

The Fourth Choir: Trustees' Annual Report

For the Period 1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025

Chair's Report

This report covers our thirteenth year as The Fourth Choir (Registered Charity Number: 1156769) and our twelfth full reporting period as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Following our milestone tenth anniversary season, 2024–25 has been a year of continued artistic growth and increased international reach under the musical leadership of Jamie Powe.

We began the season with a notable milestone achievement: our debut performance at the BBC Proms in September 2024. As one of six choirs forming a "super choir" for Handel's *Messiah*, this performance—broadcast live on BBC Radio 3—was a significant moment in our mission to bring visibility to LGBTQ+ voices at the heart of the UK's classical music establishment.

Having completed the recording of our debut full-length album, *Songs of Ourselves*, a core strategic goal for this year was to secure the album's long-term legacy and we were delighted to successfully sign a distribution deal with Orchid Classics during this period. This partnership with a widely respected specialist label unlocks global professional distribution and marketing, supporting our mission to educate the public through the promotion of diverse choral works.

Another significant highlight of our artistic output was our staging of a musically-integrated version of James Joyce's short story *The Dead* at Wilton's Music Hall: the world's oldest functioning music hall. Blending literature, folk tradition, and classical music, and starring legendary actor Niamh Cusack, this performance continued to push the boundaries of our artistic outputs, brought significant new audiences to our work in two sold out nights and received critical acclaim in a review in The Guardian Newspaper.

Rounding out the season, we were thrilled to perform our first full booking at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, having taken part in a choir festival at the venue during Euro Pride in 2016. Coinciding with Amsterdam Pride weekend, we performed our *My Beloved Man* programme – conducted for the first time by Jamie Powe – earning a five-star review in the Netherlands' *Trouw* newspaper.

Having completed mastering, we look forward to the release of *Songs of Ourselves*, in September 2025 with a launch event at London's iconic and historical LGBTQ+ venue the Royal Vauxhall Tavern.

Edward Long

Chair, The Fourth Choir

Objects and Organisation

The objects of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) remain:

1. **Education:** To educate the public in the art of choral music through concerts, recitals, and other decided means.
2. **Equality and Diversity:** To promote equality and diversity for the public benefit, with particular reference to the LGBTQ+ community, through raising awareness and fostering understanding between diverse backgrounds.

Our Values

The choir's activities are guided by five core values:

- **Pride:** Celebrating our identity as LGBTQ+ singers and allies.
- **Excellence:** A passion for musical skill and artistic achievement.
- **Inclusion:** Nurturing a diverse and celebratory space.
- **Ambition:** Being creative, collaborative, and forward-thinking.
- **Community:** Maintaining a supportive and "big-hearted" environment.

Achievements and Performance 2024–2025

Key milestones for this reporting period include:

- **BBC Proms Debut:** Participation in a nationally broadcast performance at the Royal Albert Hall.
- **Orchid Classics Partnership:** Signing a professional distribution deal for our debut album.
- **International Debut:** Our first overseas tour with Jamie Powe, performing at the **Amsterdam Concertgebouw**.
- **Artistic Innovation:** Staging a major collaborative performance at **Wilton's Music Hall**.
- **Community Impact:** Raising significant funds for **Say It Loud Club** and **Rainbow Railroad** through retiring collections and festival participation.

Performance Review: The 2024–25 Season

BBC Proms (September 2024), Royal Albert Hall

The Fourth Choir joined forces with no fewer than five other choirs to create a giant "massed choir" to give the Messiah choruses their full dramatic potential – and were even joined by members of the audience for the iconic Hallelujah chorus.

The Messiah, in Mozart's orchestration, was conducted by John Butt and played by the Academy of St Martin's in the Fields. Other choirs performing in the work were the Philharmonia Chorus, the J Max Ferdinand Singers – who also performed in their own prom earlier in the day – London Youth Chamber Choir, the Bath Minerva Choir and Voices of the Rivers Edge.

Holly Herndon & Mat Dryhurst: The Call (October 2024–February 2025), Serpentine Gallery

The Fourth Choir were one of 15 choirs from around the UK participating in an exploration of AI technology and choral music by artists Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst. Having recorded a choral dataset earlier in the year, the choir's voices formed part of a generative output created by the artists in partnership with a group of technologists. The work was nominated for a STARTS (Science, Technology and the Arts) prize from the European Commission.

Music for a Winter's Night (December 2024), St Clement Danes Church

In our annual Winter concert, we performed a beautiful, varied programme of Christmas music featuring works by Joanna Marsh, Bob Chilcott and Reena Esmail, a gorgeous Ave Maria by Tudor composer Robert Parsons, and the atmospheric, 8-part 'First Snow' by Danish composer Bo Holten.

We were joined by Alicia Bruce-Doig, a representative of the Cambridgeshire-based LGBTQ+ charity The Kite Trust and took a retiring collection to support their work with young people.

James Joyce's *The Dead* (January 2025), Wilton's Music Hall

This choral-drama, adapted and directed by Séamus Rea, the Choir's Creative Producer, explored how unaccompanied singing adds layers of emotion to a powerful story and was narrated by the distinguished Irish actress, Niamh Cusack. The music included Irish folk songs, an exquisite Tudor Ave Maria, and showcased works by contemporary Irish composers, Áine Mallon and Rhona Clarke, as well as a new arrangement by our MD, Jamie Powe, of *Bid Adieu*, the only known song for which Joyce wrote both the words and the melody. It also featured atmospheric Christmastide music by Joanna Marsh, Sarah MacDonald and Bo Holten.

As well as selling out both nights, the performance received effusive reviews from the arts press:

“The exceptionally polished LGBTQ+ chamber choir teamed with Niamh Cusack for a beautifully paced production of Joyce’s short story.” – Flora Willson, *The Guardian*

“The performers created a highly effective synthesis, Niamh Cusack was a wonderfully engaging yet also a highly sympathetic performer, you never felt that the choral items were interrupting her, but were a natural part of the flow. The choir sang admirably and effectively, making us think about the music and its role in the drama rather than worrying about details of the performance.” – Robert Hugill, *Planet Hugill*

A Requiem for Those Who Had None (March 2025), Farm St Church

Held in Farm St Church – the home of LGBT+ Catholics Westminster – this concert commemorated the thousands of LGBTQ+ people sentenced to death in Europe during the 14th to 19th centuries. The programme featured Herbert Howells' *Requiem* and extracts of Alonso Lobo's *Lamentations of Jeremiah* as well as contemporary works celebrating love including *I Gaze Upon You* by Gabriel Jackson, Jake Runestad's *Let My Love Be Heard*, Michael Bussewitz-Quarm's *Nigra Sum* and a setting of texts by the poet Sappho by the choir's Musical Director Jamie Powe.

The concert and partnership with LGBT+ Catholics Westminster received press coverage, including mentions in *Gramophone Magazine*, *The Tablet* and *Independent Catholic News*.

Queer Cosmos (June 2025), Wigmore Hall

The choir celebrated Pride in London in this concert with works spanning nine centuries of human experience in collaboration with celebrated musician and author CN Lester and *Classical Pride*.

Kicking off the concert with a mystical work by American contemporary composer Meredith Monk, featuring a solo by CN, the concert also featured works by Dominique Phinot, who was executed for his sexuality in the 16th century, contemporary gems by Michael Genese, Mary Offer, Caroline Shaw and Kerry Andrew and the world première of *Though You Have Left Me*: a heartbreaking recently rediscovered poem by Siegfried Sassoon set to music by the choir's own Kit Grahame.

Amsterdam Tour (August 2025)

The choir was thrilled to be making its debut at the world-famous Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in its first overseas tour since COVID, and first with Musical Director Jamie Powe. The concert, entitled *My Beloved Man*, told the story of the 39-year relationship between Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears using extracts from their letters to each other, in a script collated by Séamus Rea. The letters were read by Classic FM presenter Zeb Soanes, and Ab Nieuwdorp, presenter on Dutch radio station NPO Klassiek.

The concert fell on the day of the Amsterdam Pride parade and was a celebration of the love of Britten and Pears with music by Britten himself as well as their friends, contemporaries and historical composers whose music influenced Britten..

The performance received a five-star review in *Trouw*:

“A stunning tribute to Britten and Pears. The quality of this non-professional choir is outstanding.” – Peter van der Lint, *Trouw*

Public Benefit & Impact

The Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit.

- **Education:** By performing rare works including many by Renaissance women (e.g., Raffaella Aleotti) and contemporary queer composers (e.g. Michael Bussewitz-Quarm, Kerry Andrew), we have brought dozens of rarely performed choral works to audiences in new contexts and formats.
- **Diversity:** Our partnership with The Kite Trust at our winter concert provided a platform for service providers working with LGBTQ+ youth to share their stories, directly advancing our aim to "cultivate a sentiment in favour of equality".
- **Accessibility:** We continue to use varied venues—from historic churches to modern concert halls—to ensure choral music is accessible to different communities. We continue to operate policies for financial accessibility for our members and audiences, providing travel bursaries to allow lower-income members to participate in our tour and offering discounted and free tiers of tickets for some of our concerts to allow audiences access to music who might not otherwise be able to afford it.

Structure, Governance, and Management

The Fourth Choir was constituted as a CIO on 22 April 2014.

- **Trustee Recruitment:** We have explored widening our Trustee group to include non-singers to enhance our governance and professional skills.
- **Reserves Policy:** The Board maintains a target reserve of £7,000 to ensure financial stability and mitigate against unexpected operational costs.
- **Financial Health:** The Choir remains in a stable financial position, supported by a mix of ticket sales, member subscriptions, and successful fundraising for the *Songs of Ourselves* project.
- **Charity’s Principal Address:** The Fourth Choir, Flat 5, 19 Percy Circus, London WC1X 9EE.
- **Names and Roles of Trustees:**
 - Dr Edward Andrew Gilmore Long – Chair
 - Dr Finn Schulze-Feldmann - Treasurer
 - Alexander Graham Edward Luck – Trustee
 - James Daniel McGrenera - Trustee

Future Plans (2025–2026)

Looking ahead, the Trustees aim to:

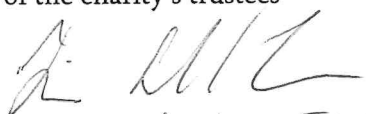
- Formally launch and promote the *Songs of Ourselves* album via Orchid Classics and reach a wider audience through album sales and radio play.
- Expand our digital presence to reach a global audience.
- Pursue collaborations with professional orchestras and LGBTQ+ advocacy groups.
- Explore diversification of our funding sources to continue to grow the ambition of our artistic and educational outputs.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature (s)



Full name (s) *Finn Schulze-Feldmann*

Position (eg chair) *Treasurer*

Date *4/6/26*



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name
The Fourth Choir

On accounts for the year
ended

31st August 2025

Charity no
(if any)

1156567

Set out on pages

1-2 below

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/08/2025**

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

F J Wilde

Date:

11th June 2026

Name:

F J Wilde

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

FCCA, MBA (OPEN), DChA

Address:

4 Marigold Drive

Bisley

Surrey

GU24 9SF



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

The Fourth Choir

1156567

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/09/2024

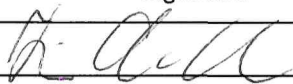
To

31/08/2025

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					
Special Events	3,500	-	-	3,500	4,758
Other Sales	19	-	-	19	12,861
Concert Sales	11,110	-	-	11,110	23,607
Concert Sales - Tickets	8,925	-	-	8,925	
Donations	1,484	-	-	1,484	
Donations (members)	12,355	-	-	12,355	-
Misc Prior Year Difference	72			72	
Gift Aid	3,769	-	-	3,769	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	41,234	-	-	41,234	41,226
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	41,234	-	-	41,234	41,226
A3 Payments					
Concert Costs	9,176	-	-	9,176	-
Product Costs	56			56	563
Development Costs	31,310			31,310	11,917
Travelling & Entertainment	1,470			1,470	
Professional Fees	750			750	15,749
Bank Charges	320			320	499
General Expenses : Subscriptions	874			874	1,004
General Expenses : Insurance	337			337	543
Advertising and Marketing Costs				-	50
Equipment Hire and Purchase				-	544
Performers				-	4,180
Catering				-	510
Travel Costs				-	288
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	44,293	-	-	44,293	35,847
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	44,293	-	-	44,293	35,847
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 3,059	-	-	- 3,059	5,379
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	10,793	-	-	10,793	5,414
Cash funds this year end	7,734	-	-	7,734	10,793

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	HSBC Bank Balance	6,299	-	-
	Outsavy control account	108		
	Stripe control account	29		
	GoCardless	330		
	Box Office Cash	38	-	-
	Paypal	929	-	-
	Total cash funds	7,734	-	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))		OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
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)
			-	-
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
			Finn Schulze - Feldmann	10/6/26