

HOLMFIRTH MUSICAL FESTIVAL CURRENT ORGANISATION

The Festival has operated in October for many years. This poses problems with the closing date of entry (right at the start of a new Autumn Term after the summer break), but attempts to alter the date have failed due to clashes with other organisations.

January

Syllabus determination. Subcommittee including local piano and vocal teachers. Until just a few years ago, individual testpieces were selected for each class, but more recently (and on the advice of local teachers, and following what other festivals have also been doing) either published graded collections, or ABRSM syllabus lists, have been specified, from which entrants can choose their own testpiece. New classes have also been added in recent years following similar introductions elsewhere which have proved successful. The biggest classes by far in 2022 were pop ballad and Disney vocal solo classes, in their first year.

February/March

Syllabus choices checked (publisher availability); Test piece details entered into database. First round of publicity aimed at entrants.

April

Syllabus published. (Document created in MS Word or MS Publisher; small number of paper copies printed, pdf published on HMF website. Website information updated. (website really needs modernisation!))

May/June/July

Publicity – Syllabus pushed to local teachers, past entrants, schools, social media. Festival Software checked and prepared to receive new entries.

August/September

Paper entries received; Secretary inputs entry data online into database.

Late August

Closing date for entries (September 16th) further publicised. (This date chosen some years ago arbitrarily as the latest date allowing sufficient time before the Festival to process the entries and create a programme schedule).

Previous year's trophies should be returned – chased if necessary.

September (around 20th)

Balloting of entries for order of competing. Actually, this is done by the computer, but the main job is to create a competition schedule. BIFF timing recommendations are used to calculate the expected class durations, then classes are ordered taking into account the recommended session lengths for the adjudicator, any entrant requests (e.g. not available on particular dates), entertainment value for audience, number of sessions competitors with multiple entries will need to attend from a distance, accompanist requirement.

This has been recently done jointly by chairman + secretary, rather than by full committee.

N.B. Unlike some other Festivals, it has been our experience that the vast majority of entries arrive either in the few days before the closing date, or indeed after the closing date. This is certainly partly due to the fact that the closing date is only a couple of weeks into the new school term, which does not give much time for teachers to organise pupils after the summer break. Were we to have ignored late entries, we would have had to cancel Festivals due to insufficient support – until 2023 when there has been a bumper entry and it was difficult to accommodate late entries

Booking of Civic Hall final details confirmed (mainly the sessions needed)

Late September/Early October

Competitors' entry tickets (allowing them entry on the day, and receipting their entries) printed and sent out. The Festival software does this from the database.

Programme text (software produced) manually compiled into a programme; copies printed for sale on the day – approx 100 depending on entries. Choirs and ensembles draw more audience and sell more programmes. We have found it appropriate/more profitable not to specify a programme price, but to request a donation. Programmes currently printed by Chairman on his home HP 5100dtn printer.

Also produced by computer from the database:

- Adjudicators report sheets.

- Trophy receipt forms (2 copies of each)

- Class list sheets (for adjudicator to summarise marks)

- Competition Schedule

Manually prepared:

- Testpiece copies for adjudicator (other than own choice copies provided by entrants on the day)

- Staffing rotas – for each session:

 - Adjudicator's assistant

 - Competitors' stewards

 - Platform assistant (sits on platform with young pianists / page turner)

 - Doorkeepers

 - Adjudicator's music copies steward

 - Trophy steward (ensures safe-keeping agreement signed by winners)

- Website updated with some detail about classes (but not enough to interfere with programme sales).

During Festival

Secretary or other official always available to deal with any problems as they arise.

Adjudicator provides sample signature before Festival starts which is scanned into computer so that "signed" certificates can be printed on demand. Microphone/amplifier ready if needed; piano in position; stage lighting adjusted;

Before each session/day – trophies need to be placed on display, in the order they will be presented.

For each class:

- Adjudicator has set of pre-headed report sheets, plus marks summary sheet, plus set of testpiece copies. Adjudicator's assistant ensures these are available to him/her as class progresses.

At end of class, assistant takes mark sheet to office whilst adjudicator presents his/her adjudication.

Marks entered into database, computer prints prize certificates plus certificates of merit.

Adjudicator's assistant takes certificates back in time for them to be presented to competitors, along with the adjudication sheets.

Computer records class winner on database.

At end of each day,

if needed, computer can print list of prizewinners so far.

Treasurer is responsible for the door takings

After Festival

Website updated with list of winners and any photographs taken.

November

Debrief committee meeting / AGM. Decide if Festival to proceed next year – book Civic Hall.

Committee Expertise Needed

General Secretarial / Organisational / Communication skills / grants procurement

Social Media – Facebook/Twitter

Publicity – both electronic and word-of-mouth. Needs to develop contacts with schools, local teachers and individuals, choirs.

Website – needs overhaul and design update. It would be advantageous to implement online entry linked to online payment. We have online entry currently only for secretary use.

The current (retiring) chairman was (12 years ago) a teacher of Computer Studies, and produced the Festival's software which has significantly simplified the secretarial tasks and streamlined the running of the Festival. The new committee is very welcome to inherit this software, but it is now quite dated, and would benefit from modernisation (or a total rewrite). Someone with computer programming skills may well enjoy this task!