



supporting women and parents in opera

SWAP'ra

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1185454

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 2 MAY 2022 – 1 MAY 2023

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LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

CONSTITUTION

SWAP'ra is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (no. 1185454), registered with the Charity Commission on 23 September 2019 and is governed by its constitution dated 7 May 2018.

TRUSTEES

The Trustees serving during the period covered by this Report were as follows:

Sarah Holford (Chair)

Catherine Carby (Treasurer)

Professor Natasha Loges

Mary Miller (appointed 1 January 2023)

Sarah Noble

REGISTERED OFFICE

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Registered charity number 1185454

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD 2 MAY 2022 – 1 MAY 2023

This document has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission and complies with the Charity's governing document.

SWAP'ra is a registered charity, number 1185454. It is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and was registered with the Charity Commission on 23 September 2019.

TRUSTEES

Trustees are appointed with regard to the skills, knowledge and experience required for the effective administration of the CIO. Apart from the first Trustees, all Trustees are appointed for a term of three years which may be renewed.

AIM AND PURPOSES

The charitable objects of SWAP'ra, as described in the constitution, are:

- 1) The promotion – for the public benefit – of equality and diversity in the opera industry, and the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of gender or parenthood in particular, but not exclusively, by:
 - a) Advancing education in and raising awareness to issues of equality and diversity.
 - b) Promoting a culture in favour of equality and diversity throughout the opera industry
 - c) Conducting or commissioning research on equality and diversity issues in opera and making the conclusions available to the public.
 - d) Promoting and supporting projects to facilitate the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of gender or parenthood in opera.
 - e) Supporting women and parents working in opera including by way of grants, advice, counselling, mentoring or otherwise as the trustees see fit.



- 2) To further such charitable purpose or purposes as the trustees in their absolute discretion shall think fit.

BACKGROUND - WHY ARE WE HERE?

SWAP'ra is a group of artists and creative professionals who have come together to build a supportive community to effect positive change for women and parents in opera.

The aim is to be a voice for women (including trans and non-binary people) and parents of all genders in opera by:

- Celebrating professional achievements in an industry where women are under-represented in many areas;
- Advocating for working conditions that better accommodate family and parenting commitments;
- Challenging preconceptions to improve attitudes towards women and parents in the arts Providing a friendly and non-judgmental community that offers peer support together with a forum to explore practical issues;
- Developing a platform for performance and publicity;
- Responding to the impact and implications of Covid 19 both in the short and longer term especially in the context of the ongoing challenges for women and parents in opera.

The ultimate aim is to foster an environment in which women and parents are enabled to thrive professionally; the balancing of career and family/parenting commitments is actively supported by companies; and a female CEO, Music Director, Artistic Director, Conductor, Composer or Librettist is no longer noteworthy.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

SWAP'ra had its beginnings at the end of 2017, when a group of artists active in the opera industry met to discuss how they could constructively address the challenges and barriers that women and parents working in opera continue to battle against.

This is not a new conversation for those affected by these issues. But the aim is to raise the volume and to bring these conversations to the attention of those in positions to effect positive change.



The SWAP'ra Senior Management Team is made up of artists with portfolio careers including singers, directors, teachers and educators, producers, company directors, instrumentalists and arts managers. Together the team has a broad range of experience and expertise working across the UK and internationally and as such is in a strong position to act as a conduit between freelance artists and building-based arts managers.

SWAP'ra launched in the summer of 2018 with a spectacular Gala at Holland Park, hosted by Fiona Shaw and showcasing the talents, both on and off-stage, of 150 female directors, instrumentalists, conductors, singers, stage managers, composers, librettists and project managers. Named by Fiona Maddocks in The Guardian as one of the best classical music events of 2018, the Gala struck a significant chord for many. The response to the launch, and the funds raised (over £15,000) enabled SWAP'ra to submit its application to the Charity Commission soon after, and, as noted above, the organisation was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (1185454) in September 2019.

WHAT DO WE WANT THE FUTURE TO LOOK LIKE?

Our vision is that women are evenly represented in all job roles within the opera industry.

- Younger artists at the beginning of their careers don't feel they have to choose between professional success and parenthood.
- Artists of all genders aren't afraid for their careers when they move between life stages (such as pregnancy, adoption, IVF, menopause, ageing) but have the support they need to consider their options.
- There is a widespread culture of respect and support for women and parents within the industry, as a result of the correction of unconscious biases.
- It is normal for those in the industry to experience working conditions that accommodate family life.

To achieve this vision, our programme focuses around three key pillars of activity:

Performance | Mentoring & Peer Support | Advocacy & Research

PROGRAMME AND ACTIVITIES 2022/23

The focus of activity during 2022-23 was primarily on developing, fundraising and delivering our first ever SWAP'ra Retreat for mothers returning to their singing careers after a period of extended maternity leave. In addition to this we continued to explore how best to build and sustain operational capacity. This resulted in the recruitment of an additional trustee and two new members of the Senior Management Team.

New team members

After a recruitment process involving advertising on our various platforms and applicant interviews, we were thrilled to welcome Katy Crompton and Hannah Sandison to the SMT. Both have extensive experience in performance, parenthood, and project management, and have been a fantastic addition to our team.

Hannah Sandison studied at RCM and The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She has since sung for companies such as ETO, Théâtre du Chatelet, Mid Wales Opera and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. In concert, she performs regularly in the UK and internationally. Recently, Hannah commissioned and produced Green Spaces: A Celebration in Song; in which she performed the world premiere of Of Nature's Light by Mark-Anthony Turnage at Opera Holland Park.

Hannah is also founder of Sound Performance Psychology and works as a performance psychology consultant with singers, instrumentalists, directors and conductors. She is passionate about the mental well-being of performing artists with particular interest in supporting women and parents within the industry.

Soprano **Katy Crompton** studied at the National Opera Studio, having previously graduated from the RCM where she was the Independent Opera Scholar and a Britten-Pears Scholar. She completed her undergraduate at the GSMD. Katy has since appeared at many opera houses throughout the U.K. and Europe. Highlights include Galatea for Opera de Rennes, Belinda for Opera Liège and First Lady for Garsington. Katy is hopeful that the operatic industry can be a place that working parents thrive and she hopes to enable that through working with SWAP'ra. Katy has also presented concerts for Radio 3 and lives with her husband, bass-baritone Edward Grint, in Bedfordshire with their two children and Ironman, the rabbit.



The SMT now consists of the following people:

Katy Crompton
Sophie Gilpin (co-founder)
Madeleine Pierard (co-founder)
Hannah Sandison
Kitty Whately (co-founder)

I. Advocacy & Research

A. SWAP'ra Retreat (see below) application research

SWAP'ra offered a short work placement to a student from the University of Huddersfield to complete a short piece of research using application data from SWAP'ra Retreat applicants (consent received). This research is yet to be published but has provided us with additional insight into the shared challenges faced by singing mothers in opera, and will inform future work. Key themes include multiple references to the disappearance of professional relationships, severe financial struggles, isolation and a lack of support through vocal transitions.

II. Mentoring and Peer Support

A. SWAP'ra Retreat at Glyndebourne

Our first ever SWAP'ra Retreat took place with huge success in February 2023. We received nearly 40 applications and were able to offer places to 6 participants. The selection process involved members of the SMT along with Natasha Loges (trustee), Sarah Hopwood (Glyndebourne Trustee and previous General Director), and Njabulo Madlala (baritone).

The Retreat was an intensive residential course, providing intensive support, training and skills development for parents who had given birth within the last four years and who were facing barriers to returning to singing careers in the opera industry. The retreat was a four-day programme hosted by SWAP'ra and supported by Glyndebourne and was provided free of charge to our participants.

Each day started with yoga, which was specially tailored for the physical and emotional needs of these new mothers, rebuilding core strength so vital for singing. Daily group sessions with a performance psychologist also helped our participants to rebuild confidence and to make plans of how to move forward with their careers

productively and to set realistic goals on how to balance parenthood with practice/auditions/performances.

There were coaching sessions and masterclasses with highly respected industry professionals to work on repertoire and performance. Participants also enjoyed a class on vocal health with Kate Valentine, which gave them brilliant advice on how to maintain their voices safely. The course culminated in the recording of audition aria videos which are vital now in the opera industry. Often prohibitively expensive to make, these videos will be a significant help to the participants for self-promotion.

In addition to the practical support, the retreat provided three days of peace and headspace in the beautiful grounds and buildings at Glyndebourne. SWAP'ra provided meals for the participants, and the schedule incorporated free time either to work or to rest.

As part of our continued commitment to participants we were also able to provide a follow up session with our performance psychologist via zoom in the weeks following the retreat. We remain active in maintaining support with check-ins and "group chats." All participants still express their feelings regarding the importance of the retreat, and continue to implement tools and concepts from the multiple practitioners into their professional lives.

B. SWAP'ra Cafe

We continued to run regular SWAP'ra Cafe sessions: online Zoom chats to provide a supportive connection for parents and carers navigating the challenges of an opera career, providing a safe space to discuss thoughts and experiences. Sessions were held at differing times to include a wider range of attendees on varied schedules, hosted by different members of the SWAP'ra SMT each time, and focussing on a variety of subjects and issues.

C. Inspiration! Videos and Blogs

In February we asked American conductor, coach, and collaborative pianist Kathleen Kelly to write a blog for our website, expanding on a social media post she had previously written, "Sit back my friends, it's morning rant time". The article examined attitudes to women, musicians, job interviews and auditions. The article contained information about American employment law so we

asked former barrister and opera singer Jennifer Johnston and employment lawyer Jo Finn to contribute edits and information about equivalent UK employment law.

Building on the success of our existing interviews and blogs, we have been working towards developing more video content for quick and easy digital consumption. Initially focused on navigating parenthood as a freelancer, the videos are intended to highlight the lived experiences of artists currently working in opera. The videos are intended to act as guidance from multiple and varied perspectives to anyone looking for support and information about being a new parent, from many differing points of view (including fathers, those who used surrogates or conceived via IVF, and adoptive parents). They include honest reflections about obstacles the interviewees have faced within the industry and how they have overcome them. The project is still ongoing and will be released online in due course.

III. Performance

A. Forgotten Voices: Women in Song

In March 2022 we continued our partnership with Oxford Lieder Festival (now renamed Oxford International Song Festival), curating a new area of their website dedicated to women composers. This project assembled information and resources to help artists and listeners discover more about the many women who wrote art songs with the intention of facilitating a more equal gender balance in performance programming. The page includes information about these women and their compositional context as song composers, written especially for the project by SWAP'ra Trustee, Natasha Loges, as well as audio/video recordings of selected songs, and links to access scores. This area of the website also includes the videos of the SWAP'ra-curated Spring Song Weekend 2022. As described in the annual report for 2021-22, this consisted of lecture recitals and young artist mini recitals celebrating the songs of lesser-known women composers of the past.

This is an ongoing project. Our aim is to grow this resource over time, including adding further recordings and texts and translations and more information about contemporary women composers.

ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

In early 2023 we welcomed a fifth trustee to further strengthen our governance and operations capacity.

Mary Miller began her career as a concert violinist, before becoming Music Editor for Scotland's national newspaper, a prominent broadcaster and festival programmer. She led new work at English National Opera before moving to the USA to direct the International Festival of Arts & Ideas, one of East Coast America's most prestigious and comprehensive festivals. She directed Stavanger 2008, European Capital of Culture, Norway's biggest ever cultural programme with over 1000 events and projects. In 2010, she became General and Artistic Director of Bergen National Opera, now one of Europe's most innovative small opera organisations, acclaimed for its productions, talent development, and work in the community. A member of the European Cultural Parliament, she continues to work internationally as a writer, speaker and mentor on cultural policy.

Instead of engaging another paid administrator, we engaged a freelance fundraiser for a fixed term contract during this financial year. It has been agreed that in the future, the SMT will take the lead on fundraising for trusts and foundations. There are no immediate plans for a paid fundraiser while the SMT has capacity to oversee day to day operations and administration.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The period of this report covers the first full financial year of the charity, 6 May 2022 – 5 May 2023. Accounts are prepared on a cash basis.

The charity's opening balance of £4,380 comprised £4,180 unrestricted and £200 restricted funds. During the period of this report £20,586 was raised through trusts and foundations and individual giving, with a total expenditure of £17,739.

The majority of the year's expenditure was on the SWAP'ra Retreat at Glyndebourne, with payments made across two financial years. The largest cost was artists' fees for the SWAP'ra Retreat (£5,752) followed by Project Management fees for the SMT (£5,600). Other significant costs include accommodation, travel and subsistence for Retreat facilitators and participants (£3,595). Glyndebourne also provided support-in-kind worth approximately £5,000.

The SMT works mostly on a pro bono basis, but successful fundraising enabled

every team member to receive modest fees in this financial year, accounting for an increase from 5% to 32% of total expenditure. Whilst there is still a way to go, this represents a positive development from the previous financial year, during which it was agreed that the SMT should be paid appropriately for their skills and expertise.

The total funds carried forward on 1 May 2023 was £7,227, £3,868 of which is unrestricted.

The trustees are extremely grateful to all those who supported SWAP'ra during the year.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

These accounts have been prepared under the receipts and payments method and are presented on the Charity Commission template. Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees' policy is to hold surplus unrestricted funds as reserves to safeguard the Charity's ongoing financial sustainability and to provide support for future projects.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

SWAP'ra (Supporting Women and Parents in Opera)	1185454
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Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	2-May-22	To	1-May-23
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations from individuals	217	3,147	-	3,364	691
Donations from Trusts & Foundations	2,000	15,200	-	17,200	6,000
Refunds	22	-	-	22	70
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total(Gross income for AR)	2,239	18,347	-	20,586	6,761
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	2,239	18,347	-	20,586	6,761
A3 Payments					
Administration (inc. office expenses)	2,000	101	-	2,101	4,457
Project management	-	5,600	-	5,600	450
Emergency Fund	-	-	-	-	-
Project delivery fees (SWAP'ra Retreat 2022/23)	-	5,752	-	5,752	4,082
Communications	144	140	-	284	254
Subscriptions	-	-	-	-	38
Travel/accommodation/subsistence	75	3,595	-	3,670	22
Insurance	197	-	-	197	193
Other	135	-	-	135	-
Sub total	2,551	15,188	-	17,739	9,496
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	2,551	15,188	-	17,739	9,496
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 312	3,159	-	2,847	- 2,735
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	4,180	200	-	4,380	7,115
Cash funds this year end	3,868	3,359	-	7,227	4,380

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 £
B1 Cash funds	Metro bank	561	2,962	-
	Co-Op bank	3,017	200	-
	PayPal	290	197	-
	Total cash funds	3,868	3,359	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account (s))		OK	OK	OK

		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	Details			
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details			
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Details			
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

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

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

Sarah Holford

Sarah Holford

26 February 2024