

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR TO AUGUST 2025

Chair's Report

This is my third report as Chair. Firstly many thanks to Jane, Eric, Victoria, Lis and Linda as Trustees and Committee members, also to Sandra, Elizabeth, David Richardson and the many other volunteers without whom running the choir would not be possible.

As Music Director and Assistant, David Halstead and Jan Rautio are a pleasure to work with, and we appreciate how week by week their high-quality skills and efforts help us become a better choir. In a full and varied concert programme, personal favourites were our Bach B minor Mass at HTSS, with the youthful orchestra and our choral scholars to the fore; and the very different *Echoes of the Stage* programme at St Mary's, to be repeated in the autumn at St Anne's, also in Wandsworth. Reflections on the concert season are in David's section below, and he has programmed an exciting 2025-26 season for us.

We said farewell to choral scholars Lingling Bao-Smith, Maria Kolpaktchi and Matt Gilchrist after their beautiful contributions to the summer concert, and to Quito Clothier after the B minor Mass. The summer concert also featured solos from Lizzie Howard and Charlie Abbott. Charlie joined us as a scholar for the summer term when Quito left and will continue for 2025-26, alongside Sarah Quinn, Sheena Jibowu and Cameron Galvin to make a full complement of scholars for next year. A big thank you to David for their recruitment over the summer and to the very generous benefactors that make the scheme possible.

Rehearsals continued at St Margaret Pattens Church on Eastcheap/Rood Lane, and we are grateful for SMP's continuing support.

Not the Christmas Party chez Coupes was, as always, a very enjoyable social and musical highlight. Mark hosted a summer party for us in Stapleford, which was delightful. Thank you to all involved.

Our top priority is of course to continue to make and enjoy good music. But in the last couple of years we recognised the need at the same time to improve the choir's finances, in various ways but particularly by growing our membership. As the Accounts and the Treasurer's report below confirm, we have made excellent progress in this direction.

The aim for our concert programme therefore continues to be to meet all the following objectives:

- *Embracing Tradition, Expanding Horizons;*
- developing the choir's musicianship and enjoyment of singing;
- attracting new and retaining existing choir members;
- building the choir's audience;
- providing performance and development opportunities for choral scholars and other young musicians;
- breaking even or making a modest surplus across each season.

More broadly, our priorities remain to:

- grow our membership – leading to a better, and a better-balanced choir; but also the single best way to improve our finances (each new member, with subscription, gift aid and additional ticket sales, may be worth up to £500 a year);
- grow our audience – because we want to put on better events, but also for the financial impact;
- encourage more choir members to volunteer some of their time and skills;
- look after our choral scholars and put the scheme on a solid financial footing.

Ross Newby

Music Director's Report

It has been a continuing joy working with the Esterhazy Singers, and 2024-25 really proved to be – for me – the best year yet of my tenure in very many ways. Each of our events seemed to 'level up' as we raised our ambitions and surpassed the expectations of many with what we achieved in each of our concerts.

Over the year, our Choral Scholarship scheme continued to run with a full cohort of singers: Matt Gilchrist continued for a second year with us, and we welcomed Lingling Bao-Smith, Maria Kolpaktchi and Quito Clothier as new scholars in September 2024. Our first event of the year was a 'Come and Sing', working together with many guests on Bach's *Mass in B minor*. We covered all the choral movements in the work, providing a useful overview of what we would be working towards later in the year.

In our November concert, we returned to St Gabriel's Pimlico, focussing on a staple work of the choral repertoire: Fauré's *Requiem*, in a version arranged for organ and string quintet by Michael Higgins. This was performed alongside his very familiar *Cantique de Jean Racine*, Duruflé's *Quatre Motets* and Lili Boulanger's *Vieille Prière Bouddhique* (arranged by me for the same forces as the Fauré). It was an ambitious programme to put together, but I thought we really presented ourselves well, and pulled off a performance that was not only beautiful, but engaging throughout, and even dramatic where needed, which is especially hard when performing some works that are so familiar to audiences. The Duruflé works were also splendid – with the extra practice effort from choir members really evident. The Boulanger was for me the highlight - it is good to 'expand horizons' and celebrate neglected works - and we really did it justice.

Our Christmas concert continued in the format of our previous years, combining the familiar with the less familiar as well as the relatively new. It was genuinely my favourite bit of all my Christmas work, from the simplest carol to the more demanding ones, and all with an enthusiastic audience who seemed to relish joining in. I believe we broke a record for attendance at this event - so also a special thanks to everyone who invited their friends.

In March 2025, we undertook our greatest challenge in my tenure – performing Bach's complete *Mass in B minor*. We once again featured our choral scholars as soloists, including

a guest scholar for the term, Lizzie Howard singing Sop 2, alongside an orchestra consisting principally of conservatoire students from across London. We also invited some friends and guest members to join for this project, resulting with a performance with 60 singers, the largest choir that has performed in my tenure. All of our hard work came together to give a very fine performance, with what is becoming a signature Esterhazy passion and drama throughout the work. The soloists were all excellent, and this concert also saw one of our best audiences ever. This work holds a special place in the hearts of many, and it is a great achievement to have pulled it off.

For our final project of the year, in June 2025, we presented a programme entitled 'Echoes of the Stage', presented a combination of opera choruses, expertly accompanied by Jan Rautio on the piano, but enhanced by a brass trio (in new arrangements by both Jan and I). We covered historic works by Verdi, Wagner, Puccini, Bizet, and Purcell, and complemented this with 20th and 21st century works including musical theatre, film and revue works from stages of the past, all in new and challenging arrangements. Having said farewell to Quito after the Bach, we were grateful to Charlie Abbot for stepping in for this term as tenor scholar (and later returning in September), joining our other scholars as soloists for this concert. They all showed a bit of themselves through performing their own choices of music. This programme was received very well by the choir and audiences, and in a first for the choir, we repeated the programme in September at St Ann's Wandsworth, at the invitation of Julie Harrison and the Wandsworth Society.

Overall, the year 2024-25 was a great success for the choir, having seen our numbers grow, current members and audiences highly satisfied, and the ongoing development of the choir – in terms of musical capability, technical attention to detail, and overall ambition – has been abundantly clear for all to see. The new challenges planned for the following year will continue to stretch and test the choir, and I look forward to another highly satisfying year of music-making with the friendliest group with which I am involved.

As ever, I am indebted to Jan Rautio, whose musicianship, support and counsel contribute greatly to my work with the choir, as well as the choir's general success. I am also grateful to Ross and the Committee who have continued to facilitate our development and longer-term strategy for the choir. I have every confidence that the Esterhazy Singers will continue to grow, not only in membership, but also in capability and in excellence, over our exciting 2026-27 season and beyond.

David Halstead

Treasurer's Report

I report on the Esterhazy Singers Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2025, which our Hon. Auditor has examined and approved (see Annex A below).

The year finished with a surplus, the first in several years, of £5200. Compared to the previous year, our concert income (donations from ticket sales mainly) rose by nearly £4231, as well as our subscription income by £3262. It is worth noting that of the £1860 surplus made on concerts, £720 was by way of sponsorship by two choir members, for which we are most grateful. Our performance costs increased by £1720 while general costs increased somewhat. We have been able to carry over excess donations amounting to £211 from the 2024/25 choral scholars' scheme to 2025/26.

The reason for the healthy financial position can be summarised in one word: Bach. There was a very well attended and enjoyable "Come and Sing Bach B minor Mass" after which a good number of singers remained to sing in the concert performance. Even more positively, some of those singers have since joined the choir permanently. This has boosted not only subscription income, but also the number of tickets sold, resulting in increased revenue for concerts.

I would like to record my thanks to our Hon. Auditor, Peter Watson, for his work and assistance over the years.

Jane Coupe

Membership Report

Over the past year, 2024 to 2025, choir numbers have been growing steadily. In September 2024 we had 31 singers. By the end of August 2025 we had 39/40 permanent. As follows: 4 basses (two basses have rejoined, Tim Sanders-Hewitt and Nathan Lee), 1 tenor, 3 altos and 1 soprano. 9 singers joined just for the B Minor Mass. May I extend a warm welcome to all, both temporary and permanent, along with our very talented choral scholars.

We are essentially a good medium sized chamber choir, numbers need to be a comfortable size, not exceeding 45/50. Singers come and go and voice parts have to be covered adequately. How to attract new singers? We are lucky to have singers who rejoin, others come through word of mouth and via the information on our concert leaflets and the choir website. We are also listed on a free website called www.London.choirslit.com But rather than a listings website, most new people find us through the former, by attending concerts and our very successful 'Come and Sing' days. May we continue to thrive, performing wonderful music, socializing together and a thank you to all for your involvement.

Linda Swann

Annex A – Annual Accounts

ESTERHAZY SINGERS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

Year to 31st August 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
INCOME		
Subscriptions	£12,497.67	£9,234.54
Friends scheme	£725.00	£657.00
Tax rebate on covenants and Gift Aid	£3,149.56	£2,670.97
Self help	£682.00	£230.09
Donations (concert sales)	£12,829.16	£8,598.64
Donations (other)	£36.44	£18.65
Bank interest	£185.19	£166.86
Choral Scholar scheme	£4,664.00	£3,900.00
Folders & Music	£337.30	£110.71
	£35,106.32	£25,587.46
EXPENDITURE		
Professional fees (non concert related)	£9,724.00	£8,967.00
Performance costs	£10,969.33	£9,240.40
Rehearsal room	£3,072.00	£2,878.00
Choral Scholar scheme	£4,664.00	£3,900.00
Administration	£983.53	£907.55
Self help	£152.49	£0.00
Folders & Music	£324.13	£368.00
	£29,889.48	£26,260.95
Excess / (deficit) of income over expenditure	£5,216.84	-£673.49

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31st August, 2025

	31/08/2025	31/08/2024
Accumulated fund brought forward	£8,218.38	£8,891.87
2025 excess of income over expenditure	£5,216.84	-£673.49
	£13,435.22	£8,218.38
Represented by:		
Cash at bank	£10,266.96	£9,005.52
Debtors (due within one year) Gift aid claims due	£3,132.33	£142.13
Prepayment (deposit for Autumn 2025 concert venue)	£247.50	£218.33
Creditors (due within one year) c/f Choral Scholarship scheme excess	-£211.57	-£1,147.60
	£13,435.22	£8,218.38

Notes to the Accounts

Note 1: Basis of accounting These accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis. There have been no changes to the accounting policies this year.

Note 2: Restriction of funds All of the funds are unrestricted with the exception of the Scholarship Fund, which is fully spent or accrued in year.

Note 3: Main concerts with comparison to previous year



	Autumn 2024	Autumn 2023	Christmas 2024	Christmas 2023	Come & Sing 2024	Come & Sing 2023	Spring 2025	Spring 2024	Summer 2025	Summer 2024	Total 24/25	Total 23/24
Ticket prices (full/under 25)	£20/£12	£18/£10	£16/£12	£15/£8	12.00	12.00	£25/£12	£20/£12	£16/£12	£16/£12		
Costs												
Professional fees	£1,550.00	£820.00	£430.00	£420.00	£530.00	£320.00	£3,946.20	£3,732.00	£980.00	£630.00	£7,436.20	£5,922.00
Venue	£475.00	£450.00	£128.00	£140.00	£172.00	£150.00	£1,455.00	£1,320.00	£250.00	£250.00	£2,480.00	£2,310.00
Drinks	£95.36	£106.00	£167.00	£96.00	£0.00	£0.00	£211.50	£146.90	£105.00	£54.50	£578.86	£403.40
Misc.	£21.00	£0.00	£52.58	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£139.85	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£213.43	£0.00
Programmes and fliers	£50.00	£145.00	£60.00	£90.00	£0.00	£36.00	£50.00	£184.00	£100.84	£150.00	£260.84	£605.00
	£2,191.36	£1,521.00	£837.58	£746.00	£702.00	£506.00	£5,802.55	£5,382.90	£1,435.84	£1,084.50	£10,969.33	£9,240.40
Income												
Box office	£836.02	£524.01	£708.93	£693.52	£128.68	£217.15	£1,821.72	£1,090.36	£792.87	£572.77	£4,288.22	£3,097.81
Choir tickets	£275.18	£428.04	£201.10	£310.93	£0.00	£0.00	£197.46	£552.21	£295.75	£179.75	£969.49	£1,470.93
Sponsorship	£250.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£469.77	£400.00	£0.00	£0.00	£719.77	£400.00
On-line sales	£613.58	£400.11	£677.80	£246.79	£365.12	£177.85	£2,547.88	£1,368.15	£569.52	£248.22	£4,773.90	£2,441.12
drinks	£243.46	£235.78	£488.96	£165.63	£0.00	£0.00	£621.82	£268.85	£388.97	£176.56	£1,743.21	£846.82
Misc.	£35.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£35.00	£0.00
Programmes	£53.19	£81.29	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£143.90	£230.26	£102.48	£30.41	£299.57	£341.96
	£2,306.43	£1,669.23	£2,076.79	£1,416.87	£493.80	£395.00	£5,802.55	£3,909.83	£2,149.59	£1,207.71	£12,829.16	£8,598.64
Net surplus / deficit	£115.07	£148.23	£1,239.21	£670.87	£-208.20	£-111.00	£0.00	£-1,473.07	£713.75	£123.21	£1,859.83	£-641.76
Approx number of tickets sold	87	78	103	90	41	32	193	150	108	71	532	421

Note 4: Choral Scholarship Scheme

Balance brought forward from previous year	£984.21
Donations received during the year	£3,891.36
	£4,875.57
Funds used during the year for 4 scholars and 1 professional soprano for 1 term	£-4,600.00
Other expenditure	£-64.00
Carry over surplus to next year:	£211.57

Jane Coupe

Honorary Treasurer

Honorary Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the Esterhazy Singers

I report on the accounts of the Esterhazy Singers for the year ended 31 August 2025, set out above.

Basis of Honorary Auditor's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners for Independent Examiners of Charity Accounts. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given in the accounts.

Honorary Auditor's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements (a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act and (b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting records of the Act, have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Peter Watson. ACA

Honorary Auditor

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