**A Shropshire Composers’ Co-operative**

***Preamble***

 Much of my own music has only seen the light of day through the generosity of musical groups and societies, mainly amateur, in Shropshire and Wolverhampton. Yet I realise that in some ways I have been fortunate, and that many composers languish without hope of performance of any kind through lack of the necessary contacts. It seems to me that there is scope for much progress in a collaboration between composers and local musicians to bring the music of local composers to some kind of an audience. I am therefore proposing the setting up of a Shropshire Composers’ Cooperative which would allow composers and interested musicians to work together to promote the performance and propagation of their work. Obviously, the direction that such a group would take would depend on the interests and priorities of those who were to set it up, but nevertheless, what follows is a personal vision which may act as framework to work with or against.

***First steps***

Following an initial meeting of those interested, which I imagine would probably be in the range of 6 -20 people, one possible starting point might be to organise a small-scale chamber-style concert where we could showcase one or more examples each of our work. There would be no funding for such a project, so we would have to all muck in with performing and beg our friends and musical acquaintances to come and join us too, for free. Realistically, we cannot expect anything more than a small audience (50 would be a triumph) made up of friends, family and musical colleagues. One venue which I personally might consider for such an event is St. Michael’s Church in Madeley, which is a welcoming, comfortable and adaptable space often used by Telford Orchestra for their concerts. If anyone is aware of cheap, welcoming and suitable venues in Ludlow or Shrewsbury, these might be better locations to get an interested audience.

if successful, such an event would

* Show that we could work successfully as a group to promote our mutual benefit and progress to further projects.
* Create a ‘buzz’ in the local musical community and get the group some recognition
* Stimulate further interest in membership of the group.

***Possible further developments***

If successful, the group would at some point have to become a proper society (probably with charitable status) with a constitution, elected Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and committee. This would give the group formal status and encourage a committed membership. This would also allow a funding stream through membership fees, as well as offering the possibility of applying for grants and other funding.

Further concerts and regular collaborations with local societies (-for example, sponsoring a local choral society or orchestra to give a performance of a member’s work-) could be embarked on. Consideration might be given to special membership for groups and societies who wish to be linked to the group to foster working together and encouraging commissions (probably unpaid for amateur groups).

Another possibility might be to develop a ‘Festival’, probably best conceived in the summer months so as not to clash with other organisations’ events.

***Long term possibilities***

With sufficient funds in the bank, it may become possible to stage professional performances and even sponsor commercial recordings. At this stage we could consider setting up a professional website and selling our goods and promoting our activities more widely as well as providing an additional window into members’ compositions. There is also the possibility of taking on part time a PA to help promote the interests of the society and individual members.