

TakeNote



The CSO Players' Newsletter

October 2020 www.CSOrchestra.org

Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to our latest edition of TakeNote. It can't replace playing together, but it is a good way to keep in touch nonetheless in what is the most challenging period I can ever recall.

I am grateful once again to our excellent editor who has brought this newsletter together in difficult circumstances for us all. Also, my thanks to the committee who have been working hard behind the scenes to work out a way that we can return to rehearsals safely, and interpreting and following the regulations, and keeping closely in touch with advisory bodies, such as 'Making Music'. Judith's item describes just a part of the work that has been undertaken behind the scenes, largely by Judith herself.

I am aware that some musical groups have started rehearsing together. We are in touch with a number of these, learning from their experiences. I believe that our cautious approach is the right response in the circumstances, being mindful of our huge desire to play again as soon as possible, but that we can do so safely for ourselves and also for the wider community to whom we also have a responsibility. But our 'five principles' are now met – so we can move the stage of planning a return to rehearsals. This could of course change if circumstances change, but we have a good basis for optimism:

	Test:	Current status:
1	We should ensure our members are safe , or able to make a sensible judgement based on the risks and their personal circumstances to keep safe.	The work undertaken by the committee, including the consultation with Taunton's and the guidance from Making Music, means that we have met this principle as far as we can. We will need to be prepared to adapt and do a 'dry run' to test our plans
2	We should be guided by our conductor and the views of our members (and will ask them) and our audiences and partners, to ensure we are in line with feelings and needs.	This is pretty much met – we have had discussions with John Traill and the member survey gives a good indication of our members concerns and preferences. We are not yet planning concerts, so we are not yet consulting audiences
3	We should not be the first UK orchestra to 'test the waters' and we should learn from what the professional orchestras and groups similar to us are doing.	Met – some orchestras are now playing, albeit in a very distanced way. However, we need to watch the space closely as this develops
4	We must always be inside the government advice (if we were ever challenged).	Met – but we need to watch this space and ensure our decisions are documented if there was any challenge
5	We should have a way of rehearsing that is both practical and appropriate.	This is met in as much as we have an agreed plan and just need to test it out. However, it won't be like the old rehearsals of course.

The planning continues and we will be trialling a return to Taunton's for those who wish, although we will simply have to adapt, as we've said all along.

Jos: Chair@CSOrchestra.org

Principal Conductor's Note

Dear CSO,

I'm sure we all miss playing together and long for the day when we can do so again safely. My sincerest thanks to our committee for their considerable efforts in planning throughout the ongoing crisis.

A musical positive, perhaps, might be found in the many innovative ways in which musicians around the globe are creating opportunities to collaborate. A day doesn't seem to pass without news of new ways to make music while being socially/remotely distanced (just yesterday I heard that the Guildhall School of Music and Drama have delivered a project where a socially distanced orchestra played live across 4 venues, with concertos by Elgar, Rachmaninov, and Tchaikovsky (conducted by Richard Farnes); this brought to mind Berlioz's vision (in the 1855 revision of his *Treatise on Orchestration* [1843]) of using synchronized metronomes to enable multiple conductors (and orchestras) to lead gargantuan performances (and indeed 20th century works for multiple orchestra such as Stockhausen *Gruppen*). One can only imagine where this might lead...!



But of course, the reality for the vast majority of orchestral musicians is that they are not yet able to make music together. I daresay we all resonate with an ever so slight trepidation about what it will be like to play together again, and the finer details therein; while I have been musically very active during lockdown (from my desk/piano), my arms haven't waved properly in front of anyone since March: my first face-to-face engagement is with London-based ensemble CHROMA on 15th October (poetic, perhaps, because they were the last group that I conducted, on the 13th March!) and I am already chomping at the bit!

I am very enthusiastic about what lies ahead for the CSO – when we can start playing together again, we will build up to our past standards step-by-step, tailoring rehearsal content and goals to players wants and needs. I feel certain we will have a lot of enjoyment reaching each milestone and I am extremely pleased to have signed, today, a new contract with the orchestra. I am excited about the prospect of working together and look forward to our future musical endeavours!

Very best wishes

John

Return to Live Rehearsals

Thank you to all members for taking the time to complete the Making Music survey and also to section leaders for getting a more detailed breakdown from the players in their section. We received 65 responses with the breakdown of return to rehearsal indications being: Yes 46; No 3 and Maybe 16. The majority of respondents want to see some or all of the following, which is all consistent with our draft risk assessment:

- Social Distancing of 2m or more
- No physical contact (handshakes, hugs)
- Face coverings where possible, but certainly for arrival and departure
- No communally provided refreshments
- All players to bring own equipment (stand, music etc.)
- Exclusion of people with symptoms
- Shorter rehearsal with no break (about half of respondents)

It is highly unlikely, at this initial stage, that we can get all players who are interested in returning, back at the same time. The social distancing requirements just won't allow that in the space that we have available to us, so we will be looking at a rota system. Now that we have an indication of the players we will firm up on the musical plans so that everyone who wants to play gets the opportunity.

As Orchestra Manager I have already visited Taunton College and have been in regular contact with their lettings team. Some of the committee are planning on visiting on the evening of 6th October to do a dry run of some of the procedures that we will need to have in place, prior to sharing these with members.

Some of you have shared correspondence from other musical organisations that you are associated with, and these have been very useful as input into our plans. Please do keep sharing those.

We are making progress, and I apologise if this is slower than some of you would like, but we ask for your patience.

All indications are that this virus is going to be around for some considerable time, so please do not expect to get back to full orchestral rehearsals and concerts of symphonic pieces in the foreseeable future, but we will do our best to work within the government guidance and have some CSO music making soon.

2m chair layout being trialled with Judith B standing in for John T! More details will follow once considered by the committee.





Orchestra manager toolkit:

- tape measure
- knotted cord (knots) every 2m
- cups to represent chairs

Judith: Manager@CSOrchestra.org

Music in the City

Music in the City, which we have supported every year, was always going to be challenging during the pandemic, and although the intention of the organisers is that it should go ahead, it is proved very difficult for us and other organisations to take part. Following extensive discussions, and consideration of options, we have had to decline this year - it was just going to be too complicated and difficult for a larger group to perform. I'm very grateful to Bree and to Philip who have worked hard to try and find a way for us to take part, however the organisers fully understand, and we will be mentioned in dispatches! We've also made it clear that we would of course want to be involved in MITC in the future, especially as the mayor is our patron.

Jos: Chair@CSOrchestra.org

CSO Membership and GDPR (that sounds exciting, Judith)

If I'd been a Membership Secretary a few years ago, I would probably have had a piece of paper pinned on the fridge door, with all the names of CSO members written on it by hand. I would also probably have lost it periodically and found it weeks later under a pile somewhere.

Thankfully now GDPR rules mean that we have to keep details more securely. The CSO member database is kept on a secure website called Membermojo. We keep lists on here of all our instrumentalists, conductors, deps, friends and sponsors, with email addresses and what instrument(s) they play.

Only members of the committee can see the full list of names and any details held, and data is never shared. We only use it to help us to communicate with our members about what is going on – newsletters, committee updates, concert detail etc. At some point we plan to process payment of subs through Membermojo, but not at present.

However, it is increasingly important in the current COVID crisis, not just to be able to keep in touch, but because we expect to use it as part of our duty to 'track and trace', as and when we return to rehearsing. So, it is essential that your details are up to date and include phone, email and address.

It would be very helpful if everyone could sign in to Membermojo and check that the details we have for you are correct. If you are happy for us to have your phone number it may be helpful should we need to use it for track and trace. If at any point in the future you change your email address or name, you can update your own details.

What to do:

1. Go to www.membermojo.co.uk
2. Sign in with email address – you will be sent an email
3. Click on 'My details' and edit them if necessary. Only your own details will be visible to you. Ignore the Messages and Payments sections.
4. If you have any problems, send me an email and I'll try to help judith.beton@gmail.com

Judith Beton: Membership@CSorchestra.org

Committee Roles



Secretary Role

I'm delighted that Louise Coggins has great take on the role of secretary for the CSO and joined the committee. She is already making a very active contribution, and bringing some new ideas, which are very welcome. We are still looking for someone to take on the role of treasurer, and grateful to both Emma and Paul for continuing to provide support in the meantime. **Jos**

Hello from Louise:

Officially from November 2020 I'm delighted to be taking the 'baton' from Annie as Secretary for City of Southampton Orchestra. I joined CSO as a member of the violin section in 2006 having moved to Sway in the New Forest from London. I went to the University of York and read music a long time ago (the '80's) and have enjoyed carrying on playing with KSO in London, and then CSO ever since. At points in the last 14 Years with CSO I have been Violin section fixer and accountable for the tea/coffee service, and I am currently on the Programming Committee. Along with raising 2 girls, one of which I

dropped off at Bristol University this September, I also am re-starting my business as a Career and Outplacement Coach, so working for myself is the perfect opportunity to give more time to CSO. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can help with. Louise Coggins louise@coggins.org.uk.

Louise: Secretary@CSOrchestra.org

Treasurer Role – Call for Volunteers

As outlined above we are still looking for a volunteer to pick up the role of TREASURER. This doesn't have to be a playing member of the orchestra - we need someone with the knowledge and time to keep on top of the orchestra finances and work with the committee for reports and future plans. The current incumbent would happily explain in more detail if you would like to find out more.

Judith: Manager@CSOrchestra.org

Grand CSO Quiz!

Back in July about 20 members of the orchestra gathered on ZOOM for an eclectic set of quiz rounds. These ranged from identifying nursery rhymes from their second verses; history questions with the answers relating to a cake or biscuit; trying to tell the difference between pasta and opera; landmarks from the air; flowers with animal names; and an IKEA round (was something an IKEA stock item or a rude word).

The little grey cells were worked hard, but players and their families seemed to enjoy the activity and it was certainly lovely to see folks, all be it on the screen.



OR



Flower Names Quiz

Flowers with a Name that includes an Animal
eg Dandelion



Judith:

Manager@CSOrchestra.org

Lockdown News

I've been quite busy, musically. I've done recordings for All Souls Orchestra, my ceilidh band and have recorded once a month for my church online services. Gina, Sue and I have played the occasional trios in the garden and I've played along with the CSO wind section on Tuesday nights. As you do, I decided to learn to play the concertina, which I love and am a bit obsessed with!

Judith Beton: Membership@CSOrchestra.org

I had the greatest of intentions at the beginning of lockdown to dig out my dusty 'Mazas Studies' and practice a study a day! Alas, this was not to be and it has remained on my music stand gathering more dust!

Sue Dancer: Teddy@CSOrchestra.org

I have missed the orchestra a great deal this year. However, one positive is that it has encouraged me to explore new ways of playing music. I have loved practising the (socially-distanced) Bach double and Mazas duets with a couple of good friends from CSO. The folk band I play in have also played on the common a few times (we are now experts at catching wind-blown music stands with one foot midway through a tune!). We played some of the beautiful 'Wood Works' album by the Danish String Quartet at a friend's wedding recently too. The fact that the wedding went ahead successfully amidst such uncertainty made the day really magical!

Mary: Editor@CSOrchestra.org

In some ways I have enjoyed the freedom of home playing whilst missing the excitement of orchestral playing. I have (over a long time!) amassed a collection of violin music and have ploughed through a lot, often playing with Marian (wife) or my mother-in-law (excellent pianist at 86!). Unaccompanied Bach has been a staple, but I also have classical backing tracks and enjoy playing difficult stuff really badly, (I have not asked the neighbours though). Earlier in lockdown I found a great (free) course by an American violin professor – mostly bowing technique. I've also been clearing out the loft and found a giant box of Victorian violin and piano 'parlour pieces'. But I miss symphonies and overtures in an orchestra – home playing is just not the same!

Jos: Chair@CSOrchestra.org

Although I am missing rehearsing with CSO, highlighted when I was watching the proms with envy! I have been involved with a couple of music making activities which, in 'normal' times I don't think would have come onto my radar.

At the end of August, I responded to a local Facebook call out for a violinist to play in the Beaulieu Shakespeare production of Romeo and Juliet. I had 2 hours' notice, and a quick call with the Director – Abby Wright – to get myself to Beaulieu for a rehearsal with the cast, and then we were off – playing a series of evenings and matinees in questionable weather deep in the woods with a very flimsy gazebo as cover. The actors were from RSC, National Theatre and West End, fabulous to watch, and we were accompanied by very loud owls, midges and rain! The audiences were good and it was a magical setting with fairy lights strewn around the trees. I don't think I will forget setting up in the rain,

having walked down a very muddy path with all my kit including warm drink with bin liners and full ski kit on to keep warm! Link to website here <http://beaulieushakespeare.co.uk/>.

I also spent time with my brother who is a saxophonist and has his own studio in his back garden. His close friend and collaborator had written a song as part of a soon to be released 5 song EP, which needed a violin part on the refrain. One early August evening I spent a very satisfying 4 hrs just improvising at his studio and my brother has just shared with me the finished track, and if I say so myself, I am rather proud of the result!

I also have my first Violin pupil starting on Saturday – very exciting!

I think we have to keep open to the more unusual opportunities that have us keep our hand in music making alive – here's to more adventures!

Louise: Secretary@CSOrchestra.org

I have been doing some playing - with my other orchestra - Romsey Chamber Orchestra at weekly online ZOOM rehearsals. Good to get together on the screen and I have enjoyed being an honorary member of the Berlin Philharmonic (it's their backing tracks that we have been using). Back in May I annoyed the neighbours by playing the last post outside for VE day. Despite the weather being reasonable over the summer the horn section are only just planning on meeting at the beginning of October in Trevor's garage (I'll let you know how we get on!)

Judith: Manager@CSOrchestra.org

Admittedly, I haven't played much over the past few months, mainly due to having two young children! However, I did take part in the BBC Lockdown Orchestra in May, which was hugely enjoyable. This involved recording myself playing along to an orchestral recording of You Got The Love. The finished product was shown on BBC4. Although I didn't feature in it, it felt really good to feel like a part of the performance. Other than this I have been working on the pieces I'll be playing with my Dad (flautist) at my Brother's wedding. This was supposed to be in April this year, but it's already been rearranged twice. Hopefully it will go ahead as planned in March next year. Having been away from CSO since May 2019, I'm very much looking forward to returning to rehearsals when it is safe to do so.

Sarah: Tickets@CSOrchestra.org

The CSO Cello Section

The cello section took the summer off from its Tuesdays WhatsApp chat sessions, but I expect we will have resumed by the time this edition of "Take Note" gets issued. I am feeling very rusty and have not done very much playing since the start of "Lock-down". I hadn't fully appreciated how much I rely on the CSO, and other musical groups with which I am associated, to keep my playing "up to scratch", and of course, all these other groups have stopped as well. So, I was delighted when we were able to have our first "live" cello trio session earlier this summer with Sue Leonard and Lucinda Wright. We played outside, of course, to comply with government guidance on social distancing, and whilst not great for sound production, I felt myself smiling like a Cheshire cat just to get back to playing together again. I am really looking forward to resumption of rehearsals with the CSO, in whatever form it has to take!



Bernard Postlethwaite (Cello section)

Tune-A-Day Concert

My cellist husband, Julian, and I, on piano, had videoed and posted 100 tunes on YouTube during lock down. To round things off, we had a Concert-and-Party, socially distanced in our garden. The rain held off!

For most of us, it was our first live "do" for months. What a wonderful feeling! and we raised lots of money for AsthmaUK/British Lung Foundation.



Ilfra Carlick (Cello section)



Bernie's Adventures

A Message from Bernie!

Hello everyone! The last month has had me contemplating my furry tummy and missing all my wonderful friends from the CSO. Not playing together has left a big 'bear' space in my life. It has made me realise how important it is to be able to play music and be creative together in a safe environment; something I think we probably all took for granted!

Although this has been a tough time for all musicians it has also created opportunities which may have never arisen without lockdown. It has given us a chance to think outside the box and be creative in different ways. An example of this which I have found particularly inspirational is 'Royal Albert Home' which aims to 'bring exclusive sessions from artists' homes to yours'. Do have a listen...

<https://www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/series/royal-albert-home/>



We cannot expect to automatically revert back to the way everything was before but we must be creative in making plans and trying to solve the problems ahead so we can play music together again!

Love Bernie x

Bernie: Teddy@CSOrchestra.org



If you would like to read about anything in a future **CSO TakeNote** newsletter do send in your ideas. Or perhaps you would like to promote a link to a website, or write a piece to put into a future edition, do send a note to ...

Editor@CSOrchestra.org

