

Commissioning New Music - Case Studies from the Promoting Societies' Development Project

When looking into commissioning new music, a perfect place to start artistic discussion is with performing artists, especially when considering complementary programming. Commissioning need not be expensive or time-consuming; many performers have contacts with both experienced and developing composers, many of whom will be open to discussion.

Maidenhead Music Society

Maidenhead Music Society made contact with the Contemporary Consort Ensemble to perform as part of their 2004-2005 season at Norden Farm Arts Centre. The idea of the commission arose from discussions with the ensemble regarding complementary programming between classical and contemporary works. Composer Quentin Paul Thomas was contacted and given a brief to compose a new work based on Mozart's Kegelstatt Trio.

The Society investigated new areas of marketing, including web and flyer design. Flyer design was disregarded in favour of a more artistic approach, as coincidentally a member had completed an oil painting of one of the performers. The Society intends to use this as part of their publicity material in future along with new IT developments. A new audience emerged as a result of the project; 48% of the audience were new attendees. The project was an excellent example of developing complementary classical programming.

Hinckley Music Club

Hinckley Music Club invited clarinettist Sue Gill and pianist Karen Suter to perform an evening of music entitled 'Discovering the 20th Century' on Saturday 2nd April 2005. Composer Colin Riley was contacted and commissioned to write a new piece for the concert.

Colin Riley was invited to attend the concert to provide information on his piece through an interval discussion. The resulting composition, *Shenanigans*, was a lively, audience-friendly and yet demanding piece for clarinet & piano. Colin Riley was very helpful throughout the process and made himself available to talk with the audience at the concert.

Bromsgrove Concerts

Bromsgrove Concerts, through its Mixing Music series, encourages young, unpublished composers by providing an opportunity for their music to be performed by top professional musicians. For most Mixing Music concerts, several compositions of around four minutes in duration are submitted to the musicians, who then decide which they would like to include in their concert programme. An added bonus, of course, is that Mixing Music concert audiences get a chance to hear some fascinating new music by composers who they will hopefully be hearing a lot more of in the future.