

ISLINGTON CHORAL SOCIETY

AGM: Tuesday 20 February 2024, at 7pm, Highbury Roundhouse

Chair's report

This has been a year of strong growth for the Islington Choral Society, leading to a consolidation of the membership numbers and several memorable performances.

First came Handel's 'Messiah' on 26 November 2022, performed at the ever-welcoming St Andrew Holborn, featuring the Hertfordshire Chamber Orchestra as our regular accompanists and a line-up of young soloists, all of them surely on the road to international fame.

On this occasion, Michael Waldron, our Musical Director, mixed the choir members up so that no two voices were standing together. This divided the choir into those who felt exposed and unsupported and those who knew the music well-enough to sing with confidence. Michael felt that the performance was improved because we avoided that split-second delay that occurs when members of the choir wait for somebody else to sing before joining in. In any event, the choir pulled out the stops when we needed to, and the final Amen sounded great, especially when the organ came in at the end – 'a cheap trick', said Michael, but an effective one.

Next came another really big work – Mendelssohn's 'Elijah' – sung on Sunday April 2, 2023, in a new venue for us, London's prestigious Cadogan Hall. Despite its size, we managed to fill the hall, not just with friends and family, but with people who regularly attend concerts at this venue because of its reputation for quality performances.

We did not disappoint them. Singing with the Hertfordshire Chamber Orchestra and with professional soloists always lifts our performance and on this occasion, our accompanist at rehearsals, Laurence Williams, raised the quality even further through his dramatic performance of the part of Elijah – interacting physically as well as vocally with the choir, especially when the prophets of the god Baal demand that their God 'hear and answer' their prayers and Elijah mocks them saying 'perhaps he is asleep – call louder!' before praying to his God who duly delivers the rain that breaks the drought.

Rain featured again in our concert at St Andrew Holborn on 24 June 2023. We called this 'Sunshine after Rain' as both are reference to the world's recovery from the consequences of the Covid pandemic and to the main piece in the concert, 'Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo', by Joseph Horowitz. We performed this entertaining piece along with lighter music for mid-summer evening, Bob Chilcott's jazz inflected 'Songs and Cries of London' and George Shearing's 'Songs and Sonnets of Shakespeare'.

We concluded our celebratory Golden Jubilee year with a November concert featuring Handel's timely 'Ode for St Cecilia's Day' (her feast day being 22 November; our concert took place on 25 November 2023), followed by Mozart's magnificent 'Great Mass in C minor', K427. Having said goodbye to Laurence Williams at the end of the summer term as he moved on to other musical challenges, we welcomed him back again in a new temporary role, as our Acting Musical Director, while our regular Director, Michael Waldron, took up the irresistible opportunity to serve as Interim Director of Music at Trinity College, Cambridge for a term.

We also welcomed Ben Markovic as our new Accompanist and Assistant Director. Ben joined us in September, a matter of weeks after graduating with a degree in Music from Queens' College,

Cambridge, where he was Senior Organ Scholar, and we were very pleased to be able to offer this post to Ben as he takes his first steps in what we are sure will be a stellar musical career.

The Mozart Mass, deceptively simple to start with, becomes progressively more challenging in the long and complex fugal movements where it is easy to find oneself lost in the maze of Mozart's inventive counterpoint but, challenged by Laurence to sing with commitment, the choir triumphed in the concert, inspired by the virtuosic performance of our soloists, one of whom was sight reading a piece he had never sung before, and by the Hertfordshire Chamber Orchestra, augmented by an outstanding theorbo player.

The choir continues to welcome new members: no week goes by without at least one new voice, come to try us out before committing to joining us permanently. We have welcomed eight new members already this term, bringing the total membership to 144. Overall, with membership numbers remaining steady and concerts being well supported, our financial position remains strong, ensuring that we can retain future resilience and afford the kind of repertoire and venue that we aspire to.

Having said that, we face a number of challenges if we are to continue performing three concerts a year and to tackle some of the larger-scale pieces in the choral repertoire in leading London venues with musicians and accompanists of the highest quality.

Challenge number one is to recruit new committee members. I am stepping down as Chair after a year in the role. Post Covid, I was able to work from home in London and so had rejoined the choir, but working permanently from home is no longer an option and I now have to be back in my office in Aberystwyth from Monday to Thursday. I am more grateful than I can possibly say to Kim Randall for agreeing to take on the role – we will work together over the next 3.5 weeks to organise the 16 March concert at Holy Trinity, Sloane Street.

Being Chair has given me an insight into just how much the committee does behind the scenes to deliver three concerts a year. There is a strong team for a future Chair to rely upon, but we need to recruit a new committee member immediately to perform the vital role of Treasurer, and we need somebody to shadow Chris Rose and take over as Choir Librarian a year hence.

Please do consider whether you can take on either of these roles; there is much satisfaction to be gained from working as part of the committee team. Being involved in concert admin is interesting and varied work and could enhance your CV – it might even be possible for you to undertake one of these roles as pro bono work with your employer's approval, or to as part of an employee volunteering scheme.

I will end by thanking Savills the estate agent for their very generous sponsorship of our concerts during our fiftieth anniversary year. That sponsorship is hugely appreciated because it enables us to balance the books financially and to offer discounted membership to younger members of the choir, as well as hire top quality soloists and musicians to accompany our concerts.

I hope you all enjoy the forthcoming choir tour of Segovia and Valladolid, and that in all your future performances, you grow ever more accomplished.

ISLINGTON CHORAL SOCIETY
Income and Expenditure for
1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023.

Year ending 31 July 2023	Prior year	Difference
£	£	£

INCOME

Membership subscriptions	26,140	21,770	4,370
Members' Donations	1,180	1,760	(580)
Gift Aid (received post YE)	5,505.48	5,342.96	162.52
Total Membership Income	32,825.48	28,872.96	3,952.52
Advertising/Sponsorship	3,500	0	3,500
Concert income			
Concert 1	8,361	6,981.58	
Concert 2	10,785	5,360.73	
Concert 3	5,288	7,119.60	
Total Concert income	24,434	19,461.91	4,972.09
Miscellaneous	423.63	403.95	19.68
Total Income	61,183.11	48,738.82	12,444.29

EXPENDITURE

Rehearsals			
Conductor	4,542	4,500	42
Accompanist	3,345	3,950	(605)
Rehearsal venue hire	6,092	5,990	102
Concert expenditure			
Concert 1	8,246	8,800.66	
Concert 2	16,410.60	8,152.27	
Concert 3	5,742	8,409.24	
Total Concert expenditure	30,398.60	25,362.17	5,036.43
Other expenditure			
Bank charges	60	0	60
Making Music subs & insurance	440	183	257
Music purchase	0	0	0
Miscellaneous expenditure	2,944.72	0	2,944.72
Total Other expenditure	3,444.72	183	3,261.72
Total Expenses	47,822.32	39,985.17	7,837.15
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	13,360.79	8,753.65	4,607.14

NOTES:

INCOME

- Membership Subscriptions includes 7 payments of £170 on 31 July for forthcoming year 23/24.
- Miscellaneous Income accounted for as follows:
 - *Easy Fundraising / Amazon Smile charity shopping scheme contributions (£397.23)*
 - *Payment received for replacement scores (£26.40)*

EXPENDITURE

- Conductor/Accompanist costs exclude Concerts & Concert/Orchestral Dress Rehearsals accounted for within overall Concert Expenditure Totals)
- All Music Purchase/Hire costs accounted for within overall Concert Totals
- Miscellaneous Expenses accounted for as follows:
 - *Concert Folders (£483.00)*
 - *Yamaha Keyboard (£1,115)*
 - *Piano Wheels (£269)*
 - *Conductor Podium (£357.84)*
 - *Music Stand (£151)*
 - *Leaving Gifts (£387.01)*
 - *Refreshments for Xmas Drinks (£109.97)*
 - *Music Printing Costs for official Highbury Roundhouse Opening performance (£71.90)*

ISLINGTON CHORAL SOCIETY

OVERVIEW FOR YEAR

1st August 2022 – 31 July 2023

ASSETS: FUNDS FLOW FOR THE YEAR

Balance b/f from prior year	43,178.09	as of 31 July 2022
<i>Represented by</i>		
<i>HSBC account ending 5910</i>	<i>24,227.58</i>	<i>as of 31 July 2022</i>
<i>HSBC account ending 6194</i>	<i>8,775.03</i>	<i>as of 31 July 2022</i>
<i>HSBC Money Market account ending 7823</i>	<i>10,175.48</i>	<i>as of 31 July 2022</i>
Balance at close of current year	£58,215.41	as of 31 July 2023
<i>Represented by</i>		
<i>HSBC account ending 5910</i>	<i>£39,202.45</i>	<i>as of 31 July 2023</i>
<i>HSBC account ending 6194</i>	<i>£ 8,837.48</i>	<i>as of 31 July 2023</i>
<i>HSBC Money Market account ending 7823</i>	<i>£10,175.48</i>	<i>as of 31 July 2023</i>

NB.

Gift Aid on all nominated Subs/Donations over this period totalling £5505.48 received after year end

3 x items in Accounts represented by Accruals from previous year:

- <i>Publicity, Printing & Postage for July 2022 Concert (3)</i>	<i>£91.00</i>	<i>BP</i>
- <i>Staging Costs for Concert (1) 2022</i>	<i>£948.50</i>	<i>BP</i>
- <i>Receipts from July 2022 Concert Programme Sales</i>	<i>£197.00</i>	<i>CR</i>

Overseas Tours Accounts

Balance at close of current year	£31,046.93	
<i>Represented by</i>		
<i>HSBC account ending 6186</i>	<i>£ 299.85</i>	<i>as of 31 July 2023 (£ 298.15 PY)</i>
<i>HSBC account ending 5929</i>	<i>£30,747.08</i>	<i>as of 31 July 2023 (£2,957.08 PY)</i>



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
ISLINGTON CHORAL SOCIETY.

On accounts for the year
ended

31 JULY 2023	Charity no (if any)	1068263
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Set out on pages

3.
(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets.)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 July 2023

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").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (~~other than that disclosed below~~ *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Paula Denton

Date:

22/4/24

Name:

PAULA DENTON.

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

NA.

Address:

23, ST. PETER'S STREET,
LONDON, N1, 8JP.

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

NONE