

Registered Company Number: 03508706
Charity Registration Number: 1070013

Mahogany Opera Group

(Company Limited by Guarantee)

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

MAHOGANY OPERA GROUP
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YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

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**MAHOGANY OPERA GROUP
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

Constitution

The Company is incorporated under the Companies Acts 1985-2006, Company number 03508706 and its governing document is its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Company is a charity registered in England & Wales, number 1070013.

Directors and trustees

The directors of the Company are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees. As set out in the Articles of Association, the trustees are appointed by the trustees or by the Company's members at a general meeting.

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees are ongoing and incorporated into the regular trustee meetings.

The trustees during the year were:

Katie Bradford

David Bernstein (resigned 8 December 2022)

Amy Challen

Ian Hamilton

Penny Jonas (Chair up to resignation on 22 June 2023)

Mary Miller (appointed 8 December 2022; Chair from 22 June 2023)

Florence Okoye (appointed 8 December 2022)

Dwight Pile-Gray

Ava Podgorski

Helen Thomas (appointed 8 December 2022)

Company Secretary

Bridget Rennie

Artistic Director

Frederic Wake-Walker

Executive Director

Bridget Rennie

Independent Examiner

Caroline Clarke, Clarke + Wells, 99 Western Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1RS

Bankers

Lloyds Bank Plc, Villiers House, 48-49 Strand, London WC2N 5LL.

Solicitors

Weil, Gotshal & Manges (London) LLP, 110 Fetter Lane, London, EC4A 1AY.

Registered office

Rosehill Theatre, Moresby, Whitehaven, CA28 6SE.

MAHOGANY OPERA GROUP
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Company's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, including the adoption of the amendments issued in December 2017 (FRS 102).

The trustees confirm that they complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit "Charities and Public Benefit". The Trustees' Report clearly sets out the charitable objectives, current activities and how they benefit the public.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY

The charitable objects of Mahogany Opera Group are:

to promote, maintain, improve and advance education, by the encouragement of the arts, but particularly the arts of drama, music, singing, mime, and dance and to formulate, prepare and establish schemes thereof provided that all objects of the company shall be of a charitable nature.

Mahogany Opera Group is a leading commissioner and producer of new opera and music theatre. Our vision of opera as an inclusive, collaborative and dynamic art form informs our aim to stretch the boundaries of what opera can be and who it is for.

We believe that music and theatre can create a space where everyone is equal, where everyone is free to express themselves and to dream. The communal experience of performance is at the heart of what we do: bringing people together to spark a shared imagination.

Through our work, we aim to:

- Share the power and joy of live music and theatre widely, demonstrating that opera can be relevant to and reflective of people's lives
- Show that everyone is an artist with the potential to play a creative role in making and performing new opera
- Give children and adults the opportunity to experience opera in inclusive environments
- Support diverse artists to develop their practice, spark new connections and create work on their own terms
- Present new work which reflects and amplifies diverse perspectives and a multiplicity of voices

We achieve our aims through three programmes of work which intersect:

- Snappy Operas, our award-winning participatory primary schools programme, through which we deliver in-school projects with children, teacher training and performances, and commission new work by professional artists working with young people
- Various Stages, our pioneering Research & Development programme involving open calls, workshops, public showcases, discussions and mentoring support, through which we support artists, explore new ideas and challenge conventions
- Commissioning innovative work for the stage, involving professional and non-professional artists in partnership with a wide range of organisations

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As a registered charity, Mahogany Opera is immensely grateful for the generous contributions of trusts & foundations and individuals, without whose support its work would not be possible.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

In 2022-23 Mahogany Opera was able to deliver a rich and substantial programme of work across its three strands:

Snappy Operas

A Snappy Opera is a short opera for children to perform which introduces all the essential elements of opera – singing, acting and making – in fun, colourful and bite-sized chunks. Mahogany Opera has commissioned 13 Snappy Operas, written by some of the UK's top composers and writers who worked with groups of young people to develop stories and characters that connect directly to the young people who will perform them. Since we began the programme in 2016, we have engaged 4,500 primary school children from state schools across the UK with Snappy Operas, working in over 130 schools.

Year of Snappy Operas

The start of 2022-23 saw the end of our 'Year of Snappy Operas', the programme we adapted from the originally planned Snappy Opera Festival 2021 which was delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Ongoing pandemic restrictions in Edinburgh limited our teacher training delivery, but otherwise we were able to deliver the final phase of the project as planned, with successful performances in Leicester and Edinburgh, and a grand finale at Whitley Bay Playhouse.

In Leicester, working with **Leicestershire Music Hub**, we were able to present three public performances across two days in April, allowing all of the schools to share their hard work with their families and friends. The second performance included the public premiere of our new Snappy Opera by Raymond Yiu and Russell Plows, *Teacups & Tentacles*.

We were delighted to partner with **Edinburgh International Festival** to bring Snappy Operas to Scotland for the first time. The bespoke activity in Edinburgh allowed us to work with our largest single region delivery team – 16 artists in total – allowing us to make diverse connections in the region for future activity. The team worked with four schools, engaging 155 children in the creation of six Snappy Opera performances. Restrictions on public gatherings in Edinburgh were lifted just weeks before the end of the activity, but in time to allow us to present our first gala performance of the year, bringing together all of the schools for a special performance at The Queen's Hall on 24 May 2022.

The final phase in the Year of Snappy Operas took place in North Tyneside, where we collaborated with our partner **North Tyneside Music Education Hub** to engage 174 children from five schools. Activity in the region had been long in the making, beginning after the Snappy Opera Festival in 2019, so an extended preparation period began in February 2022. Teachers worked with their children (after a remote introduction from the delivery team) over 3 months to introduce them to the arts, opera and Snappy Operas, using specially created resources and links to the wider curriculum. Our teams then began in-school activity in April 2022, including working towards the English premiere of *Smiles Better* – a new Snappy Opera created by Pippa Murphy and Karine Polwart with children from one of the participating schools. The young people performed this with four other Snappy Operas in a joyful event with over 500 in the audience at Whitley Bay Playhouse on 11 July 2022.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
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Project evaluation showed that:

- For 86% of 221 surveyed children it was their first experience of opera, and for 98% it was their first experience of performing opera
- Children scored their enjoyment of the project an average of 4.4 out of 5
- 19 of 20 surveyed teachers said that Snappy Operas supported their teaching of the curriculum
- All surveyed teachers said the project had increased their pupils' music and/or drama skills
- 12 of 13 surveyed artists said that our training would feed into their wider participation practice

A new Snappy Opera commission

Through 2022-23, we began developing a new Snappy Opera commission in partnership with Sandgate School, an SLD (severe learning difficulty) school in Kendal, Cumbria. This was launched with an **open call** in April 2022 to find the creative team to co-create a new opera with the young people at Sandgate. We looked for artists who valued and understood the nature of inclusive arts practice, could adapt their approaches for children of all abilities and would be able to transform the children's ideas into a meaningful multi-sensory participatory opera work.

We understood that a more intensive and longer-term programme was necessary for a special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) school than is typically delivered in a mainstream school. (Typically a Snappy Opera commission has involved a composer-writer team doing two in-school workshops in the process of making the piece, followed by four rehearsals ahead of a performance.)

We were delighted that this process enabled us to appoint Kendal-based composer and clarinettist **Jack McNeill** and Glasgow-based theatre-maker **Claire Willoughby** (a Jerwood fellow with significant experience in SEND settings), who worked with music lead at the school Annie Ruscillo to devise a programme that would enable the participation of the whole school across the school year.

"It is really important for us, as a school for young people with a range of communication difficulties and SEND, to focus on what we CAN do and not what we can't. We are excited beyond words to be embarking on a whole school immersive project, which will give our young people a broad range of creative experiences."

Annie Ruscillo – Music Lead, Sandgate School

Following an initial school visit in June 2022, the co-creation process began with a week-long residency in school in November 2022, with Jack and Claire spending time in 20 sessions with children across the primary school site. They started the non-verbal classes, with creative workshops built out of their vestibular movement sessions, devising musical and dramatic ideas inspired by the young people. Following this, the creative team developed these themes into a work inspired by contemporary circus.

Roll Up! was further developed and performed in two in-school residencies after the year-end.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
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Here we share some staff feedback from the initial residency week in November 2022:

"I didn't expect it to be so good. I also didn't expect the pupils to join in so soon if at all."

"I think the way that Jack and Claire made the pupils feel in control of the music was brilliant. The pupils really engaged with this. I noticed the pupils who engaged most with this are the pupils who don't engage in class as much."

"The sessions engaged all students, the class were really enjoying the music, everyone was involved, the atmosphere was calm."

Commissions

During 2022-23, we developed four commissions:

Hildegard: Visions is an immersive mystery opera by **Nwando Ebizie**, inspired by the works and life of Hildegard von Bingen. A multisensory experience of sound, movement, scent and taste, it will combine song, electronic soundscapes and ritual traditions from across cultures and eras. The project was developed as part of Mahogany Opera's Various Stages festival in 2019-20 and this research and development (R&D) phase helped to develop an installation (Extreme Unction Vol.2) which was exhibited at East Street Arts, Leeds in June 2021.

In 2022-23, we fully commissioned the work, developed plans and secured funds for a further R&D phase which took place after the year-end in 2023 in partnership with Britten-Pears Arts, Artsadmin and Yorkshire Sculpture Park. We now plan to co-produce the piece for full premiere in summer 2025.

Sky in a Small Cage is conceived as a contemporary staged oratorio by composer **Rolf Hind** – telling the story of the extraordinary life of Sufi poet, Rumi – and focussing on his relationship with his master, muse and beloved, Shams who was (it is suspected) murdered at the hands of Rumi's brothers. The story will be told with words written specifically by award-winning poet, **Dante Micheaux** together with translations of Rumi's own poetry. Directed by Mahogany's Artistic Director **Frederic Wake-Walker**, an exceptional multi-disciplinary cast and mixed ensemble will bring each dramatic tableau to life using song, musical interludes and dance.

This work was initially supported through Various Stages 2019-20 and given a seed commission in 2020-21. In 2022-23 we fully commissioned the work, fundraised and secured partnerships with the **Barbican** and **Copenhagen Opera Festival** for premiere performances in 2024.

Out of Her Mouth is our co-production with **Dunedin Consort** and **Hera**, staging three of Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre's *Cantates Bibliques* in new English translations by Toria Banks. In 2022-23, we commissioned the translation and managed an open call process to recruit three artists to the team. This had a phenomenal response with a total of 211 applications. Through this we were delighted to appoint director **Mathilde Lopez**, harpsichordist **Katarzyna Kowalik**, and soprano **Alys Mererid Roberts** who completed a stellar cast alongside **Anna Dennis**, **Carolyn Sampson**, and three Dunedin Consort players. The piece was premiered and toured after the year-end in June-July 2023.

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The Great Learning is a participatory, collaboratively composed choral work, inspired by the Cornelius Cardew work of the same name. In 2022-23 we delivered two participatory R&D workshops with a total of 79 people in Edinburgh (July 2022) and Whitehaven at **Rosehill Theatre** (January 2023), in which participants reflected on their experiences of the pandemic through creative improvisation, facilitated by director **Frederic Wake-Walker**, writers **Elsbeth Murray** (Edinburgh) and **Emma McGordon** (Whitehaven) and music directors **Stephen Deazley** (Edinburgh) and **Dave Camlin** (Whitehaven).

Feedback from participants on these initial R&D workshops included:

"I felt that together we had achieved something I would never have imagined possible — the idea of actually creating the outlines of a performance in just one day, with a group of people who didn't know each other previously is incredible. I had such a great feeling of achievement. And it was huge fun along the way too."

"I loved being surrounded by so many creative and open-minded people, all willing to expose their emotions and vulnerabilities, made possible I'm sure because it felt like a very safe space."

Various Stages

Various Stages is Mahogany Opera's pioneering Research & Development programme involving open calls, workshops, public showcases, discussions, and mentoring support, through which we support artists, explore new ideas and challenge conventions.

During 2022-23 we provided significant support to Ukrainian/British collective **Hooligan Art Community** in the context of the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by Russia. We had secured British Council funding for a partnership project to take place in Dnipro, Ukraine as part of the planned UK-Ukraine Season 2022. The company worked quickly with their colleagues to support the relocation of the project to Germany, where eight female artists from the company were able to gather. They connected remotely with two male colleagues who, unable to leave Ukraine due to wartime restrictions, worked from a bunker in Kyiv. The women artists undertook a residency in Ponderosa, followed by rehearsals and a performance which brought together Ukrainian refugees and local Germans as participants in a performance of Hooligan at WUK Theater in Halle, Germany in May 2022.

Following this, the company was able to reunite in the UK in autumn 2022, where they developed a new production inspired by their experiences of the invasion entitled **Bunker Cabaret**. Mahogany Opera was able to fundraise for and co-produce a tour of the piece from January-March 2023, with 16 performances across England, Germany and Ireland to audiences of over 1,000 people. These included two powerful events at Somerset House in London on 24 and 25 February 2023, marking the first anniversary of the full-scale invasion.

During the year Mahogany Opera continued to develop its online series of discussion events '**Meet Me @ Mahogany**', a format developed during the pandemic which is now evolving as an accessible opportunity for artists, producers, supporters and audiences to explore diverse themes, connect people to our creative practice and open up the process of opera-making. In 2022-23 we delivered three 'Meet Me @ Mahogany' events:

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
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- In July 2022, we held a discussion with the Hooligan Art Community artists about their experiences of creating their participatory performance in Germany, and the role of making art in times of war
- In November 2022, we focused on reinventing the old and finding contemporary relevance in ancient works. We talked with *Out of Her Mouth* partners from Dunedin Consort and HERA, introducing soprano Alys Mererid Roberts and director Mathilde Lopez who were recruited through our Open Call process
- Then, in February 2023, we focused on community led commissioning and interrogated how vital creativity can be in supporting wellbeing and recovery in the context of the pandemic, linked to our community commission *The Great Learning*

VALUES

In 2022-23 we took the opportunity to revisit our company values as a team, and integrated a new value centred on care. Our values underpin our vision of opera as an inclusive, collaborative and dynamic art form and sustain us in our mission to stretch the boundaries of what opera can be and who it is for. They stem from both the working practices we've developed over the years and our aspirations for the future:

We are artist-led

We are guided by artists, by their ideas and their lines of enquiry. We consider everyone who actively participates in our work to be an artist. We create structures that are flexible and responsive to meet the ambitions of our artists while operating on a scale that connects us meaningfully to the communities and contexts within which we work. We aim to be a creative space for sharing knowledge and experiences.

We are people-centred

Care and inclusivity are key principles for the way we work. We aim to create safe and supportive working environments which enable trust, creativity and fun. We recruit as much as possible by open call and we try to remove barriers for disabled and minoritised artists, as well as making our performances and events as accessible as possible for audiences. We value the process as much as the product. We are transparent about fees and pay people promptly.

Our work is a collaborative process

We are continually exploring new ways of working and searching for new creative relationships while striving to enrich our existing knowledge and collaborations. We test ourselves with a thoughtful and considered approach, learning from others and sharing our research and discoveries with both rigour and playfulness.

We actively seek to break down barriers

We push against traditional norms, often working outside conventional constructs, opening up access to our work, offering space for diverse perspectives and a multiplicity of voices and collaborating across borders. We stand up against racism and all forms of discrimination.

We are committed to sustainability

Awareness of and efforts to reduce our environmental impact is embedded in everything we do. We take an ethical stance on our income streams, favour purpose-based relationships over transactional ones and develop on-going relationships with our partners. We strive to take a long view on our collaborations, outcomes and impact.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Our values are open and responsive

We stay true to ourselves, while being open to challenge and change. We question ourselves, listen to others and reflect on our experiences in order to improve our practice and stay connected with the most recent developments. We are in a continual state of renewal, always full of potential, searching for new means of expression and new visions of the future.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We believe that opera is a form of culture that can challenge rather than uphold systemic injustices. We are committed to eliminating discrimination and aim to diversify who makes, performs and sees opera. Since 2017 we have encouraged diversity across all areas of our work through inclusive open calls for artists, staff and board recruitment; training; and improving accessibility to our activities and opportunities (British Sign Language interpretation & captioning are now standard at our events and we offer tailored support for disabled artists). Our partnerships in areas not typically well-served by opera companies enable us to reach people from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. We aim for at least 50% of our commissioned artists to be women, which we have achieved through our Snappy Opera programme and our current commissioning activity, and we are developing our expertise in supporting disabled creatives through two of our current commissions.

We acknowledge that there is more we can do, starting with more detailed diversity monitoring of the artists we engage in order to set targets from a benchmark. In 2022-23 we asked all the artists we engaged to complete a diversity monitoring survey. This was only completed by six artists (of c.60 artists engaged; c.10% response rate). The data is therefore not statistically significant and we are considering ways in which we can encourage more artists to complete the survey.

We did get better levels of response to the diversity monitoring surveys attached to our open calls, and can report the following results:

Out of Her Mouth open call

114 responses out of 211 applicants (54% response rate)

NB the most popular role advertised through this call was for a soprano so the gender / sexuality results reflect this

Ethnicity:	50%	white British	Sexual orientation:	47%	heterosexual/straight
	33%	other white background		18%	bisexual
	5%	mixed Asian/white		11%	queer
	2%	Black British		8%	gay woman/lesbian
	1%	Latin American		2%	gay man
	5%	any other ethnic background		14%	other/prefer not to say
	3 %	prefer not to say	Age:	17%	18-25
Sex:	77%	female		61%	26-34
	16%	male		16%	35-49
	7%	prefer not to say		1%	50-64
Gender identity:				5%	prefer not to say
	74%	women	Disability status:	77%	not Deaf or disabled
	13%	men		12%	Deaf or disabled
	6%	non-binary		11%	prefer not to say
	7%	other/prefer not to say	Neuro-divergence:	25%	neurodivergent
				62%	neurotypical
				12%	prefer not to say

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Trustee recruitment open call

5 of 7 applicants completed the diversity monitoring survey (71% response rate). The number of respondents therefore did not generate statistically significant data. There was proportionately more ethnic diversity than in the *Out of Her Mouth* open call, but less representation of disabled people.

Conclusions

The data from our main open call in the year shows we are reaching a diverse range of artists in terms of gender, sexual orientation, disability and neurodivergence. However on ethnicity, we are reaching a less diverse range of candidates than we would like, and we are also reaching very few older candidates.

Ensuring that our recruitment reaches a wider range of people will be a key focus as we redevelop our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy over the coming year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account), Balance Sheet, together with the notes thereon are set out on pages 14 to 27.

The Statement covers the 12 months from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Total income for the year amounted to £259,940 (2021/22 £216,217) of which £112,848 (2021/22 £138,636) was restricted. Total expenditure for the year was £274,195 (2021/22 £197,828), of which £123,347 (2021/22 £114,652) was restricted.

The charity's income for the 2022/23 financial year was higher than the previous year, which had continued to be impacted by a reduction in funding due to the impacts and delays of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Expenditure was also significantly higher, due to increased delivery. This resulted in an overall deficit in 2022/23 of £14,255 (2021/22 surplus of £18,389). The charity maintains a strong reserves position, with unrestricted funds of £356,491 at 31 March 2023 (2021/22 £360,247).

The charity also continued to enjoy strong support from a number of trusts and foundations, including core cost grants from Foyle Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation and Vaulkhard Douglas-Hume Music Trust; grants from the British Council, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Foyle Foundation towards our co-produced tour of *Bunker Cabaret* with Hooligan Art Community; a grant from Cockayne Grants for the Arts towards *Sky in a Small Cage*, and multiple smaller grants to support *Out of Her Mouth*, our SEND Snappy Opera and *Hildegard: Visions*. Mahogany Opera continues to focus on increasing its philanthropic fundraising, cultivating individual donors and regional trusts in the UK areas where it works. The charity was also able to take advantage of the Theatre Tax Relief scheme.

The charity generated income of £1,136 (2021/22 £62) from bank interest; in 2022/23 the trustees invested some of its cash reserves in fixed term deposit accounts to benefit from increasing interest rates.

Having streamlined core costs substantially in 2018/19 and 2019/20, the charity maintains a lean operating model, with one employee supported by a core team of three freelancers who all work remotely. Despite this, fundraising for core costs remains challenging year-on-year, and the company was unsuccessful in applying to become an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation in 2022. Coupled with the broader economic outlook, there are few certainties in planning for the coming years, but given the charity's strong balance sheet and

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with the ongoing support of a range of organisations and individuals, the trustees are confident in the charity's future ability to continue to meet its artistic goals.

Reserves

The unrestricted reserves of the Charity comprise a General Fund and two Designated Funds. The trustees consider it prudent to maintain sufficient unrestricted reserves in the General Fund to meet a minimum of six months' core operating costs. This reflects the challenge of funding within the present economic climate, together with the need to deliver on future commitments.

In response to the variable pattern of expenditure, the Charity maintains two Designated Funds. One is for funds that have been received and have been allocated by the trustees to existing projects which are underway. The level of this reserve fluctuates according to the pattern of funding and the Charity's production schedules. This flexibility allows the Charity to respond to performance opportunities, the scheduling of which may be beyond the Charity's control.

The second is the John Hughes Innovation Fund, which is the combination of a legacy received in 2017/18 and the previous Future Commissions Fund. This is used for future commissions, the funding of which may be required two to three years before production; for the development of new ideas across the Charity's artistic programme; and to support Various Stages.

Investments

The Charity maintains three savings accounts for managing cash reserves and any grants awarded for future projects. These funds are split between 32-day and 95-day notice accounts and a 12-month fixed term deposit account. The remaining funds are kept in a current account with Lloyds Bank.

RISK MANAGEMENT

All significant activities undertaken are subject to a risk review as part of the initial project assessment and implementation. Major risks are identified and ranked in terms of their potential impact and likelihood. Major risks, for this purpose, are those that may have a significant effect on:

- Operational performance, including risks to staff, volunteers and visitors
- Achievement of aims and objectives
- Meeting the expectations of beneficiaries or supporters

The trustees review these risks on an ongoing basis and satisfy themselves that adequate systems and procedures are in place to manage the risks identified. Where appropriate, risks are covered by insurance. The following framework is central to ensuring adequate risk management:

- Regular monitoring of major risks
- Embedding risk identification and assessment within operating procedures
- A clear structure of delegated authority and control
- Maintaining reserves in line with set policies

In assessing risk, the trustees recognise that some areas of work require the acceptance and management of risk if key objectives are to be achieved. The trustees have reviewed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed and identified control and mitigation procedures, under the headings of:

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

- Governance
- Operational
- Financial
- External
- Compliance

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

At year end, there were nine trustees (directors) on the board, who have overall fiduciary responsibility for the supervision of the activities of the Charity.

Day-to-day management of the charity is delegated to the Executive Director, Bridget Rennie, and Artistic Director, Frederic Wake-Walker, who works internationally as a freelance director alongside his work with Mahogany Opera. They are supported by a freelance core team comprising an Associate Producer, Fundraising Manager and Finance Manager each working part-time. In addition, the Charity works with a range of specialist freelance staff to deliver on additional functions when appropriate.

Mahogany Opera's trustees and staff reflect and champion the communities and artists with whom they work. Registered in West Cumbria, we deliver work across the country, with strong relationships and partnerships in key areas across the North of England and Scotland.

The trustees meet at least four times a year and are available for consultation and advice on an ad hoc basis. The Finance Committee meets in advance of each quarterly Board meeting to monitor the Charity's financial position and management.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are directors of Mahogany Opera Group for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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Disclosure of information to the independent examiner

Each of the persons who are trustees at the time when this trustees' report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as that trustee is aware, there is no relevant information of which the charitable company's independent examiner is unaware
- that trustee has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a trustee in order to be aware of any information needed by the charitable company's independent examiner in connection with preparing their report and to establish that the charitable company's independent examiner is aware of that information

In preparing this report, the trustees have taken advantage of the small companies exemptions provided by section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the Board of trustees on 12 December 2023 and signed on its behalf

by


Mary Miller
Chair

Mahogany Opera Group
Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees
For the year ended 31 March 2023

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law), you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

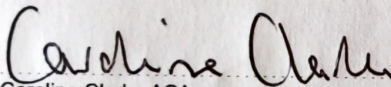
Independent examiners statement

Since the Charitable company's gross income exceeded £250,000, your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination by virtue of my membership of Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I 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.



Caroline Clarke ACA

99 Western Road

Lewes

East Sussex

BN7 1RS

Mahogany Opera Group
Statement of Financial Activities (including Income and Expenditure Account)
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 £	2022 £
Income and endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	85,363	112,848	198,211	178,491
Charitable activities	3	30,652	-	30,652	27,241
Investments	4	1,136	-	1,136	62
Other income	5	29,941	-	29,941	10,423
Total		147,092	112,848	259,940	216,217
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	(14,688)	-	(14,688)	(16,645)
Charitable activities	7/8	(136,160)	(123,347)	(259,507)	(181,183)
Total		(150,848)	(123,347)	(274,195)	(197,828)
Net income/expenditure		(3,756)	(10,499)	(14,255)	18,389
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		360,247	23,984	384,231	365,842
Total funds carried forward		356,491	13,485	369,976	384,231

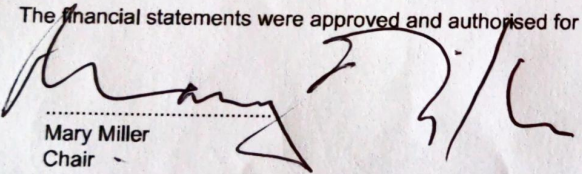
Mahogany Opera Group
Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Current assets			
Debtors	14	42,492	20,527
Cash at bank and in hand		353,163	394,339
		395,655	414,866
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	(25,679)	(30,635)
Net current assets		369,976	384,231
Total assets less current liabilities		369,976	384,231
Net assets		369,976	384,231
The funds of the charity			
Restricted income funds	16	13,485	23,984
Unrestricted income funds	16	356,491	360,247
Total funds		369,976	384,231

For the year ended 31 March 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476,
- The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board and signed on its behalf by:


 Mary Miller
 Chair
 12th December 2023

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for investments which are included at market value and the revaluation of certain fixed assets and in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Companies Act 2006.

Mahogany Opera Group meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going concern

The financial statements are prepared, on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention.

Funds

The charity maintains a general unrestricted fund which represents funds which are expendable at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the objects of the charity. Such funds may be held in order to finance both working capital and capital investment.

Designated funds comprise of unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds have been provided to the charity for particular purposes, and it is the policy of the board of trustees to carefully monitor the application of those funds in accordance with the restrictions placed upon them.

There is no formal policy of transfer between funds or on the allocation of funds to designated funds, other than that described above.

Incoming resources

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable certainty. Income is not shown net of expenditure. The following specific policies are applied to categories of income.

- Voluntary income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in the SOFA when receivable. Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.
- Investment income is included when receivable.
- Income from grants where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.
- Theatre income is included in income in the period in which the relevant activity took place.
- Project specific funding, when donors specify that donations and grants are for particular restricted purposes, which do not amount to pre-conditions regarding entitlement, is included in the income of restricted funds when receivable.

Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is stated net of VAT. Costs of generating funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs which can be directly allocated to activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements. Costs are allocated between the expenditure categories of the SOFA based on usage of the resource. Where costs cannot be directly allocated they are apportioned on an appropriate basis and recognised in SOFA.

Allocation and appointment of costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs may include any back office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charity's programmes and activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities where applicable.

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Taxation

As a registered charity, the company is exempt from income and corporation tax to the extent that its income and gains are applicable to charitable purposes only.

Pensions

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme in respect of its employees. The scheme and its assets are held by independent managers. Pension costs are allocated to restricted funds as part of gross salary costs where funds cover salaried posts.

2. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Donations received	5,363	4,383	9,746	9,855
Grants received	80,000	108,465	188,465	168,636
	85,363	112,848	198,211	178,491

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Analysis of grants received

	2023	2022
	£	£
Ambache Charitable Trust	1,500	-
Arts Council England	2,580	-
Arts Council England (Culture Recovery Fund)	-	30,912
Arts Council England (Snappy Opera Festival)	-	23,218
British Council Ukraine	24,172	23,984
Chapman Trust	-	2,000
Didymus Trust	-	5,000
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	-	5,000
Fidelio Charitable Trust	3,000	-
Finn Family Fund	3,000	-
Frieda Scott Charitable Trust	7,713	-
Garfield Weston Foundation	25,000	-
Granada Foundation	1,000	-
Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation	2,500	-
HMRC - Job Retention Scheme	-	1,022
John Ellerman Foundation	-	30,000
John S Cohen Foundation	-	2,500
Katie Bradford Arts Trust	1,000	-
London Community Foundation: Cockayne - Grants for the Arts	15,000	-
Nicholas Berwin Charitable Trust	-	5,000
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	20,000	-
PRS Foundation	5,000	-
Scops Arts Trust	-	5,000
The Foyle Foundation	35,000	25,000
The Golsoncott Foundation	2,000	-
The Marchus Trust	5,000	-
The Radcliffe Trust	5,000	-
The Vaulkhard Douglas-Home Music Trust	30,000	-
Three Monkeys Trust	-	5,000
Victoria Wood Foundation	-	5,000
	188,465	168,636

3. Income from charitable activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Unrestricted funds		
<i>Artists / production / touring / preparation / education</i>		
Income from charitable activities	30,652	27,241

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

4. Investment income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Unrestricted funds		
Bank interest receivable	1,136	62
	1,136	62

5. Other income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Unrestricted funds		
Other income	-	1
Theatre Tax Relief	29,941	10,422
	29,941	10,423

6. Expenditure on generating donations and legacies

	2023	2022
	£	£
Unrestricted funds		
Donations	13,696	14,899
Support costs	992	1,746
	14,688	16,645

7. Costs of charitable activities by fund type

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Artists / production / touring / preparation / education	114,544	123,347	237,891	152,917
Marketing	4,256	-	4,256	9,262
Support costs	17,360	-	17,360	19,004
	136,160	123,347	259,507	181,183

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

8. Costs of charitable activities by activity type

	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Support costs				
Artists / production / touring / preparation / education	237,891	17,065	254,956	170,836
Marketing	4,256	295	4,551	10,347
	242,147	17,360	259,507	181,183

9. Analysis of support costs

	Raising funds	Artists / production / touring / preparation / education	Marketing	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£	£
Office Costs	659	11,441	204	12,304	16,116
Finance and Bookkeeping	189	3,296	59	3,544	3,180
Bank Charges	13	225	4	242	470
Governance costs	131	2,103	28	2,262	984
	992	17,065	295	18,352	20,750

10. Net income/(expenditure) for the year

This is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accountancy fees	1,500	825

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

11. Staff costs and emoluments

Total staff costs for the year ended 31 March 2023 were:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Salaries and wages	40,753	40,692
Pension costs	1,013	1,172
	<u>41,766</u>	<u>41,864</u>

	2023	2022
Production Staff	1	2
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

There were no employees (2022: Nil) who received emoluments (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

The key management personnel of the Charity, comprise the trustees, Executive Director and Artistic Director (freelance). The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £68,257 (2022: £72,547).

12. Trustee remuneration and related party transactions

The Charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with the Charity or its subsidiary in the year (2022: £nil). Two trustees were reimbursed expenses totalling £423.29 during the year (2022: One trustee £184.23). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2022: £nil).

There were no related party transactions requiring disclosure during the year.

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

13. Comparative for the Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 £
Income and endowments from:			
Donations and legacies	39,855	138,636	178,491
Charitable activities	27,241	-	27,241
Investments	62	-	62
Other income	10,423	-	10,423
Total	77,581	138,636	216,217
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	(16,563)	-	(16,563)
Charitable activities	(66,531)	(114,652)	(181,183)
Total	(83,094)	(114,652)	(197,746)
Net income/expenditure	(5,513)	23,984	18,471
Reconciliation of funds			
Total funds brought forward	365,842	-	365,842
Total funds carried forward	360,329	23,984	384,313

14. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Amounts due within one year:		
Trade debtors	4,332	12,000
Prepayments and accrued income	35,307	8,110
Other debtors	2,853	417
	42,492	20,527

15. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	17,304	16,543
Accruals and deferred income	8,375	14,092
	25,679	30,635

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

16. Movement in funds

Unrestricted Funds

	Balance at 01/04/2022 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfers £	Balance at 31/03/2023 £
<i>Designated</i>					
Following Year Projects Designation	49,953	-	(49,953)	47,620	47,620
John Hughes Innovation Fund	249,767	-	-	(4,238)	245,529
<i>General</i>					
General	60,527	147,092	(100,895)	(43,382)	63,342
	360,247	147,092	(150,848)	-	356,491

Unrestricted Funds - Previous year

	Balance at 31/03/2021 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfers £	Balance at 31/03/2022 £
<i>Designated</i>					
Following Year Projects Designation	3,379	-	-	46,574	49,953
John Hughes Innovation Fund	120,000	-	-	129,767	249,767
<i>General</i>					
General	242,463	77,581	(83,176)	(176,341)	60,527
	365,842	77,581	(83,176)	-	360,247

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Purpose of unrestricted Funds

John Hughes Innovation Fund

The trustees have brought together the legacy received in 2017/2018 with the Future commissions fund to create the John Hughes Innovation Fund. This will be used for future commissions, the funding of which may be required two to three years before its production; development of new ideas across the Company's artistic programme; and to support Various Stages.

Following Year Projects Designation

This designated fund is allocated by the trustees for existing projects which are underway and which the Charity wants to support with its own resources. The level of this reserve fluctuates according to the pattern of funding and the Charity's production schedules. This flexibility allows the Charity to respond to opportunities, the scheduling of which may be beyond the Charity's control. In 2022-23 this designation was to support costs for Hildegard: Visions, Snappy Operas, Various Stages and some core costs.

General

The trustees consider it prudent to maintain sufficient unrestricted reserves in the General Fund to meet a minimum of six months' core operating costs. This reflects the challenge of funding within the present economic climate, together with the need to deliver on future commitments.

Restricted Funds

	Balance at 01/04/2022	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Balance at 31/03/2023
	£	£	£	£
Hildegard: Visions	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
Hooligan Art Community	23,984	6,161	(30,145)	-
Hooligan Art Community Bunker Cabaret tour	-	49,894	(47,814)	2,080
Out of Her Mouth	-	6,500	(6,500)	-
SEND Snappy Opera commission	-	22,713	(22,713)	-
Sky in a Small Cage	-	15,000	(3,595)	11,405
Year of Snappy Operas	-	2,580	(2,580)	-
	23,984	112,848	(123,347)	13,485

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Restricted Funds - Previous year

	Balance at 31/03/2021	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Balance at 31/03/2022
	£	£	£	£
Arts Council CRF	-	30,912	(30,912)	-
HMRC - Job Retention Scheme	-	1,022	(1,022)	-
Hooligan Art Community	-	23,984	-	23,984
Rolf Hind commission	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Year of Snappy Operas	-	77,718	(77,718)	-
	-	138,636	(114,652)	23,984

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

Purpose of restricted funds

Hooligan Art Community

British Council Ukraine awarded a grant through their UK/Ukraine Season of Culture programme to support a partnership project with Hooligan Art Community.

Arts Council CRF

Arts Council England awarded a grant through their Cultural Recovery Fund programme to sustain core costs in the context of reduced income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Year of Snappy Operas

Arts Council England paid the final instalment of their grant in support of the Year of Snappy Operas.

Rolf Hind commission

Nicholas Berwin Charitable Trust awarded a grant to support the development of a new commission from Rolf Hind.

HMRC - Job Retention Scheme

Between February and April 2021 we received flexible furlough support for 20% of the then Executive Manager's time.

SEND Snappy Opera commission

Finn Family Fund, Frieda Scott Charitable Foundation, Granada Foundation, Katie Bradford Arts Trust, The Radcliffe Trust and Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation supported the creation of a new Snappy Opera in a SEND school.

Year of Snappy Operas

Arts Council England paid the final instalment of their grant in support of the Year of Snappy Operas.

Hildegard: Visions

Grants from The Marchus Trust and PRS Foundation supported the commission and development of this work by Nwando Ebizie.

Hooligan Art Community Bunker Cabaret tour

A further grant from British Council Ukraine and emergency support from The Foyle Foundation and Paul Hamlyn Foundation supported Mahogany Opera to co-produce a tour of the Ukrainian company's piece Bunker Cabaret.

Sky in a Small Cage

A grant from London Community Foundation: Cockayne - Grants for the Arts supported the early production of our Rolf Hind commission, Sky in a Small Cage.

Out of Her Mouth

Grants from Fidelio Charitable Trust, The Golsoncott Foundation and Ambache Charitable Trust supported the production of Out of Her Mouth.

Mahogany Opera Group
Notes to the Financial Statements Continued
For the year ended 31 March 2023

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Net current assets / (liabilities) £	Net Assets £
Unrestricted funds		
<i>General</i>		
General	63,342	63,342
<i>Designated</i>		
Following Year Projects Designation	47,620	47,620
John Hughes Innovation Fund	245,529	245,529
Restricted funds		
Hooligan Art Community Bunker Cabaret tour	2,080	2,080
Sky in a Small Cage	11,405	11,405
	369,976	369,976

Previous year

	Net current assets / (liabilities) £	Net Assets £
Unrestricted funds		
<i>General</i>		
General	60,527	60,527
<i>Designated</i>		
Following Year Projects Designation	49,953	49,953
John Hughes Innovation Fund	249,767	249,767
Restricted funds		
Hooligan Art Community	23,984	23,984
	384,231	384,231