

CONCERTS AT CRATFIELD CIO
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2024

**Independent Examiner's Report to the members of Concerts at Cratfield for the year ended
31st December 2024**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024

Respective responsibilities of Trustees of Concerts at Cratfield and the Independent Examiner:

The Trustees note that neither an audit nor an independent examination is required by the Charity Commission but take the view that an independent examination is desirable.

It is my responsibility to

Examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Charities Act (2011)

Follow the procedures laid down by the Charity Commission under the Act

State whether particular measures have come to my attention

Basis of the Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Trustees and a comparison of financial statements with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosure in the financial statements and seeking explanation from the Trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the financial statements.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention:

1. Which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
To keep accounting records in accordance with Section 145 of the Act
To prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records have not been met; or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

L Taylor
Red Lodge Barn, Middleton Moor, IP17 3LN

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Visit the Gallery page of our website and you will find wonderful images that bring back to life not only the 2025 season just ended, but the brilliant 2024 season covered by this Report & Accounts. What a thrilling year it was – Fenella Humphreys and Martin Roscoe stepping in at short notice with a programme of entirely French music. A mesmerising performance by Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, who is on track to become a major musical star, and an exuberant concert by the Meliora Collective, packing seven musicians onto our tiny stage. Then the unforgettable combination of two more rising stars, cellist Tim Posner and pianist Mishka Rushdie Momen, who hotfooted their way to Cratfield from the Italian Lakes. And finally, two of Britain's greatest Quartets, the Fitzwilliam featuring we believe their last performance ever with violist and co-founder Alan George, who knew Shostakovich personally; and the Heath Quartet, joined by the award-winning young Dutch violinist Charlotte Spruit.

What a long way Concerts at Cratfield travelled in the two years from the end of the pandemic, when the Trustees were concerned for our future. Thanks to the Chairmanship of Peter Baker, we ended 2023 in a far stronger position - financially and in terms of audience numbers and enthusiasm - than we had dared hope. We spent many hours in the run up to the 2024 concerts working out how many extra audience members we could squeeze in. Audience numbers continued to grow, with all top price seats and most concerts sold out. So too did our audience reach, with many first-time visitors to Cratfield, and several instances of people becoming Patrons and Friends after just one concert.

Our audience continues to respond to ambitious programming, with pieces and composers never previously heard at Cratfield, alongside new and sometimes challenging works. 2024 was notable for the number of composers who came to Suffolk to introduce their work to us: Christian Forshaw spoke movingly at our Young Artists concert about his piece *Milton Road*, written specially for the Melos Quartet; Liz Dillnott Johnson talked about her piece *Borderlands* composed for the Fitzwilliam Quartet; and Southwold-based Nathan Williamson spoke with great frankness about his "dark" and brilliant composition *Quartet Black*.

To further our charitable purpose of supporting professional musicians, in 2024 we embarked on an ambitious spring programme focusing on musicians at the start of their career. Classical accordionist Ryan Corbett, a BBC New Generation Artist and ROSL Gold Medal winner, performed for us at The Cut in Halesworth. By the time he came to play for us in the main 2025 Season, he had made his Wigmore Hall and Proms debuts, and played a fabulous concerto written specially for him at Berlin's Konzerthaus. Our second Young Artists concert with the Melos Saxophone Quartet provided more musical riches, including two world premieres; and classical guitarist Jack Hancher, another ROSL Gold medallist, played for our AGM last year before also returning to perform for our main season in 2025. With the support of our audience, we had the confidence to plan further Young Artist concerts in spring 2025 and 2026, making them a regular feature of our calendar.

We are so grateful to all those who support us financially through their generosity as Patrons and Friends, helping bridge the gap between ticket revenues and the cost of staging first-class professional concerts, and by contributing to specific projects. At the beginning of 2024, we launched a Chairman's Appeal aimed at helping with the cost of hiring pianos for Cratfield, one of our biggest expenses. Our aim was to provide greater flexibility in concert programming. The appeal was a great success, raising well over £2000, enabling us to hire no less than six pianos in 2025, culminating in a piano quartet.

Crucially, the significant improvement in our funding position enabled us to employ a concert manager for the first time. The brilliant Lottie Ackerley has transformed the way we operate on concert day, getting everything ready before the arrival of artists and audiences, and tackling most of the clearing up afterwards, freeing up Trustees and volunteers to focus on front of house duties and collecting the musicians.

Another innovation in 2024 was the introduction of a programme book covering the whole season. The new format, beautifully designed and printed by Leiston Press, proved a great success and for the first time in many years (perhaps ever) we made a profit on programmes, further strengthening our finances. We were also fortunate that the amazing photographer Darrel Charles volunteered his services to Concerts at Cratfield, taking our website, and increasingly important Instagram pages, to a level of professionalism we could never achieve without him. So many musicians have been delighted with Darrel's ability to unobtrusively capture the joy and magic around their performances. Jeneba Kanneh-Mason used his pictures on her own social media immediately after performing for us, and some recent Instagram posts have attracted more than 5,000 views, which seems astonishing for an organisation of our size.

I am especially grateful to our Trustees for their unstinting support and enthusiasm: Marilyn Reeves for responding so quickly to all inquiries and keeping tabs on our Patrons and Friends; Glenda Bennet and Anne Hyatt King for their steadfast commitment and boundless enthusiasm; Simon Whitney-Long for organising poster distribution and disabled car parking; and Graham Ingham for rebuilding our finances and taking on the role of concert organiser. We were fortunate to be joined at the beginning of 2025 by Christine Webber, who miraculously secured (and wrote) a wonderful two-page feature on Concerts at Cratfield in Suffolk Magazine this summer.

Victoria Bennett-Hall, who joined as a Trustee at the beginning of 2024, quickly revealed herself to be indispensable, assuming responsibility for artists' hospitality. The spectacular lunches she prepares for musicians have already become legendary. Every musician who comes to Cratfield loves the overall experience: the acoustic, the quiet, attentive and enthusiastic audience, Victoria's amazing lunches and of course the famous Cratfield teas. We also send every artist home with a Concerts at Cratfield mug – a small token that is amazingly well received and helps discreetly spread the word about us.

2024 was a wonderful year for Cratfield, consolidating the recovery in 2023 and enabling us to plan for 2025 and further ahead with great confidence with the invaluable support of our membership and ever-growing audience.

Jonathan Birt
Chairman

INTRODUCTION TO FINANCIAL STATEMENT

In one sense the numbers (see the tables below) speak for themselves. 2024 was another bumper year. At the end of 2022, our reserves position was worrying to say the least: a loss of around £3,000 on the year, bringing them down to £13,000; perilously close to an unsustainable level. A year later our reserves had risen by 52% and by the end of 2024 they had risen by a further 43%; a rise of 115% in just two years. By the end of 2024 we had reserves of almost £28,000—easily enough to finance a complete season which should be our minimum objective. We made a surplus on the year of £8,357, making it possible for the first time in several years to plan ahead more ambitiously.

Some of the individual numbers are striking. Our income, which comprises ticket sales, membership subscriptions, and donations, was 16% up—even though ticket prices remained the same as 2023. Ticket sales rose by 11%, membership subscriptions were up by 32% and donations were roughly double those of 2023. On the costs side, we saw an overall decline of 1.6%, in spite of significant increases in two areas. As noted in the Chairman's report, we hired a concert manager at the start of the 2024 who we pay on a per diem basis. This, plus a larger contribution to St Mary's church reflecting the large increase in ticket revenues, put the Venue costs item up (this heading also now includes hire of the portaloos). These additional costs were anticipated and budgeted for. What we did not anticipate, however, was the impact that changes to the way PRS (the charge levied to play music still in copyright) was calculated would have on our costs. For 2023, we paid £106 (actually paid at the beginning of 2024). For 2024 that charge rose to £1337—roughly twelve times as much. This could potentially impact on our ability to programme new music and we are investigating whether and how we might mitigate these costs for 2025 and beyond; it is too soon to be optimistic about this. These additional costs were offset by reductions in other areas.

Although it is too soon to make accurate forecasts, we anticipate that our reserves will have strengthened further by the end of the year, although not by as much as the previous two years. But ticket sales and subscriptions have continued to rise making new initiatives including outreach to schools financially feasible.

Graham Ingham
Treasurer

CONCERTS AT CRATFIELD CIO
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2024

INCOME

	Net	Gross
Membership subscriptions	£8,609	
Ticket sales	£22,034.23	22695
Programme sales	£725.23	£728
Donations	£6085	
Mug sales	£30	
Bank interest	£337.37	
TOTAL	£37,820.23	£37523.8

EXPENDITURE

Musicians fees	£15,770.13
Piano hire and tuning	£1,950
Venue costs	£4,814.05
Printing	£1,824
Making Music incl insurance	£1,981.65
Website	£350.4
Financing charges (inc refunds)	£456.22
Hire of The Cut for April concert	£396
Equipment	£952.81
Artists lunches	£282.65
Car park payment	£240
AGM Village Hall hire	£20
Examiner's fee	£300
Administration costs	£125.73

TOTAL	£29,463.73
TOTAL INCOME:	£37,820.73
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£29,463.64
SURPLUS	£8,357.19

CHANGE IN RESERVES

January 1, 2024		December 31, 2024
Business Banking Account:	£19,408.57	£27,819.87
Treasurer's Account:	£186.51	£161.94
Petty cash	£29.55	£0.01
Total	£19,624.63	£27,981.82
<u>Increase in reserves</u>		<u>£8357.19</u>

COMPARISON WITH 2023

2024		2023
Income	£37,820.83	£32,534.26
Expenditure	£29,463.64	£29,950.30
Increase in reserves	£8,357.19	£6,583.96