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Stephen Hough CBE
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WACIDOM

Inspiring concerts – Inspiring competitions
www.musicinwarrington.org.uk

Registered

Charity No.
1141750

Norman Cutter BEM

1939 - 2018

WACIDOM, then known as the Warrington Arts Council Initiative for the Development of Music, was formed in 1994 with the aim of supporting and encouraging music making in Warrington and the surrounding area. The direct connection with the Warrington Arts Council has since lapsed but Norman Cutter was Treasurer and Chairman for this project from its foundation right up until his untimely death in December 2018.

Initially WACIDOM organised recitals at various venues in the town to provide a platform for musicians, especially young musicians, who were dear to Norman's heart. The emphasis on music making by young people was further promoted by WACIDOM's first Warrington Young Musician competition in 1998, held at Great Sankey High School. The competition, run biennially, subsequently moved first to Walton Hall and later to the superb venue of Arley Hall, where it has remained.

Free Saturday lunchtime recitals in Holy Trinity Church in the town centre began in 2000, and for 19 years, until the arrival of the Coronavirus, there have been more than 20 Saturday recitals a year. Many of the performers being young musicians from the country's conservatoires, especially the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

WACIDOM's 300th Saturday lunchtime recital was due on 13th May 2014, but, at the last moment, the performer had to back out because of a broken finger. Despite many attempts by Norman to find a replacement, with two hours to go and still no musician lined up, he was contemplating cancelling the recital. This would have been the first time it had happened. Then Norman received a phone call from international superstar Stephen Hough, who was in the area visiting his mother. Stephen had heard about our predicament and very generously offered to fill the gap. To put it mildly, the audience was astonished when Stephen walked out to play and they were stunned by his world-class performance.

Norman's contacts were important with WACIDOM's 400th recital in September 2018, too, with a piano recital by Yuanfan Yang in front of a packed church. Yuanfan's first performance at Holy Trinity had been 11 years earlier as a nine-year-old. WACIDOM has kept up the tradition of occasional concerts by very young musicians and the final recital of the 2019 season, recital number 428, was given by young pianists, including a ten-year-old.

In 2011 WACIDOM registered as a charity and Norman was instrumental in seeing this through. The charitable status, which enables the organisation to benefit from Gift Aid, has put it in a solid financial position.

Norman's service to local music was not limited just to WACIDOM. In 1991 he was one of the founders of the Live at St Wilfrid's series of concerts, which were still going strong 28 years later. In 2006 he became Concert Secretary for Friends of Walton Hall Music, which holds recitals in the intimate surroundings of this Victorian mansion.

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Classical music-lovers in Warrington have an enormous debt of gratitude to Norman for all the ventures he started and his dedication in keeping them going. It was not just what he did, but the way he did it, with a smile on his face, and in 2013 his enormous services to music were rightly recognised with the award of the British Empire Medal.