

Northern Opera Group

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Northern Opera Group

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the CIO for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the CIO 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 CIO's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. 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 charity as required by section 130 of the Charities Act;
- 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.

Signed: 

Name: Simon Bostrom FCIE

25/5/2023

West Yorkshire Community Accountancy Service CIO

Stringer House
34 Lupton Street
Leeds
LS10 2QW



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From 1/4/22

Period start date To 31/3/23

Period end date

Charity name: Northern Opera Group

Charity registration number: 1167501

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT OF THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE ARTS, IN PARTICULAR THOUGH NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY THE PRODUCTION OF LIVE OPERA AND THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF AUDIENCES AND PARTICIPANTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.	Para 1.17 and 1.19	We create a range of musical productions, suitable for participants of varying ages, abilities and experiences. We produce works which are rarely performed, providing artists, participants and audiences with new and engaging experiences. We operate in the North of England, with a national reach.
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	The trustees confirm they have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	
	Para 1.38	

Contribution made by volunteers		
Other		

Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	<p>We have celebrated our busiest year to date, with our critically acclaimed 2022 Leeds Opera Festival, R&D process for our new Sherlock Holmes opera, and our first performances in Bradford with our community opera 'Little Red Riding Hood'.</p> <p><u>Sherlock Holmes</u></p> <p>In April 2022 we undertook an R&D week with a public 'work in progress' performance for our new 'Sherlock Homes' opera (adapted from the novel 'The Sign of Four').</p> <p>With music and libretto by Lliam Paterson, the opera is being developed with mind to touring to mid-scale theatres. This type of story (a fast-paced, detective mystery) has rarely been adapted for the opera stage, with this R&D therefore enabled us to try out different ideas – musically and dramatically – and gain feedback from an audience.</p> <p>We undertook this process at the East Riding Theatre in Beverley, as it represents the type of theatre and community we intend to reach with our eventual tour.</p> <p>The response from artists and our audience was very positive, with emphasis on the clarity of the story telling, and the need for more innovative and high quality work in local theatres.</p> <p>We are now continuing to develop the opera for premiere in 2024.</p> <p><u>Leeds Opera Festival 2022</u></p> <p>We were extremely pleased with the outcomes of this year's Festival. Feedback clearly demonstrated that our output was the highest</p>

		<p>quality we're produced thus far, and the Festival succeeded in reaching more, and more diverse, audiences and participants than ever before.</p> <p>The Festival's theme was POWER, and included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new production and English translation of Handel's 'Silla' at Leeds School of Arts - A performance of Krenek's 'The Dictator' at The Holbeck - A tour of a new opera, written by Christella Litras and Mike Kenny, called 'Power' - A programme of workshops and events, including a Climate Symposium and audio project with participants from Leeds Art Gallery. <p>62% of audiences travelled from outside LS postcodes which positively demonstrates the growing regional and national reach of the Festival. Feedback from audiences was extremely positive and in line with our ambitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 88% Very Good (highest option) and 12% Good on the quality - 72% Very Good and 28% Good value for money - 48% new audiences to Northern Opera Group, inc 10% of audiences for our headline production of 'Silla' were new opera audiences <p>Audience feedback:</p> <p>"Fantastic beautiful music excellent singers and the production will be a highlight of 2022 for me"</p> <p>"The direction was absolutely fantastic. It was revolutionary to see a production put together with such care and determination to be feminist and inclusive. You could see how the cast cared for each other - the energy was supportive and engaging"</p> <p>"I attended Alcina at Glyndebourne but enjoyed Silla much more as the plot was conveyed much more clearly and there was no weak link; singers, musicians and production"</p> <p>"A triumph. Staging, singing, music all of the highest order. It was a great idea to take this</p>
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	<p>under performed masterpiece and re-imagine it for the 21st century”</p> <p>“A reimagining with a clear vision and precise execution. Bold, feminist, exciting, thoughtful. Each performance had clear intentions and sharp, nuanced characterisation”</p> <p>We worked with 25 young people from New Wortley Community Centre to co-create our pop-up opera. This is the first time that we’ve worked with young people in this way, and it was a very positive experience for both the young people involved and our artists leading the sessions.</p> <p>“The children really engaged well. We’d love to do something similar again in the future” (Gemma Bain, Centre Manager)</p> <p>The pop-up opera they co-created was performed in venues in eight different communities across the city – including New Wortley, Colton, Morley and Seacroft. Over 1,000 people engaged with the performances, including an estimated 25% of audiences under the age of 12.</p> <p>We supported local creatives by hosting a Climate Symposium, with 68 artists and companies joining us to learn about sustainable practice. We also extended opportunities for local students to join the Festival on placements in acting, assistant directing, and assistant stage managing. This was a really positive development, and enabled 7 local students with no previous experience of opera to learn from our creative teams.</p> <p>“The company has been so welcoming to me as a new face, I feel so inspired by every creative in the room. I never thought about working in opera before because I honestly didn’t think it was something accessible to me. It’s been so eye-opening to work with like-minded individuals on an art form that’s new to me, finding so much creativity and inclusion in a place I never thought to look. Being in the room with such talent and being able to offer what I can to a professional space is a dream” (assistant director placement student)</p> <p>This Festival saw the first year of our new partnership with Leeds School of Arts (at Leeds Beckett University). This partnership enables to</p>
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		<p>use their outstanding rehearsal and performance facilities at their new £80m performing arts centre in Leeds city centre, store our props and costumes for use by their students, and provide placement, internship and career development opportunities to students.</p> <p><u>Little Red Riding Hood</u></p> <p>Our annual community opera was a new production of Cesar Cui's 'Little Red Riding Hood'.</p> <p>Rehearsals took place in Bradford for the first time, enabling us to welcome new participants from the area. Performances took place at Victoria Hall in Saltaire, Bradford, as well as Morley Town Hall in Morley, Leeds. Community participants were able to perform alongside a professional principal cast, and were supported by a professional production team.</p> <p>Audience feedback:</p> <p>Thanks so much, this was a wonderful performance! My kids and I thoroughly enjoyed it</p> <p>Very enjoyable, perfectly pitched for younger audience</p> <p>Our children loved it and so did we! They loved that it wasn't just watching and they sat and coloured and their pictures were used on stage and the wolf jumped down. They were mesmerised</p> <p>It was just fabulous. I felt it was incredibly professional, fun and a wonderful way to start the festive season with my 2 daughters who are 6 and 9. We all absolutely loved it.</p> <p>Loved the interaction with the children. Felt the performance was excellent and made opera available to all (even though I don't usually listen to opera)</p> <p>We had such a lovely time my little girl was entertained from start to finish</p> <p>Thank you so much for a fabulous production and for coming to Saltaire! It's very local to me which is important as I have long covid and would not have been able to attend in Leeds (where such performances usually are).</p>
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		<p>Please offer more productions here, for grown ups and children</p> <p>Length of performance was just right. Took my grandchildren to give them an introduction to opera and they enjoyed it.</p> <p>A lovely family day out. Thank you!</p> <p>85% of booking parties included at least one under-12 year old, and 63% of audiences were attending their first opera.</p> <p><u>Future Plans</u></p> <p>We are currently preparing for the 2023 Leeds Opera Festival, which is themed around opera from Latin America. It will include the UK premiere of 'Frida' by Robert Rodriguez, and a new production of Astor Piazzolla's tango opera, 'Maria de Buenos Aires'.</p> <p>We will be working with schools to deliver workshops on Latin folk stories and music, with the contributions of young people helping to create a new pop-up opera for the Festival, written by Jose Puello and Zodwa Nyoni.</p> <p>The Festival will include our most extensive events programme to date, including music recitals, free dance workshops, and another collaboration with Leeds Art Gallery.</p> <p>We are also planning for a revival tour of 'Little Red Riding Hood', a new community production for December 2023, and planning for the 2024 Leeds Opera Festival.</p>
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Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	
Investment performance against objectives	Para 1.41	

Other		

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	<p>With minimal overheads and liabilities, Northern Opera Group is in a stable financial position moving forward. Whilst income has gone down this financial year compared to last, this is due to where grants from Arts Council England have fallen either side of the financial year end. As stated in this year's accounts, we have a grant of £60,000 to be paid in the early months of the 23/24 financial year, as well as over £40,000 of Theatre Tax Relief, placing the charity in a very healthy position.</p> <p>At the time of signing these accounts the charity has been impacted by the global Covid-19 virus. The trustees have reassessed the charity's ability to continue for at least 12 months from the date that the accounts are approved and conclude that no material uncertainties exist that cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to meet its liabilities as they fall due.</p>
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	As we have minimal overheads the company doesn't have a formal reserves policy. Management accounts are created for each Board meeting for Trustees to monitor
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	£365
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	n/a
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	n/a
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	n/a

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	Our principal sources of funding are Arts Council England (project grants), Theatre Tax Relief, and Trust and Foundation grants
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	

Other		

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed , royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association , CIO)	Para 1.25	CIO
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	Trustees are selected based on recommendation and research

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	
Other		

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Northern Opera Group
Other name the charity uses	
Registered charity number	1167501
Charity's principal address	c/o Northern Ballet 2 St Cecilia Street Quarry Hill Leeds LS2 7PA

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Mark Skipper	Chair		
2	Sally Stephens		1/4/22 - 24/1/23	
3	Sarah Vyse			
4	Rachel Bamforth		1/4/22 - 24/1/23	
5	Emily Simpson			
6	Charlotte Armstrong		1/4/22 - 24/1/23	
7	John Savournin		1/3/23 -	
8	George Johnson-Leigh		1/3/23 -	
9	Alan Williams		1/3/23 -	
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

[illegible]

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

[illegible]

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	

Additional information (optional)

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Exemptions from disclosure

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

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Other optional information

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Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)	<i>S. Vyse</i>	
Full name(s)	Sarah Vyse	
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Trustee	
Date	25/5/23	



Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/04/2022

To

31/03/2023

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					
Government		7,860		7,860	54,996
Trust and Foundation	2,000	51,250		53,250	65,700
Donation	1,710	3,370		5,080	886
Box office		6,055		6,055	4,953
Commissions					
Misc					1,195
Theatre Tax Relief	12,036			12,036	10,987
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	15,746	68,535	-	84,281	138,717
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	15,746	68,535	-	84,281	138,717
A3 Payments					
Operacast	100			100	200
Artist fee		92,318		92,318	64,236
Marketing		3,081		3,081	5,053
Accommodation / travel		11,501		11,501	4,116
Venue hire		10,424		10,424	7,289
Production	227	14,108		14,335	11,066
Administration	90			90	600
Overheads	2,068			2,068	1,398
Equipment					51
Governance	240			240	288
Volunteer expenses		29		29	142
Training					
Vendor fees	1	124		125	356
Other	127	100		227	176
Sub total	2,853	131,685	-	134,538	94,971
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	2,853	131,685	-	134,538	94,971
Net of receipts/(payments)	12,893	- 63,150	-	- 50,257	47,746
A5 Transfers between funds	- 12,827	12,827	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	299	66,347	-	66,646	18,900
Cash funds this year end	365	16,024	-	16,389	66,646

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				
	Current account	365	16,024	-
	Paypal	-	-	-
CCXX R1 accounts (SS)	1			25/05/2023

	-	-	-
Total cash funds	365	16,024	-

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

OK

OK

OK

Unrestricted funds
to nearest £

Restricted funds
to nearest £

Endowment funds
to nearest £

Details

B2 Other monetary assets

Tax reclaimable through Theatre Tax Relief	45,552	-	-
Arts Council England	-	60,000	-
Leeds City Council	-	5,000	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

Details

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

Details

B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

Details

B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
WYCAS - Independent Examination	Unrestricted	480	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

S. Vyse	Sarah Vyse	25/05/2023