



## SPO AGM 14 October 2025 – Chair report

### Welcome

Thank you for staying for tonight's AGM. We'll aim to be finished in 30 minutes. I hope you have all had a chance to chat and have some snacks.

A very warm welcome to all our new members. For those of you who don't know me, I am Nic, I have played bassoon with SPO since 2007 and been Chair since 2022. Unless there are any last minute contenders for the post of Chair, I am happy to stand again but this will be my last tenure, so someone will need to take over – please give some thought to whether this is something you would like to consider.

### Season review - highlights

Some of the musical highlights this year, as voted for by you in the end of season survey, were **Carmen at Canon Arena and Tramlines**. Interestingly quite a bit of the feedback focused on the social aspects of these events, having more time to get to know other orchestra members. This orchestra has a reputation for being super friendly and welcoming and hopefully those sorts of events help foster that. We can't promise we'll definitely be at Tramlines next year – we'll just have to keep our fingers crossed. We are looking at options for another big collaborative event in March 2027 for the next Classical Sheffield weekend – more to follow on that. Another favourite was showcasing some of our wonderful players in our July concert.

Another major event was of course our **80<sup>th</sup> birthday party in June**. I think everyone enjoyed listening to present and past members take the mic and share what it means to be them to be part of this orchestra. We are working with Victoria Hall to simplify the process for buying drinks for future events. Particular thank yous to Marie and Sophie, for delving into our archives and producing the lovely long-service (20 year) awards. We will continue to award these at each AGM.

On a related note, we are in the process of updating our **membership records** to ensure we capture when everyone joins. We think next up for an award is Neil next year – but if you think you qualify (now or next year) please shout!

We are going to recirculate an updated membership letter and code of conduct. Please take a moment to read these – we'll be asking you to update any details that have changed and to sign and send these back to acknowledge your acceptance of them.

We also launched our **merch** this year – big thanks to Nicki and Reiy for making this happen. You can even now buy pencils and stickers with your tickets, and we'll have a stall on concert days too. Nicki will be running a stall at next week's rehearsal and we



have lots of stock, so please do stock up. She'll also be doing another hoodie/T-Shirt order soon, so please message her or speak to her next week if you'd like anything.

Finally: our **charitable purpose** is of course music making, but we can still do some things on behalf of other charities. You may not know but we allocate a number of tickets to each of our concerts to charities supporting refugees and asylum seekers. And we were delighted to be able to give a donation to the Friends of Sheffield Music Hub from our proceeds of our wonderful July concert.

### Looking forward

We have a fab concert to come in November and as you know, are close to selling out Christmas. We took the decision not to partner with Sheffield Youth Orchestra this year. Helen Harrison has had to step down so we'll be having Flick, who you all know, together with narrator Hannah Fumoleau, to bring Paddington to life.

### Survey results – you said we did/are doing

<b>Repertoire</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Balance of works</li><li>- Workload</li></ul>	<p>George and the committee work very hard to get this right and I thought it might be helpful if I explain a bit about the process for choosing repertoire.</p> <p>George considers a range of factors, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- composer anniversaries and other special events</li><li>- playing under-represented composers</li><li>- level of technical difficulty</li><li>- composition of orchestra</li><li>- cost of hire</li><li>- particular local events, such as Classical Sheffield weekend, one off opportunities like Tramlines and special opportunities such as collaborations with festivals with associated funding opportunities (like Fusion)</li></ul> <p>He submits his proposals to the committee for discussion and approval.</p> <p>Remember you can have your say – use the dedicated Slack channel to make suggestions. We'll never please everyone all the time but we try hard to get the right balance over the season.</p> <p>On workload, we try very hard to provide both a season plan and a rehearsal schedule as early as possible, so you can plan dates. I think we actually excel at this compared to some other groups! We may have to make changes, or ask you to hold dates pending confirmation, but we do our best to allow you to plan as early as possible.</p>
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	<p>We note that Tramlines and Carmen were really popular, in particular from a social perspective, so we will continue to explore those types of opportunities. More generally on socials, we need people to volunteer to organise these, so if you were someone who said you wanted more of them, please feel free to be proactive and suggest something. The committee works very hard but we can't do everything!</p>
<p>Rehearsal logistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- finishing earlier</li><li>- comms</li></ul>	<p>This comes up regularly and we have no plans to move to an earlier finish. However, George will continue to finish earlier on occasion, including when the football is on.</p> <p>We acknowledge that some people have issues with hearing, in particular, guest conductors. We have no plans to introduce microphones on a regular basis, but please let George, me or the conductor know if you are having difficulties.</p> <p>This is also a two way thing – we still get people talking and fiddling with instruments when conductors are speaking – please don't! It makes it super difficult for those at the back to hear.</p>
<p>Sectionals</p>	<p>As George mentioned at last week's rehearsal, this concern has been noted. Charlotte has very kindly offered to take the string sectional next week. We do already carefully consider who takes sectionals as they are a really important part of our prep and should also be fun and engaging. (If ever you have suggestions as to who would be a good person to take a sectional, please do let George and the committee know.)</p>
<p>Victoria Hall related things</p>	<p>Heating – we have been assured there will be no further issues this winter. Fingers crossed...</p> <p>Security – we need to continue to be careful at the door. We will be bringing in a rota, which Zoe will organise, for 2 people to wait on the door until we start rehearsal.</p>
<p>Schools engagement</p>	<p>A couple of people mentioned this so we are considering what this might look like. If you have contacts at schools, or ideas as to what we might do, please let me know. We'll probably look to set up a mini group to coordinate this.</p>

## Thank you

Finally, a huge thank you from me to the whole committee for all that you do. A particularly special thank you to Hilary, who is stepping down as librarian. And thank you to George, and to the Victoria Hall team, and to everyone else who has helped out



with socials, fundraising, setting up and clearing the hall, volunteering on the door, selling cakes in concerts, and anything else I have forgotten – every contribution to the running of the orchestra means we can concentrate on what we do best (and ever better) – making fantastic music.

That's me. Before we move on – any questions or comments?

## **SPO AGM 2025 Treasurer's report – Zoë Birtwhistle**

For the accounting period 31 August 2024 to 30 August 2025

And the 2024 / 2025 Concert Season

### **1. Profit / Loss for the accounting period ended 30 August 2025**

The Profit/Loss breakdown for the accounting period 31 August 2024 to 30 August 2025 has been circulated on Slack and with the paperwork for this meeting. The headline figures are that we received £73,539.60 and spent £77,552.02. This means there was a net loss in the accounting period of £4012.42. On 30 August 2024 our cash in bank was £17,084.73, and on 30 August 2025 it was £13072.31.

When Neil gave this report last year, he set out our relatively comfortable financial position with a view that Carmen and the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations would give us cause to spend some money this time round. Which we did. However, I should point out that the £4000 “loss” on the balance sheet includes both significant investment in new equipment (music stands) and inventory stock (SPO merch) that we will continue to sell this season. I would also argue that there was an intrinsic and intangible value to our operation in the 2024/25 that is not meaningfully quantified by the idea of a “loss” – money that we invested in each of our projects built up a great deal of artistic and social capital in return.

Of course, I am aware that we cannot continue to lose £4000 a year, so were I to be re-elected as Treasurer my goal for this season would be either to break even or run up a small surplus.

### **2. Project breakdown for the 2024/25 Concert Season**

A breakdown that shows the income and expenditure for each of our six projects of the 2024/25 concert season has also been circulated. Unlike previous years, I have chosen to allocate as many items of income and expenditure as I can to specific projects, including things such as the cost of hiring the Victoria Hall for our rehearsals that haven't been included in recent previous years' per-project analyses. I have done this to emphasise what putting on these projects actually cost us, and therefore the importance of income streams that are not hypothecated to specific projects. These

income streams include the generous donations that we receive, our fundraising efforts, and above all, your membership fees. I hope this gives you a realistic idea of what it actually costs to run the show.

Income and expenditure in our accounting period doesn't always line up with the operational season it relates to. Therefore there are items in the 2024/25 season project breakdown which aren't accounted for in the 2024-2025 P/L (for example, the 2025Q2 and Q3 hire fees for the Vic, which weren't billed to us until September 2025) – and vice versa (e.g. ticket sales made over the summer for our 2025/26 season concerts). The P/L also includes income and operational overheads that aren't hypothecated to a specific project (for example, the membership subs).

### **3. Achievements in 2024/25**

Completed transition to new treasurer.

Moved our accounts over onto Xero.

Attended the Making Music treasurers' event.

### **4. Goals for 2025/26**

Complete the next Independent Review of the accounts for the Charity Commission.

Complete the Gift Aid return (expected c. £3200).

Turn Sheffield Phil into a Charitable Interest Organisation.

Look again at whether we are eligible for Orchestra Tax Relief.

All of our money is currently in a 0% interest Co-op Business Current Account – we should invest some in a financial instrument that will return a bit of interest. I would welcome suggestions about what kind of investment we make and how much we put into it.

Buy some more RAT stands.

Maintain our excellent relationship with the Vic Hall as they reorganise some aspects of their operation.

Aim for a small surplus this time next year and ensure that SPO members and audiences continue to get great value for money!

## **5. Questions**

Answer any questions from Slack and the floor.

*Does the line item “venue hire” include rehearsal venue hire?*

Yes

## **6. Summary**

If anyone would like to discuss any aspect of this with me further, or take a closer look at the accounts, I am very happy to enable that.

I am extremely grateful to Nic, Suzie, George, and the committee for the support and encouragement they have given me in my first year as Treasurer, and most especially to my predecessor Neil for the endless help and limitless patience he has offered me during what has at times been quite a frustrating transition period. I think I’ve found my groove with it now, and would be very happy to carry on as Treasurer, if you’ll have me.

## **Profit / Loss and Balance**

Sheffield Philharmonic Orchestra

For the year ended 30 August 2025

<b>Income</b>	
Apparel sales	1,887.50
Appearance fees	1,842.00
Donations	6,266.63
Food and drink sales	1,097.00
Gift aid	3,014.55
Grants	21,215.00
Membership subs	9,745.00
Merchandise sales	626.50
Online fundraising	358.02
Programme ad sales	525.00
Ticket sales	26,962.40
<b>Total income</b>	<b>73,539.60</b>

<b>Costs</b>	
Apparel inventory purchase	1,869.00
Commissions	2,300.00
Decorations	805.98
Equipment hire	1,550.00
Equipment purchase	2,854.34
Equipment storage and transport	238.45
Food and drink	1,409.88
Fundraising	703.00
Gifts	590.79
Guest conductor fees	2,217.00
Guest player fees	863.90
IT subscription fees	193.49
Leader stipend	900.00
MD fees	7,100.00
Merchandise inventory purchase	1,079.99
Miscellaneous expenses	1,690.34
Music hire	1,724.85
Music printing	1,433.01
Online payment fees	612.34
Organisation membership fees	739.00
Other fees	24,409.26
Photography and videography	945.00
Postage	10.80
Programmes	1,332.00
Publicity - Print	1,165.55
Publicity - Web	699.17
Safeguarding	78.40
Sectional leader fees	1,830.70
Security	455.00
Soloist fees	2,658.58
Travel	40.80
Venue hire	13,051.40
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>77,552.02</b>

<b>Profit on ordinary activities</b>	<b>(4,012.42)</b>
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<b>Cash in bank at year end</b>	<b>13072.31</b>
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**Project financial breakdown**  
Sheffield Philharmonic Orchestra  
For the 2024/2025 concert season

<b>Autumn 2024 – Clara, Gustav and the Chevalier</b>		
<b>Account</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Commission		1,500.00
Donations	325.78	
Equipment hire		1,425.00
Gift		15.96
Guest conductor fees		247.10
Guest players		461.90
MD		1,720.00
Music hire		65.39
Music printing		0*
Photography / videography		210.00
Programme		100.00
Publicity - Print		191.00
Publicity - Web		99.82
Soloist		1,458.58
Tickets	1,706.00	
Venue hire		2,100.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,031.78</b>	<b>9,594.75</b>
<b>Net</b>		<b>(7,562.97)</b>

\* Not sure who paid for the Schumann and Bolgone printing or how much

<b>Christmas 2024</b>		
<b>Account</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Decorations		189.00
Donations	449.66	
Equipment hire		25.00
Gift		11.50
Guest conductor fee		1,287.55
Music hire		149.56
Music printing		110.00
Programme		195.00
Publicity - Print		128.00
Publicity - Web		49.55
Security		175.00
Ticket sales	5,623.00	
Venue hire		1,210.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6,072.66</b>	<b>3,530.16</b>
<b>Net</b>		<b>2,542.50</b>

<b>Spring 2025 – Carmen</b>		
<b>Account</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Costs</b>
A/V		751.20
Cast		5,835.00
Children's chorus		1,000.00
Children's masterclass		200.00
Chorus director		260.00
Costumes		1,161.72
Director		2,625.00
Donations	1,576.56	
Equipment hire		50.00
Equipment transport		238.45
Evaluation report		930.00
Food	569.50	952.97
Fundraiser ticket sales	425.40	
Grants	21,215.00	
Guest conductor fees		418.00
Guest player fees		402.00
Librettists		1,000.00
Lighting		1,109.85
MD		2,500.00
Miscellaneous expenses		51.46
Music hire		94.99
Music printing		1,130.01
Photography and videography		620.00
Postage		10.80
Producers		7,200.00
Production design		1,000.00
Programme ads	320.00	
Programmes	784.00	770.00
Props and set		268.20
Publicity - Print		367.00
Publicity - Web		299.96
Rehearsal venues		2,394.00
Repetiteur		1,050.00
Score prep		1,000.00
Sectional leader fees		1,830.70
Surtitles		500.00
Ticket sales	15,382.00	
Venue hire		6,242.40
<b>Totals</b>	<b>40,272.46</b>	<b>44,263.71</b>
<b>Net</b>		<b>(3,991.25)</b>

<b>Summer 2025 – From Acorn to Oak and SPO80 Party</b>		
<b>Account</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Commission		800.00
Decorations		256.98
Donations	1,223.05	
Equipment hire		50.00
Food and drink	497.50	1,139.10
Gifts		529.94
Guest conductor fee		140.00
MD		1,860.00
Merchandise sales	168.00	
Music hire		63.00
Music printing		43.00**
Programmes		225.00
Publicity - Print		167.00
Publicity - Web		49.89
Security		175.00
Soloist		1,200.00
Ticket sales	1,791.00	
Venue hire		2,880.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,679.55</b>	<b>9,535.91</b>
<b>Net</b>		<b>(5,856.36)</b>

\*\* Not sure who paid for the Böhme, Whibley and Sterndale Bennett printing or how much

<b>Summer 2025 – Summer Celebrations!</b>		
<b>Account</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Donations	193.05	
Donation to Sheffield Music Hub		245.69
Gifts		44.35
Guest conductor fee		124.35
MD		1,020.00
Music printing		150.00
Merchandise sales	57.50	
Programme		42.00
Publicity - Print		87.00
Publicity - Web		49.99
Ticket sales	1,397.50	
Venue hire		1,065.00
Videography		350.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,455.00</b>	<b>2,828.38</b>
<b>Net</b>		<b>(1,373.38)</b>

<b>Summer 2025 – Tramlines</b>		
<b>Account</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Miscellaneous expenses	0.00	17.17
Venue hire	0.00	280.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>297.17</b>
<b>Net</b>		<b>(297.17)</b>

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS' REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF SHEFFIELD PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

We report to the trustees on our examination of the accounts of the Sheffield Philharmonic Orchestra (the Trust) for the year ended 30 August 2025.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

We report in respect of the examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out our examination we have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(B) of the Act.

**Independent examiners' statement**

We have completed our examination. We confirm that no material matters have come to our attention in connection with the examination giving us cause to believe that in any material respect:

- Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act, or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

We have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Michael Race FCCA**

Date: 16 April 2026

**On behalf of Brearley & Co Accountants Limited**

39-43 Bridge Street

Swinton

Mexborough

South Yorkshire S64 8AP