

Vasari Singers - Trustees' Annual Report for 2024-25 (Year ending 31st March 2025)

Review of the Year

The Board met regularly throughout the year to discuss the priorities for the coming year and beyond, as we reached the half-way point of the Five-Year Plan which will culminate in 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.

Significant efforts have gone into planning for our tour to New York in April 2025, and we are indebted to members who have volunteered to coordinate arrangements for the tour, avoiding the use of a costly tour company and with the aim of making the tour accessible to all budgets. Our week will be centred around a performance of the Bach B minor Mass with the choir of St Thomas' Fifth Avenue, and we will join them again for services on Palm Sunday as well as performing our own concerts in St Thomas' and in Ridgewood, NJ with Ramapo College's CantaNOVA ensemble.

We continue to work with the seven long-standing friends of Vasari selected 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 Exeter Cathedral, where we were made most welcome; a joyful concert in Owslebury (for which we thank Nicky and Jon Scott); and our usual end-of-season weekend in Canterbury Cathedral.

After the summer break we hosted another hugely successful Come and Sing event, “Dixit vs Singet”, and returned to St Luke’s Battersea for their All Souls’ service in November. Between these two engagements we spent an enjoyable weekend in Tonbridge School, recording our next album of close-harmony pieces – this will be released on Naxos later in 2025 and is provisionally titled “The Music Never Ends”. We ended the year with our traditional Christmas concerts with the Michael Varah Memorial Fund (this year in St Mary-le-Bow whilst St Stephen Walbrook was being refurbished), and our own promotion in St Paul’s, Covent Garden.

We finished off the year with a pre-tour Lenten concert in St Bride’s, Fleet Street. The programme featured several works that Vasari will be performing in New York in April, as well as Frank Bridge’s extended anthem, *A Prayer*, recorded by Vasari 25 years ago and released on an album alongside Parry’s *Songs of Farewell*. 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 5-7. Our reserves of £24.2k 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:

Chair	Paul Robertson
Secretary	Elena Carlton Jones
Treasurer	Imants Auziņš
Vice-chair	Giles Gabriel
Librarian	Liz Limb
Choir Fixer	Alison Benton

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 2025 which are set out in pages 2 - 4.

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', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Rachel Robinson ACA
47 Holmdene Avenue
London
SE24 9LB

22 January 2026

Vasari Singers

Income and expenditure account 2024/25

Income (£)		Expenditure (£)	
Concert income	14,543	Concert expenditure	9,023
		Close harmony recording	10,615
CD sales	253	Cathedral expenditure	3,727
Royalties received	151	Music purchase	575
Sponsorship/donations	2,182	Publicity etc	329
Subscriptions	15,371	Fees	11,498
		Administration	1,338
Interest	338	Miscellaneous	293
Total income	32,838	Total expenditure	37,398
Excess of income over expenditure	-4,560		

Vasari Singers

Statement of assets and liabilities at 31 March 2025

	31 Mar 2025	31 Mar 2024
Current account	2,644	3,931
Deposit account	8,938	24,899
 Debtors		
<i>2023/24 subscriptions tax relief due</i>	<i>2,503</i>	
<i>2023/24 subscriptions due</i>	<i>687</i>	
<i>2023/24 donations tax relief due</i>	<i>491</i>	
<i>Exeter Apr '24 expenses</i>	<i>123</i>	
<i>Owslebury Jun '24 expenses</i>	<i>80</i>	
<i>Close harmony recording Oct '24 expenses</i>	<i>165</i>	
<i>CD float</i>	<i>50</i>	
		4,099
 2024/25 subscriptions tax relief due	2,512	
2024/25 subscriptions due	342	
2024/25 donations tax relief due	182	
Songs of Farewell expenses '27	7,500	
NY Tour Apr '25 expenses	1,661	
Close harmony CD Launch Jul '25	3,000	
Men's shirts paid in 2024/25	1,724	
CD float	50	
	16,971	
 Creditors		
<i>2024/25 advance subs</i>	<i>1,836</i>	
<i>Fees paid in 2024/25</i>	<i>1,397</i>	
<i>Owslebury Jun '24 advance ticket income</i>	<i>933</i>	
		4,167
 2025/26 advance subs	1,368	
Fees paid in 2025/26	2,321	
NY Tour Apr '25 income received	660	
	4,349	
 Net current assets	24,204	28,763
 Reserves		
Unrestricted reserve	24,204	28,763
Restricted reserve	0	0

Analysis of reserves

	Unrestricted reserve	Restricted reserve
Brought forward at 1 Apr 2024	28,763	0
Result for year	-4,559	
Unrestricted reserves used in year		
Restricted reserves used in year		
Carried forward at 31 March 2025	24,204	0