

OTAGO & SOUTHLAND ORGANISTS ASSOCIATION INC

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 2020 – AND WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Our previous Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 13 March 2020 in St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Hope St., Dunedin. There were 11 members present, and 12 apologies. In my annual report I aired concerns that had been raised over the preceding year about the future of the association, and future support for the organ in this part of the world. A positive outcome of the ensuing discussion was the moving of a motion that:

The incoming Committee be a working party to conduct a SWOT analysis and develop a business plan. The working party has the option to co-opt where necessary. A special general meeting of the membership to be called to present the recommendations of the working party.

The officers and committee elected for the year were:

President	Mark Hughes
Vice President	Stephen Chalcroft
Secretary / Treasurer	Sue McLintock
Committee	Robert McLintock Peter Stockwell Raymond White
NZOA Councillor	Mark Hughes

There was a little time left for those who wished to play the St. Matthew's 3 manual Bevington instrument, which was introduced by a brilliant demo by David Burchell. Supper was served in the 'Hope Centre'.

None of us appreciated at the time how quickly our world was to change, as a week later New Zealand plunged into lock down so as to stamp out the advance of COVID 19. While in lock down, the opportunity presented itself to the committee to embark upon project planning and working up a business plan. Once Alert levels dropped down, the committee was able to meet in person, and did so on five occasions. It turned out to be a substantial piece of work, taking longer than we had anticipated, hence only now reporting to our membership at the forthcoming AGM. However, in the meantime, we did explore some of the recommendations.

The way forward for the Otago Southland Organists Association:

Supporting documentation:

- 2019 Annual Report of the President of the Otago Southland Organists Association
- NZOA - RESULTS OF SWOT ANALYSIS 2009-2019
- April 2020 Discussion document + Excel spreadsheet guide which identified key points and their priorities, prepared by Stephen Chalcroft, Vice President OSOA
- Project Initiation Document - April 2020
- Otago Southland Organs of note 2020 – draft spreadsheets – July 2020

Objectives

- Assess the NZOA SWOT analysis in relation to our region
- Business plan developed outlining a way forward
- Project Plan formalised for an agreed time period
- Present the set of recommendations to a specially convened meeting of the current membership

Scope

Nationally, there are similar concerns regarding the direction of the parent organisation. The scope of this project is focused exclusively on the Otago & Southland region. The northern regions will no doubt be very interested to learn of the progress of our region's project

Financial and Non-Financial Benefits (our Aims)

- i. Promote organ playing
- ii. Promote the literature of the organ
- iii. Promote the maintenance and preservation of pipe organs
- iv. Promote the continued building and installation of new instruments
- v. Encourage new members to become involved and engaged in all of the above

Benefits Realisation

- Relationships with allied and interested groups:
 - i. There is a need to communicate with all teachers of keyboard instruments (especially with current organ teachers) to outline our aims and where they may be able to support them. The University (including U3A where musical themes and subjects are discussed) and school music departments should not be neglected. Teaching groups such as the George St Saturday morning classes are another possibility. The "Rare Byrds" have established themselves as a competent early music group who may wish to consider any joint concert options
 - ii. We need to engage more with the custodians of existing instruments in the form of formal meetings with the purpose of both sharing our aims and air mutual concerns relating to the neglect and poor maintenance of instruments. The ultimate aim is to have all current and potential organists realised as valued players in this change process
 - iii. More young organ students would be of a great asset – especially if their skill levels enable them to participate in any of the concert series that might develop
 - iv. We need to offer a summary of our aims and strategies to the custodians of the majority of pipe organs in the region. A hopeful outcome could be that some may wish to champion these (aims and strategies) and provide suggestions on access for students and even a performance venue
- Future cohorts:
 - i. is the question of identifying young musicians with keyboard skills who have not been exposed to the organ and its music
 - ii. is attracting the group of current young organ students who may be enrolled with a recognised organ teacher
 - iii. is the musician (of any age) who would like to combine with the organ (or sample the option)
 - iv. is the adult musician who relishes the opportunity to access organs and may have access to a church or his or her own instrument
 - v. for all (most?) being a member of our organisation needs to have relevance and meaning

Strategic Alignment

- Support the aims of the New Zealand Organ Association Inc. that are:
 - i. To promote and foster in New Zealand an interest in and knowledge of organs, organ music, organ building and associated matters

- ii. To encourage young people and others to become organ students
- iii. To advance the knowledge of organ students and others by arranging public and other recitals, concerts and master classes and by providing lectures, discussions, conferences and practical sessions on topics of interest to and of value to organists and others
- iv. To enable organ students and others to develop their skills and widen their knowledge by promoting the exchange of organists within New Zealand and overseas
- v. To stimulate public interest in the preservation of New Zealand organs of national or local importance and of organ building records
- vi. To encourage scholarly research into the organ, its composers, music, history and construction
- vii. To liaise closely with other musical groups with similar objectives and to encourage the formation and growth of organs societies in New Zealand

Recommendations:

1. Need for a sponsor - someone who is well recognised as an achiever in the arts or any other civic activity that has been recognised. Someone, who will be supportive of the aims of our association and demonstrated to be a recognisable and respected personality. If we are to consider mounting a community appeal for any major project funding, then such a person will be of help to give a personal identity and perhaps provenance to such an initiative
2. Comprehensive communication strategy – to cover everything, including:
 - a. a ramped up approach to the promotion of the Dunedin Town Hall organ concerts
 - b. commissioned articles in the daily newspapers
 - c. highlighting of regular demonstration concerts
 - d. theming of the aims of the organisation
 - e. making it clear that the fate of the organ and its repertoire in this region relies heavily on public engagement and support
 - f. canvassing for donations and bequests would be an important function if (4) below is to progress. This strategy could risk failure because of too great a reliance on traditional means and not have enough person power to see it through
 - g. The use of electronic media and methods is strongly recommended
 - h. Review the name of our association – perhaps it should be aligned now with the national association’s name, and that too of the Auckland Organ Association
3. Making the most of the regional instruments of good playing quality. These would mainly include pipe instruments but there are at least 4 digital instruments in the region that would be very suitable. Barriers to access and use (where identified) should be addressed.
 Demonstration concerts need to be carefully planned for the maximising of our aims.
 Maintain a current database of Otago & Southland Organs of note
4. Funding for:
 - a. Advertising
 - b. Newsletters
 - c. Commissioned articles
 - d. Visiting organists
 - e. Scholarships
 - f. Major projects, etc
5. This working party has the power to co-opt where necessary, to bring on board the desired expertise to deal with most of the points covered above. There may be a need to employ a skilled facilitator (clearly with its own financial implications)
6. Through our Regional Councillor, work with the NZOA to develop and adopt a New Zealand Code of Ethics in the national body’s constitution, that we too can include and endorse

Interdependencies

Success will depend on the clarity with which our aims are formulated and stated

Piecemeal approaches which are short term “patches” will give an illusion of change, but be unlikely to help in the longer term

In summary:

This is the result to date of the work of the committee / working party. We look forward to your initial input at the AGM, so we can in confidence together move forward into 2021 and beyond.

Stop Press

Sue McLintock very ably took on the challenge of compiling and editing four issues, so as to keep membership informed of various events, developments, and opportunities.

In the August issue we welcomed new member - Mark Patterson, who had recently moved to Dunedin from Nelson. Mark has a 3 manual Johannus T370 organ at home (same as the one in First Church, Dunedin) as well as a 3 manual Studio370 practice organ. Mark works in with both *The South Island Organ Company*, and *Keyboard Music Systems*, as a repair technician for both digital and pipe organs.

Mark also owns an Audio Visual company that is opening a branch in Dunedin, specialising in residential and commercial Audio Systems. Specifically Churches, Schools, Restaurants, and much more: www.lifestyleav.co.nz

Events

The month of September, in recent times, has been celebrated as ‘New Zealand Organ month’. In light of this, David Burchell, Organist at St Joseph’s Cathedral, in conjunction with the Otago & Southland Organists Association, organised a successful concert at St Joseph’s Cathedral on 4th September 2020. Coming as it did in the Level 2 lockdown, we were pleased to welcome an audience of around 35 people.

The aim of this concert was to give four organ students a chance to gain confidence playing in front of an audience. Other contributors to the concert were the Deputy Organist of St Joseph’s Cathedral, Maria Lane, together with four of our local members and Caroline Burchell (Soprano).

David Burchell (City Organist, Organist at St Joseph’s Cathedral and Senior Organist, All Saints’ Church, Dunedin) brought the evening to a close with his performance of *Praeludium in e* by Nicolaus Bruhns (1665 – 1697).

Our grateful thanks too, to Mark Patterson, who volunteered to set up a video link for us from the organ loft to the screen at the front of the Cathedral. As many of you will recall, the organ loft is not visible to the congregation, therefore the screen enabled the audience to participate in a tangible way viewing the recitalists.

Prior to the concert, 10 members had enjoyed a meal together at *The Black Dog*.

Five members travelled to Timaru on 10 October 2020, at the invitation of the SIOC, to hear and view the Austrian Reiger organ from St Peter's Anglican Church in Riccarton, Christchurch. Several members from the Christchurch Association were present in addition to local people. John Hargraves, Russell Kent and David Burchell ably demonstrated the instrument, showing its versatility. To test out its capacity for choral accompaniment, we also sang a couple of hymns, with great harmony! This was the first time that SIOC was able to host an event in 2020, due to the previous lockdowns.

It was agreed at our 2020 AGM that Stanley Fox should be appointed as a Life Member of our Association. Stanley started to learn the organ at age 14 and later studied at the *London College of Music*, gaining his Diploma in Organ. He played at various churches and Cathedrals during his 14 years in England. Stanley moved back to Invercargill in 1980 and has contributed much in piano and organ to the musical scene in Invercargill. He is still in demand to play for weddings and funerals and with his usual dry wit, comments: "people are dying for his services".

A special Evensong was being planned for, at Holy Trinity Church, Invercargill, for late March 2020, to include the presentation of the Certificate. However, due to Covid-19 lock down this event was cancelled. Mark Hughes was able to present Stanley with the Certificate at First Presbyterian Church, Invercargill on 25th October. There was a subsequent article, regarding the presentation of the Certificate, published in *The Southland Times*.

Our 'End of Year Event' planned for 13th December 2020, at the Chalcroft's, had to be postponed, instead eight members enjoyed a pot luck meal at Sue and Robert's home.

On Sunday 31st January 2021, 11 members met at Stephen and Doris Chalcroft's home to view part of a DVD series titled "The English Organ". We saw the initial 20 minutes of the introductory DVD: "The Long Beginning" then a description and demonstration of the three New Zealand organs featured. These were all introduced by organist Daniel Moulton. The evening concluded with a delightful shared dinner. We look forward to viewing further DVD's in this series.

Our oldest Otago member, Mel Freeman, celebrated his 90th birthday on 2nd February 2021. We presented him with a birthday cake and card at our Sunday 31st January event. Mel also enjoyed playing the Johannes LiVE 111

In conclusion

Thank you to our committee for their energy and enthusiasm in addressing the future direction of the association, and preparing a way forward. The ground work has been set in place, and new initiatives have begun. We now need to build on this momentum. Thank you too to the support of our members through what has been a very challenging year. We can look forward with renewed confidence to celebrating our association's 60th anniversary this year.

Mark Hughes
President

23 February 2021