

SCMS 2025 AGM Minutes

20th May 2025, 11:00-12:00

Walters Room, Selwyn College

Minutes taken by George Nicholson and Jao-Yong Tsai

Present:

Senior Committee: Roger Mosey (President, RM), Sarah MacDonald (Senior Secretary, SEAM), Dr Alan Howard (Senior Treasurer, ADH)

2024/25 Junior Committee: Louise O'Hanlon (Junior Secretary, L'OH), George Nicholson (Junior Treasurer, GN), Zara Bhayani (Publicity Officer, ZB), Jao-Yong Tsai (General Member, JYT), Ellie Tang (General Member, ET)

2025/26 Junior Committee: Magnus Chapman (Junior Secretary, MC), Jessica Macfarlane (Junior Treasurer, JM), Elsa Chung (Orchestral Manager, EC), Kit Attwater (Concert Manager, KA), Louisa Paterson (Publicity Officer, LP)

1. Apologies for absence

- Prof. Katharine Ellis (Fellow in Music), Dr Andrew Jones (Emeritus Fellow and former Director of Studies in Music)

2. Senior Committee Reports

- SEAM pleased with an industrious and efficient committee
- ADH explained that 2024-2025 was a good year financially, though overall gain is less because PRS returns came twice in this year. Commented that PRS fees are much cheaper in the hall than chapel; Suggested limiting the capacity of organ recitals to 100 when declaring. Raised the issue of how to administer the £2000 received; suggested ringfencing the fund for committees to 'bid' to underwrite a more ambitious concert or for concerts that struggle to make money back in donations. Asked the next committee to do more work on the PRS throughout the year on a spreadsheet.
- RM commended the year's publicity compared to the previous, suggested that 'people' sell events on publicity and to use photos of performers if they are willing to be photographed.
- LO'H stressed how highlights videos give a 'face' to SCMS. Recommended different types of publicity for different audiences (emphasised the success of posters in town for larger concerts).
- RM suggested inviting local alumni to the May Week Concert.

3. Junior Committee Reports

- LO'H commended an overall successful year and thanked the rest of committee. Stressed the cohesion, communication, and co-operation of the committee and thanked the precedent from last year's committee. Explained how the committee

had built on existing traditions with larger ensemble concerts (drawing wider student community attendance), solo recitals (highlighted the Williamson prize recital). Stressed the involvement of instrumental musicians through chamber music concerts. Thanked EC for freshers' string orchestra, JYLPT and ZB for baroque and string orchestra concert, Marcus Budack's (3rd year music student, *Selwyn*) song cycle. Emphasised how Abba in Freshers' squash was enjoyable with choir solos seeing a good participation.

- SEAM questioned whether organ recitals are 'traditional' given they have only been running for three years but emphasised that students are keen to play them.
- GN analysed the attendance and donation figures for the previous year. Commented that the low attendance on the 24/11/2024 was due to poor communication with the recitalist.
- SEAM stressed the use of non-muso committee members.

4. Plans for coming year

- LO'H emphasised the importance of the next committee making SCMS their own.
- ADH emphasised careful fiscal planning and engagement with the college community.
- MC proposed a big push to engage with the freshers and get SCMS a name that the incoming freshers know from the start and stressed the importance of financial health. Suggested pushing the social side of SCMS outside of the choir.
- SEAM recalled how links outside choir were good until ZB joined, eliminating connection with wider world; Suggested MC 'come up' early to communicate with the wider body like previous organ scholars had.
- ZB emphasised the committee's good relationship with the JCR, and making sure SCMS events are on freshers' week timetable. Recalled how the previous year students had disliked constant emails resulting in the use of Selwinfo. LO'H also stressed the use of the chapel mailing list.
- JM recalled that lots of freshers had come to the freshers' squash and that most are happy to play when they're asked such as in musicals and the bridgemas concert. SEAM noted the problem getting lots of high achieving musicians to do concerts as many are studying chemical engineering and medicine.
- KA suggest performing a big Bach concert with motets, orchestral pieces, and Goldbergs without repeats. SEAM worried that they take a while. KA planned a better connection with FCMS (*Fitzwilliam College Music Society*) in particular Jazz concerts with 'Fitz Swing'.
- LO'H emphasised the links with Selwyn Jazz. ZB recalled Matt Rowe's (*Operations Manager, Selwyn*) support of more regular 'Jazz in the Bar' events
- SEAM recalled the more regular proliferation of Jazz events pre-covid. MC suggested a bigger jazz standards concert

- KA proposed an 'open stage night' for people not usually involved.
- SEAM recalled that Selwyn Voices have been involved in SCMS concerts before but took decision not to this year in favour of concerts during lunch at hall.
- RM raised the problems with lunchtime concerts as well as how Selwyn Voices may not be inclusive for those who do not know their part. SEAM agreed, suggested unison in two parts. RM argued it discriminates against lower voices.
- LO'H emphasised that SCMS can provide a nice middle ground with choral concerts seeing good interest from people outside chapel choir. SEAM questioned this idea given they still do not see people who don't know SATB. KA argued its more about pressure. LO'H agreed stressing a lower commitment for people who may have sung in school choirs. JM emphasised contribution through more casual events like musicals, freshers' squash, and beach boys flute concert.
- JYLPT reminded the committee of the need to be careful not to organise a big concert too often. ADH recommended choosing recitalists who are good at communication

5. Organ recital planning

- SEAM and Shanna Hart will sort organ recitals for the coming term and then organise it with Kim (*incoming Organ Scholar*).

6. Retirement of president and succession planning

- SEAM formally thanked RM. Argued it gives SCMS 'structural kudos.'
- RM argued the role is really 'light-touch'
- SEAM emphasised SCMS being accountable to college council to have a bank account and therefore magisterial oversight is useful. Saw Sunday evening recitals as an important tradition (since the end of WWII), with lots of important musicians restarting careers through it.
- SEAM agreed to write to the new master. ADH planned to possibly raise it next week with the new master
- ADH noted that RM has been both communications officer and master and drew attention to the ongoing process to appoint a new communications officer.
- RM stressed how the society must remain integrated within the college. Argued that other societies make the mistake of doing their own Instagram or mailing list, rather than getting on the college Instagram which SCMS has been doing. Believed the organ recitals are yet to get on college consciousness.

7. Election of junior committee

- MC – Junior Secretary, JM – Junior Treasurer, KA – Concert Manager, EC – Orchestral Manager, LP – Publicity Officer
- All in attendance approved of the appointments
- L'OH recalled the rearranging of roles slightly for the 2024/2025 junior committee, in particular some administration to the Junior Treasurer.
- MC stressed having named roles as a way of ensuring clearly defined responsibilities
- KA worried that the concert manager role only involves 'putting out stands' where the orchestral manager has a lot to do. SEAM pointed out how Annabel Steadman (*author*) had to discuss so many things about opening and closing doors in future interviews and therefore the SCMS transferable skills are useful
- EC looked forward to fixing players and building connections with string and chamber groups.
- SEAM raised the issue of planning for handover arrangements. LO'H explained the committee's plans to make some 'tips and tricks' documents and hold a short meeting with the incoming committee.
- ADH recommended placing the google drive on his account, existing as an 'evolving archive'. Recalled how it was formerly a box of paper items.
- RM recalled the 100 or so redundant Selwyn social media accounts. GN will check passwords of software for the incoming committee.

8. May Week Concert planning

- LO'H said the committee planned to program Vivaldi, 'Gloria'; Elgar, 'Enigma variations' (including 'Nimrod'); Parry, 'Blest Pair of Sirens'; concluding on a surprise 'to the taste of the president'
- RM stressed the importance of not making the concert too long. JYLPT stated that playing time for music shouldn't take too long.
- RM questioned the importance of an interval. SEAM suggested refreshments after the concert might be more useful. RM offered to pay for and host drinks in the Master's Garden, though questions who we might want to provide drinks for.
- LO'H clarified that the committee had already started to send out emails for players and singers.

9. Any other business

- EC raised the question posters around college. ADH recalled that the music society noticeboard used to have a poster every week.
- ADH thanked the committee. Noted that informal meetings with the senior committee would be useful. LO'H found senior committee input is useful, argued that it might be nice to discuss them before it goes out on posters. ADH

stressed that the senior committee can provide insight and 'institutional memory' (what has and hasn't worked in the past). LO'H pointed out that committees only get one 'example' from the year before.