But what it did do was give me the motivation to go home and start practising scales and arpeggios. This revived my muscle memory and hand eye coordination and by the end of the ten week course I was able to play something again. It has exceeded expectations in that I never anticipated being involved in playing music again at all.

*Is there anything that you would never have done without Cobwebs...and is there anything you'd still like to try?*

I would never have put on a red overall, sat on a wooden trolley with my cello and be pulled around the Angel of the North. That was one of Anton Hecht's film projects, one of an enormous variety of experiences over 25 years that range from the ridiculous to the sublime. I hope to continue to try all such opportunities that may arise in the future!

*What's the most beautiful piece of music you've played with Cobweb Orchestra?*

I think that most of the music we play is beautiful though to be honest we don't always play it beautifully.

*Have you played cello in other orchestras and if so, how does Cobwebs compare?*

My first experience of orchestral playing was with the school orchestra. Then I graduated into the City of Belfast Youth Orchestra. This was in the early seventies and thinking back now it amazes me how much we were able to do considering we were effectively living in a war zone. It was an up and coming time for the Youth Orchestra and I enjoyed memorable tours of Scotland and Berlin. If I'd been a year younger I would have still been in Belfast to enjoy their tour of Canada.

Cobwebs is different to other orchestras I've experienced, it is more tolerant, less competitive and more supportive.



*Have you played or wanted to play any other instruments?*

The first musical instrument I learnt was the piano for which I had lessons for several years alongside the cello.

I also tried playing the organ. A friend at a local church gave me a few lessons and I would practice in the church after school when I could fit it in.

My main memory of this was how creepy it was to be alone in a church, especially in the dark winter afternoons. Churches make strange noises all of their own especially when encouraged by an organ playing.

*How/why did you become chair of trustees?*

*What's it like being involved at this level and is there anything you're particularly proud of achieving??*

When North Music Trust was formed and Northern Sinfonia was going through many changes leading up to moving into the Sage it became clear that Cobwebs would have difficulty continuing as we wanted to.

We were advised to consider the possibilities available for becoming independent. Several meetings took place and the timing coincided with the Cobwebs trip to Hungary in 2006. Many discussions took place on the bus driving around the country.

When we arrived home and things were beginning to take shape Lee Fairlee asked me if I would consider chairing the group set up for going independent. I agreed and this became the group of Trustees that oversees the orchestra.

I'm not a meetings person but the trustee meetings were always held on the same basis as orchestra gatherings and were always good humoured while getting "stuff" done.

The main achievement is a workable system that continues to work.

*Which are your favourite 'highlights' from your years with Cobweb Orchestra (and any 'low' lights)?*

Certainly the main highlight has been the opportunity to make so many wonderful friends and as we have been around for a generation now the lowlights are the loss of many of those friends.

Musically of the many highlights one early performance sticks in my memory: It was at Bowes museum playing Bruckner's 7<sup>th</sup> Symphony. I'd listened to Bruckner before but this performance made me understand what he was about.



Thanks so much to Howard for sharing his experiences.

Next (and the last) month's founder member feature is with Lesley Wearmouth. Please send any questions for Lesley by Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September.

Please send all replies and queries relating to this newsletter to [nikki.k.lipinski@gmail.com](mailto:nikki.k.lipinski@gmail.com).

However archive materials need to go to [howardrocke@yahoo.com](mailto:howardrocke@yahoo.com). Thanks so much!