



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

Harlekin Studio Opera - Charity No. 1183089

The trustees of Harlekin Studio Opera present their annual report for the period 24th April 2023 to 23rd April 2024. The report follows the structure of the *Charity Accounts Template – Trustees' annual report for the period* published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Items are numbered using the SORP reference system, with optional items included where appropriate.

Period start date: 24/04/2023

Period end date: 23/04/2024

Charity name: Harlekin Studio Opera

Charity Number: 1183089

Objectives and Activities

1.17 Summary of purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document

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

- a) The organisation and/or presentation of performances of high educational and artistic merit.
- b) To advance the education of the public in the subject of opera music.

1.18 Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

The charity's trustees have read and understood the guidance on public benefit and have worked closely together to ensure that the charitable purposes have been met.

1.19 Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit

The 2023-2024 period saw the continuation of our weekly workshops, providing education in Opera through learning arias and choruses in a safe and supportive environment. The main vehicle for our work this year was Leoncavallo's opera Pagliacci.

As our second fully staged opera, Pagliacci proved the perfect vehicle to build upon the learnings from our 2022-2023 production Dido and Aeneas. The conscious choice for this one-act opera in Italian proved short enough to not be overwhelming to participants, while also providing them with the experience of singing a full foreign language opera. Pagliacci offers a compelling drama, sweeping music and is a prime example of the 19th century Verismo movement in opera.

Pagliacci allowed our members to get to know this key example of the era, both musically and dramatically, while challenging conventional staging practices of the opera by updating it to a contemporary setting and exploring gender through casting the lead as a woman rather than the conventional male casting. The themes which we explored in our production included adultery, domestic violence, and workplace relations. Great care was taken to make sure that the cast were comfortable, happy and safe throughout the rehearsal period. We provided sessions on language coaching, the intricacies of Verismo Opera, and workshops on Chekavian and Brechtian Theatre.

Furthering the education of our members, an orchestra was drafted in to accompany our three performances of Pagliacci at Summerhill Bowling Club. Singing with an orchestra offered our members an authentic operatic experience, while also deepening their understanding of the music by introducing the depth and colour that an orchestra can provide.

Performing at the Summerhill Bowling Club in November 2023 also furthers our goal of bringing opera to underserved communities who otherwise wouldn't have access to the artform. By taking opera out of the theatre and into a more informal setting, we successfully lowered thresholds for attending - sending our audience (who had mostly never attended an operatic performance before) into the night singing the tunes they'd heard.

Our year was rounded out by a Spring concert at Jesmond URC in March 2024. During the preparations of this concert we welcomed our first non-Newcastlian members, travelling from as far as Durham to be part of the only operatic venture in Newcastle. Our Spring concert provided our members the opportunity to showcase their own learnings and private studying, bolstering their confidence in performing, which we will continue to build upon for our next project *Prodana Nevesta*, to be performed in late 2024.

Achievements and Performance

1.20 Summary of main achievements, examples of benefits to beneficiaries and society as a whole

The performance run of *Pagliacci* was hosted by Summerhill Bowling Club. We presented three performances; two evening performances (Friday and Saturday) and an early evening show (Saturday) the length of the opera in combination with the casting of each show enabled all singers to get through the run without becoming overtired, or putting a strain on their voices. Summerhill Bowling Club proved a welcoming and adaptable venue, and will be considered for future projects. The production was well received by the audience with several audience members expressing their enjoyment through singing their way down the street, and others keen to seek out opera productions in their home towns.

Our spring concert allowed our participants to showcase their own personal repertoire, highlighting their vocal and musical development throughout the year welcoming a new member to the company with their first performance with us. Though our numbers were smaller than for previous concerts, the development of the voices in this past year made for an engaging performance, with strong singing and thrilling choruses.

In all, this year has seen a remarkable growth in the confidence and ability of our participants, and this shines through in their performances, and interactions with their colleagues in rehearsal. A number of our participants have faced personal hardships

through the year, but our regular rehearsals have provided solace and a safe space for them to freely explore their voice, movement and creativity.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

1.21 Review of charity's financial position at the end of the period

During this period a number of participants faced financial hardship and either reduced or suspended their subscriptions and, In conjunction with low audience attendance at our spring concert, this has led to a net loss of £746 with a closing balance of £970.

Although the company retains a reasonable financial buffer the trustees are continuing to look at ways to ensure the financial security of the company for the future and for ways to increase spending power for future projects. This includes planned fundraising events, the appointment of another trustee to oversee funding applications and increased recruitment efforts, and relocating weekly workshops to a venue more central and accessible location in Newcastle.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

1.25 Type of Governing Document

The company is a Charitable Incorporated Society using the 'foundation' model. It is managed by a board of trustees in accordance with a constitution.

New trustees are nominated by existing trustees and admitted to the board following a vote at a meeting of the trustees in accordance with the constitution which states that:

(1) Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed
for a term not exceeding 5 years by a resolution passed at a properly
convened meeting of the charity trustees.

(2) In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the
charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience
needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity Name: Harlekin Studio Opera

Other name(s): HSO

Registered Charity Number: 1183089

Charity's Principal Address: 53 Bishops Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE15 6RY

Charity Trustees:

Mr. James Whitfield (Chair and Co-Treasurer)

Mr. Robert Hardiment (Co-Treasurer)

Dr. Susan Baker (Trustee)

Mrs. Jolanda Grijpstra (Trustee)

Miss. Holly Zeffertt (Trustee)

Trustees declare that the trustee's report has been approved for submission to the Charity Commission.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Whitfield', with a large, stylized initial 'J' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.

Name: James Whitfield

Position: Chair

Date: 18/02/2025

Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period from	24-Apr-23	To	23-Apr-24
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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					
Membership Subscriptions	3,410	-	-	3,410	2,855
Ticket Sales - Concert	182	-	-	182	225
Ticket Sales Opera - Pagliacci	835	-	-	835	1,071
Donations	100	-	-	100	375
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	4,527	-	-	4,527	4,526
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	4,527	-	-	4,527	4,526
A3 Payments					
Venue Hire	2,274	-	-	2,274	1,209
Musicians Fees	2,822	-	-	2,822	2,705
Insurance	62	-	-	62	-
Website	115	-	-	115	-
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
Sub total	5,273	-	-	5,273	3,914
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
		-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	5,273	-	-	5,273	3,914
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 746	-	-	- 746	612
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,716	-	-	1,716	1,104
Cash funds this year end	970	-	-	970	1,716

Section B Statement of assets and

	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds			
Lloyds Bank Account	750	-	-
Cash	220	-	-
Total cash funds	970	-	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets			
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
B3 Investment assets			
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
B5 Liabilities			
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
		Jake Hardiment	18/02/25