

Vasari Singers - Trustees' Annual Report for 2023-24 (Year ending 31st March 2024)

Review of the Year

The Board met regularly throughout the year to discuss the priorities for the coming year and beyond, working to implement the Five Year Plan leading up to the retirement of Musical Director, Jeremy Backhouse. We broadly maintained the same strategic priorities as those set out for the previous financial year.

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
5. Planning the tour to New York for 2025
6. Songs of Farewell project – commissioning seven contemporary composers to create reimagined works based on texts set by CHH Parry
7. Making the choir fit for the next generation
8. Creative use of members and their gifts to support the choir
9. Developing and optimising the use of social media and our digital presence
10. 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.

A tour to New York around Palm Sunday has now been confirmed, centred around a performance of the Bach B minor Mass with the choir of St Thomas' Fifth Avenue. We are also hoping to sing the Palm Sunday services in St Thomas' and additional concert opportunities are also being explored.

We have also confirmed the involvement of seven long-standing friends of Vasari as composers for the reimagined Songs of Farewell project. Gabriel Jackson, Will Todd, Francis Pott, Cecelia McDowall, Roxanna Panufnik, Bob Chilcott and Jonathan Rathbone will each compose a movement setting the texts used by Parry in his 1916 composition, with an additional *Requiem Aeternam* movement to close the work.

Performance highlights in the first part of the year included a weekend in Southwell Minster, where we were made most welcome; a packed Come and Sing event featuring Coronation Anthems from across the centuries; a wedding and summer's evening concert in Duns Tew in Oxfordshire, and our usual end-of-season weekend in Canterbury Cathedral.

After the summer break we performed a sell-out concert of the Rachmaninov *Vespers* with soprano Rebekah Jones and tenor Mārtiņš Šmaukstelis, followed by our annual All Souls' service at St Luke's Battersea, and our traditional Christmas concerts with the Michael Varah Memorial Fund in St Stephen Walbrook, and our own promotion in St Paul's, Covent Garden. Our St Paul's concert this year also saw the launch of our latest recording, *Music on Christmas Morning*, which is the second of our two releases with baritone Roderick Williams. On this disc he can be heard most memorably in Gerald Finzi's haunting *In Terra Pax*, which also features our own Jocelyn Somerville as soprano soloist. The title track for this recording, by young British composer Helena Paish, is the latest entry on the list of Vasari commissions.

We finished off the year with a contemplative Lenten concert in St Bride's, Fleet Street. The programme featured several works that Vasari has performed and recorded in its history, including the Pizzetti *De Profundis* and *Messa di Requiem*, and Frank Martin's *Mass for Double Choir* which is a choir favourite. This theme of revisiting works from the choir's history will continue in the coming years by way of tribute to all the wonderful achievements of the choir under its founding MD, Jeremy Backhouse.

Financial position

The financial results of the Charity are reported on pages 5 to 7. Our reserves of £28.8k 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 (until 24 th January 2024) Elena Carlton Jones (from 24 th January 2024)
Treasurer	Imants Auziņš
Vice-chair	Giles Gabriel
Librarian	Liz Limb

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 2024 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rachel Robinson ACA
47 Holmdene Avenue
London

SE24 9LB

28 January 2025

Vasari Singers

Income and expenditure account 2023/24

Income (£)		Expenditure (£)	
Concert income	15,283	Concert expenditure	11,089
CD sales	1,680	Cathedral expenditure	3,872
Royalties received	87	Music purchase	525
Sponsorship/donations	2,691	Publicity etc	383
Subscriptions	14,825	Fees	10,949
		Administration	1,658
Interest	270	Miscellaneous	328
Total income	34,836	Total expenditure	28,825
Excess of income over expenditure	6,011		

Vasari Singers

Statement of assets and liabilities at 31 March 2024

		31 Mar 2024	31 Mar 2023
Current account		3,931	4,560
Deposit account		24,899	20,230
Debtors			
<i>2022/23 subscriptions tax relief due</i>	<i>1,605</i>		
<i>2022/23 subscriptions due</i>	<i>194</i>		
<i>2022/23 donations tax relief due</i>	<i>417</i>		
<i>Xmas CD recording income due</i>	<i>1,192</i>		
<i>Southwell Apr '23 expenses</i>	<i>10</i>		
<i>Come and Sing May '23 expenses</i>	<i>11</i>		
<i>CD float</i>	<i>50</i>		
			3,479
2023/24 subscriptions tax relief due	2,503		
2023/24 subscriptions due	687		
2023/24 donations tax relief due	491		
Exeter Apr '24 expenses	123		
Owslebury Jun '24 expenses	80		
Close harmony recording Oct '24 expenses	165		
CD float	50		
		4,099	
Creditors			
<i>2023/24 advance subs</i>	<i>1,590</i>		
<i>Fees paid in 2023/24</i>	<i>1,240</i>		
<i>Xmas CD recording expenses paid in 2023/24</i>	<i>1,626</i>		
<i>Come and Sing May '23 advance ticket sales</i>	<i>561</i>		
<i>Duns Tew Wedding Jun '23 advance deposit</i>	<i>500</i>		
			5,517
2024/25 advance subs	1,836		
Fees paid in 2024/25	1,397		
Owslebury Jun '24 advance ticket income	933		
		4,167	
Net current assets		28,763	22,752

Analysis of reserves

	Unrestricted reserve	Restricted reserve
Brought forward at 1 Apr 2023	22,752	0
Result for year	6,011	
Unrestricted reserves used in year		
Restricted reserves used in year		
Carried forward at 31 March 2024	28,763	0