

# **THE CARICE SINGERS**

**Registered Charity Number 1170689**

## **TRUSTEES'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

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### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

#### **Trustees**

D M GRIMLEY (resigned 18 July 2023)

D HODGES

C KING

G PARRIS

P SPICER (resigned 17 April 2023)

J SYNGE

M TATTERSALL

#### **Charity registered number**

1170689

#### **Charity registered address**

Fexloe House, Main Street, Oxhill, Warwickshire, CV35 0QR

#### **Charity staff**

George Parris – Artistic Director

Ellie Sperling – Producer (resigned 3rd August)

Bradley Gill – Marketing & Communications Coordinator (resigned 19th July)

Will Wright – Singer Representative

#### **Honorary Treasurer**

James Synge

#### **Independent examiner**

John McKail

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## THE CARICE SINGERS

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### TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023. The Trustees confirm that the Annual Report and financial statements of the charity comply with the current statutory requirements for charities. The financial statements have been reviewed by an Independent Examiner as required by statute.

#### **Objectives and Activities**

##### **a. Policies and objectives**

The objectives of the charity are for the public benefit:

To advance the education of the public in the arts and in particular the art of choral music by British composers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

#### **Mission Statement**

The Carice Singers exists to connect music to people of all ages and backgrounds through its performances, recordings, and outreach work throughout the UK and beyond. Named after Elgar's daughter, the choir is committed to continuing Carice's tireless work in securing her father's legacy and particularly his fresh, poetic but unduly neglected music for vocal ensembles. Engaging with audiences, other musicians and the wider world is incredibly important to the charity and something which has been at the core of its existence since it began performing to the communities of South Warwickshire villages. Today the charity is proud to be engaging and actively supporting the next generation of the UK's ensemble singers, striving for the highest artistic calibre in all its work and gaining a reputation for imaginative concert programmes.

#### **Background**

Founded by George Parris in 2011, the ensemble began life giving concerts in North Cotswold churches and focusing on the choral music of Edward Elgar, naming itself after the composer's daughter and only child. Securing a contract with the Naxos label in 2013 for a three-part series of CD recordings gave the ensemble new momentum and confidence to develop ambitious artistic projects while also remaining loyal to audiences based in rural areas of the UK.

Since 2018, the choir has been invited to perform at prestigious UK music festivals including Chiltern Arts, the Lichfield Festival, Ludlow English Song Weekend, Newbury Spring Festival, the Oxford Lieder Festival, Spitalfields Music Festival, and the the Three Choirs Festival and to record its chosen repertoire for the *BBC Music Magazine*. In London, the group has performed at Holy Sepulchre Church, King's Place, and will soon give its debut concert at St Martin-in-the-Fields, while in the Cotswolds the group maintains an ongoing relationship with Cheltenham Music Festival involving a biennial residency.

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## THE CARICE SINGERS

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### TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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#### **b. Strategies for achieving objectives**

1. To inspire our audiences with work of the highest artistic calibre
2. To provide our audiences with pre-concert talks and workshops which contextualise our chosen repertoire and encourage them to draw their own interpretations from the music
3. To cultivate new audiences for choral music by undertaking our work in an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere
4. To undertake projects which enable the ensemble to travel out of the metropolis and bring our performances to areas of the UK that normally do not have access to a high level of music-making
5. To support the artistic and professional development of early-career freelance musicians by securing performances at prestigious venues and festivals and by creating artistically demanding programmes within a supportive atmosphere
6. To develop an ethical and environmentally sound approach to all aspects of our work

#### **c. Main activities undertaken to further the charity's purposes for the public benefit**

The Trustees have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing their aims and objectives and planning future activities. Below is a record of the public benefit activities for 2023.

The Carice Singers undertook 11 public engagements during the year, including a week-long residency at the Cheltenham Music Festival. Four engagements belonged to a new concert series established at London's choral hub St Martin-in-the-Fields, an initiative which aimed to bring varied and likely unfamiliar choral repertoire to a wider audience.

2023 saw The Carice Singers particularly active in performing new music, with the London premiere of Arvo Pärt's most recent choral work *O Holy Father Nicholas* in February and the first performances of Soosan Lolavar's *The World is The Active String*, commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society in partnership with Cheltenham Music Festival. George Parris and choir members also worked with 12 early-career composers during a five-day Composer Academy at the Cheltenham Music Festival in July.

The Carice Singers continued its wider work to engage with audiences and other musicians which goes hand-in-hand with the considerable work, support and opportunities it has so far created for ensemble singers at the start of their professional careers. The charity was able to continue offering its sick-pay scheme for freelance musicians (introduced in 2022 to reflect changed attitudes towards illness following the pandemic and to further increase its support to early-career freelance singers) and also began exploring options for holding a Singer Focus Day to create a supportive context for discussion among freelance choral singers.

In 2023, the charity engaged 38 early-career freelance singers.

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## THE CARICE SINGERS

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### TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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#### Achievements and performance

##### a. Key financial performance indicators

The accounts are prepared on the accepted basis of receipts and payments. The overall cash flow was £2,665 positive, on a total income of £75,676. This compares with £4,889 negative and £65,567 respectively in the prior year.

Income received from music festivals and music venues/societies remains a core element of the charity's financial stability. In 2023, this figure made up 62% of total income, against 57% the previous year. Ticket income made up 3% of total income this year. Donations given by individuals or Trusts and Foundations supported 29% of the charity's total yearly income, bringing in a total of £21,614 (without Gift Aid), which is a 14% increase from last year.

In terms of expenditure, total direct costs of all events again totaled 92% of total expense.

For the detailed financial statements please see the end of this report.

##### Review of activities

2023 has been an excellent year for The Carice Singers on the basis of reviews and feedback received from audience members, singers and participants. The charity's name is now synonymous among many with superb performances of ravishing, underexplored and thought-provoking music from a diverse range of composers and also a clear commitment to learning and development within a very supportive environment.

On 23 February, The Carice Singers gave a performance of 'Arvo Pärt: An Estonian Vespers by Candlelight' at St Martin-in-the-Fields. This was the first in a series of four concerts at this iconic London venue, which is fast becoming London's new choral hub. The concert had the added significance of being held on the eve of Estonian Independence Day and the one-year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. The latter gave the evening a particular poignancy and also demonstrated, through music, the unwavering support promised to Ukraine by the governments of Estonia and the wider Baltic region.

This was also an important occasion for the Estonian diaspora in London, many of whom attended at the invitation of the Estonian Embassy in London. By way of welcome, the Ambassador H.E. Mr Viljar Lubi addressed the audience and at the concert's end a silence was held for the people of Ukraine. Along with works by Arvo Pärt, including the London premiere of his most recent choral work *O Holy Father Nicholas*, Galina Grigorjeva's *Vespers* was heard in full along with works by Ester Mägi, Evelin Seppar and Valentin Silvestrov.

'Lenten Music by Candlelight' took place at St James' Church, Chipping Campden on 17 March. The concert's programme featured works by Arvo Pärt and William Byrd along with J.S. Bach's *Jesu, meine Freude* and Britten's *Sacred and Profane*. It was part of the

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## THE CARICE SINGERS

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### TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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charity's mission to bring high-quality performances of varied repertoire to communities in the South Midlands. The Carice Singers again visited Chipping Campden in December to give a concert for the town's Music Society, Campden Music.

In April a concert of music by female composers was planned in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, however this did not end up taking place. The concert was postponed until a later date.

The charity used the weekend of Elgar's birthday (2 June) to give concerts in Oxford and London featuring music for which it is now regarded as specialists. Part-songs by Elgar (still fresh, poetic and unduly neglected) were performed alongside part-songs by younger contemporaries Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Rebecca Clarke. Angus Smith, Choral Ambassador at Stainer & Bell, thought the performances were 'full of elegance and conviction. The tonal quality and blend of the highly-skilled performers was of the highest order'. The same programme was repeated in Richmond, North Yorkshire, in September at the invitation of Richmondshire Concerts.

The summer months brought a couple of staff changes, with Bradley Gill and Ellie Sperling leaving their respective roles.

The Carice Singers' week-long residency at the Cheltenham Music Festival involved an afternoon concert, a Classical Mixtape event and a five-day Composer Academy, the latter featuring two public Showcases of new works. The afternoon concert, 'A Prayer of Peace and Light', had at its centre Ligeti's masterpiece *Lux aeterna* around which was spun music where light and luminosity – as a topic, image, or inspiration – are refracted into myriad forms. The concert included the world premiere of Soosan Lolavar's *The World is The Active String*, commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Society in partnership with Cheltenham Music Festival.

Composer Academy, celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2023, saw George Parris and eight members of The Carice Singers working alongside Course Director Daniel Kidane (himself an alumnus of the scheme). The Academy supports early-career composers who are looking for professional advice and mentorship, alongside having their new works workshopped in advance of a world premiere in the same week. In two Showcases new works were premiered by Alice Beckwith, Robert Crehan, Effy Efthymiou, Mary Offer, Alexander Papp and Anibal Vidal.

Feedback from the participating composers included:

"Cannot emphasise strongly enough how fulfilling it was to work with George Parris and the Carice Singers. Their commitment, engagement, and encouragement was a real highlight of the course - so much teaching happened within a very supportive environment."

"The course content was artistically nourishing and technically rigorous. George and the Carice Singers took our pieces extremely seriously, showing each and every composition meticulous care and attention to detail. The positive energy of the Singers was also a joy

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## THE CARICE SINGERS

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### TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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to work with - the sessions were always informative, respectful and fun.”

‘A Prayer of Peace and Light’ was performed again at St Martin-in-the-Fields on 22 September, including the London premiere of Soosan Lolavar’s *The World is The Active String* alongside works by Vaughan Williams, Rautavaara, Ligeti, Harvey, Tippett and Byrd. Both the programme and the performance received unanimous praise from members of the audience, one person saying that it was ‘a real privilege to be in the audience’.

The autumn saw one other performance at St Martin-in-the-Fields which this time was part of the Joy & Devotion Festival of Polish Sacred Music, organised by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and composer Paweł Łukaszewski. The programme included mostly UK premieres of works by Andrzej Panufnik, Roman Padlewski, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Aldona Nawrocka and Krzysztof Penderecki: ‘mostly unfamiliar, but strikingly original, music that certainly deserves to be heard – and especially when sung as well as that!’, as one audience member wrote to us afterwards.

#### **Membership and Support**

The Carice Singers is enormously grateful to its many Friends, Benefactors and other donors whose support is vital to realising artistic ambitions and helping to secure the future. In 2023, the number of our supporters was 44.

Along with donations from individuals, the charity is extremely grateful to the Trusts and Foundations who supported the charity in 2023.

#### **b. Investment policy and performance**

Under the Charity’s Constitution the charity has the power to invest in any way the Trustees see fit.

The charity has so far not made any major investments nor does it plan to in the foreseeable future.

#### **Financial Review**

##### **a. Going concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

#### **Financial risk management objectives and policies**

The financial objective of The Carice Singers is to raise sufficient annual income to cover the expenditure of the year whilst generating surplus funds to maintain reserves at levels which match potential future liabilities and risk so that the financial viability of the charity is assured.

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## THE CARICE SINGERS

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### TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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The charity aims to spread financial risk across the main sources of income including performance fees, ticket sales, philanthropic donations, and money from Trusts and Foundations. The charity continues to regularly review its plans to increase these levels of income, across all main sources, as well as further economising on expenditure where possible.

- **Principal risks and uncertainties**

The principal risks facing The Carice Singers include:

- The expense of putting on events and making recordings, together with the accompanying costs involved with being a professional vocal ensemble which is larger than most others (e.g. singers' fees, transportation, accommodation)
- Financial uncertainty related to Brexit particularly with regard to the impact on securing engagements in Europe (which are often more financially generous than in the UK) as well the impact on financial support from individual donors
- Financial uncertainty related to the long-term impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic with regard to the continued caution or volatility preventing the charity's activities from taking place (either as a whole or in their fully realised versions) and the general recovery of the cultural sector as a whole
- Competition from other arts organisations, in particular professional vocal ensembles, that could impact the number of engagements, donations, ticket sales, and the availability of musicians
- Practicalities of working with musicians at the beginning of their careers, with regard to the prospect of financial strains and or other professional hardships facing these persons, made all the more uncertain by the recent volatility of the cultural section in general.

#### **b. Reserves policy**

Reserves are generally no more or less than the bank and cash balance. As such these funds are not restricted and for the use of the charity as working capital. If funds have been received as donations for specific purposes, other than general activities, then such amounts will be shown in the accounts as used or held as restricted.

#### **c. Principal funding**

The principal funding sources for the charity include a) funds received from music festivals or music venues/societies who wish to engage the charity for a performance for an agreed amount b) revenue collected as ticket or CD sales which comes from the general public at the charity's own events c) donations given by individuals or Trusts and Foundations d) Gift Aid received as a result of these donations.

### **Structure, governance and management**

#### **a. Constitution**

The Charity, also referred to as 'the Charity' is registered as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) whose only voting members are its charity trustees. The Charity was incorporated on 12 December 2016 and commenced trading on that date. The principal

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### TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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objects of the CIO are for the public benefit: to advance the education of the public in the arts and in particular the art of choral music by British composers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

#### **b. Method of appointment or election of Trustees**

The management of the Charity is the responsibility of the Trustees who are responsible for the appointment or election of new Trustees under the terms of the Constitution.

#### **c. Policies adopted for the induction and training of Trustees**

New Trustees receive a copy of the current version of the Constitution as well as a copy of the Charity's latest Trustees' Annual Report and statement of accounts before his or her first appointment or trustees' meeting. Thereafter, the new trustee is introduced to key employees and other Trustees and is invited to upcoming performances given by the charity.

#### **d. Organisational structure and decision making**

The Trustees are responsible for the overall governance of the charity and all key decisions affecting direction of the charity. The Board of Trustees delegates the day to day management of the charity to the charity staff members including the Artistic Director, Projects Administrator, and the Treasurer.

#### **e. Pay policy for staff**

The remuneration of staff is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees and is kept in line with other similar arts organisations.

#### **f. Connected persons**

In his role as Artistic Director, George Parris receives artistic fees from each engagement as well as a small stipend as agreed by the trustees and as per clause 6. 2. a. of the Charity Constitution.

#### **g. Trustees' indemnities**

If the CIO is wound up, the charity trustees have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

#### **Plans for future periods**

The trustees' main hope is for the quality of the charity's work to keep increasing, together with the frequency and scope of its projects, and to continue forging a unique approach to how it engages with its listeners (both those who are familiar and new to us), other musicians and those who can directly benefit from The Carice Singers' music making.

As reflects the charity's objectives, the choir plans to continue exploring the wealth of different voices that are found within the British Isles as well as reaching out to other cultures that have or can enrich our own. In 2024, The Carice Singers has specific plans to



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## **THE CARICE SINGERS**

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### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (continued) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

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apply this approach to the 150th anniversary of Gustav Holst, where Holst's masterly choral works are paired alongside music which evokes a similar sense of the limitless. The project will also include the commission of a new piece in response to Holst and his universe.

Otherwise, the charity's artistic vision will continue developing to find ways in which it can focus its programming of repertoire, where disparities can be strategically presented together, and opportunities where stories and contexts behind the music can be unwrapped for listeners in a way that is compelling but unpatronising.

The charity wishes to continue developing its support of early-career composers and singers, not so much because they might be the next generation, but because the trustees believe that fresh creativity and originality is well worth facilitating and celebrating at this moment in our history.



# CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A

### Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

The Carice Singers

On accounts for the year  
ended

31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

Charity no  
(if any)

1170689

Set out on pages

Page headed "Receipts & Payments Account"

(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 31/12/2023

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 (other than that disclosed below \*) 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.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

28th APRIL 24.

Name:

J M F McKail CA

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

Chartered Accountant

Address:

Brambles, Back Lane

Oxhill

Warwickshire CV35 0QN

# THE CARICE SINGERS

[Charity no. 1170689]

## RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

2022		2023
£	RECEIPTS	£
37,860	Engagement Fees	47,147
5,134	Tickets and Programmes	2,080
175	CD Sales	85
12,810	Friends and Benefactors	12,614
6,100	Other Donations	9,000
3,487	Gift Aid Recovery	4,750
<b>65,567</b>	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>75,676</b>
	<b>LESS PAYMENTS</b>	
60,506	Artists fees & expenses	60,281
2,580	Venue Hire	3,143
335	Printing/Stationery/Website	240
500	Advertising	2,000
1,376	Music & Materials	1,670
0	Sundry	666
	Fundraising and Stewardship	1,538
5,158	Administration and Production expenses	3,474
<b>70,456</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>73,011</b>
<b>(4,889)</b>	<b>NET CASH SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>2,665</b>
<b>7,790</b>	<b>CASH &amp; BANK RESERVES BROUGHT FORWARD LAST YEAR</b>	<b>2,901</b>
<b>2,901</b>	<b>CASH &amp; BANK CARRIED FORWARD THIS YEAR</b>	<b>5,566</b>
	<i>Other assets and liabilities:</i>	
10,234	Engagement fees owed by venue/promoter of final concert in year	0
	<i>less</i>	
-8,671	Fees payable to contracted singers/conductor/producer	0
<b>4,464</b>	<b>NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>5,566</b>

Notes

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- \* Of the £5,566 cash and bank balance, £3000 is 'ringfenced' as a grant for a specific project in 2024. It is not regarded as a restricted fund for the purposes of the charity's operations.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Receipts and Payments basis specified by the Charities Commission.

