

Trustees' Annual Report for 2022-23 (Year ending 31st March 2023)

Review of the Year

The Board met early in the year to discuss the priorities for the coming year and beyond, as we finally felt as if we were throwing off the shackles of the Covid pandemic and could reliably plan for a full programme once again.

These priorities, in no particular order, are:

1. Programming and budgeting for a full season of diverse engagements
2. Regular communication with members through letters from the Chair and other means
3. Continuing to commission and champion new music
4. Succession planning, including the "Five Year Plan"
5. Consideration of a possible tour to New York in 2025
6. Making the choir fit for the next generation
7. Creative use of members and their gifts to support the choir
8. Developing and optimising the use of social media and our digital presence
9. Maintaining strong and transparent governance and financial regulation

Much progress has been made against these priorities, some of which are by nature medium- to long-term goals. As ever, there is more to be done and we acknowledge the support and encouragement of all members as we continue to work towards these goals.

On the subject of succession planning, the Board met in July 2022 to discuss the plans for the next five years, leading to Jeremy's planned retirement in 2027. These include a proposed tour to New York, linking up with long-standing Vasari friend Jeremy Filsell at St Thomas' Fifth Avenue, and an ambitious commission of a reimagined *Songs of Farewell* – six new pieces using the same texts set by CHH Parry. An EGM was convened on 21st September 2022 to inform members of our plans, and to gather support for more formal succession planning activities that will be needed over the coming years.

Our first musical engagement of the year was a slightly unconventional Cathedral weekend in Coventry. Due to the Cathedral being booked out for a BBC orchestra concert on the Saturday, we were obliged to relocate to the nearby Holy Trinity Church for Saturday evensong, and this made the weekend feel slightly disjointed. Despite last-minute Covid absences we managed to put on a good show, and we were brilliantly supported by George Castle on the organ.

This was followed in May with 'Songs and Sonnets' in Guildford, promoted by Hennessey Brown Music. It was lovely to sing to a full church again, and to support the local Oakleaf charity. We then returned to lovely Fairwarp to join their Platinum Jubilee celebrations, with Covid rearing its ugly head once again as Jeremy succumbed and the choir were subjected to a stand-in conducting Chair for a couple of rehearsals! Despite this, the concert went

really well and welcome was as warm as ever. We finished the season with our long-awaited 'Radical Masses' concert in St Peter's Eaton Square, combining Palestrina and Panufnik with a sprinkling of tubular bells, harp and organ – we were blessed yet again with some truly first-class young soloists, it truly is a joy to be able to collaborate with such excellent musicians.

We returned after the summer break to our regular reauditions and then it was straight into preparations for the launch concert for our latest recording, Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* (and other British choral anthems). This is the first of our two albums featuring ex-Vasari (tenuous but true) Roderick Williams, and it was an absolute delight to welcome Roddy to St Luke's where we performed to a packed house and rapturous applause.

Next on the agenda was a guest appearance with Vivace, Jeremy's "other" choir, for a performance of Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* along with the RVW *Five Mystical Songs*. What a treat to hear Thomas Nießer (with whom we have worked previously) as the baritone soloist in both works, and we are grateful to Vivace for welcoming us so warmly and allowing us to share in a wonderful evening.

And then into the Christmas season, with the Michael Varah Memorial Fund concert in St Stephen's, Walbrook followed by a return to Guildford for a joint venture with Hennessey Brown Music, and then our own promotion Christmas with Vasari concert in St Paul's, Covent Garden. Both London concerts were affected by rail and tube strikes, so we were fortunate to be able to offer a live-stream option for the Covent Garden concert, which was well received. We were joined by Jonny Hennessey-Brown on the 'cello for the latter two concerts, performing the RVW *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*.

Finally, in February we returned to Tonbridge School to complete the recording of Christmas music that will form the second of our Roddy Williams collaboration albums. We also recorded our most recent commission, *Winter Song* by Dominique Le Gendre, and a trio of pieces by Greco-Australian composer Nestor Taylor, *Children's Garden*, setting texts by R L Stevenson. We were privileged again to be accompanied by Martin Ford, and to have Adrian Peacock and Dave Rowell as producer and engineer. This album will be released later in 2023 on the Naxos label.

We remain deeply grateful for all the support offered to the choir by our Patrons and Friends, and we marked the retirement of long-standing supporter and Patron, Robert Willis, from his post as Dean of Canterbury Cathedral with a letter from the choir, thanking him for his support and encouragement over so many years.

Financial position

The financial results of the Charity are reported on pages 6 - 8. Our reserves of £22,752 at the end of the reporting year are considered consistent with our reserves policy to maintain funds sufficient to support the ongoing operations of the Charity for a period of between

three and six months and to ensure funds are accumulated to support larger projects on a periodic basis.

Under Sections 144 and 145 of the Charities Act 2011 an audit is not required for this year; the Trustees of the Charity have elected for the accounts to be examined by an independent examiner and their report is on page 4.

Governance and administration

Vasari Singers is a Society and a UK registered charity (number 1071299) and is governed by a constitution. The primary object of Vasari Singers is “to promote, improve, develop and maintain public education in and appreciation of the art and science of choral music in all its aspects by the presentation of public concerts”.

The Society’s members are those that have been invited to join the choir as a full member, paying the relevant annual subscription. Its management is vested in a board that comprises the Officers of the Charity (being the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer) and up to three other members, all of whom are elected by and from the members on an annual basis. The board may co-opt a member onto the board, pending election at the next AGM. The Music Director may attend all board meetings.

The Board has simplified the management of our Risk Register, mitigated many of the previously identified risks and resolved to review the Risk Register at six monthly intervals.

During the reporting year and subsequently (except as otherwise indicated), the board comprised the following members:

Chairman	Paul Robertson
Secretary	Stephanie May
Treasurer	Imants Auziņš
Vice-chair	Giles Gabriel (from 18 th May 2022)
Concert Manager, Choir Fixer & Publicity	Alison Benton (until 25 th January 2023)
Librarian and Technology	Yvonne Connell (until September 2022)
Librarian	Liz Limb (from September 2022)

The Music Director is Jeremy Backhouse.

The choir’s registered address and contact details are:

Vasari Singers
c/o St Luke’s Church Office
194 Ramsden Road
London SW12 8RQ
secretary@vasarisingers.org or info@vasarisingers.org
www.vasarisingers.org

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE VASARI SINGERS

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Vasari Singers for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out in pages 5 - 7.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND BASIS OF REPORT

As the charity trustees of the Vasari Singers, 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 Vasari Singer's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all 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 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 Vasari Singers as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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.



Rachel Robinson ACA
47 Holmdene Avenue
London
SE24 9LB

31 January 2024

Vasari Singers

Income and expenditure account 2022/23

Income (£)		Expenditure (£)	
Concert income	20,035	Concert expenditure	13,843
CD sales	1,522	Cathedral expenditure	1,439
Royalties received	268	Christmas CD recording	7,970
Sponsorship/donations	2,797	DLG commission	2730
Restricted donations	1,677	Music purchase	429
		CD purchases	210
Subscriptions	12,063		
Interest	50	Publicity etc	546
Total income	38,411	Fees	10,748
		Administration	1,517
		Miscellaneous	210
Excess of expenditure over income	1,230	Total expenditure	39,641

Vasari Singers

Statement of assets and liabilities at 31 March 2023

	31 Mar 2023	31 Mar 2022
Current account	4,560	1,805
Deposit account	20,230	21,680
Debtors		
<i>2021/22 subscriptions tax relief due</i>	2,533	
<i>2021/22 donations tax relief due</i>	652	
<i>2021/22 restricted donations tax relief due</i>	2,525	
<i>SPES Jul '22 expenses</i>	400	
<i>Guildford May '22 expenses</i>	150	
<i>Coventry Apr '22 expenses</i>	27	
<i>CD float</i>	50	
		6,337
<i>2022/23 subscriptions tax relief due</i>	1,605	
<i>2022/23 subscriptions due</i>	194	
<i>2022/23 donations tax relief due</i>	417	
<i>Xmas CD recording income due</i>	1,192	
<i>Southwell Apr '23 expenses</i>	10	
<i>Come and Sing May '23 expenses</i>	11	
<i>CD float</i>	50	
	3,479	
Creditors		
<i>2021/22 royalties payable</i>	4	
<i>2022/23 advance subs</i>	1,775	
<i>Fees paid in 2022/23</i>	2,175	
<i>GBA #2 recording expenses paid in 2022/23</i>	1,473	
<i>SPES Feb '21 expenses paid in 2022/23</i>	289	
		5,716
<i>2023/24 advance subs</i>	1,590	
<i>Fees paid in 2023/24</i>	1,240	
<i>Xmas CD recording expenses paid in 2023/24</i>	1,626	
<i>Come and Sing May '23 advance ticket sales</i>	561	
<i>Duns Tew Wedding Jun '23 advance deposit</i>	500	
	5,517	5,716
Net current assets	22,752	24,107
Reserves		
Unrestricted reserve	22,752	23,982
Restricted reserve	0	125

Analysis of reserves

	Unrestricted reserve	Restricted reserve
Brought forward at 1 Apr 2022	23,982	125
Result for year	-1,230	1,577
Unrestricted reserves used in year		
Restricted reserves used in year		1,702
Carried forward at 31 March 2023	22,752	0