

Glorious

Thornbury Orchestra Conductor's report for 2009

Yes, Glorious. I really enjoyed the year and feel that the Orchestra has established itself to a good standard. We consistently get "improved" comments from our audience and the orchestra has settled to a full symphony size of around 50 regular players.

I'm very pleased with the way 3 in each woodwind is working – I hope it works for you too. The horns and trumpets also seem to be happily running with the one extra and we have found good trombones to help us out. We have a good violin section and plenty of cellos. If we could encourage a few more violas, a couple of trombones and a double bass or 2 we would be there. Again we are fortunate to have a number of extras who help us out at our concerts. Now we have a regular arrangement with our percussion and harp it means we have players we can rely on. A big thank you to them too.

Our concert preparation for June went well and we played to a reasonable audience in Berkeley church. What a fantastic opportunity to play with Elin. The orchestra raised its standards and accompanied her superbly. May this be the first of many collaborations with young artists. Jonathan once again gave us some locally composed music which gained audience acclaim. The Sibelius Symphony, whilst not the best we could have played, was a creditable performance.

I would like to mention the carnival even though I wasn't there. Thanks to all of you who helped – such events are great for the orchestra's publicity and profile in the area. I hope you will be able to support it again this year. It was good that many of you took part in the Thornbury Community play too even though this meant opting out of the "for fun" sessions. Thanks also to the string quartet and wind quintet who played in John Lewis at Christmas and gave their fee to Orchestra funds.

My concerns for the December programme was starting Christmas music in September. In the end I think it worked well – I didn't tire of the music and maybe you were too polite to tell me that you did. We had a few nerves at the start – something we need to work on generally – but by the second half we were flying. The orchestra really seems to play programmes of lighter music very well – even the more technically difficult bits.

Programmes which involve lots of shorter pieces incur more cost and significant effort for the librarian. Thanks Naomi. Indeed thanks to all the committee. In addition to all the usual roles, they take it in turns to organise concerts and manage the various crises that come up from time to time. The fact that everything runs so smoothly is down to them – thank you all. Thanks also to Janet for quietly keeping me under control and helping all the strings perform to their best.

Lastly I look forward to this year with confidence. We have a stable membership, improved playing standards, an influx of younger players (you are all welcome) and a strong financial position. We will do three concerts which is more than usual but our prom concert will repeat a number of recent items and I have programmed a shorter and more straightforward concert for December. Not strictly in the coming year but I'm really excited about TO Compose! Martyn Brabbins has agreed to chair the judging panel. This will raise the orchestra's profile as a supporter of local contemporary music and give us a significant resource for our future concerts.

I wish you all as much enjoyment as I get from this exciting orchestra. Chris Hill Feb 2010.