

SongEasel

Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial Statements

For the Year to 31 October 2023

Registered Charity number: 1197751

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Report of the Trustees

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report and financial statements for the year to 31 October 2023. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and Activities

The charity's purposes, as set out in its governing document are:

To advance the education of the public, groups and individuals in, and promote the understanding, appreciation, composition, and performance of song, both its poetry and music, through a series of events governed by a strong artistic vision including (but not limited to):

- a) The arrangement of an annual song recital series; and
- b) A significant outreach and audience development component incorporating:
 - (i) Workshops with local schoolchildren;
 - (ii) A Young Artist programme;
 - (iii) Talks and educational events; and
 - (iv) Ad hoc events to bring music and poetry to new audiences;

for the benefit of all sectors of the community in South East London and elsewhere.

During the course of the year the charity was successfully able to undertake all of the activities set out above in relation to its purposes, as set out in more detail in Achievements and Performance below.

The Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'.

Achievements and performance

SongEasel's 2022/23 programme was titled "Quintessential Song" to celebrate the fifth annual series produced under the SongEasel banner. The previous four series all highlighted a significant historical event or cultural concept from 2019 with the "Dual Alliance" treaty between France and Russia in 1894; "Wanderlust" in 2020 with Schubert's complete song cycles; Parisian musical café culture in 2021 with "Café Chanson"; and last year with "Icons and Legends" which shared music that celebrated a notorious dinner meeting in Paris in May 1922 following the premiere of Stravinsky's opera-ballet, *Le Renard*. Hosted by philanthropic Londoners Violet and Sydney Schiff, and including Proust, Joyce, Picasso, Stravinsky and Diaghilev, this series paid homage to the meeting of minds of these creative luminaries.

The Quintessential Song programme for 2023 celebrated a milestone: five years of bringing song to South East London. The theme was the genre itself – quintessential songs that form the core of the repertoire, speaking genuinely from one heart to another and enriching our understanding of humanity. And the series was themed on the number five, with references throughout, from the Latin for five in the series title (Quintus) to Britten's *Five Canticles* and Shakespeare's *Full Fathom Five*.

Ticketed Recitals

In December 2022 SongEasel started their year with “Winter Lieder” a very successful recital by the acclaimed Austrian baritone Florian Boesch who is hailed as one of today’s foremost Lieder interpreters, appearing regularly at London’s Wigmore Hall, Vienna’s Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall and many other international venues. Held in the Old Library at Dulwich College the recital included Lieder and Ballades by Schubert, Schumann and Loewe and provided a wonderful introduction to the SongEasel’s 2023 programme. SongEasel’s Artistic Director Jocelyn Freeman accompanied on the piano.

As in the previous year the Quintessential series included three ticketed recitals, two at Blackheath Halls and one at St Catherine’s Church, Hatcham.

- Leading German bass-baritone Stephan Loges launched SongEasel’s ‘Quintessential Song’ series in collaboration with accomplished pianist and curator Jocelyn Freeman at Blackheath Halls. Their “Letters and Legends” programme presented some supreme items from the song genre by Johannes Brahms, alongside works by five composers who inspired or were inspired by this Lieder giant: Robert and Clara Schumann, J.S. Bach, Marie von Kehler and Ethel Smyth.
- Also at Blackheath Halls, rising star, Spanish soprano Lorena Paz Nieto joined pianist Sholto Kynoch, Artistic Director of the Oxford Lieder Festival, for an eclectic programme, taking listeners on a “World Tour of Song”. The programme traversed South American tangos and the sophistication of French melodie, providing scintillating musical brilliance and a true feast for the senses. Presented in collaboration with the Friends of Blackheath Halls
- SongEasel’s third ticketed recital, performed at St Catherine’s Church in Hatcham, featured Schubert’s Trout Quintet alongside Lieder by Schubert and Finzi, performed by former BBC New Generation Artist baritone James Newby, renowned South African bassist Leon Bosch, the acclaimed Piatti Quartet and pianist and SongEasel Artistic Director Jocelyn Freeman. The recital also featured an inspiring pre-concert talk by Leon Bosch discussing his background and vision for equality.

“This beautiful church was a sympathetic setting for a joyous celebration of song.” (Audience member)

Free Recitals

As in previous years the charity held three free recitals at St Laurence Church Catford, a parish in an area high in the statistics of overall deprivation, to provide access to world-class performances to the local community, particularly those who might not otherwise be able to experience song performance of this quality and beauty.

- Britten’s Canticles I & III were performed by award winning tenor Laurence Kilsby accompanied by hornist George Strivens, and pianist Jocelyn Freeman, and the recital was introduced by Dr. Lucy Walker. In addition the recital featured works by Schumann and Bozza with sacred and secular influences.
- Canticles II & IV were presented by tenor Ben Johnson, a winner of the audience prize at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition, countertenor Tom Lilburn, one of four singers who sang at the funeral of the Duke of Edinburgh, and baritone Theodore Platt who has performed at the Wigmore Hall and the Oxford Lieder Festival. They were accompanied on the piano by Keval Shah, an international prize winner who has played at the Wigmore Hall, Oxford Lieder, Leeds Lieder and the

Queen Elizabeth Hall. The programme also featured a number of folk songs set to music by Britten illustrating the extraordinary range of his musical ability as well as his sensitive, flexible approach to a variety of texts.

- Canticle V featured the acclaimed Northern Irish soprano Aoife Miskelly and former Royal Harpist Anne Denholm as Britten composed the final Canticle for harp rather than piano. The programme also featured songs by Strauss, Debussy and Mendelssohn imaginatively reconfigured from piano to harp.

Outreach and Development

Schools Workshops

SongEasel's schools programme in 2023 was themed around World Music and Cultures with source material from Britten Pears Arts 'Friday Afternoons' archive, fused with a youth-voice led consideration of travel and migration. Leading these activities were talented artists from European, West Indian, West African, South Asian and South East Asian backgrounds.

The programme continued to grow reaching just under 1,000 children at six schools across the London Borough of Lewisham compared to 400 in 2022 and 200 in 2021. The schools involved had pupil premium rates ranging from 13 to 30 percent, with an average of just over 20 percent.

The children learned classical songs by the likes of Errollyn Wallen & Benjamin Britten, as well as traditional songs in languages as diverse as Scots, Hebrew, Egyptian, and that of the first Australian natives. Workshops were led by Johannes Gerges (bass-baritone), Lynda Nwabudike (soprano), Anna Sideris (soprano), Jocelyn Freeman (piano) and Elspeth Wyllie (piano), and culminated with 221 children sharing their unique creative responses as part of the final performance.

We will seek to build further on this vital element of our work in 2024 by aiming to reach more than 1,000 children with the programme.

"When would these children ever get the opportunity to hear a professional opera singer in school? They were truly amazed by the sound Anna made and were talking about it for days afterwards!" (Teacher)

Young Artists Programme

SongEasel's 2023 Young Artist programme featured twelve artists in total, six duos of singer and accompanist.

The Young Artists benefitted from a variety of coaching, masterclass and performance opportunities, with the masterclass for 2023 featuring renowned pianist Keval Shah who provided the Young Artists with insights into the subtleties of interpretation and performance at the Old Library at Dulwich College. A performance platform exploring Shakespeare's theme of "Full Fathom Five" through song was held at Blackheath Halls, and we also continued to provide the Young Artists with performance and engagement opportunities with Lewisham's elderly residents at Ageing Well Lewisham, thus combining our educational and development work with the Charity's purpose, to Bring Song to South East London.

"Thanks for taking the singers to Homewalk house in Sydenham.. my mum and stepfather live there and really enjoyed it. Mum has dementia but was a pro singer and loved it!" (Audience Member)

Ad hoc events to bring music and poetry to new audiences

SongEasel continued its mission to take classical song to places it doesn't usually go with performances by mezzo soprano Heather Lowe and lyric soprano Anna Sideris accompanied by SongEasel Artistic Director Jocelyn Freeman at regular collaborator Rocketvan, a café in Elephant and Castle, and at Hill Station Café, a social enterprise café in Telegraph Hill. In addition, award winning Spanish soprano Lorena Paz Nieto reprised last year's lunchtime recital at the Ninth Life pub in Lewisham.

"SongEasel is doing amazing things for this artform: the future of song is not in Wigmore Hall for most of us and this is making it relevant and taking it to a new audience to create a future for the genre." (Keval Shah)

Financial Review

Significant Events

SongEasel completed its second year of operations with increased performance in all areas with Income nearly doubling which enabled increased charitable activities and reach – the number of children participating in the schools' programme more than doubled.

Financial Summary

The charity's income for the period was £40,335 (2022 - £20,768) primarily made up of donations from Trusts and Foundations of £18,034 – 44% (2022 £7,715 - 38%), private donations augmented by Gift Aid of £9,594 – 24% (2022 £4,770 - 23%), donations in kind of £7,650 – 19% (2022 £6,030 - 29%) made up of facilities hire of £1,950 plus Artistic Director's and administrative fees waived to support the charity's activities, and corporate sponsorship of £3,200 – 8% (2022 £2,000 - 10%) giving total donations of £38,478 (2022 £20,515).

The remaining income came from ticket sales for recitals of £1,857 (2022 £253). The increase represents a positive effort to diversify income sources but remains a relatively low proportion of income as ticketed recitals are only one element of the charity's work, ticket prices are held low to make the work accessible in line with the charity's objectives. SongEasel aims to continue to grow this area through increased audience numbers to provide additional income to contribute to SongEasel's charitable objectives.

The charity's largest area of expenditure was for Artistic and Creative costs at £19,602 – 51% of total expenditure (2022 £10,124 - 49%) primarily made up of musicians' fees for ticketed and free recitals, plus some pre-recital talks and recital programmes. Venue Hire and Stewarding represented a further £2,260 – 14% of costs (2022 £2,220 – 14%), much of it through donations in kind in the form of hall hire fees waived.

Outreach and educational expenditure in the form of Schools and Young Artists programmes made up the second largest outgoing for the year at £7,293 – 19% (2022 £5,151 -25%). Support costs were £6,830 – 18% (2022 £2,295 - 11%), with the increase representing the need for additional administrative support as the charity grows, plus the need for some maternity cover.

The remaining expenditure was for Fundraising which accounted for £2,481 – 6% of total expenditure (2022 £829 - 4%), representing an allocation of 20% of website costs, the cost of preparing submissions to Trusts and Foundations and administering private donations. Donations in Kind of fundraising effort of £2,000 from SongEasel's Artistic Director made up the majority of this cost.

Costs were carefully managed by the charity achieve a surplus of £1,869 (2022 £149).

Reserves

At the end of the financial year cash reserves stood at £4,943 (2022 £9,568), and net reserves totalled £2,019 (2022 £8,149). The reduction compared to the last financial year is primarily due to grants that were received in advance in 2022 which funded the activities of 2023. As a new charity with limited funds SongEasel does not have the capacity to hold a material reserve but the £2,018 of accumulated reserves of the charity represented an increase from the £149 at the end of 2022.

Trustee Benefits

No Trustee was paid for carrying out their role as a Trustee, claimed expenses or was employed by the charity.

One Trustee received fees for specialist services provided to the charity as Artistic Director and for performances in some of the charity's recitals. There were no other related party transactions.

Details of the services and fees are disclosed in Note 8 to the Accounts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

The charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and governed by its Constitution.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are chosen on the basis of merit and their ability to contribute to the charity in terms of skills, knowledge and experience. All Trustees are provided on appointment with the charity's governing document, the relevant guidance from the Charity Commission and the latest Annual Report and Accounts and are given informal personal guidance by an existing Trustee.

Reference and Administrative Information

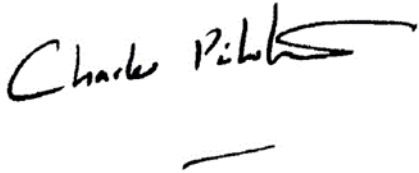
Name of Charity	SongEasel
Charity Registration number	1197751
Date of Registration	1 February 2022
Principal Address	The Rectory Meadow Row London SE1 6RG

Trustees

The Trustees who have served during the year and since the establishment as a charity were as follows:

Jocelyn Freeman
Matthew Gasser
Clare Glover
The Rev'd Canon Charles Faulkner Pickstone
Jeremy Young

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Charles Pickstone

The Rev'd Canon Charles Faulkner Pickstone
Chair

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SongEasel

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the SongEasel Trust (the Trust) for the year ended 31 October 2023.

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.

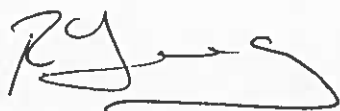
Independent examiner's statement

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.

Signed:



Name: Rory Young

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any): Chartered Accountants of New Zealand and Australia, membership number: 3022930

Address: 114 Leathwaite Rd, London SW11 6RR

Date: 22 August 2024

SongEasel
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year to 31 October 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income:					
Donations	2	12,794	25,684	38,478	20,515
Charitable Activities	3	1,857	-	1,857	253
Total Income		14,651	25,684	40,335	20,768
Expenditure:					
Charitable Activities	4	12,301	23,684	35,985	19,790
Raising Funds	5	481	2,000	2,481	829
Total Expenditure		12,782	25,684	38,466	20,619
Net Income / (Expenditure)		1,869	-	1,869	149
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total Funds brought forward		149	-	149	-
Total Funds carried forward		2,018	-	2,018	149

SongEasel
Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 October 2023

	Note	£	£
Current Assets			
Cash at Bank and in hand		4,943	9,568
Debtors	9	1,920	1,048
		<u>6,863</u>	<u>10,616</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	4,845	2,467
Net Current Assets		<u>2,018</u>	<u>8,149</u>
Total Assets less current liabilities		<u>2,018</u>	<u>8,149</u>
Charity Funds			
Restricted Funds	11	-	5,000
Unrestricted Funds	11	2,018	3,149
Total Charity Funds		<u>2,018</u>	<u>8,149</u>

SongEasel
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year to 31 October 2023

1 Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (October 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities Act 2011. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going Concern

The financial statements are prepared, on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention.

Fund Descriptions

a) Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted Funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objects of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

b) Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions set out by the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes.

Income Recognition

Income is included in the statement of financial activities when the Charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Donated Goods, Services and Facilities

Donated goods and services are disclosed as restricted donations with corresponding expenditure, and are valued at the amount that the charity would pay in the open market.

Expenditure Recognition

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

2 Income from Donations

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Private Donations	7,683	-	7,683	3,816
Gift Aid Recoverable	1,911	-	1,911	954
Trusts and Foundations	-	18,034	18,034	7,715
Corporate Sponsorship	3,200	-	3,200	2,000
Support in Kind	-	7,650	7,650	6,030
	12,794	25,684	38,478	20,515

3 Income from Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Ticket Income for events	1,857	-	1,857	253

4 Costs of Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Artistic and Creative Costs	5,348	14,484	19,832	10,124
Venue Hire and Stewarding	80	1,950	2,030	2,220
Schools Projects	755	4,200	4,955	2,861
Young Artists Projects	1,238	1,100	2,338	2,290
Support	4,880	1,950	6,830	2,295
	12,301	23,684	35,985	19,790

The charity received donated facilities hire from St Laurence Church Catford and Blackheath Halls to the value £1,950 in total, valued at market rental rates for the venues.

5 Costs of Fundraising

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Website and media	320	-	320	464
Trust Applications and Supporter administration	161	2,000	2,161	365
	481	2,000	2,481	829

6 Analysis of support costs

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Website and other media	1,279	200	1,479	1,855
Marketing	1,080	-	1,080	207
Fundraising	481	2,000	2,481	365
Administrative Support	2,521	1,750	4,271	697
	5,361	3,950	9,311	3,124

7 Particulars of Employees

	2023	2022
Number of employees	0	0

8 Trustee Benefits

No Trustee was paid for carrying out their role as a Trustee or received expenses.

	2023	2022
	£	£
One Trustee, Jocelyn Freeman, received fees for services provided to the Charity as follows		
Performance in recitals	5,250	2,295
Preparation and delivery of Schools Projects	325	1,375
Preparation and delivery of Young Artists Programme	660	1,060
Programme Management and Artistic Design	500	180
Fundraising (Trust Applications)	-	350
	<u>6,735</u>	<u>5,260</u>

In addition Jocelyn Freeman provided services as donations in kind to the value of £4,800 (2022 £1,880), as well as carrying out her role as a Trustee. The Support in Kind was primarily in the areas of fundraising, and support for Schools Projects and Young Artists.

The Trustees have fully disclosed the circumstances of the services and Trustee benefits to the Charity Commission and are satisfied that they comply with the standard constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, with Charity Commission guidance and with Section 185 to 188 of the Charities Act 2011.

The work of the charity requires a high degree of skill in curating, organising and managing the projects, and performing the works involved. Jocelyn Freeman is a concert standard pianist and curator of music with considerable experience and has organised similar activities promoting song for the benefit of the community for several years. The Trustees believe that Jocelyn's intimate knowledge of the specific requirements of the charity and its working environment, her competence in this specialist field, and her willingness to carry out the services for less or no more than the market rate mean that using her services in such circumstances is in the best interest of the Charity and supports delivery of the charity's object.

Fees do not exceed what is reasonable for the services provided; are measured by market comparison; the Trustee to benefit is absented from the Board discussion and vote; no other Trustee receives any benefits; remuneration for services from the Trustee is approved only when it is in the best interests of the charity and in support of the charity's object.

9 Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts due within one year:		
Prepayments and Accrued Income	<u>1,920</u>	<u>1,048</u>

10 Creditors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts due within one year:		
Accruals	<u>4,845</u>	<u>2,467</u>

11 Fund Reconciliation

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £		Outgoing Resources £	Carried Forward £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted	3,149	11,651	-	12,782	2,018	3,149
Restricted	5,000	20,684	-	25,684	-	5,000
	<u>8,149</u>	<u>32,335</u>	-	<u>38,466</u>	<u>2,018</u>	<u>8,149</u>

Funds carried forward represent the 2023 surplus of £1,869 plus funds brought forward of £149.

Funds carried forward in 2022 were exceptional as grant income was received in advance of the financial year, resulting in a reduction in funds carried forward at the year end.