

THE CHOPIN SOCIETY UK

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2024

This is the Chairman's report for the Year Ending March 31st 2024.

It has been relatively quiet with fewer concerts taking place in Westminster Cathedral Hall – 7, as opposed to the usual 9 – and only one special event, the evening at Hatchlands on June 18th.

However, Members were not short-changed as we introduced a Young Artists' Series during the year, with exceptional young people under 30 who are not yet established in their careers giving short recitals.

The first two took place at Steinway Hall by kind permission of Steinway & Sons and their Managing Director, Craig Terry.

Our Assistant Artistic Director, Adam Repa, gave the first of these concerts on June 28th to a packed audience. It proved a great success. Then on September 14th, 16-year-old Alanna Crouch played an exciting programme of Chopin Preludes, Rachmaninoff, Spanish music and her own compositions.

The third concert in the series took place at Ognisko Polskie on January 21st this year, thanks to Committee Member Ela Wernik. She introduced Ognisko Executive Committee Member Mr. Filip Slipaczek to the Society, and he very kindly offered to sponsor the hire of the venue. Ognisko itself sponsored the tuning of the piano and Mr. Slipaczek contributed a further £100 towards the refreshments. All our thanks go to him for his generosity, and of course to Ognisko Polskie.

The pianist was Cristina Achim, a Romanian scholarship student at the Royal College of Music, who gave fine performances of Barber's Sonata, Chopin, Ravel and her own compositions. We were delighted to welcome the Director of the Romanian Cultural Institute, Aura Woodward, to the concert.

Mr. Slipaczek has very kindly offered to similarly sponsor another Young Artists' concert next year, and also to give an extra £500 towards a Westminster Hall concert.

He also contributed £500 to the London International Chopin Competition for Young Pianists, which took place on March 4th and 5th. The Chopin Society contributed £2,000 to the 1st Prize in the senior category and also to cover some administration costs. The winner of the Senior Category was Deva Mira Sperandio, who also won the Audience Prize. The Jury Prize went to Yuri Yasui. The standard was higher than last year, and incredibly impressive. Full credit goes to the organisers: Piotr Michalik, Jenny Lee and Chopin Society Member Artur Haftman.

Our next Young Artist will be Gabrielė Sutkutė from Lithuania, a truly outstanding pianist – as you can see from your Newsletter. This concert will take place in Steinway Hall on July

3rd. Then in 2025 we hope our Young Artist will be Qian Xinrui, winner of the senior category of the London International Chopin Competition for Young Pianists in 2023.

As I have said, Westminster Cathedral Hall concerts throughout the year amounted to only 7, as distinct from the usual 8 or 9. 8 were actually planned, but following Sofia Gulyak's – as always – brilliant recital on April 30th, the May recital by Murray McLachlan and the AGM preceding it had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. No Westminster Cathedral Hall concert had been planned for June so – as we usually like to keep July and August and much of September free, the next Westminster Cathedral Hall recital took place on September 24th with the young virtuoso Vitaly Pisarenko performing La Valse – as did Sofia Gulyak back in April.

Piers Lane was the artist in October, performing the rarely heard Rachmaninoff Variations on a theme of Chopin (Prelude No.20) amongst other Rachmaninoff pieces, plus a magical selection of Chopin favourites, proving him to be an outstanding Chopin interpreter.

Another master pianist appeared for us in November. Martino Tirimo is one of the great pianists of his generation. It was wonderful to have him perform a complete Chopin recital.

Murray McLachlan returned on January 28th to play the programme he had originally planned to play back in May 2023 – the last Haydn and Beethoven sonatas, his own arrangement of a Godowsky arrangement of a Chopin Nocturne, and the 4 Chopin Ballades. It was a stirring performance to a large and appreciative audience.

On February 25th Mishka Rushdie Momen played. She has performed for the Society since her teens and is a beautiful and sensitive artist, particularly attuned to the music of Schubert.

Charles Owen had the biggest audience this year and has a terrific and well-deserved following. It was an excellent concert to end the year with – apart of course from the 3 Members' Matinées, of which more anon.

2 other musical events took place during the year.

One was the recital at Hatchlands Park on June 18th given by international pianist Melvyn Tan on the Pleyel piano once owned by Chopin himself, and the one he used for his last Paris concert in 1848. Of the 3 pianos with close Chopin associations in the Cobbe Collection of Composer Instruments housed at Hatchlands, this is the piano that we have adopted. The Broadwood was used for Chopin's London concerts, the Erard piano belonging to his friend Jane Stirling was played by Chopin when he was staying in Scotland. Melvyn Tan understands these kinds of instruments very well, and his performance of the Preludes was riveting.

This was a particularly successful evening and the catering by Standby Chef was excellent.

We had received sponsorship or patronage for this event the previous financial year, with £2,000 from Dr. & Mrs. Jozef Przybylski, and £1,000 from Mrs. Elzbieta Stanhope. All our thanks to them for their generosity. The shortfall was made up from the £10,000 bequest of Mrs. Yvonne Clarke.

The Chopin Festival at POSK organised by Chopin Society Member Janusz Sikora-Sikorski, took place on October 21st 2023. Talks were given by Honorary Member Professor John Rink on “How did Chopin play?”, Dr. Ewa Slawinska-Dahlig on “The Pupils of Fryderyk Chopin” and myself on “Chopin in Majorca” assisted by Co-Chairman Charles Grant who did the readings. There was also a Chopin Exhibition provided by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute in Warsaw, and a Chopin-inspired Jazz concert late in the evening.

Before that came a very impressive Gala Concert, with an amazing guitarist, Adam Palma; an excellent flute and harp duo, and 2 pianists I would like to engage: Jakub Kuszlik and Mateusz Borowiak.

We will again be supporting this year’s Festival, and I will be giving a talk “The Mysteries around Fryderyk Chopin”.

It is a pleasure for the Chopin Society to support the POSK Chopin Festival and the London International Competition for Young Pianists at Ognisko, both because of what they add to Chopin activities in London, and because they are so well organised.

There were 3 Members’ Matinées in the financial year.

The first took place at Petersham Lodge on July 2nd by kind permission of Princess Josephine Loewenstein. Sadly, she did not feel up to playing after a year of ill health, but she was still the perfect hostess, and everyone had a wonderful time.

The second was at our Legal Advisor, Leslie MacLeod-Miller’s beautiful flat, which seems made for occasions of this sort. Not as many pianists played as usual, but that meant the concert was about the right length. It was a very festive Christmas occasion, with the flat fabulously decorated and an exciting tea.

The third Matinée was held at Sir Sydney and Lady Lipworth’s amazing house, “The Gables” in Hamilton Terrace. Surrounded by numerous works of art, guests enjoyed a glass of champagne before going down to the music room, where people sat at individual tables to listen to the concert in a room with perfect acoustics which greatly enhanced the playing. After the concert there was a wonderful tea, with every delicious treat one could imagine.

All my thanks go to the Lipworths for giving us the perfect Matinée, as well as to Leslie MacLeod-Miller and Princess Josephine for their most generous hospitality.

I have said that we will be reducing the number of “free to Members” concerts at Westminster Cathedral Hall – but this year it appears that this will not be the case.

Our artists for April, May and June are Gabriele Strata – who had a big success on April 28th; Riyadh Nicolas today May 26th, and Craig Sheppard on June 9th.

Then on September 28th we will have Margaret Fingerhut; October 20th Dmitri Alexeev, and November 17th the Rosamund Trio with Martino Tirimo. Moving into 2025, January 29th will be Rose McLachlan and February 23rd Danny Driver. I hope to play in March to celebrate 40 years as Chairman of the Society.

As well as these concerts amounting to 9 for the year, we have been asked to organise a presentation for the 2025 International Chopin Competition in Warsaw, as we did in 2019. This will consist of a concert given by a Laureate of the last Competition; presentations by Dr. Szklener, Director of the Fryderyk Chopin Institute in Warsaw, and others, and a film and champagne reception to follow. The costs will be covered by the Fryderyk Chopin Institute.

I have asked the London International Chopin Competition for Young Pianists to help us with the organisation of this event.

Our first Members' Matinée of the year will take place at Petersham Lodge on July 21st, and I would like to say to Princess Josephine how grateful we are to have her continued support and the opportunity to see her beautiful house and gardens once more.

The Hatchlands Concert on July 7th will take the same form as the previous one last year, except that the pianist will be Andrzej Wiercinski, and he will be playing Jane Stirling's Erard piano instead of the Pleyel, which will be an interesting change.

Funding the Society over the years has always been a worry, but we have been very lucky for the last 3 years.

At the end of lockdown in 2021, we were able to start up again on a high note with the Wigmore Hall 50th Anniversary Gala, which made around £23,000 for the Society and kept us going through 2022. Towards the end of 2022 we received a bequest of £6,000 from Mrs. Joyce Harasowski, which enabled the Society to hold a New Year's Party in January 2023. This led to us receiving £3,000 in patronage to go towards the Hatchlands Concert in June 2023.

In March 2023 we received a bequest of £10,000 from Mrs. Yvonne Clarke, which helped us with the Hatchlands 2023 concert, but which did not cover our costs. Soon after the concert, one of our actual Patrons who has many times supported our fundraising Galas – Sir David Davies – kindly offered us £5,000 sponsorship towards another Hatchlands concert, or, something similar.

Further patronage came in in the Autumn of 2023 amounting to £3,600, so we have £8,600 to go towards this year's Hatchlands concert and enable us to make a small profit. Our Patrons were Mme. Richard Armand, Mrs. Elzbieta Stanhope and Mrs. Urszula King.

As well as this we have recently received £5,000 of support from The Robert Turnbull Foundation for Young Pianists, organised by the writer and critic Rupert Christiansen. These funds are to go towards concerts in the financial year 2024-25 for pianists between the ages of 18 and 30 who – though very gifted – are not yet fully established in the profession.

The first beneficiary was Gabriele Strata who gave the April concert. The next will be Gabrielė Sutkutė at a Young Artist's Recital; then in January 2025 Rose McLachlan, the performer at the next Young Artist's Recital; hopefully Qian Xinrui, and another artist at Westminster Cathedral Hall.

We greatly appreciate all this extra support which has enabled us to do so much more and I would like to say a big “thank you” to all our Patrons over the last 2 years: Sir David Davies, Dr. & Mrs. Jozef Przybylski, Mrs. Elzbieta Stanhope, Mme. Richard Armand and Mrs. Urszula King, as well as those who have supported us with small extra donations. An equally big “thank you” to The Robert Turnbull Piano Foundation for Young Pianists and Rupert Christiansen for making the £5,000 support of our Young Artists’ programme possible.

Without a fantastic, hands-on Committee, none of our events would be possible, so I would like to thank them all for their hard work and commitment to the Chopin Society. Secretary Gillian Newman is responsible for our very decent audiences and liaising with the Membership; Co-Chairman Charles Grant is invaluable as Front of House; Co-Chairman Marek Ostas likewise for liaising with Poland and music groups, writing pieces for our Facebook page and photography; Adam Repa – helped by Yurie Lee – is a great help to me as Assistant Artistic Director, and our Treasurer Angela Delbourgo generously hosts Committee Meetings in her flat. Alexandra Lloyd Philipps is an ideal Minutes’ Secretary as well as a star of the Members’ Matinées. Her husband Matt is to be congratulated for having 2 portraits in the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters! Our Legal Advisor Leslie MacLeod-Miller also hosts Members’ Matinées. Everyone deserves to be mentioned, but as we have 20 Committee Members it is not possible.

As Gill and I both want to reduce our duties, we feel it is a good idea to have help with the administration, so the Society will engage Amy Jamieson for a 3-month trial period. As she needs to attend Committee Meetings, we will vote her onto the Committee today.

Before I finish, it is with sadness that we must now say farewell to some people who were important to the Society.

Sulamita Aronovsky had a long association with the Chopin Society and was an Honorary Member. She died late in 2022 and a memorial event was held at the Royal Academy of Music in September 2023. A very loyal Member, usually seen at our concerts, John Hadley died in the Autumn of 2023.

Another loyal Member, Peter Roberts, died suddenly and peacefully during our AGM in May last year. A charming man and a great supporter with many friends in the Society, he was a talented pianist, and always beautifully dressed. We will miss him.

We were all very sad to hear of the death of Roy Enfield early in 2024. He was a retired professor of philosophy and something of a polymath, with many talents and interests. Roy was a dedicated Committee Member of the Society, and retired as Co-Chairman in 2021.

Everyone in the piano world was saddened to hear of the death of Eugen Indjic. A wonderful pianist and outstanding interpreter of Chopin, he gave many concerts for us and performed in our Galas. I feel very sad for his beautiful wife, Odile, and their two children, Alexandre and Juliette.

We have heard that Westminster Cathedral Hall is closed for refurbishment this summer. Apparently it is going to have a big makeover as there is a significant grant. We are lucky to have the use of the Hall. Long may it continue.

All our thanks to Peter McNulty, the Administrator, and the Diocese of Westminster.

Our caterers, Meagan and Merlin, continue to do a fantastic job, not only making the sandwiches during the concert, heating up savouries and laying everything out so attractively, but also putting out the chairs and even wheeling out the piano. And of course clearing, washing up and putting everything away afterwards. What would we do without them?

I now pass you on to our Treasurer, Angela Delbourgo.

The Chopin Society (London) – Registered Charity No.271562

Income & Expenditure for Main Chopin Society A/C at Lloyds for Year Ending
31st March 2024

Balance at Bank on 31 st March 2023		17,808.56
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Add INCOME

Subscriptions	11,728.00	
Concert Income	7,100.87	
Members' Matinées	2,238.00	
Mailings	80.00	
Donations & Sponsorship (3,600 meant for Hatchlands concert '24)	4,652.00	
Hatchlands '23 Ticket Sales	4,763.00	
Miscellaneous (including refunds & bounced cheque paid out later)	2,839.25	
Merchandise	55.50	
Ads	1,595.00	
Allocation from Gala A/c	20,000.00	

Paid into Main A/c during Year Ending 31 st March 2024	55,051.62	55,051.62

		72,860.18

Less EXPENDITURE

Venue Hire	4,472.00	
Artists' Fees	11,208.00	
Postage, Printing & Stationery	4,441.10	
Steinway's Tuning (including 4 for previous year)	1,731.60	
BAFM Membership & NFU Insurance 470 & Lark Insurance 198.05	668.05	
BT	1,211.99	
Secretary's Honorarium, Artistic Director's, Adam's & Marek's	17,500.00	
Extra Food, Wine & Help	1,592.39	
Hatchlands' Concert Expenses & Adoption of Pleyel	10,158.99	
Miscellaneous	3,423.99	
Ads	157.93	
Website	1,547.21	
Expenses	547.61	
Flowers	58.00	
Purchases	187.19	
Accounts check	250.00	

Expenditure paid out of Main A/c in Year Ending 31 st March 2024	59,156.05	59,156.05

Balance in Main A/c 31 st March 2024		13,704.13

The Chopin Society (London) – Registered Charity No.271562

Income & Expenditure for Main Chopin Society Account at Lloyds
For Year Ending 31st March 2024

Expenditure from Main Chopin Society A/c for Year Ending 31st March 2024
Beside Expenditure for Year Ending 31st March 2023

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Venue Hire	4,472.00	3,120.00
Artists' Fees	11,208.00	23,391.49
Post Office, Printing & Stationery	4,441.10	5,422.10
Steinway's Tuning etc. (including 4 in 22-23)	1,731.60	552.60
BAFM Membership & NFU Insurance 470	470.00	470.00
& Lark Insurance 198.05	198.05	396.10
BT	1,211.99	1,090.73
Honorariums (Gill, Adam, Rose & Marek)	17,500.00	22,000.00
Extra Food, Wine & Help	1,592.39	853.05
Hatchlands including adoption of the Pleyel	10,158.99	1,000.00
Miscellaneous (refunds, bounced cheque)	3,423.99	1,896.62
Ads	157.93	560.05
Website & Computer	1,547.21	1,265.27
Expenses	547.61	-
Flowers	58.00	-
Purchases	187.19	-
Accounts Check	250.00	250.00
Young Pianists' Competition	see Gala A/c	2,200.00
ROSL excluding hire of 2040 paid in 2021	-	1,721.90
Reform Club New Year's Party	-	13,916.00
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	59,156.05	80,123.91

The Chopin Society (London) – Registered Charity No.271562

Income & Expenditure for Main Chopin Society Account at Lloyds
For Year Ending 31st March 2024

Income from Main Chopin Society A/c for Year Eding 31st March 2024
Beside Income for Year Ending 31st March 2023

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Subscriptions	11,728.00	9,544.50
Concert Income	7,100.87	9,211.67
Members' Matinées	2,238.00	2,676.00
Mailings	80.00	280.00
1* Donations & Sponsorship (3,600 for year 2024-25)	4,652.00	3,384.00
Reform Club New Year's Party January 2023	-	7,515.00
ROSL Platinum Jubilee Concert June 2022	-	2,310.50
Wigmore Hall Gala 2021	-	100.00
Miscellaneous	2,839.25	84.00
Hatchlands (June 26 23)	4,763.00	-
Merchandise	55.50	-
Ads	1,595.00	-
Bequests	-	16,692.80
2* Allocation from Gala Account	20,000.00	35,000.00
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	55,051.62	86,798.47

1* £500 of the sponsorship received was for the Chopin Young Pianists' Competition at Ognisko. Together with the £2,000 we gave it was paid in by the Gala A/c.

2* Included in the 2022-23 Allocation was £10,000 for 2023-24. Included in the 2023-24 Allocation was £10,000 for 2024-2025.

The Chopin Society (London) Registered Charity No.271562

Income & Expenditure for Gala (St. Nicholas) A/c at Lloyds
For Year Ending 31st March 2024

Balance in Gala Account on 31 st March 2023		116,417.44
<u>Add INCOME</u>		
Hatchlands Concert	80.00	
Subscriptions	130.00	
Refund	130.00	
Members' Matinées	14.00	

1* Paid into Gala A/c but due to be refunded to Main A/c	354.00	+ 354.00

		116,771.44
 <u>Less EXPENDITURE</u>		
Allocations to Main A/c	20,000.00	
2* Sponsorship of London International Chopin Competition for Young Pianists March 2024	2,500.00	

	22,500.00	- 22,500.00

Balance in Gala A/c on March 31 st 2024		94,271.44

* All income needs to be refunded to Main A/c as it was accidentally paid into Gala A/c.
The figure paid for sponsorship includes £500 contribution from Mr. Filip Slipaczek donated through the Chopin Society. This was initially paid into the Main Account.

The Chopin Society (London) Registered Charity No.271562

Income & Expenditure for Gala A/c for Year Ending 31st March 2024
Beside Income for Year Ending 31st March 2023

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Hatchlands Concert ticket	80.00	-
Subscriptions	130.00	65.00
Members' Matinées	14.00	42.00
New Year's Reform Club Party (Jan '23)	-	60.00
Refund	130.00	-
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All to be refunded to Main A/c this year	354.00	167.00

Expenditure out of Gala A/c for Year Ending 31st March 2024
Beside Expenditure for Year Ending 31st March 2023

	2023-2024	2022-2023
Allocation to Main A/c	20,000.00	35,000.00
Belonging to Main A/c and paid to it	-	271.00
Sponsorship of London International Chopin Competition For Young Pianists	2,500.00	Paid from Main A/c
Purchase of Clésinger hand	-	18,000.00
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	22,500.00	53,271.00

The Chopin Society (London) Registered Charity No.271562

The Chopin Society Gross Income for Year Ending 31st March 2024

Main Chopin Society Account Gross Income	55,051.62
The Chopin Society Gala (St. Nicholas) A/c Gross Income	354.00

	55,405.62

The Chopin Society Expenditure for Year Ending 31st March 2024

Main Chopin Society A/c Expenditure	59,156.05
Chopin Society Gala A/c Expenditure	22,500.00

	81,656.05
Balance in Main Chopin Society A/c on 31 st March 2024	13,704.13
Balance in Gala A/c on 31 st March 2024	94,271.44

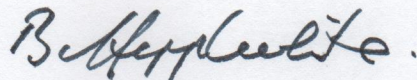
16 Newenden Road
Wainscott
Rochester
ME2 4NJ

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have examined the attached financial statements.

In my opinion they appear to show a true and fair view of the state of the
Chopin Society's affairs as at 31st March 2024.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'B Hepplewhite'.

B Hepplewhite
17 December 2024

23 DEC 2024 15:08
B Hepplewhite