

# SANSARA

Sansara Choir

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Charity No. 1179978

## Report and Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 JULY 2024



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

- Judith Weir DBE

## CONTENTS

Reference and Administrative Details	3
Structure, Governance and Management	3-4
Objectives	4
About SANSARA	5-6
Chair's Report	6
Artistic Director's Report	7
Activities	7-8
Case Study	8
Financial Review	9
Declaration	10
Financial Statements	11-12
Independent Examiner's Report	13

## **Trustees' Annual Report**

For the period 1 August 2023 - 31 July 2024

### **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 - to 31 July 2024)

Rosamund Hatfield

Ben Inman (to 31 July 2024)

Michele Price (Interim Chair - from 1 August 2024)

Sarah Rennix

Henry Southern

Simon Tanner

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

#### **Governing Document**

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, foundation model, registered on September 18 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 Engagement & Wellbeing Lead (Fiona Fraser).

#### **Remuneration**

The Trustees have approved regular remuneration for administration time for the Artistic Director and Finance Manager. The Engagement & Wellbeing Lead is remunerated on a project-by-project basis. In addition, the Artistic Director who is also the founder of the choir, receives professional fees on a project-by-project basis for his services.

## **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 500,000 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.



## **ABOUT SANSARA**

**SANSARA is a collective of professional singers, composers, and creatives from across the UK creating transformational choral experiences.**

Choirs are living, breathing instruments fuelled by the primal force of the human voice and its power to move, challenge, console - to *transform* hearts and minds. Inspired by this belief, we share choral music we love to create spaces for reflection and renewal - whatever that means for you - from intimate a cappella performances to immersive vocal soundscapes.

**Our name echoes the ancient Sanskrit word 'samsara' - the transformational experience of moving through life's cycles.**

The cycles of modern life can be overwhelming. Despite our digital connections, feelings of loneliness and social isolation are on the rise. Our work is rooted in the unique potential of choral music to enhance the mental and physical wellbeing of audiences and singers.

**We engage with the complex, messy issues of our time.**

Whether commissioning new music that brings refugee communities together (A Quiet Night by Natalia Tsupryk), making a podcast about love and resistance (Traces of the White Rose), or using ensemble singing to support the journey through loss (Rite to Grieve), we believe choral music can speak directly to those seeking creative responses to the challenges of today.

**We are collaborative, experimental and forward-looking.**

Recent collaborations include projects with ensembles Manchester Collective, Fretwork, United Strings of Europe; composers Natalia Tsupryk, Piers Connor Kennedy, Rebecca Dale, Jasmin Kent Rodgman, Nico Muhly, Marco Galvani; and instrumentalists Basel Saleh, Julian Azkoul, Liam Byrne and Ruth Gibson.



Winners of the London International A Cappella Choir Competition, our performance highlights include concerts at the Southbank Centre, Barbican, Kings Place, St John's Smith Square, Bridgewater Hall, V&A, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Erholungshaus (Germany) and De Singel (Belgium).

Releases include *My North*, a commission by Rebecca Dale which was premiered at a commemorative event at the National Covid Memorial Wall, and *A Quiet Night - Tyhoyi Nochi* by Ukrainian composer Natalia Tsupryk, commissioned for Ukrainian Independence Day in August 2022. SANSARA's recordings have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and 4, Scala Radio, ABC and NPO Klassiek, and *Traces* (2023) was listed as Gramophone Magazine Editor's Choice. The choir's latest album *in the midst* was released in September 2024.

## CHAIR'S REPORT

This year was one of transition, as SANSARA started to focus on fewer, larger projects and increased recording activity enabled by our recording partner, Platoon.

Our next album, *in the midst*, recorded with the United Strings of Europe will be released in September 2024. It will feature Caroline Shaw's *To the Hands*, music by Hildur Guðnadóttir, Houtaf Khoury, and Piers Connor Kennedy. This is the first of three upcoming albums as part of our record deal with Platoon, with two more albums planned for release in 2025 and 2026. Much of the recording activity was completed in this reporting period.

In April 2024, Tom Herring, the collective, and trustee Dr Simon Tanner, completed a Creative Health residency with Britten Pears Arts, funded partly by the Postcode Places Trust. The purpose of this residency was to develop a workshop format that we can use to address issues of loss and social isolation in the Suffolk area and beyond. This is work developed from our Rite to Grieve project during the pandemic, and we hope will become a core tenet of our future work - deeply embedding our music making with pressing social issues in our society. We are currently developing this work, and starting initial engagement of additional research and venue partners.

SANSARA as a charity is dedicated to mould-breaking music-making, as we start to re-define the role of choral music in our society. This strategy, with which the board is supporting our Artistic Director, Tom Herring, will see fewer, larger, and more ambitious projects. These projects would be impossible without the continued support of our loyal private donors, our venue partners, and various trusts and foundations who have made financial commitments to this bold vision.

During this reporting period, our reinvigorated and professionalised board took root, and in addition we hired a part-time finance manager (Tom Perkins) to support our Artistic Director (Tom Herring), especially as we are now VAT registered, which comes with additional reporting requirements. The charity is developing well, however, it remains under financial pressure as many arts organisations are, and as a board we are focussed on achieving greater financial support for our upcoming projects to relieve the significant pressure placed on our Artistic Director to deliver the bold ambitions that we have.

On the 31 July 2024, I resigned from the board of trustees of SANSARA and due to personal circumstances I am moving to the United States of America. It has been a pleasure to lead the board of trustees in supporting Tom Herring's creative vision, and I look forward to seeing the charity's next stage of development from afar.

- Charles Graham, Chair  
31 July 2024

## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The performance calendar has been lighter this year, as the charity focusses on fewer, larger projects that align to our creative purpose. The themes of socially engaged work, collaboration, and creating recorded output continue from previous years and three highlights emerge from this year's activity: significant recording work for future releases with Platoon, our collaboration with Manchester Collective, and the start of our Creative Health work through a residency with Britten Pears Arts.

In October 2023, we completed two recording sessions for two new albums to be released with our partners, Platoon. One of which, *in the midst*, builds on our collaboration in the previous reporting period with the United Strings of Europe. In addition, we have recorded material with another string-ensemble and collaborator, Fretwork, which builds on our Stabat Mater programme with them and features the music of Arvo Pärt. The first of these albums will be released in 2024 and the second in 2025. We will record the third album that forms part of our current recording contract with Platoon in early 2025.

In April 2024, we completed a Creative Health residency at Snape Maltings in partnership with Britten Pears Arts and with support from Postcode Place Trust. A report on the residency can be found below (see Case Study).

Towards the end of the period, we joined forces with Manchester Collective for the European tour of our joint project, Rothko Chapel. This was our first European tour and included significant new commissioned work by Isobel Waller-Bridge, Edmund Finnis and Katherine Balch with performances at London's Southbank Centre, Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, De Singel (Antwerp, Belgium) and Erhohlungshaus (Leverkusen, Germany).

In summary, the 2023-24 year was one where we started to see success for our creative strategy - however, we continue to be under financial pressure to build organisational capacity to support my role with the administration and development of the charity.

- Tom Herring, Artistic Director  
July 2024

## ACTIVITIES

In the period August 2023 - July 2024:

### Professional Engagements

06.10.23 - St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London: Traces of the White Rose

11.11.23 - Wiltshire Music Centre: Traces of the White Rose

20.12.23 - King's Place, London: The Waiting Sky

22.04.24 - 26.04.24 - Britten Pears Arts: Creative Health Residency

05.05.24 - Southbank Centre, London: Rothko Chapel with Manchester Collective

07.05.24 - Leverkusen, Germany: Rothko Chapel with Manchester Collective

08.05.24 - Antwerp, Belgium: Rothko Chapel with Manchester Collective

10.05.24 - Bridgewater Hall, Manchester: Rothko Chapel with Manchester Collective

### Self-promoted Events

22.12.23 - St Cross Chapel, Winchester: The Waiting Sky

## **Recordings**

6-8.11.23 - Recording sessions with Fretwork

13-15.11.23 - Recording sessions with United Strings of Europe

## **CASE STUDY**

In April this year, we spent five wonderful days in Snape Maltings on a Creative Health Residency, supported by Britten Pears Arts. As a collective, we are in the process of developing our vision and ambitions for the future, with a particular focus on creative health and wellbeing.

In 2020, SANSARA developed Rite to Grieve, a project responding to the widespread crisis of grief and bereavement as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In collaboration with Ellie Harrison and 'The Grief Series', we devised a musical event format for the collective expression of grief, providing a safe space for conversation, remembrance and celebration of the lives lost during that time.

During our residency, one of our main aims was to develop our Rite to Grieve event, bringing it out of the context of the pandemic and creating a workshop that allowed participants the space to reflect. We wanted to guide participants to use breath work and their voices as tools to develop awareness, and ground themselves both physically and mentally, with the hope that this learning might be transferrable into their day-to-day lives.

Not only were we looking to develop and explore ideas around this workshop format, but we also wanted to use the time to think more broadly about wellbeing in the ensemble and how we can take that forward across all areas of our work. We also used the time together to explore and trial ideas for a new commission with composers Alex Ho and Rockey Sun Keting.

Over the course of the week, we had time together as a group to work on these objectives, but were also guided by sessions run by Mary Ann Gayford, Music Therapist, and Hazel Harrison, Clinical Psychologist. We also participated in a sharing session with the St Elizabeth's Hospice Compassionate Communities team.

Our week at Snape Maltings was invaluable. As busy freelancers, it can often be difficult to get everyone together in the same room, and so to have five days of uninterrupted time to explore and develop our ideas together away from the bustle of our everyday lives was incredible.

As a result of this time, we succeeded in developing our workshop, and have since run two events - one at St Elizabeth's Hospice and one at Snape Maltings. We are really looking forward to developing our relationship with the Hospice and Compassionate Communities team, and hope to run further events in the future for members of the community and the extraordinary staff who give their time there.

The residency an incredible opportunity for us to develop the creative health strand of our work and a wonderful time to connect as a group. Over the course of the week we had a beautiful walk along the water to the Iken Church, sampled the local pubs, and spent evenings on the beach with our fish and chips.

- Fiona Fraser, Engagement & Wellbeing Lead



## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The charity's financial position in 2023-24 was largely shaped by increased recording activity.

In particular, earned income (concert fees, ticket sales and CD sales) grew to £135,644 (from £81,590 in 2022-23), as reported in our accounts, section **A1**.

Private donations decreased in the period, at £11,852 (from £16,117 in 2022-23): we remain grateful to the Friends of Sansara for their ongoing support of the choir.

Expenditure (**A3**) reflected increased recording activity. We are proud to have provided over £73,896 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 (£150,824) was less than income (£168,798) by £17,974 in this financial year: the choir's underlying, unrestricted position remains largely stable.

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

Total cash holdings (**B1**) were £24,045 at year end, comprising £14,352 in unrestricted funds and £9,694 in funds for restricted purposes.

- Tom Perkins, Finance Manager  
September 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.

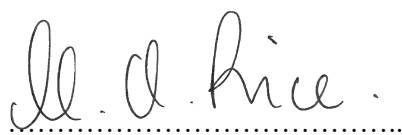
Unrestricted funds may come from sales of tickets or CDs, payment for concerts or workshops (by promoters or through ticket sales) or through unrestricted donations such as the Friends of SANSARA scheme.

### 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.

## DECLARATION

This Annual Report is approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Price', written over a dotted line.

Michele Price

Date: 28 May 2025



## Receipts and payments accounts

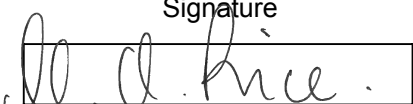
CC16a

For the period from	8/1/2023	To	7/31/2024
---------------------	----------	----	-----------

### 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	11,852	-	-	11,852	16,117
Gift Aid	8,303	-	-	8,303	-
Grant income	-	13,000	-	13,000	5,000
Income from services rendered inc. concert fees	123,752	-	-	123,752	68,230
Miscellaneous income	-	-	-	-	-
Royalties and streaming	-	-	-	-	153
Sale of CDs / scores	584	150	-	734	1,460
Sponsorship	-	-	-	-	-
Ticket sales	11,158	-	-	11,158	11,747
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>155,648</b>	<b>13,150</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>168,798</b>	<b>102,706</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>155,648</b>	<b>13,150</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>168,798</b>	<b>102,706</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Catering	186	-	-	186	581
Commission of music	500	-	-	500	2,750
Costs of sales e.g. box office	813	-	-	813	841
Digital and computing	1,904	-	-	1,904	1,448
Donations made	-	-	-	-	1,055
Filming, photography and publicity	6,645	-	-	6,645	6,388
Hire or purchase of scores, microphones etc.	70	-	-	70	645
Payments to musicians - expenses	7,474	126	-	7,601	5,808
Payments to musicians - fees	68,913	4,983	-	73,896	63,593
Printing, postage and stationery	247	-	-	247	1,206
Professional services	29,857	2,450	-	32,307	20,614
Recording production and purchase	11,067	-	-	11,067	6,373
Travel and accommodation	2,500	-	-	2,500	436
VAT on purchases	1,012	-	-	1,012	1,373
VAT Payments	7,615	-	-	7,615	-
Venue hire and insurances	4,461	-	-	4,461	6,583
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>143,265</b>	<b>7,559</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>150,824</b>	<b>119,693</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>143,265</b>	<b>7,559</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>150,824</b>	<b>119,693</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>12,384</b>	<b>5,591</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>17,974</b>	<b>- 16,987</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>1,968</b>	<b>4,103</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,071</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>14,352</b>	<b>9,694</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,045</b>	<b>- 16,987</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 funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Cash funds	14,352	9,694	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>14,352</b>	<b>9,694</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	nil	-	-	-
		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<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>	VAT	Unrestricted	6,180	01/08/2024
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
			Michele Price	28 May 2025

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

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Sansara Choir CIO ("the CIO") for the year ended 31 July 2024.

### **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 Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 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

28<sup>th</sup> May, 2025

Andrew Radice

Chartered Accountant

Guelder Cottage, Hanging Langford, Salisbury, SP3 4NW