



2016-2017 Annual Meeting

Monday, May 15, 2017 | 7 – 9 pm

Deedee's House, Brattleboro, VT

Participants: Linda Hecker, Deedee Jones, Gudrun Weeks, Jill Newton, Ede Thomas, Sarah Kemble, Chris McAvoy, Peter Gibbons, Pedro Pereira, Mary Hayes, Don Hayes, Doug Cox, Michael Ward, Kimi Hasegawa, Kaitlin Haskins, Jessica Murrow, Catalina Arrubla, Stephen Broll, Fleur Barnes-Rowell, Karen Horton, Donna Morse, Hugh Keelan, Jenna Rae (facilitator)

Note: The formal portion of the annual meeting started at 7 pm. It was preceded by a 6 pm potluck dinner and social hour and a 5 pm tour of the Brattleboro Music Center's new buildings, which are currently under construction.

1. Report of 2016-17 Season

- Musical Report:
 - **Praise:** Orchestra members are committed, diverse (in terms of age, skill level, etc.). We are in service to something collective. Everyone give a lot of energy. We offer great performances.
 - **Capital Campaign:** Note that we've already reached a high participation rate in contributions to the BMC building capital campaign.
 - **Concerts:** This year, we gave 10 or 12 concerts, collaborated with the Sage City Symphony. Look back at the repertoire we covered this year.
 - **Repertoire Highlights:** Don Quixote was challenging; the Ruggles was not altogether pleasant, but it was unique; the principal singers loved participating in Il Trovatore; Beethoven symphonies were grounded; etc.
 - **Growth:** People are attracted to the WO. Audience members are not restless; they expect miracles and wonderment. Our accuracy and "cleanliness" have improved. We're behaving like a real *orchestra*; we're serious.
 - **Challenges:** Especially for our March and May concerts, we struggled to attract audience members.
- Comments:
 - **Gratitude:** We come to rehearsals to be a part of Hugh's vision. We appreciate his direction.
 - **Interconnectedness:** Our connectedness and relationships allow us to make great music. Hugh has helped us achieve a strong sense of community.
 - **Motivation:** We're doing what our mothers wanted us to do. ;-) We're a big, multi-generational family.
 - **Youth:** Note that the Vermont All-State Music Festival directors attempted to achieve a sense of community and collaboration in Brattleboro. Seeing our young members participate in the festival gives us hope for the future of music.
 - **Collaboration:** Our willingness to go along with the wishes of the Sage City Symphony to play the Ruggles was admirable.

- **Concert Venues:**
 - *Location:* The high school auditoriums were challenging venues for various reasons. When we host a concert in a different community, be sure to plan way ahead and coordinate more closely with the host organization, venue, or community.
 - *Latchis:* For next season, try to get the Latchis Theatre for every concert; this will build comfort, consistency, and familiarity. Contact Jon now!
 - *NECCA:* The new New England Circus Arts building may have enough space for an orchestra.
 - *The Colonial:* The Keene Orchestra may be dying, so there will be an opportunity for us to play in The Colonial. This would help us recruit more players too. The Keene State Orchestra is doing well, but they only play two concerts per year.
- **Rehearsal Venues & Outreach Ideas:**
 - *River Garden:* We'd like to continue rehearsing at the River Garden at least once per concert cycle because it's a public space. Promote it with signage and a sandwich board!
 - *Brooks House Atrium:* Small groups.
 - *Flash Mob:* In the street or the Harmony Parking Lot. One instrument at a time emerges.
- **Financial Report:** Will be available in June. **We will host a special meeting at Pedro and Karen's July 2nd to discuss the 2016-17 financial report and review the 2017-18 draft budget.** Give Hugh a raise.
- **Gratitude:** Thank you to all our orchestra and community members who volunteer to manage various details.

2. Moving Into the Future

- **2017-18 Season Repertoire:**
 - **Votes:** Orchestra members were given an opportunity to contribute suggestions, then vote on a full list of ideas. See the resulting repertoire proposal. **Kaitlin will post the vote results on Google Drive and email the link to everyone.** Note that there is no opera. Hugh will play the solo part of the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1.
 - **Music in the Schools:** We may move this concert to November. This would require moving the concerto competition up as well.
 - **Concerto Competition:** Dates may change. We're considering a new model that would allow for more participation of the orchestra (TBD).
 - **Dates:**
 - *Spread:* There's more time in between fall/winter concerts than spring concerts, so we could start rehearsing spring repertoire in the fall. Give everyone all their music in the fall. This might help with retention.
 - *Days of the Week:* Consider switching from Friday and Sunday to Sunday and (the following) Sunday.
 - *Number of Concerts:* Consider only offering one concert per cycle. Try this for one or two programs. This could open up dates for chamber and opera.
 - *Opera:* Try an opera gala, potentially for fundraising.
 - **Potential Collaborations:** BUHS jazz band; Nutcracker with dance school; Romeo & Juliet and Scheherazade with ballet dancers from the dance school. These collaborations help build audiences. Get more people on stage! The audiences will come.
 - **Audience:**

- *Size*: We're playing for ourselves, but we'd like larger audiences. Attendance is never a function of program. Word of mouth is king.
 - *Motivation*: People come for the performers. Invite your friends, family and neighbors!
 - *Research*: See American Symphony Orchestra Association audience survey – key finding: 80% of the decisions people make regarding concert attendance are *social*.
 - **Comps**:
 - *First-Timers*: Be sure to offer the first-timer comps in 2017-18 to bring in new people.
 - *BMC Students*: Offer comps to BMC students to get more young people; offer a season pass to students (show their pass to the BMC staff and get tickets).
 - *Groups*: Offer comps to a certain group for each concert (ex: Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Brattleboro Selectboard).
 - **BMC Building**: The studios will enable more chamber music groups. The WO should offer chamber music performances in between our regular concerts.
 - **Donation Requests**: Don't ask for donations during our concerts. Hugh shouldn't be the one to ask. Bake sale volunteers can ask for donations.
 - **Marketing**:
 - *Newspaper*: We need to ensure that we get into The Commons for every concert. Jon Potter, formerly the arts editor at the Brattleboro Reformer, was a big advocate. Cicily, the new editor, is not as enthusiastic about classical music.
 - *Free Papers*: Free papers require notice two weeks ahead of time. Schedule the publicity ahead of time.
 - *Parades*: 2017 or 2018 Strolling of the Heifers: Get a float. Donna has a 24-foot trailer with a roof that we can use!! Requires a special truck to pull (Deedee has a big truck). It fits 24 people with stands. Feature Jenna singing an opera aria.
 - **Grants**: We *can* write grant proposals and present them to the BMC for approval before submission.
- Social Events & Organizational Meetings:
 - **Milk & Cookies**: End one of our September rehearsals at 8:30 pm for a social hour.
 - **Visioning**: The conversations we've had at our visioning meetings are intended to expand our thoughts, not *necessarily* to produce results (still, the results are a byproduct of good communication and engagement in process; we're more invested). We have repeat patrons because our concerts are phenomenal.
 - **Pedro & Karen's Music Party**: Everyone is invited to attend their music part on July 2nd at their house in Wilmington. Bring food, beverages, chairs, music stands, hats, clothes pins, and your instrument. Friends and family are welcome. The Executive Committee will meet there as well.
- Fundraising:
 - **Silent Auction**: Deedee is starting to plan an online auction in collaboration with the Executive Committee.
 - **Welcome Center Bake Sale**: We were assigned the last Friday in September. Start rehearsing soon.

3. Announcements

- Executive Committee: Jenna is stepping down as our committee chair. Chris is also leaving – she has been on the committee for ten years and in the orchestra

as a musician for 37 years. Don Hayes, Fleur Barnes, and Linda Hecker will join the committee. Woohoo! Dvora will continue organizing the bake sales.

- Tenure: Many of our members have been playing in the WO since the 1970s and 80s. What dedication!

4. Conclusion

Minutes submitted by Kaitlin Haskins