

CORVUS CONSORT

Registered Charity no. 1207144



ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ending 31 December 2024





Corvus Consort & Music on the Edge

photo by Matthew Johnson

*"Dazzling ... under its founder-director Freddie Crowley,
Corvus Consort is always full of fresh thinking"*

BBC Music Magazine, 2024

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REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity name

Corvus Consort

Registered Charity number

1207144

Registered Address

37 Dartmouth Park Avenue
London
NW5 1JL

Trustees

Joseph Littlewood	chair	<i>from 22 February 2024</i>
Jane Whitlock Blundell	secretary	<i>from 22 February 2024</i>
Keith Haydon	treasurer	<i>from 22 February 2024</i>

Independent Examiner

Simon Deane



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Governance

Corvus Consort is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered on 22 February 2024. Corvus Consort's Constitution serves as the governing document of the charity.

Trustees

Trustees are appointed to oversee the activities of the charity, monitor its performance against objectives, review its financial position, and ensure that the charity is continuing to meet its charitable purposes. The board must comprise of no fewer than three and no more than eight trustees.

New Trustees must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees, and for a term of at least three years. 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.

Management

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



REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

for the year ending 31 December 2024

Objectives of the charity

The charitable objects of Corvus Consort, as laid out in the constitution, are:

To promote and advance public education in and appreciation of the art and science of music, particularly but not exclusively choral & vocal music of high artistic merit, by the presentation of concerts, recordings, workshops and other musical activities, and by any such other means as the Trustees in their discretion shall from time to time determine.

In pursuance of these objects, Corvus Consort has six core aims:

1. To inspire audiences by presenting choral music in fresh and innovative ways, often through imaginative collaborations.
2. To improve accessibility of choral music by offering affordable access to our musical output, and by creating an unstuffy and engaging atmosphere that makes everyone feel welcome at our events.
3. To facilitate the creation of new music of high artistic merit through commissioning projects, and to introduce this new music to audiences.
4. To introduce audiences to lesser-known music of high artistic merit by both living and historically neglected composers.
5. To support the artistic development of freelance musicians in the early stages of their professional careers by providing performance opportunities and creatively stimulating projects.
6. To inspire the next generation of musicians by providing and contributing towards workshops for children and young people.

Summary of main activities

2024 was a busy and successful year for Corvus Consort, featuring 14 live concert performances, recording and releasing our second album 'Welcome Joy', and co-delivering an expanded Learning & Engagement programme with the Whiddon Autumn Festival in Devon.

Particular highlights are outlined below...



"Clean, clear voices, impeccable intonation and a direct, engaged way with the texts."

Limelight Magazine

In April, we spent a week recording our second album for Chandos Records, entitled **'Welcome Joy'**. The disc is a celebration of women's voices, both as singers and composers, featuring 12 of our upper voices in collaboration with harpist Louise Thomson. The repertoire is almost entirely by women composers, with particular focus on Elizabeth Poston (her cycle *An English Day-Book* receiving its first professional recording) and Imogen Holst (whose cycle *Welcome Joy and Welcome Sorrow* gives the disc its name). Alongside music by Gustav Holst, himself a great champion of women's voices and musical education for women, there is music by five living female composers (world premiere recordings in most cases), including a pair of works by Indian-American composer Shruthi Rajasekar commissioned specially for the album.

The album was released later in the year, at the end of September, and received excellent reviews across the board. BBC Music Magazine chose 'Welcome Joy' as their 'album of the month' for December 2024, with a five-star review describing it as "a jewel-box of glinting, shimmering choral gems", while it also featured as 'album of the week' on BBC Radio 3's 'Essential Classics' programme. Gramophone Magazine devoted a full spread to their glowing review, and featured one of our album videos as their "video of the day" on the release date. The disc was also selected as 'Editor's Choice' for the Australian publication Limelight Magazine, who praised the group's "clean, clear voices, impeccable intonation, and a direct, engaged way with the texts".

The release day was marked with an album launch concert as part of the Islington Proms in London, at which we performed most of the repertoire from the album to an enthusiastic audience. This concert featured the world premiere live performance of the two works by Shruthi Rajasekar that were commissioned for the album.

In the summer, we embarked on a five-concert tour of our **'Byrd Takes Flight'** programme in collaboration with instrumental duo Music on the Edge. Byrd Takes Flight was our commissioning project for 2023, which saw the creation of four brand new works in response to the music of William Byrd, to mark the 400th anniversary of Byrd's death. The programme was premiered in 2023, and this tour was a brilliant opportunity to perform it more widely across the country. The tour included a sold-out concert at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, as well as concerts in Truro, Oxford, Bristol and London.

In September, we returned to the **Whiddon Autumn Festival** in Devon for the fourth year in a row as Ensemble-in-Residence, performing in a wide variety of events throughout the festival week. Highlights included a programme of great music from Renaissance Europe, a concert celebrating the magic of folk song, and featuring in the festival's jazz night to perform *KOSMOS Suite*, an ambitious work for jazz sextet and vocal ensemble by German pianist-composer Lukas DeRungs.



We also co-delivered the festival's Learning & Engagement programme, which provides singing opportunities to around 200 children at rural primary schools. We visited Devon in July for an initial round of workshops before returning in September to bring all the schools together for a massed voices showcase, and a performance alongside Corvus Consort in one of the festival's principal concerts.

In May, we gave our first performance of **Rachmaninov's All-Night Vigil** in a very special concert at Exeter Cathedral. The fifteen movements of the *Vigil* were interspersed with multi-cultural hymns of peace from around the world to create a powerful call for peace through the lens of Rachmaninov's iconic choral work, itself written in the shadow of the First World War. This concert was particularly well-received, with a great deal of positive feedback from audience members, including the following selection...

"It was divine. I enjoyed the concert for the most exquisite singing and wonderful use of the cathedral to create different atmospheres... In all it was an evening to remember... thank you for giving such delight."

"We loved your Rachmaninov concert. The programming, singing and choreography were all perfect. A real achievement."

"That has to be the most beautiful choral singing I have ever experienced! The sound of the voices in the cathedral was breathtaking! I loved how you integrated the peace songs into the programme as well – it really was a magical evening!"

In November, Corvus Consort was the support act for well-known singer-songwriter The Magic Lantern at Hackney's Round Chapel. Appearing as a quartet of singers, we performed a short set of mostly plainchant and renaissance polyphony, finishing with a magical contemporary piece by James MacMillan. This was a wonderful opportunity to reach an audience who had come to hear a very different kind of music, and the reception was extremely warm.

In December, we released a Christmas video on our social media channels, featuring a performance of Imogen Holst's carol *That Lord that lay in assë stall*, a very little-known carol by one of England's most talented composers of the 20th century.

Summary of main achievements in the year to 31 December 2024

Corvus Consort's 2024 in numbers...

- performed live to over **2,100** audience members.
- videos watched more than **13,000** times across YouTube and social media.
- music streamed over **30,000** times across Spotify and Apple Music.
- delivered singing workshops to more than **200** primary school children.
- provided employment and artistic development for **50** young musicians.
- gave world premiere performances of **3** newly commissioned works.



In advancing the charity's objectives, Corvus Consort's achievements in 2024 can be further outlined as follows...

1. We presented choral music in fresh and innovative ways, particularly in our 'Byrd Takes Flight' summer tour, and our Rachmaninov concert in Exeter Cathedral.
2. At all our self-promoted concerts, we offered heavily subsidised ticket prices and discounts to try and ensure that no one was excluded from our events on socio-economic grounds. This included free tickets for those aged 18 & under. We worked hard to create a welcoming atmosphere, and brought our music to new audiences, particularly when supporting The Magic Lantern in November.
3. We commissioned two new works from distinguished young composer Shruthi Rajasekar for our album 'Welcome Joy' and gave the world premiere performances. We also gave a world premiere at the Whiddon Autumn Festival, and gave five further performances of the four new works we commissioned for our 'Byrd Takes Flight' project the previous year.
4. We worked hard throughout the year to introduce lesser-known music of high artistic merit to audiences and performers alike. Our album 'Welcome Joy' brought unjustly neglected music by 20th century composers Elizabeth Poston and Imogen Holst to a much wider audience, as well as platforming music by living female composers. Our concert programmes always showcased lesser-known composers alongside more famous works, and our Christmas video brought an obscure carol by Imogen Holst back into the public eye.
5. Our projects provided employment and artistically stimulating work for 40 young singers in the early stages of their professional careers, as well as other young freelance musicians such as composers, administrators, recording engineers and videographers.
6. Working with the Whiddon Autumn Festival in Devon, we co-delivered a Learning & Engagement programme providing singing opportunities for 200 children at rural primary schools who face geographical barriers to arts provision.

Statement on public benefit

The Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in planning all Corvus Consort's activities. This is reflected in the achievements outlined above, with particular emphasis on:

- offering fresh perspectives and ways of engaging with the art of choral music.
- heavily subsidised ticket pricing ensuring accessibility at self-promoted events.
- introducing audiences to new and lesser-known music of high artistic merit.
- inspiring the next generation of singers through workshops for children.



FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position at the end of the period

Over the course of the period, the charity had a surplus of £18,893.

At the end of the period, the charity has unrestricted funds of £21,289.

The charity has zero restricted funds.

Statement of Assets & Liabilities

Bank balance at year end:	£21,289
Other assets at year end:	£450 in stock of CDs
Liabilities at year end:	£1,668 in outstanding invoices

Reserves policy

The trustees recognise the need to maintain financial reserves to protect the charity from financial risks such as unforeseen project deficits, emergency expenditure, unexpectedly high operational costs, and short-term deficits in cash budgets. The trustees consider that reserves of approximately £4,000 are sufficient for mitigating the charity's risks at they currently stand.

The charity's reserves level at the end of the period covered by this report was £21,289 which is significantly above the target amount. This is because the charity received a single large donation during the period which took the accounts into significant surplus. The surplus reserves are expected to be spent on charitable activities over the next two years, as well as funding one-off purchases such as a new website.

Financial risk management

The Trustees maintain a risk management schedule which is renewed annually, and are satisfied that all reasonable measures are being taken to minimise exposure to the principal risks facing the charity.

Going concern

The Trustees consider that the charity has adequate resources to continue its operations for the foreseeable future. As such, the charity is considered a going concern.

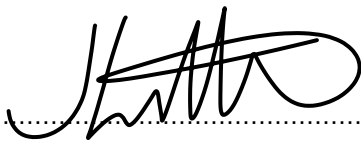
Basis for preparation of accounts

The financial statements are prepared on a Receipts & Payments basis.

DECLARATION

The Trustees declare that, by way of a virtual meeting held on Sunday 19 October 2025, they have:

- approved the Trustees' Report above.
- approved the Receipts & Payments accounts below.
- accepted and acknowledged the Independent Examiner's Report below.
- authorised the signature of the Report on the Trustees' behalf by the following:



Joseph Littlewood
Chair of Trustees

20 October 2025

Date



Jane Whitlock Blundell
Trustee

20 October 2025

Date

RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS

for the year ending 31 December 2024

	Unrestricted	Restricted	TOTAL
	£	£	£
INCOME			
Friends donations	1,345	-	1,345
Other donations	31,529	-	31,529
Gift Aid claims	7,781	-	7,781
Grants	300	-	300
Performance fees	19,667	-	19,667
Ticket sales	4,988	-	4,988
CD sales	1,343	-	1,343
Royalties	61	-	61
Total Income	67,014	-	67,014
EXPENDITURE			
Musician fees	37,335	-	37,335
Travel expenses	1,478	-	1,478
Other professional services	2,743	-	2,743
Venue hire	2,517	-	2,517
Publicity	986	-	986
Score purchase & printing	1,295	-	1,295
Subsistence	477	-	477
Materials, printing, postage	236	-	236
Other	1,054	-	1,054
Total Expenditure	48,121	-	48,121
Net surplus / deficit	18,893		18,893
Cash brought forward	2,396		2,396
Cash carried forward at end of year	21,289		21,289



INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT to the Trustees of Corvus Consort

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Corvus Consort ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, 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.

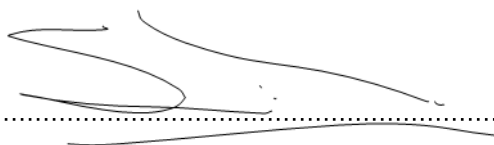
Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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:



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Date: 20 October 2025

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Simon Deane
BA FCA

