

CONNAUGHT OPERA

57 Connaught Street, London W2 2BB

(CHARITY NUMBER: 1131004)

REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

YEAR ENDING 31 March 2025

The Chair Maria Arakie, reported to the Trustees at the AGM on 15/04/2025. Present were Wendy Mead (President), Dr Glenn Wilson (Treasurer), Dr Bill Acker (Secretary), Sabeed Dawood (Trustee/signatory), and Domenic Pini (Trustee).

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

We were deeply saddened to learn of the sudden death of our dearest Trustee and Secretary, Alan Steinfeld KC, whose continuous support and guiding light was valued, and appreciated, for the many years he helped to make Connaught Opera the solid and reliable Charity it has become. Rest in Peace kind and gentle friend and colleague, you will be sorely missed.

Dr Bill Acker, who has been one of our Trustees and a strong supporter of Connaught Opera has agreed to take on the role of Secretary.

Connaught Opera is an Unincorporated Association with a Constitution as its Governing Document. The Trustees were appointed by the Executive Committee, and as required by the Constitution, reappointed annually at the AGM. They have adopted the policies and procedures as supplied to them by the Charity Commission.

CHARITABLE OBJECTS

The objects of the Charity are to relieve the needs of people suffering from sickness, poor health and old age living in Greater London and beyond by the provision of musical concerts in hospitals, residential and nursing homes, day centres and similar institutions.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Connaught Opera raises funds to offer free concerts to older people in care in all the Greater London Boroughs and beyond. Our activities for the year ending March 2025 are detailed below.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that the Charity's activities contribute to the public benefit. Having taken note of the Charity Commission's guidance on the subject, the Trustees believe that the Charity's activities do indeed contribute to the public benefit.

TURNOVER

Our heartfelt thanks go to our major new benefactor (who wishes to remain anonymous) and has made Connaught Opera their sole beneficiary of charitable giving. Any monies received from them will be used

solely for activities that further our charitable purposes for the benefit of older, vulnerable people throughout England, with particular emphasis on enriching the cultural heritage of elders, resident in the Greater London area. The grant will not be used for any other purpose. An additional benefit is the Gift Aid from HMRC that gives us funds for more concerts.

Income for this financial year to end March 2025 was a large increase, compared with that to March 2024 (£45,805.57).

Virtually all our grant income goes directly to support our charitable activities. We believe it is most important that the elderly population, who have suffered many funding cuts, as well as additional stress due to lockdown, continue to have access to quality cultural and heritage events. Fortunately, our funders and benefactors have been in general agreement and very supportive, requesting that when safe to do so, we take professional concerts to older people in care who would not otherwise be able to attend events in the community.

It is gratifying to learn that we are made so warmly welcomed by all the audiences we perform for when they can, once more, have live performances in their care settings and attend concerts in Heritage sites.

SILVER SUNDAY/AGE UK EVENTS.



Connaught Opera have supported this fine organisation for many years, 2024 being no exception. We performed at the Hampton Hill Theatre for AGEUK in Richmond, and also Jean Stokes Centre in Islington for the AGEUK Islington branch.



Hosted by the Mercers' Livery Company in the stunning Mercers' Hall.

City Bridge Foundation (the Gold Standard of Funders) provided our main support during 2024/2025, when many of our regular sponsors were experiencing severe cutbacks due to the cost-of-living crisis. We are more than delighted that we have been awarded a third year of continuation funding from this very special and supportive funder. The Foundation have been having a massive overhaul of their funding programmes. We are extremely fortunate and grateful that we have received, in this funding year, a Cohort I grant of £9,945 which they have paid in one lump sum. We thought it wise to maximise the benefits of this grant by arranging many of the concerts in Heritage sites, thus enabling a much larger audience of elders to attend and benefit.

LONDON BOROUGH'S' SUPPORT in 24/25.

The CBF grants allow us to continue our work in all the London boroughs, when other funders have had need to adjust their priorities.

GUNNERSBURY HOUSE AND MUSEUM

The Rothschild Dining Room was the glamorous venue for a fourth concert hosted by **Gunnersbury House and Museum**. Gunnersbury have requested a series of concerts following on the success of these, making a further 4 concerts before the end of 2025. The Museum commissioned a video of the March performance, which is featured on their website. This is also shared on the Connaught Opera website under videos.

KNEBWORTH HOUSE, Lord and Lady Cobbold once again generously opened their home to residents in Quantum Care Homes, who funded this concert, in Hertfordshire. A short video is featured



on our website.

The Wizard of Oz finale for Quantum Care Homes residents at Knebworth House

ISLINGTON GIVING, through their grants awarded by the panel, **Golden Grantmakers**, enabled us to perform 8 concerts in Islington, their area of benefit, during 2024.

Further. in December we were granted 4 concerts in Care Homes in Islington and a **‘Make it Happen’**



grant was co-funded
invited us to perform a Christmas concert.

by the **Vibast Centre** who



SHUTTLEWORTH HOUSE

This marked the third concert held in this glamorous venue in Bedfordshire for the exclusive invited audience from Tibbs Dementia, supported by Wixamtree Trust.

LEIGHTON HOUSE

Past residence of Frederic, Lord Leighton, whose imaginative and extravagant tastes created this exotic gem, set in the heart of London in Holland Park. Featuring Connaught in the studio in which our community concerts are hosted. We helped celebrate the birthday of Deputy Mayor of RBKC, Councillor Laura Burns.



A second concert “We’ll Gather Lilacs” at Leighton House, attended by The Deputy Mayor in March 2025.



"It was as always, a joyful and uplifting occasion, full of laughter, singing along and so many enthusiastic and happy comments as guests departed. I can't quite put my finger on it but there was something particularly special in the air this time, I think :)"

My thanks also to everyone who contributed to the day, and particularly of course Maria, Glenn and Nick – you are such professionals, and you absolutely bring the pizzazz!!"
Charlotte Villiers, Leighton House.

FUTURE PLANS

We will continue applying for funding in our rolling programme.

Reference and Administrative Details of the Charity

The Charity is Connaught Opera, Registration Number: 1131004. Address of the principal officer of the Charity is 57 Connaught Street, London W2 2BB, Phone 07833736278. President is Mrs Wendy Mead, OBE, past Chief Commoner. Current Trustees are: Ms Maria Arakie (Chair), Dr William Acker (Secretary), Dr Glenn Wilson (Treasurer), Mr. Sabeed Dawood (Trustee and cheque signatory). Mr Domenic Pini (Trustee). Independent Examiner: Mr P L Boielle. M Eng. MAAT (Retired Community Accountant).

The Chair handles all day-to-day management of the charity as delegated by the Trustees. There are no salaried positions, and no profit is sought. Performers are paid a small, set fee for their services, in accord with a Charity Commission provision that Connaught Executives/Trustees who receive payment are in a minority of the Committee that sets the fee. All are regular performers but none is irreplaceable. If one is unavailable or indisposed a talented replacement can be drafted. This has occasionally happened in the past, with the result that we have never in our history (dating from 2003) had to cancel a planned concert, with the exception of the COVID 19 circumstances.

Structure, Governance and Management: The Charity has a constitution as its governing document. It is an Unincorporated Association. *Objects of the Charity* To relieve the needs of people suffering from sickness, poor health and old age living in Greater London and beyond by the provision of musical concerts for hospitals, residential and nursing homes, day centres and similar institutions.

Activities of the Charity: All activities are undertaken for the beneficiaries as described in grant proposals submitted to funders. The Charity keeps virtually no reserves other than restricted funds ear-marked for ongoing projects. Fees are allocated to professional artists only after concerts have been performed, as well as any allowance for administration and travel costs as outlined in grant applications.

Signed...*Maria Arakie*... Maria Arakie (Chair), 23/04/2025.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
Connaught Opera

No (if any)
1131004

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date
01 April 2024

To

Period end date
31 March 2025

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Grants	-	26,259	-	26,259	13,258
Donations	-	15,000	-	15,000	9,600
Gift Aid	-	4,547	-	4,547	7,598
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	-	45,806	-	45,806	30,456
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	-	45,806	-	45,806	30,456
A3 Payments					
Artists Fees	-	29,700	-	29,700	43,860
Venue Hire	-	1,739	-	1,739	296
Video/Photo	-	1,650	-	1,650	1,750
ICT	-	1,413	-	1,413	837
Travel	-	1,231	-	1,231	1,860
Dry Cleaning	-	600	-	600	
Stationery	-	430	-	430	
Wardrobe	-	268	-	268	1,082
Insurance	-	243	-	243	235
Parking	-	72	-	72	
Refreshments	-	51	-	51	-
Other Expenses	-	-	-	-	1,088
Postage	-	-	-	-	96
Sub total	-	37,397	-	37,397	51,104
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	-	37,397	-	37,397	51,104
Net of receipts/(payments)	-	8,409	-	8,409	20,648
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	7,826	-	7,826	28,474
Cash funds this year end	-	16,235	-	16,235	7,826

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Current Account	-	16,235	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	-	16,235	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
	Kawai ES7 digital piano	Restricted	595	-
	Kawai ES110 digital piano & case	Restricted	572	-
	ASUS Vivobook 15 OLED Laptop	Restricted	636	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		Maria Arakie	Maria Arakie	22/04/2025
		Glenn Wilson	Glenn Wilson	22/04/2025

Notes

1 GRANTS

City Bridge Foundation	£19,695.00
Cripplegate Foundation	£3,300.00
Wixamtree Trust	£2,314.00
Quantum Care	£750.00
Islington Council	£200.00
	<u>£26,259.00</u>

2 DONATIONS

Domenic Pini	£12,000.00
Bruce Quartermann	£3,000.00
	<u>£15,000.00</u>

Independent Examiner's Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Connaught Opera, Charity No. 1131004, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity 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 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 Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, 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.

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.

Signed: *P.L. Boïelle*

Name: **Paul Laurence Boïelle**

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any): **MAAT**

Address: **71 Lonsdale Road, Stevenage, Hertfordshire. SG1 5DD**

Date: 24th. April 2025