

COMMUNITY NEWS - Tuesday 5th June 2021

IPSWICH ARTS ASSOCIATION with Chris Green

Welcome to news from Ipswich Arts Association in a New Year! I only hope it could be better news but it is more of what one has come to expect under the current circumstances. Throughout December, some of our major performance groups were assessing what would happen in the spring and, after discussions between their senior officers, members and hirers of venues, reluctantly decided that cancellation of programmes would be inevitable.

I was privy to one such meeting between the Ipswich Symphony Orchestra, Trianon Music Group and Wolsey Orchestra together with Ipswich Borough Council. Each had taken the best advice currently available and also was briefed about what was happening in the professional theatre scene, since all three organisations are major users of the Apex in Bury St Edmunds and the Ipswich Corn Exchange. At the time of their meeting Suffolk was in Tier 2 and further restrictions were expected in Essex which was then in Tier 3. Soon afterwards the Government announced the imposition of a new Tier 4 which makes public performances impossible.



Wolsey Orchestra in rehearsal. Photo: Wolsey Orchestra



Ipswich Symphony Orchestra. Photo: ISO.



Trianon Music Group. Photo: Geoff Rogers

Since then Trianon – which had already cancelled its January 2021 concert at the Ipswich Corn Exchange months ago – reluctantly had to postpone the second of its smaller-scale Covid secure concerts scheduled for 31 January at the Suffolk village of Great Bricett. This will be re-arranged for possibly March. Meanwhile the Group is keeping its scheduled Covid secure concert planned for 27 February at St Thomas’s Church in Ipswich in place and will review the situation in a fortnight’s time.

Of course this is only the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds of performance groups in the region, all of whom, are facing the same restrictions and concern about retaining the confidence and interest of members, and being able to plan for a time when some kind of “live” activity will be resumed. Agile planning and flexibility seems to be the order of the season and all we can do is to be patient and keep faith with our colleagues that a kind of “normal” service will be resumed as soon as possible.

Last year should have marked the twentieth year of the Ipswich Town Lectures and Ipswich Town Concerts. The series started promisingly in January 2020 and continued until March and then came to a juddering stop and although one lecture and one concert were able to be presented in the early autumn, the series had to be halted for the second time. Whilst streaming the 2021 has been considered, it was felt that this would not be appropriate or possible at present, and so the waiting game continues.

I should have been conducting a concert at the Ipswich Corn Exchange next Saturday. This is only the second time in 61 years that I have missed such an event. Instead, I shall just have to sit myself down and listen to music that does not tax the imagination; music such as that provided by the annual New Year’s Day concert in Vienna. So as a suitable “rehearsal” for my entertainment I selected a CD at random from my bulging shelves. Turn the clock back 21 years to a concert when the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra was conducted by Japanese conductor Seiji Ozawa. From the opening bars of Johann Strauss’s Overture to Die Fledermaus to the end with the traditional rendition of the Radetzky March, the recording reminded me why this is considered a vintage event. The orchestra could probably play the music from memory and with their collective eyes shut, but Ozawa brought swagger and extra finesse to the well-attired and (probably well-fed) audience that graced Vienna’s Musikverein (Philips 468 999-2).

Finally, one of the casualties of 2020 was the chance to experience “live” more music by

Ludwig van Beethoven , the 250th anniversary of whose birth was scheduled to be celebrated across the world. Well, 2021 for me belongs to a friend and colleague, Sir Malcolm Arnold who was born 100 years ago. So you will have to put up with many references to the composer described as a “Rogue Genius

If you have a story to share with other organisations, please email IAA chairperson, Professor Chris Green at cjc.green@talktalk.net
