

ECHO VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Registered Charity number 1186162

TRUSTEE ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Registered Address

2 Ellesmere Close
Caversham
Reading
RG4 5HG

Trustees

Sarah Ralphs	(chair)	From 5 November 2019
Nick Jackman		From 5 November 2019
Matthew Neudegg	(treasurer)	From 5 November 2019
Daniel Sargeant		From 5 November 2019
Naomi Taylor		From 5 November 2019
Thomas Hansell		From 8 June 2023
Jonty Dawson		From 7 September 2023

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

For the period ending 31st March 2024

Our Objectives

Echo is a professional vocal ensemble that aims for both excellence and accessibility, presenting the highest quality music in the least pretentious way possible. We aim to inform, entertain, and inspire audiences across the UK, while getting every audience singing. We want to explore the full range of what ensemble singing can achieve, including improvisation and multi-disciplinary collaborations, while aiming for musical excellence at all times, and are committed to reaching a varied and extensive demographic with our work.

Our aims are to:

1. Innovate within the sector of ensemble singing
2. Reach a diverse audience and break down barriers within this art form
3. Achieve artistic and musical excellence

In particular, we are keen to challenge the preconceptions and traditions that can sometimes be associated with choral music in the UK - the fixed association with the church, the 'seriousness' of western classical repertoire and its presentation, and a critical approach to the idea of a 'fixed' historical canon. By doing so, we aim to reach the widest possible audience and allow them to engage in a meaningful way with music through inclusive experiences.

Our measure of success is gauged by the audience, participant and artist reaction to each event, and the number of new audiences and participants we can reach each year.

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

For the period ending 31st March 2024

Review of Performance

2023/24 was a flagship year for Echo, which saw the group make its debut album recording with label Resonus.

The year saw the group in performances across the UK from Brighton to Yorkshire, alongside workshops and improvisatory projects, and a major sound installation at Frieze Sculpture Fair. The group also expanded its education work, reaching KS2, KS3 and KS4 students across the course of 2023.

Debut album recording

In October 2023, Echo recorded their debut album with producer Phil Hobbs and engineer Tom Mungall at St Augustine Church in Kilburn. The album is titled Innocence - exploring that theme through some wonderful music from the 12th century to the present day; and featuring well-known pieces alongside recording premieres. The programme was a true reflection of Echo's innovative work; taking a theme and boldly programming music conceptually, as opposed to contextually.

The album release took place in 2024, and the disc received critical acclaim across the board, with five star reviews in BBC Music Magazine, and Gramophone describing the album as *"crafted with skill, flair, understanding, passion and respect for the traditions to which they belong...brilliantly conceived and executed"*.

The album recording and release marked a major step change for the organisation in terms of its reach and visibility in the market.

Performance

23/24 saw the group perform across the UK. Some highlights include:

- Performing in Brighton as part of the Autograph Series of concerts at Brighton College. They took the Innocence programme to the audience in the evening alongside two educational events.
- A continued collaboration with Birdsall House in Yorkshire, with whom Echo premiered the "sweet disharmony" programme celebrating dissonance in sacred music.
- A performance at the Arts Foundation Future Awards ceremony at the Purcell Room in February, celebrating John Barber's music as part of his award win. The performance was accompanied by a beautiful music video of his work featuring dancer Jamal Sterrett.

Breaking new ground

One of Echo's major projects for 23/24 was a collaboration with artist Hans Rosenström. Echo spent three studio days with Hans creating a fully improvised 9 minute piece. It was artistically fulfilling and very collaborative, with the luxury of time to create it as a group.

The final piece was called Unfolding Silence and developed from birdsong to harmony via spoken word. The full installation took place at Frieze London in Regent's Park, and reached over 15,000 people during the exhibition.

It was listened to by audiences who were given headphones as they arrived at a glade in the park, where the recording was played to them in binaural spatial audio.

Education

2023-24 saw an expansion of Echo's education work, which included:

- A workshop for KS3 and KS4 students in Brighton, alongside a masterclass with the chamber choir the day beforehand, who then sang with Echo in the concert performance
- As part of the work as ensemble-in-residence at Radley, Echo performed to over 350 KS2 students from primary schools across Abingdon in June. The programme featured music by William Dawson, Henry Purcell, Sheena Phillips and Shivani Rattan.
- An improvisation workshop based on the Echolocation and bats project in Cambridge with artist Hermione Spriggs and anthropologist Harsha Balasubramian.

"Thanks again for a sensational concert, so inspiring for the students and all of us"

"We absolutely LOVED working with you and Echo. The Chamber Choir got so much out of the experience. Your concert was stunning, and it was such a privilege to be part of it."

"You got 200 school children singing songs they didn't know, in new languages, with sound effects, in a round, and it sounded beautiful! Excellent job"

Financial Review

Over the course of the period, the charity had a deficit of (£1,775).

At the end of the period, the charity has unrestricted funds of £16,589, and zero restricted funds.

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

For the period ending 31st March 2024

Governance

Echo Vocal Ensemble is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered on 5th November 2019. The Trustees approved the Echo Vocal Ensemble Constitution, which serves as the governing document of the charity.

Trustees

Trustees are appointed to the board of the charity to manage the affairs of the CIO. The board must comprise no fewer than three trustees.

New trustees must be appointed by a resolution of the existing trustees for a term of two years. Any new trustee will be judged on the basis of their skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity.

Management

Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the charity is held by the Artistic Director, who reports on performance to the board.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ECHO VOCAL ENSEMBLE

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Echo Vocal Ensemble (the charity) for the 12 months ended 31 March 2024.

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 all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'SR' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Stephen Rennison

January 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the 12 months ending 31st March 2024

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023
	Notes	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income from:							
Donations	2	8,958	-	8,958	6,286	-	6,286
Charitable activities	2	22,541	-	22,541	38,473	-	38,473
Other		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Income		31,499	-	31,499	44,759	-	44,759
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		(32,647)	-	(32,647)	(42,250)	-	(42,250)
Administration expenses		(627)	-	(627)	(295)	-	(295)
Other		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure		(33,274)	-	(33,274)	(42,544)	-	(42,544)
Net surplus/(deficit) for the period		(1,775)	-	(1,775)	2,215	-	2,215
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		18,363	-	18,363	16,148	-	16,148
Total funds carried forward		16,588	-	16,588	18,363	-	18,363

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 31st March 2024

		2024 Total	2023 Total
	Notes	£	£
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		14,716	24,119
Debtors	3	4,020	6,161
Total Assets		18,736	30,280
Current liabilities			
Creditors	4	(2,148)	(11,917)
Deferred income	5	-	-
Total Liabilities		(2,148)	(11,917)
Funds of the Charity			
Unrestricted Funds		16,589	18,363
Restricted Funds		-	-
Total Funds		16,589	18,363

APPROVED BY


Matt Neudegg

Treasurer

On behalf of all of the trustees

January 2025

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the 12 months ending 31st March 2024

1 Accounting policies

Basis for preparation

These accounts are prepared on an accruals basis in compliance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), and with the Charities Act 2011. We consider the charity to be a going concern and the accounts have been presented accordingly.

2 Recognition of income

Income is recognised when the charity becomes entitled to the resource and it is likely that the charity will receive the income.

Echo Vocal Ensemble recognises two main types of income:

Charitable Activities	Income related to specific events, performances or services (for example ticket sales)
Donations	Income related to general support for the charity and its operations, including 'Friends' memberships.

Any income outside of these parameters is considered 'Other Income'.

Restricted funds are income committed to the performance of a particular event or series of events. Currently Echo does not have any restricted income.

3 Debtors

At 31st March 2024, Echo Vocal Ensemble had £4,020 (2023: £6,161) of debtors related to charitable activities.

4 Creditors

At 31st March 2024, Echo Vocal Ensemble had £2,148 (2023: £11,917) of creditors related to day-to-day expenses.