**Are you being served? Are you being heard?**

As I expressed at our AGM, it is a privilege and an honour to be your President this year. I believe passionately in the values and aims of the ISM: to promote and support the art of music; to promote and support the interests of persons working as professionals within the music profession; and to provide assistance, support and relief of need for members, former members and their families and dependants.

I have experienced the benefits of being a member of the Society for over 30 years and, during the past year as President-Elect, I saw for myself what an excellent job our dedicated staff team at central office do for us all and what a thoroughly professional role our Council fulfils. I hope that this year we can all work together, focussing our energies on the objects of the Society referred to above.

We now have articles that enable the Society to function effectively in the 21st century. I know that a small minority of members had concerns about the changes. I therefore want to re-iterate that I value openness, transparency, challenge and constructive criticism. In a Society as large as ours we will not always agree. That does not mean that we do not value and respect those different opinions. But having considered all views, it is Council’s responsibility to take decisions that are in the best interests of the Society as a whole. I am a Director/Trustee on several boards and I can say with confidence that the ISM is run totally professionally.

One of my tasks as your President this year is to have a significant input into conference. This year’s conference was excellent. I am sorry that more of you were not able to experience it. For 2014 I want to engage and involve more of you. The Society has a long and distinguished history dating back to 1882. There is much that we must value and retain from the past whilst also looking forward to a Society that supports its objects in the 21st century, turning the spirit of those objects into relevant, practical action. At present we are considering separating the AGM from conference so that we can devote more time at conference to learning and sharing ideas. A separate AGM will allow those of you who are interested in the business of the Society to engage more with what your Society does and with our future planning. The AGM would take place in London. The provisional date is 24 April 2014.

I also want conference to be relevant to the needs of more members. I am considering the theme of Music in the 21st century, incorporating music in a 21st century society; the composer in the 21st century; the professional musician in the 21st century, the private teacher in the 21st century; music education in the 21st century. You get the idea! At present we are considering hosting the conference in Birmingham for two days between 15 and 17 April2014. Do let me have your thoughts and views. I can’t promise to accommodate them all, but I can promise to give them all full consideration as part of our planning. I look forward to hearing from you.