

S A N S A R A

Sansara Choir

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity No. 1179978

# **Report and Financial Statements**

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 JULY 2023



**"Out of the plethora of vocal ensembles in the UK,  
SANSARA stands out for me as something really  
exceptional"**

- Judith Weir DBE, Master of the King's Music

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## **Trustees' Annual Report**

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 - 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023

### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**Charity name**

Sansara Choir CIO

**Other name the charity uses**

SANSARA

**Registered charity number**

1179978

**Charity's principal address**

C/O MA Price Legal Services Ltd, 6 Woodside, Elgin Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8SW

**Trustees**

Charles Graham (Chair)

Sarah Rennix

Henry Southern

Michele Price

Simon Tanner (from 1 August 2023)

Ben Inman (from 1 August 2023)

Rosamund Hatfield (from 1 August 2023)

*Laurence Harris (1 August 2022 - September 2023)*

*Karen Redhead (1 August 2023 - 11 February 2024)*

### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Governing Document**

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, foundation model, registered on September 18<sup>th</sup> 2018. It is governed by its Constitution.

**Trustees**

The Trustees meet at least quarterly, to discuss matters affecting the charity, review the financial position of the charity, and review the charity's activities and performance against its objectives. New trustees may be put forward by current trustees or members of the executive and are considered according to relevant experience, qualifications or specialist knowledge.

**Management**

The organisation is operationally managed by an executive team consisting of an Artistic Director (Tom Herring), Finance Manager (Tom Perkins), and Learning & Participation Manager (Fiona Fraser).

## **Remuneration**

The Trustees have approved regular remuneration for administration time for the Artistic Director and Finance Manager. The Learning & Participation Manager is remunerated on a project-by-project basis.

## **Policies**

The Trustees are committed to the pastoral care and wellbeing of all those who interact with the charity. The following policies are in place and are reviewed annually or when we make changes to our working practices.

- Safeguarding
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection
- Anti-Bullying
- Health and Safety
- Complaints
- Staff Code of Conduct

All policies can be found via our website, [sansarachoir.com/safeguarding](https://sansarachoir.com/safeguarding)

Potential risks of all events, projects and engagements are carefully considered as part of the charity's standard governance procedures, and suitable oversight and contracts are put in place. The charity takes out an annual Public Liability insurance policy.

## **Public Benefit**

In reviewing the reporting year and considering objectives for the year ahead the Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and the duty under S 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 and confirm that that public benefit is being achieved by

- Performing live to over 2,500 people across the UK and beyond.
- Reaching over 300,000 listeners worldwide across all streaming platforms.
- Supporting over 50 freelance artists and musicians
- Providing exposure for young creatives, including our Artistic Director, to:
  - New commissions
  - New creative partnerships working with other ensembles
  - Professional recording experience

## **OBJECTIVES**

**Charitable Objectives** as set out in our constitution:

To promote the art of choral music for the public benefit by:

- (a)** the organisation and/or presentation of concerts of high educational and artistic merit, the production of recordings;
- (b)** the commissioning and performance of new music and/or the presentation of musical works of particular historical and cultural significance, research and presentation of musical editions;
- (c)** the organisation and presentation of concerts, workshops and collaborations with community musical groups, schools and other places of education;
- (d)** by such other means as the Board of Trustees shall from time to time determine.





**SANSARA is a vocal collective making choral music that matters. By drawing on the unrivalled expressive potential of the human voice, we connect new audiences with timeless music and offer unique opportunities for reflection and renewal.**

Our work is rooted in artistic excellence and social engagement. Whether commissioning new music that brings refugee communities together or using ensemble singing to support the journey through bereavement, we believe in the transformative power of choral music to make meaningful connections in people's lives.

SANSARA responds to the present and breathes new life into our rich musical traditions. We create artistic experiences which challenge the boundaries of form and genre, from intimate a cappella performances to immersive electronic soundscapes. We believe that working collaboratively, with authenticity and the highest levels of shared ambition, allows exceptional things to happen.

Established as a charity in 2018, SANSARA reaches 400,000+ people every year through our critically acclaimed programme of concerts, recordings and community partnerships. As a collective we are committed to developing a core group of musicians and musical entrepreneurs - with the skills and passion to explore a new purpose for choral music.

SANSARA believes that choirs are living, breathing entities with a unique expressive power to give voice to compelling human stories. We create opportunities for people to experience and explore what choral music can mean to them, via the very highest quality performances, recordings and partnerships.



The UK is in the middle of a loneliness epidemic. 1 in 4 people are living with the devastating impact of social isolation on their physical and mental health. The legacy of a global pandemic, the climate emergency, cost of living and war in Europe have all contributed to a peak in anxiety leaving many people grief-stricken, isolated and fearful. All of this in the midst of an over-stretched health system meaning that people need to find new ways to help themselves and each other.

Human connection is a crucial part of the answer.

***"I felt very supported and was able to talk about some things which I had not previously."***

- Participant in SANSARA's *Rite To Grieve* project

Over the last five years, SANSARA's unique choral offer and partnerships have created new spaces and contexts for connection, spirituality, reflection and growth. We have seen first-hand the impact that exceptionally high quality choral music can have on individuals and groups, whether at a concert or as part of a participatory experience.

SANSARA is open to everyone, sharing music we love in welcoming and beautiful settings. We invite our audiences to bring their own beliefs, experiences and emotions - and to join together in rare, genuine moments of connection.

***"The whole experience was almost unbearably moving"***

- Audience member, *Traces of the White Rose* performance



## Chair's Report

This year was another where SANSARA continued working towards its bold creative and social purpose to make choral music that matters, giving voice to powerful human stories.

SANSARA's core projects fuse artistic excellence with social engagement, and this was excellently exemplified with the release of the *Traces* album with the record label, Platoon. This album was inspired by the Traces of the White Rose project, a collaboration with a research and engagement initiative led by Dr Alexandra Lloyd at the University in Oxford. Working closely with Alex and her students, we produced a programme of choral works interspersed with readings from the White Rose resistance group's letters, diaries and pamphlets. The project exists both as a live performance and a podcast series. The album was generously supported by Genesis Foundation Kickstart Fund and received critical acclaim.

SANSARA performed extensively during this reporting period both through self-promoted concerts and as part of arts festivals. A particular highlight was the *Byrd 400: Before the Dawn* tour in the UK - which saw SANSARA's fantastic music-making reach more new audiences.

Despite significant efforts in terms of fundraising, our core position remains unchanged from previous years. As a board we continue to support Tom Herring with applications to trusts and foundations to support his artistic vision for SANSARA, as well as developing private donation sources. We are incredibly grateful to our core group of regular donors who have provided the choir with much needed support, without which SANSARA would not have delivered the fantastic recordings and performances in this reporting period.

During this year, we continued to recruit board members to assist the charity with its objectives. I am pleased that Simon Tanner, Rosamund Hatfield, and Benedict Inman accepted offers to join the board from the start of the next reporting period (1 August 2023). The board is focussed on further developing the financial resilience of the charity over the coming months, so that the artistic ambition of SANSARA can be realised.

- Charles Graham, Chair  
April 2024

## Artistic Director's Report

Alongside the professional engagements and self-promoted events, three key projects stand out from the year: the start of a successful collaboration with the United Strings of Europe, the release of our album *Traces* with Platoon, and our successful UK tour of our William Byrd anniversary programme.

In November 2022, we joined forces with United Strings of Europe and Syrian oud player Basel Saleh to present a powerful sequence of choral and instrumental music on the timely and enduring themes of sanctuary, solidarity and displaced people. This successful concert at St.

Martin-in-the-Fields featured music by renowned Icelandic composer Hildur Guðnadóttir, the European premiere of Caroline Shaw's striking *To the Hands* – a six movement cantata responding to Dietrich Buxtehude's *Ad manus* from his *Membra Jesu Nostri*, as well as the world premiere of *The Journey* by Lebanese composer Houtaf Khoury, commissioned by United Strings of Europe. This collaboration has led to a future album recording in the following reporting period.

The release of *Traces* in February 2022 was a significant milestone in our developing relationship with our recording partner, Platoon, as well as for our existing collaboration with the University of Oxford's White Rose Project. This was in part enabled by the Genesis Foundation's Kickstart Fund. Today, we live with the traces of those who dreamed of a brighter future. We search for traces of meaning to hold onto in fractured times. With this album, we asked one simple but pressing question: how do we find inner peace in a world of conflict and division?

Through a programme of powerful choral works by British, German and Ukrainian composers each grappling with this question in their own way, we explored the wide range of emotional responses to this enduring challenge, from fear and uncertainty to the calm of acceptance.

Gramophone Magazine selected *Traces* as its Editor's Choice choral recording for March 2023, describing it as "a powerful programme of thought-provoking works, both timely and timeless, the impeccable performances by SANSARA drawing us in and holding us throughout the deeply reflective journey."

Towards the end of the period, we completed a UK tour with our Before the Dawn programme. We marked the Quartercentenary of the death of William Byrd, the most famous of England's Tudor musicians with a programme that featured some of his most enduring works, alongside rarely-performed gems that tell the story of a recusant Catholic within the turbulent Tudor court and church. In addition, we performed works by his teacher and friend Thomas Tallis and colleague Philippe De Monte which complement Byrd's musical genius, variety and invention, celebrating his remarkable ability to find - from the darkest and most anguished depths - a longing and hope for a new dawn.

In summary, the 2022-23 year was one where we embedded collaborations, performances, and recorded releases moving towards our renewed creative vision. The work done in this time has since proved highly valuable for the development of the charity, its trustees and its creative freelancers.

- Tom Herring, Artistic Director  
April 2023



## ACTIVITIES

In the period August 2022 - July 2023:

### Professional Engagements

15.09.22 - Lammermuir Festival I: Vox Machina & Stabat Mater  
16.09.22 - Lammermuir Festival II: Byrd  
25.11.22 - St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London: Sanctuary & Solidarity  
12.03.23 - Barnes Music Festival: Stabat Mater  
31.12.23 - St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London: Vox Machina  
15.05.23 - Newbury Spring Festival: Garden Follies  
17.05.23 - York University: Vox Machina  
01.07.23 - St. Martin's, Barcheston: Byrd 400 - Before the Dawn  
02.07.23 - Saxon Shore Early Music: Byrd 400 - Before the Dawn  
03.07.23 - Oxford Festival of the Arts: Byrd 400 - Before the Dawn  
04.07.23 - St. Bartholomew-the-Great: Byrd 400 - Before the Dawn  
15.07.23 - Sounds Sublime Festival, London

### Self-promoted Events

17.11.22 - SJE Arts: Les Voix Humaines  
22.12.22 - St. Cross Church, Winchester: Christmas Concert  
07.07.23 - St. Cross Church, Winchester: Byrd 400 - before the dawn

### Recordings

17.02.23 - Traces album released

## CASE STUDY

### Piers's story

Piers Connor Kennedy has sung with SANSARA for many years, and it was fantastic that SANSARA could record one of his compositions as part of the successful *Traces* album.

*"Blessed are the Peacemakers is one of those pieces which should appear simple and tranquil but is in fact very tricky to put together - the care and skill which Tom Herring and SANSARA have applied in this recording speaks to their quality and commitment to contemporary music, and has produced, I think, a piece of real serenity. This is the first time I have heard the work since it was commissioned for the Edington Music Festival in 2017 and I am utterly delighted and humbled with SANSARA's beautiful rendition - thank you!"*

- Piers Connor Kennedy

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The charity's financial position in 2022-23 was largely shaped by increased performing activity.

In particular, earned income (concert fees, ticket sales and CD sales) grew to £45,939 (from £39,138 in 2021-22), as reported in our accounts, section **A1**.

Private donations increased in the period, at £15,397 (from £9,640 in 2021-22): we remain grateful to the Friends of SANSARA for their ongoing support of the choir.

Expenditure (**A3**) reflected increased performing activity. We are proud to have provided over £45,000 of paid singing work to young professional singers, in a challenging financial and cultural climate. Fees for professional services also increased: the principal recipient of professional services fees is the Artistic Director, who receives a monthly retainer alongside other project-based fees.

The charity has no asset sales (**A2**) or asset purchases (**A4**) to report.

Expenditure (£83,112) outstripped income (£79,431) by £3,681 in this financial year. This is mostly driven by a delay in submission of gift aid claims for the period. The choir's underlying, unrestricted position remained largely stable.

There are no transfers between funds (**A5**) to report.

Total cash holdings (**B1**) were £6,071 at year end, comprising £1,968 in unrestricted funds and £4,103 in funds for restricted purposes.

The chair has written this statement as Jack Butterworth resigned from volunteering from the choir in December 2023, after ten years of voluntary support for the charity. Tom Perkins has been appointed from January 2024 as a paid part time Finance Manager for the charity.

- Charles Graham, Chair  
April 2024

## Accounting Policies and Management

Receipts and payments are the operational responsibility of the Finance Manager, who has delegated responsibility for expenditures of less than £500. Larger expenditures are subject to the approval of the Trustees.

The charity has a reserves holding policy to cover six months of core costs which was successfully maintained during this period. The reserves policy is reviewed annually and adjusted in accordance with current commitments and other prevailing economic factors.

**Restricted and unrestricted funds**

Funds are restricted where they have been raised for a clearly communicated purpose or project, or have been designated as such by the donor.

Unrestricted funds may come from sales of tickets or CDs, payment for concerts or workshops (by promoters or through ticket sales) or through unrestricted donations such as the Friends of SANSARA scheme.

**Risk Management**

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity may be exposed and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate any exposure to these risks.



Sansara Choir		1179978		CC16a
<b>Receipts and payments accounts</b>				
For the period from	1/8/2022	To	31/7/2023	

### 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 £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Donations	15,397	720	-	16,117	9,640
Gift Aid	-	-	-	-	-
Grant income	5,000	-	-	5,000	-
Income from services rendered inc. concert fees	45,939	22,291	-	68,230	29,946
Miscellaneous income	-	-	-	-	-
Royalties and streaming	153	-	-	153	-
Sale of CDs / scores	1,195	265	-	1,460	566
Sponsorship	-	-	-	-	-
Ticket sales	11,747	-	-	11,747	8,626
<b>Sub total(Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>79,431</b>	<b>23,275</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>102,706</b>	<b>48,777</b>

<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
nil	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>79,431</b>	<b>23,275</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>102,706</b>	<b>48,777</b>

<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Catering	581	-	-	581	114
Commission of music	-	2,750	-	2,750	2,850
Costs of sales e.g. box office	748	93	-	841	653
Digital and computing	1,448	-	-	1,448	923
Donations made	-	1,055	-	1,055	-
Filming, photography and publicity	1,838	4,550	-	6,388	3,485
Hire of purchase of scores, microphones etc.	645	-	-	645	277
Payments to musicians - expenses	5,421	387	-	5,808	2,116
Payments to musicians - fees	45,327	18,266	-	63,593	40,188
Printing, postage and stationery	962	225	-	1,206	738
Professional services	20,114	500	-	20,614	19,088
Recording production and purchase	-	6,373	-	6,373	825
Travel and accommodation	201	235	-	436	1,116
VAT on purchases	687	685	-	1,373	992
Venue hire and insurances	5,120	1,462	-	6,583	4,987
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>83,112</b>	<b>36,581</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>119,693</b>	<b>78,350</b>

<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
nil	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>83,112</b>	<b>36,581</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>119,693</b>	<b>78,350</b>

<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>- 3,681</b>	<b>- 13,306</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 16,987</b>	<b>- 29,573</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>- 2,985</b>	<b>2,985</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>8,635</b>	<b>14,423</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23,059</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>4,103</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,072</b>	<b>- 29,573</b>

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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Cash funds	1,968	4,103	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>4,103</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	nil	-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	nil	n/a	-	-
		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Musical scores	Unrestricted	-	500
		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	nil	n/a	-	-

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

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

*Charles Graham*

Charles Graham

01/03/2024

## **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Sansara Choir (1179978)**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Sansara Choir (the Trust) for the year ended 31 July 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 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.

*Andrew Radice 15 March 2024*

Andrew Radice

Chartered Accountant

Guelder Cottage, Hanging Langford, Salisbury, SP3 4NW