

## **BATH OPERA Trustees report to the Charity Commission for the year ending August 2023.**

### **Charity's name, registration number, address and trustee names**

The name of the Charity is Bath Opera.

The business address is 24 Southay, Bratton, Westbury BA13 4RT

The Trustees for the period in question were:

- John Clark (Chairman/Treasurer)
- Pat Harper (Secretary)
- Jane Clark
- Rev Richard Hunt
- Hannah Crisp
- Nicole Kirkman
- Rod Hunt
- Peter Sutton

### **Charity's structure, details of how it is managed, including how it recruits trustees**

The Charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered with the Charity Commission under number 1185066. Its Constitution is the Association Model and is viewable on our website [www.bathopera.com](http://www.bathopera.com). The constitution allows for the day-to-day business to be conducted by the Management Committee.

Trustees are elected at the AGM and any casual vacancies during the year are filled by the Committee. Officers are appointed by the Trustees, usually at the first meeting after the AGM.

### **Charity's activities and objectives**

The Charity's stated objective in the Constitution is:

To advance public education in and appreciation of the art of opera music, in particular but not exclusively by:

- promoting interest in and access to opera through regular public performances, master classes and workshops;
- fostering musical education by offering young singers the opportunity to work alongside experienced opera practitioners and develop as artists.

The activities in the year comprise a main fully staged performance with full orchestra, a summer fund-raising tour, and sometimes other fund-raising and social events.

### **Report for Year Ending August 23**

The year has been another successful one for the Company artistically and organisationally: less so financially.

- Financial report (see end of year accounts)
- The Balance Sheet shows 'Net Current Assets' of just under £15,500, which are the reserves available to the company. They are less than the previous year by £5,934, which is the loss on the year. However these reserves include £2,900 tied up in the BOIBA contest account, and we have just invested £1,577 in a new tab track in the

Roper theatre, so the actual reserves available to us are only about £11,000. This is still satisfactory, but we must make sure we do not reduce them by a further loss in the year just started.

- The Merry Widow made a loss of £10,880. While this is not much over budget, it was a relatively expensive show. Ticket income was good by historical standards, but £1,800 less than Eugene Onegin, which was a company record. The royalties were very high, about £1,800 more than average. Lighting costs have more than doubled in 5 years, although our Mark Read is not expensive compared to other similar technicians.

The Summer Tour (Marriage of Figaro) managed to hit its target of a minimum £3,000 profit. Ticket income was £7,030 from 7 shows, typical of previous years other than Tosca. Lighting costs were reduced by using more local lighting technicians and keeping lighting simple. Transport costs were kept low by use of the company's cars (which were often quite small!). A final District Council grant of £1,070 towards the Wincanton shows will no longer be available in future years.

The General Account profit (£2,000 before depreciation) is well down on pre-Covid levels. Members subscriptions were £1,100 lower than previous year, and patrons (£300) less than half. This is due to fewer chorus members (which requires urgent attention) and to dwindling numbers of patrons not being replaced. This has a serious knock-on effect of the gift aid that can be claimed - £1,100 less than previous year).

The Trustees have kept the show fee to £75 for another year because of the cost-of-living crisis. Taken with the basic membership (£15), this is still cheaper than the £100 of several years ago. The financial hit (about £500 after insurance) due to having to hire a Figaro accompanist at a late stage was taken as an exceptional item on the General account.

- Main show – The Merry Widow

This production set a number of 'firsts'. Bath Opera has ever performed an operetta before, and this led to a few subtractions from and additions to our regular chorus. Alison Paine joined Rupert Drury as the directing team, and she brought a brilliant entourage of supporting players – husband Anthony with the show's design (terrific scale drawings!), Scarlett Hayler-King with her costume design, acting colleagues from the Mission Theatre, and of course choreographer Hayley Fitton-Cook with her brilliant team of 'Grisettes', an absolute highlight of the show.

Newcomers to Bath Opera Charlie Morris and Kezia Robson shone as the lead couple, supported by principals and chorus from the company.

The set and costume were lavish and colourful, the orchestra was in typically great form, and the show was universally well received by the large audiences that came to see it. Congratulations to Alison and Rupert and to all involved.

- Tour – Marriage of Figaro

The summer tour was 'The Marriage of Figaro', directed by Will Stevens, with accompaniment by Emma Cayeux following Peter Blackwood's cruel luck halfway through rehearsals with his eye operation.

'Figaro' requires ten principal singers and some very demanding ensemble singing, which was spectacularly achieved. We welcomed Katy Garden, Alex Pinkstone and Bruna Figueiredo to the cast of Bath Opera regulars, and Gabby Eels was great in her first principal role as Cherubino. Alex and Bruna have gone on to win major roles in 'Semele' for next February.

Will's concept for the piece was highly original, set in 1950s Almack's Studios, with the story hilariously narrated by Dave Key Pugh as the garden set designer, and audiences at seven performances in five venues loved it, with many houses sold out.

- Trustees

We welcomed Hannah Crisp, Rod Hunt and Peter Sutton to the Board of Trustees, and during the year Fiona Gray and Naomi Heffer joined and contributed to our meetings with a view to standing for election as Trustees at the following AGM. This influx has contributed enormously to lowering the average age of the Board, as well as to discussion and decision making and to sharing the workload. Fiona was a great tour and stage manager for The Marriage of Figaro, and is looking to strengthen the backstage team: she will also be production secretary, which will lighten the burden on Pat. Hannah and Naomi are managing our social media, and Naomi has mastered the website controls so we are no longer dependent on others for updates.

We thank Nicole who is retiring from the Board, in particular for her lead on publicity which has led to excellent ticket sales for the last two main shows.

- Looking forward

In stark contrast to The Merry Widow, we go back several centuries musically for Handel's 'Semele' for our main show next year. We welcome back Dave Key Pugh and Peter Blackwood as directors. Fiona Gray will lead the backstage team and stage manage. The Trustees decided to fund a track in the Roper from which to hang 18 foot stagecloths: this has now been fitted and will add considerably to our scene changing options, and save time and money. I am pleased to report that the Roper will also have in time for this production mid-stage black curtains and new 'legs' to improve the sight lines.

The next summer tour will either be Don Giovanni or Don Pasquale, and this should be decided by the time of the AGM. It will be directed by a talented newcomer Harvey Evans, and the MD/Accompanist will be Dominic Irving, who stood in so well as repetiteur for Peter a few weeks ago. We will revisit the successful venues of the Strode theatre at Street, the Rondo in Bath, Great Chalfield Manor, Wincanton Memorial Hall, and the Julian Slade Theatre at Prior Park.

For the main show to follow 'Semele', the Trustees have shortlisted 'Norma', 'The Bartered Bride' and 'The Elixir of Love'. Will Stevens has accepted our invitation to conduct the show and the stage director will be appointed in due course.

Bath Opera - Charity Number 1185066

Accounts for the year to 31st August 2023

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