

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY

England & Wales - Charity number 291130

Details

Other names CITY OF BIRMINGHAM TOURING OPERA

Status Registered

Legal form Charitable company

Company number [01850467](#)

Registered 1985-02-19

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 205 The Argent Centre
60 Frederick Street
Birmingham
B1 3HS

Phone 01212466644

Email info@birminghamopera.org.uk

Website www.birminghamopera.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING AND IN PARTICULAR THE ART AND SCIENCE OF MUSIC BY THE PRODUCTION ARRANGEMENT, PROMOTION AND COMMISSIONING OF OPERA AND OTHER MUSICAL PERFORMANCES AND CONCERTS AND TO FOSTER INTEREST IN SUCH OPERAS CONCERTS AND MUSICAL PERFORMANCES BY SUCH MEANS AS MAY FROM TIME TO TIME BE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE BY THE COMPANY.

Activities: With no opera house, all our work lives in the peoples and places of the city- a unique fusion of local volunteers and international artists delivering artistic, personal and social change.

Classification

- **How:** Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training, Arts/culture/heritage/science
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Czech Republic
- Italy
- Poland
- Spain
- Birmingham City
- Coventry City
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Walsall
- Wolverhampton

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-06-30	£823,886	£750,108	£593,481	3
2024-06-30	£870,288	£1,317,398	£309,996	4
2023-06-30	£839,555	£693,460	£757,106	4
2022-06-30	£641,653	£446,851	£611,011	3
2021-06-30	£709,573	£768,717	£416,209	4
2020-06-30	£627,130	£332,126	£470,353	4

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Geoffrey John Nicholas Payne		2014-09-30
Hannah Griffiths		2025-03-28
Joelle Ikwa		2025-12-02
Justine Themen		2018-12-12
Katie Fulcher		2020-05-20
Lauren Williams		2016-06-07
Richard Willacy		2022-07-01
Stephen Maddock		2024-10-04

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY

England & Wales - Charity number 291130

Accounts

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2025

Registered number: 01850467
Registered charity number: 291130

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
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TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

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BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

Trustees and Directors:	Nicholas Payne (Chair) Katie Fulcher William Husselby OBE (resigned 22 nd September 2025) Lauren Williams Justine Themen Richard Willacy Stephen Maddock Hannah Griffiths (appointed 28 th March 2025) Joelle Ikwa (appointed 2 nd December 2025) Anthony Colville (resigned 4 th October 2024)
Personnel:	General Director – Richard Willacy Music Director – Alpesh Chauhan OBE General Manager – Seb Lovell-Huckle Creative Producer – Diandra McCalla Development Co-ordinator – Katie Sidebotham
Associate Artists:	Vocal Coach – Jane Robinson Choral Directors- Mariana Rosas, Themba Mvula Casting Consultant – Sarah Playfair Projects Consultant – Andrew Pye
Secretary:	Richard Willacy
Registered Office:	205 The Argent Centre 60 Frederick Street Birmingham B1 3HS
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank plc 36/38 New Street Birmingham B2 4LP
Auditors:	Forvis Mazars LLP Three Chamberlain Square Birmingham B3 3AX
Registered Charity Number:	291130
Company Number:	01850467

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees, who are also directors of the Company, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30th June 2025 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for the Directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

OVERVIEW

Birmingham Opera Company aims to create the best quality Opera with and for the broadest possible audience. To this end, we have built and continue to develop an extraordinary company of volunteer performers drawn from Birmingham's diverse population. They contribute their time, talent and creativity alongside some of the world's leading Opera professionals to create truly memorable productions.

In return, we enable fantastic training, skills and self-confidence as well as friendships and contacts between people whose paths may not otherwise cross. This is social inclusion and highest quality art in action.

Founded by the late Sir Graham Vick, who passed away in 2021, in recent years we have striven to open up as many touchpoints as possible for volunteers and both emerging and established artists to share space, test ideas and make great Opera.

Without the support of our funders and partners Birmingham Opera Company would not exist, so grateful thanks are due to Arts Council England, and a number of both long-supporting and new Trusts, Foundations and donors.

In-kind support and shared endeavour

All of our work exists in partnership- we are always on someone else's turf, someone who has invited us into their lives for however fleeting a moment. We recognise that socially impactful work and highest quality Opera enrich each other and all those involved.

We recognise the innate capacity and yearning to create, to dream, to share, to explore our own inner worlds and we strive to make space for that most human endeavour in our everyday, our city, our districts.

Whether it's the in-kind with over 50 community organisations hosting our artists across the city, the City Council giving us meanwhile use of a disused County Hall, a volunteer gifting their time and experience to a performance, an artist learning to develop their craft with their intended audience, what links us all is this innate capacity.

The result is socially engaged opera of the highest standard, gaining national and international recognition up there with the best, and at the same time sometimes life-changing moments for volunteers, artists and even the reputation of the city.

Creativity through Opportunity, Accessibility and Availability underpins everything we do.

All of our work is inspired by this mission.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

In shaping our objectives and planning the programme, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance on public benefit and fee charging. Birmingham Opera Company relies on grants and income from fees and charges to cover its operating costs. In setting the level of fees, charges and concessions, the Trustees give careful consideration to the accessibility of the performance space for those on low incomes.

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The strategies employed to achieve the charity's aims and objectives are to:

- Offer opportunities for a broad range of people to get involved in expressive arts activities such as singing, acting, dancing and writing.
- Present opera performances for the enjoyment and education of our local community and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for diverse professional artists to develop their skills and artistry.
- Target socially excluded communities to help build bridges to mainstream arts provision available to them but not extensively used.
- Challenge the norms of the opera sector and enrich the artform by employing bold approaches to creating ambitious work.

To achieve this strategy, we have a programme of targeted events delivered at grassroots level within the underrepresented communities we want to engage. We support and train people who elect to become part of our full-scale productions and make sure that confidence levels rise to match the level of performance we are internationally renowned for. We also support people to progress and pursue other opportunities, to take part in arts activities in the city, or to pursue further study in either formal or informal settings.

Since its inception, Birmingham Opera Company has shown a unique commitment to offering local people the opportunity to engage with opera first hand and, crucially, to create work that is enriched by the wealth of human experience that exists among the people of Birmingham. We know that to be embedded in the life of our city, we need to sustain our curiosity about the people who live, work and study here, what their lives are like, and how to build meaningful relationships with them.

In the thirty years of work here, Birmingham itself has become home to even greater ethnic, economic, cultural and social diversity. We aim to serve the broadest possible range of peoples, many underserved by publicly funded art and new to opera. Birmingham gives us such an opportunity to do so.

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Key information about Birmingham

Wealth	44% of Birmingham's population live in IMD1 areas - neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived areas in England. 41.7% of Birmingham's population live in income deprived households. Birmingham is ranked second among English Core Cities for income deprivation. (English Indices of Deprivation 2025: Statistical Release, ONS)
Education	Birmingham is ranked in 8th place of all the Core Cities with the highest percentage of population with no qualifications, with 23.9% stating they have no qualifications - the national average is 18.2% (Birmingham City Council, Census 2021)
Ethnicity	Birmingham is the most diverse city in England, with a population as follows (2021 census): Asian/Asian British 31.0% Black/Black British 11.0% Mixed 4.8% Other ethnic group 4.5% White 48.6%
Age	Birmingham is the youngest city in Europe. Nearly 40% of the population is under 25 years old (Census 2021).

We also know that the “wealthiest, better educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the population forms the most culturally active segment of all” in England, in relation to publicly funded culture (Warwick Commission, 2015). Birmingham Opera Company has a long and successful history of cultivating approaches that enable and celebrate diverse communities consuming, participating in and contributing to the Company's work. For example:

Wealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all of Birmingham Opera Company's work is free at the point of access • Tickets to productions are highly subsidised • Much of Birmingham Opera Company's work takes place in IMD1 and IMD2 areas • Volunteers are reimbursed for travel expenses
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free, in-depth training to any Brummie who wishes to volunteer with the Company (including no barriers to participation, with no auditions or applications necessary) • Taster sessions enable people to gain confidence and get to know the Company (as well as continually informing the Company's approach) • Training caters for a range of learning styles and is fully accessible to people with no previous experience in the performing art
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong track record in representing the population of Birmingham in casting and the wider workforce • Development initiatives for diverse artists and workforces across a range of disciplines, feeding the talent pipeline
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke initiatives for 16-25 year olds (e.g. Songs of Sandwell, Voice of an Ancient Youth- with fast-track rehearsal processes)

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Programme, reach and impact

Birmingham Opera Company delivers a holistic programme of multi-scale work: grassroots engagement activities, productions, training for volunteer performers, artist development. These are commitments that co-exist, overlap and enrich one another.

As detailed elsewhere, our offer sits in an otherwise regionally diminishing opera offer for a city of one million residents and in a region of three million residents.

Since 2023 we have expanded our reach both artistically and geographically with a mission to demonstrate need and opportunity in this challenging environment.

We work especially hard to engage demographics and locations who are otherwise unlikely to be able to access publicly or privately funded opera.

"An army of Brummies are the backbone of a promenade production." Neil Fisher The Times July 2024

Arts Council England

In the current changing environment of public and civic funding, the Board continues to be appraised of and mitigate for foreseen risks. We were awarded continued National Portfolio Organisation status plus a 20% uplift in ACE funding for the period 2023-26. This additional funding is enabling us to develop a new strand of co-creation work, including a presence in currently underserved areas close to Birmingham. Arts Council England have recently announced that this NPO period will be extended to 2028, subject to confirmation per organisation. Additionally, Arts Council England have indicated that recognising inflationary pressures, outputs may be reduced by up to 15% in consultation with ACE. Funding has been secured going forwards.

Private Supporters

Trusts and Foundations

Birmingham Opera Company attracted support from 21 Trusts and Foundations in 2024 and 2025.

29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust, The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust, The Garrick Charitable Trust, PRS Foundation, The Saintbury Trust, Souter Charitable Trust, The Thriplow Charitable Trust, Vaughan Williams Foundation, Michael Tippett Musical Foundation, The Cole Charitable Trust, George Fentham Birmingham Charity, The Eveson Trust, Roger and Douglas Turner Foundation, Samuel Gardner Memorial Trust, EE Lawley Trust, Laidlaw Opera Trust, Grimmit Charitable Trust, Smetanova Litomyšl o.p.s.CZ), Camerata Nuova (DE), Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK)

In 2025 we were part of a successful CreaTech West Midlands Regional Bid which will enable us to work on new forms with artists and engage 16-25s.

Ticket income

Box Office income is historically low as much of our work is delivered free at the point of access. We operate the lowest possible ticket prices to promote access, with a maximum ticket price of £24.99. Many paying audience members pay significantly less than this (from £5). We have no "tiers" – there is no better "seat" whether you pay £24.99 or £5. With very few of our year-round beneficiaries in the more affluent sections of society, philanthropy from individuals and Trusts is vital to support the large majority of our beneficiaries who come from the most economically challenged sections of society.

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Opera in Birmingham and the West Midlands

As we write in January 2026, we are the only professional opera company of scale fully based in Birmingham with a year-round programme in the Midlands. The Opera offer has been diminishing in the region for some time with touring companies visiting less frequently. We see our role as striving to represent our city and region in developing an offer for those who live and work here. We constantly review our work to ensure that it is direct and open to those who have not previously accessed publicly funded culture and especially opera.

We aim to find ways to grow the work of Birmingham Opera Company. To do this will require additional private and public funding and income streams. As we develop a new model for growth we will also look to economic benefit in terms of inward investment and employment opportunities for regionally based artists, producers and other freelancers and companies.

Current Structure

Richard Willacy (Associate Director since 2000, participation and digital lead since 2005, Associate Artistic Director from 2008-14, Executive Producer of *Mittwoch aus Licht* for London 2012, Executive Director 2014-21) remains General Director with overall responsibility for artistic and financial leadership and elected to the Board as a Trustee on 1 July 2022 with Charity Commission approval.

Birmingham born Alpesh Chauhan OBE (also Principal Conductor of the National Youth Orchestra) remains as Music Director (appointed 2020) and Diandra McCalla remains Creative Producer. Seb Lovell-Huckle was appointed as General Manager in May 2025. Around this core structure we employ artistic and production freelancers.

Andrew Pye- Projects Director (previously a role fulfilled by Sheelagh Barnard to whom we wish to record our heartfelt thanks for her many years of dedicated service)

Jane Robinson- Vocal Coach

Sarah Playfair- Casting consultant

Mariana Rosas & Themba Mvula- Chorus Directors

Nicholas Edwards- Acoustics Consultant

With an expanded programme we have also been able to engage a greater number and variety of emerging freelance artists.

In consultation with the Board we have created an holistic programme which forges a grassroots presence with an open offer for all to develop their creative capacity in a dynamic shared space.

In consultation with the Board in 2023-26 we seek to explore and develop the following key areas:

- Partnership - open up and develop the apparatus, knowledge and resources to mutual benefit of the partners in Opera, Arts, Education and Social endeavour.
- Presence - local with year-round created and programmed work. National and international through incremental partnerships. Increased and programmed communications.
- Participation - find new ways for participants to take part by creating new approaches to delivery and co-creation.
- Productivity - maximise productivity to deliver quantifiable outputs with clear intention and application.
- Personnel - development of full-time staff, Board, freelance artists and teams.

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The Board recognise their role in ensuring that the mission of the Charity is well met by them and the Executive through clear targets and reporting internally and externally to stakeholders. Quarterly review of all targets at Board level and greater proximity to the work by Board members will be the cornerstone of the next phase of work.

Leading the way

Birmingham Opera Company's intergenerational and intercultural practice was ahead of the curve in the first year of existence. Birmingham Opera Company's "participatory" model won the Royal Philharmonic Society Award (RPS) for New Audience Development in 2001 and again in 2007, the only company to win it twice in that decade.

In the UK, we have achieved the highest accolade in Opera, the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre, firstly in 2012 for *Mittwoch aus Licht* and again in 2019 for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. We have recently been nominated again, twice, for *New Year* and *woman.life.song*. We were nominated for the South Bank Show Sky Arts Award for Best Opera 2015 and 2020.

Globally we are making a mark, having been awarded the International Opera Award 2015 for Best Production against stiff international competition from Metropolitan Opera New York, Zurich Opera, Dutch National Opera, Festival d'Aix and English National Opera. At the International Opera Awards 2016, Birmingham Opera Company was nominated for the Accessibility Award and Rediscovered Work Award and were winners of both the FEDORA Education Prize 2020 and the International Opera Award for Outreach and Education 2021.

Birmingham Opera Company is the only company to have received both the RPS Award for Opera and Music Theatre and the International Opera Award for Best Production. It is also the only participatory company to receive either award, let alone both.

Additionally, Birmingham Opera Company's model has been adopted in Europe and beyond in collaborations with external producers who pay full costs of the work in their respective cities. International co-productions have taken place in Macerata (Italy), Valencia (Spain) and Poznań (Poland). Our diverse artists and audiences make our work in Birmingham a unique model for the future of opera.

As 2019 Winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre for the ground-breaking *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* the judges said: "*Another sensational production from Birmingham Opera Company embracing and embedding its community in world-class work. This is the kind of thing we all wish we were doing - a model to us all in being ambitious and truly going for it. It delivers the pure drama and emotional punch of opera without gimmicks - the audience feels right inside it, and it proves how resonant, inclusive and exciting opera is.*"

With Covid in full thrust we were listed in the Top Ten Musical Pivots by Musical America in 2020-21.

Sadly, founder Graham Vick passed away in 2021 and his long-time collaborator Richard Willacy picked up *RhineGold* as Director. In 2022 we were finalists in Sky Arts South Bank Show Awards for *RhineGold* and recognising the contribution to the opera ecology over decades, The Critics' Circle awarded BOC the Outstanding Achievement in Opera Award in recognition of the work of Graham Vick.

In 2023-24, we were selected European Opera-directing Prize hosts in collaboration with Smetana 200 in the Czech Republic and Lviv National Opera in Ukraine, recognising our international reputation as the powerhouse for socially engaged opera at the highest level.

In Summer 2024 our production of Michael Tippett's *New Year* was described as "a major operatic re-discovery" having remained unperformed since its first outings in 1989-90.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

And in Summer 2025, we took Judith Weir's *woman.life.song* and opened it up, not just for soloist and orchestra, but for a large-scale, city-wide collaboration that brought together international artists, over 20 local organisations and the people of Birmingham as chorus, actors and dancers.

Both Michael Tippett's *New Year* and Judith Weir's *woman.life.song* were nominated for the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre in 2025 and 2026 respectively alongside peer organisations Royal Opera and Ballet, Welsh National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival and Aldeburgh Festival (Britten Pears).

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Laws applicable to charitable companies in England and Wales require the Trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Company is limited by guarantee and therefore does not have a share capital. The liability of members is limited, and details of their guarantee are detailed in the notes to the accounts. The Company is also registered as a charity.

The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 24th September 1984, amended 19th July 2012.

Overall responsibility for the Company's activities is vested in the Board, whose members also serve as the charity's Trustees. All of the Trustees are in non-executive positions.

The Trustees are appointed at the Company's Annual General Meeting; casual vacancies are filled by appointment agreed by the Board.

Potential Trustees are invited to an initial interview with the Chair and/or the General Director. The appointment of a new Trustee must be approved at a full meeting of the current Trustees. Trustees receive an induction pack with information about the Company and a detailed written guide to their responsibilities as a Trustee. The Chair is initially responsible with the General Director for the induction and training of a new Trustee.

The day-to-day management of the Company is delegated to the General Director who is expected to report to the Trustees at a minimum of four times each year, and more if required. These meetings monitor the activities of the Company, the finances of the Company, the risk assessments and future planning to achieve the aims of the charity. Officers of our major funder, Arts Council England, are invited to attend all Trustee meetings.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

OBJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The principal activity of the Company is to encourage and promote the advancement of learning and in particular the art and science of music by the production, arrangement, promotion and commissioning of Opera under the name of Birmingham Opera Company and other musical performances and concerts, and to foster interest in such Operas, concerts and musical performances by such means as may from time to time be considered appropriate by the Company.

Birmingham Opera Company aims to bring the best quality Opera to the broadest possible audience. Working outside the norms of most Opera companies, it is dedicated to mounting productions away from existing opera houses and theatres and to presenting opera in unusual places at affordable prices. It has a policy of encouraging local people to take part as volunteer performers alongside the professional team of singers, players and technicians as well as attend the performances. A two-way process creating the opportunity for more people to be a part of opera, whilst enriching Birmingham Opera Company's work with a wealth of human experience. Birmingham Opera Company combines the highest artistic standards with an open invitation to the people of the city to join in and explore this deeply transformative art form.

CORE FOCUS

World Class Opera in Birmingham

Birmingham Opera Company draws internationally renowned and emerging artists to the region, gaining national and international recognition for the city and the cultural offer in the region.

Participatory training as a tool to achieve artistically at the highest level

We believe that participatory training in partnership with volunteers is essential to the practice and training of the highest calibre artists and will be at the heart of the art form's future.

Participation as a tool to develop a new generation of freelance diverse UK artists

Conservatoires and training organisations all agree that fewer and fewer socially and ethnically diverse British artists are coming through their doors. We are growing a new generation of diverse, socially responsible singers, directors, designers and choreographers through our work.

Co-creation as a rewarding method for participants and artists and to access new audiences, placemaking and the democratisation of the artform

With artists and art revitalised by participatory work, we will continue to re-invigorate the genre and the audience.

Employment for artists- with a distinct lack of employment opportunities for freelance artists in the region, we aim wherever possible to create such opportunities. When we recruit our volunteers or publicise our productions, much is done through direct contact with self-employed artists rather than, for example, a marketing company or department.

New Voices – As most of our work is with 16+, our participants are elective and our engagement strategies reflect this. We aim to be as responsive as possible to those we meet; we learn together rather than, for example, having a set workshop offer about a production- we may sing excerpts and ask how we could make the excerpt, translation or delivery clearer.

We aim to marry artistic and social impact in the titles we choose, the methods we employ, the artists we engage. To this end there are in effect no separate departments. Wherever possible we spend our resources on direct contact, direct engagement and feedback. This enhances both artistic practice and audience engagement. Much of the work is delivered free at the point of access to a majority who do not otherwise have easy access to publicly funded culture.

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Ways of understanding our work and impact

One way we try to understand who our work is engaging is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). IMD is a scale that rates deprivation in England in deciles, from 1 (the 10% most deprived geographical areas) to 10 (the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods). Various domains of deprivation are considered and weighted, such as income, employment, education and health.

- For example, if we take IMD profiles the venues and events we have worked in/at across 2024/25 (rather than participants), we see that:
 - 76% of all venues are in IMD 1-3 areas
 - 70% of Four Hubs venues are in IMD 1-3 areas
 - 92% of Sandwell Creates venues are in IMD 1-3 areas

The overall picture

We strive for a truly diverse model. Going forward we will continue to direct our resources and efforts to welcome people that opera and publicly funded culture is typically less successful in engaging, including people of the Global Majority, young people, people from lower IMD deciles. Each year, we disaggregate data according to the different ways in which we invite people to engage with Birmingham Opera Company. We do this with a view to understanding how we can best enable the broadest range of people to participate in our work right across the board.

Diversity of workforce

Birmingham Opera Company is still the only Opera organisation delivering a truly diverse model at the centre of its work in the UK and Europe. Once again, in line with our "Outstanding" rating in ACE's Creative Case for Diversity, in 2024-25 we engaged artists and freelance staff in all roles with a resolute commitment to representing the peoples of Birmingham.

Reaching Out – making Opera accessible and available to all

As detailed above, throughout the year we work with over 80 freelance artists and over 50 partners, performing and engaging with the peoples of Birmingham and Sandwell, free at the point of access. This work creates the foundations by which our productions are underpinned. The productions for which we are renowned are inseparable from such engagement.

Local Partners- each year we partner with organisations which host us

All Saints Youth Project | Acocks Green Library | Bearwood Community Hub | Bearwood Shuffle | Belgrade Theatre | Birchfield Library | Birch Network Youth Group | Birmingham Black Box Theatre | Birmingham Hippodrome | Birmingham REP | Birmingham Settlement | BMET | Sutton Coldfield College | British Red Cross Birmingham | Celebrating Sanctuary | Central Library West Bromwich | Choir With No Name | Coneygre Arts Centre | Creative Black Country | Dolphin Women's Centre | Erdington Library | E R Mason Youth | Friends of Cotteridge Park | Friends of Handsworth Park | Girlguiding Birmingham | Handsworth Library | IKEA Birmingham | Journey LGBT+ Asylum Group | Just Straight Talk | Just Youth Sandwell | Laurel Road Community Centre | Library of Birmingham | Lighthouse Youth Centre | MAC Birmingham | Maryvale Community | ME Dance Company | Multistory | New Square, West Bromwich | Northfield Library | OPUS | Queen Alexandra Community Services Red Cross Birmingham | Restore | Royal Birmingham Conservatoire | Sandwell College | Sandwell Library | Sandwell Music and Arts Service | Shard End Library | Shireland CBSO Academy | South and City College | St John's Sparkhill | St Mary's Guildhall Coventry | Stone House Gang | Oak House Museum | Oasis Academy Boulton | The Birch Network | The Choir with No Name | The Crescent Theatre | The Factory Young People's Centre | The Pump, Kitts Green | Thimblemill Library | University of Birmingham | Ward End Wellbeing Centre | Ward End Asian Elders Welfare Association | Wednesbury Library | YMCA Sutton Coldfield Get Up and Sing Choir | YMCA West Bromwich | 3 Estates Youth Project

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

The result- a powerhouse for socially engaged opera at the highest level, nationally and internationally.

In the last three years Birmingham Opera Company hosted the European Opera Directing Prize producing Smetana's *Two Widows* Re-imagined in *Smetanova Litomyšl* in CZ June 2024 and delivered two further substantial volunteer driven-performance projects in 2024-25: Michael Tippett's *New Year* (July 2024) and Judith Weir's *woman.life.song* (June - August 2025). All involved casts of professional artists and volunteers, and across these projects there were significant programmes of volunteer training for performance and opportunities to engage with and shape new work in new ways with multiple creative teams.

Over the last years we have aimed to develop more multi-scale work as a way to engage new voices, artists and communities- we have been able to create work which we are able to explore in a touring / co-producing model, firstly with our schools collaboration (120 school children co creating with Omar Shahryar), *Two Widows* developed in Birmingham and co funded and produced in CZ and *woman.life.song* which is designed to happen in temporary venues such as churches as minimal cost and our Brum Commissions developed in *The Opera Lab* which as a body of work is flexible to be scaled to suit venues.

Laying the ground for 2026-28 youth engagement

In recent years we have noted a significant decline in networks and civic provision for 16-25 year olds. At the same time news items run continually around the % of unemployed (19% unadjusted youth unemployment) in Birmingham. In response, we are turning our main focus to 16-25 year old provision from April 2026. To this end, we have engaged Nyasha Gudo from June 2025 to slowly explore and shape youth networks on which we can build on in the years to come.

Looking back at our programme 2024-25:

1. **Four Hubs** - our year-round Birmingham programme of events and performances;
2. **Sandwell Creates** - a new geographical area and co-creation strand starting from scratch to create new work;
3. **The Opera Lab** - a place for artists and participants to engage, test and develop work and develop new commissions;
4. **New Production** - Michael Tippett's *New Year*;
5. **New Production**- Judith Weir's *woman.life.song* culminating August 2025;
6. **Evolve**- Creative Skills in the region- whilst all our work offers opportunity to grow creatively and professionally, we collaborate with the educational sector and others to offer career opportunities and awareness;
7. **Digital** –Film Capture of Tippett's *New Year*, release of films of four new commissions.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Executive Summary: Year 1 (July 2024 - 30 June 2025)

12,575 face to face engagements across multiple strands and 126 targeted events, in year and bookended by productions in June 2024 (*Two Widows* in the Czech Republic) and Summer 2025 (*woman.life.song*).

- *Four Hubs* - Across 32 events and activities we made 2,191 engagements with participants
 - *Sandwell Creates* - 6,095 engagements across 15 events and activities
 - Tippet's *New Year* - 2,155 participant engagements across 67 sessions including 140 hours of guided training for the chorus and 98 hours for actors and 54 hours for dancers. 1852 audience members over 6 public performances- from May to July 2024 we provided over 9000 Learning Hours
 - *The Opera Lab* - 312 participant engagements over 12 free sessions
- Subsequently July and August 2025
- *woman.life.song* - 1,027 participant engagements and 3,595.9 learning hours over 26 sessions. 947 audience members over 6 free public performances

1. Four Hubs- year-round programme

From July 2024 to June 2025, we made 2,191 engagements with participants, volunteers, and audiences, through a range of free targeted events and activities in collaboration with community organisations across the city. All activities in the year-round programme were free at the point of access for all participants.

Free targeted events and activities:

We delivered 32 free targeted events and activities across our Four Hubs in Birmingham.

Two of the hubs are geographical (Perry Barr and Ward End) and two of the hubs are in the interest of community groups (Young People and Newly arrived/Asylum seekers).

All activities were free at the point of access:

22 Small-group sessions:

- 760 local people of all ages and backgrounds took part in small-group sessions in their communities, featuring a live performance and/or participatory event lasting 1-2.5 hours each, exploring music, opera, and performance.
- Participants worked closely with BOC's wide team of lead professional artist mentors (singers, directors, facilitators), including conductor Mariana Rosas (Chorus Director of London Symphony Chorus), baritone Themba Mvula, soprano Gweneth Ann-Rand and other freelance artists.

10 Performances:

- 5 pop-up performances including at The Jewellery Quarter Festival, Birmingham Weekender Festival, Refugee Weekend, and Birmingham Settlement Neighbourhood Future Festival, engaging 1,270 local people
- 2 people in public free performance with professional artists on their doorstep
- 3 further intimate performances engaged at places including Ward End Community Centre and Handsworth Park

2. Sandwell Creates- a new BOC initiative in the wider West Midlands Region

- Sandwell Creates is significant project for Birmingham Opera Company aimed at opening up opportunities for young people currently excluded from engagement in the arts
- We launched a new co-creation strand with young people in the Sandwell area where we engaged 6,095 local people over the year

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

- We hosted 6 pop-up performances, engaging 5,553 local people as audience, at spaces such as Wednesbury IKEA, Oak House Museum and New Square shopping centre
- We also delivered 9 small-group sessions with groups such as Just Straight Talk, CBSO Shireland Academy, Way 2 Wellbeing and Bearwood Community Hub, engaging 542 young people as participants
- We are commissioning new co-created work in partnership with the young people, strengthening connections we already have with residencies youth-focused groups such as Sandwell College, YMCA West Bromwich, and ME Dance Youth and Proud Baggies LGBT football fans group to create 3 new works.
- We are also partners in the Creative People and Places 3 Fifteen project led by Creative Black Country.

“The truth is, if this opportunity had been around when I was growing up in Sandwell, I might not have had the courage to get involved. I’d have been worried that I wouldn’t fit in or that I’d embarrass myself. Then, years later, I’d have been an adult who really regretted not being braver and finding out what I was capable of. Believe me, it’s better to risk a little bit of embarrassment than a lot of regret. Go for it!”

- Frank Skinner

3. Michael Tippett’s New Year September 2023 – July 2024- nominated for a Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre (alongside Welsh National Opera and Aldeburgh Festival)

When in 2022 and sifting through 60 titles, New Year floated to the top as a “must-do” for Birmingham. Unstaged since 1990, much of its futurism is now in our lives; space travel, virtual worlds, societal conflict. Its eclectic musical world riffing on ska, jazz, classical, electronics, haunting blues, constantly shuffling now a way many also listen to music. Tippett’s pioneering approach to put urban modern life on stage and brought to life with diverse international cast (UK, USA, South Africa), the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and people of Birmingham, though a massive undertaking and clearly risky, was too much to resist. Joining Alpesh Chauhan conducting and Mariana Rosas as Choral Director, was a new-to-us creative team led by Keith Warner. New Year also enabled us to engage new voices in creating the work from the Midlands as Dramaturg and assistants. Building on our small group sessions and performances, chorus training began in April 2024 and with over 68 rehearsals with volunteers across chorus, actors and dancers, by the time the mysterious blue Dream Tent appeared, Birmingham was talking Tippett. In partnership with the rights’ holders, the city council, property developers and funders, the whole company rose to the challenge.

“Why there’s a huge blue tent in Digbeth and you can visit it for £5” - The Birmingham Mail

New Year – 68 rehearsal and training sessions and 6 performances in May - July 2024 – 28 of these training sessions took place before 1 July 2024 financial year, with the performances from 7th-13th July 2024

- 126 volunteers took part in free training towards our production of Michael Tippett’s New Year. 78 participants took part as chorus members and 48 took part as actors or dancers. To ensure there were no barriers to participation, there were no auditions and we reimbursed volunteers’ travel expenses up to £4.60 per session.
- The Chorus were offered 34 training sessions (140 hours of guided training, including extra time to learn the material), the Actors were offered 22 training sessions (98 hours of guided training) and the Dancers were offered 11 training sessions (54 hours of guided training). Based on registered attendances, we made 1,609 engagements with the Chorus members and 546 engagements with the Actors.

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- The Chorus were trained by Chorus Director Mariana Rosas, and conductor Alpesh Chauhan, with support from 5 pianists. Volunteers were also supported by new emerging talent of 10 Chorus Mentors in their voice parts, to help them learn the music by ear and explore the opera. The Actors were trained by international director, Keith Warner, and worked closely with the 8 professional singers, Francesca Chiejina, Sakhiwe Mkosana, Sarah Pring, Lucia Lucas, Joshua Stewart, Samantha Crawford, Grace Durham, and Oskar McCarthy.
- Volunteers received pastoral support from BOC's Creative Producer, Diandra McCalla, and from 2 Participation Managers.
- The above culminated in 6 public performances of Tippett's piece in The Dream Tent, Smithfield, Birmingham, a huge blue tent in the centre of Birmingham, in early July. The volunteer cast performed with the wonderful City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The production, directed by Keith Warner, conducted by Alpesh Chauhan, and designed by Nicky Shaw, sold out on opening night and was a hit with audiences and participants alike.

Access at New Year

In a collaboration with Talking Birds we were able to offer hand-held captions in performances via wifi and mobile devices. We also employed Surtitles for the first time.

Press

"An army of Brummies are the backbone of a promenade production" – The Times

"With an engaged and utterly fearless community chorus of 100, it's a remarkable and inspiring feat" – Clive Paget, The Guardian

"A major operatic re-discovery" – Richard Bratby, The Spectator

"Operatic life would be much duller without the music of Michael Tippett and the work of Birmingham Opera Company" The Times, Neil Fisher

"demonstrating that opera can indeed re-pitch itself in the twenty-first century, Serious art and popular expression, cultural diversity and the very highest standards of performance: these do not always have to be implacable enemies or forced and awkward partners." – Edinburgh Music Review, Simon Barrow, July 2024

★★★★ The Times ★★★★★ The Guardian ★★★★★ The Stage ★★★★★ The Telegraph

Audience

1,852 people from Birmingham and the wider regions attended the dress rehearsal and final performances of New Year. We offered explorer tickets for £5 each to 16–25-year-olds, care experienced people aged 16+, those who are unemployed, those who qualify for government assistance and residents of Erdington, Northfield, Perry Barr and Ward End.

31% of audience members were from IMD 1-2 areas and over 50% of audience members were from IMD 1-3 areas.

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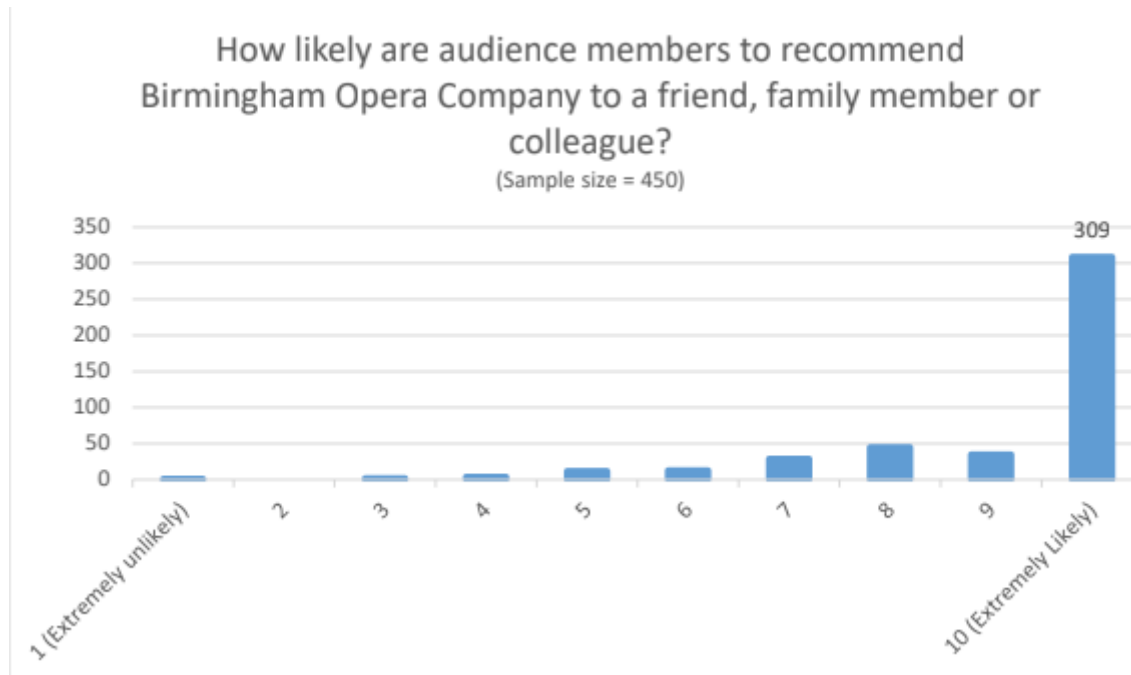
TRUSTEES' REPORT

Audience Quotes

“Accessible, Different, Zany”

“Exciting, Confusing and Thrilling”

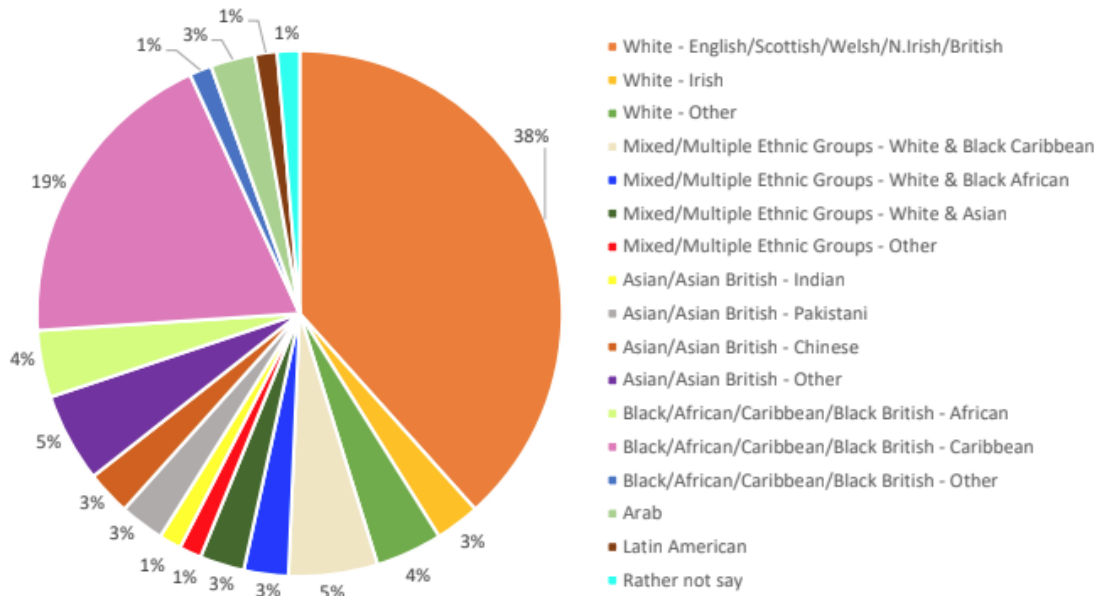
“So proud of Birmingham opera that looks like the people, not some irrelevant art form but living, breathing, telling relevant stories. World-class singing and showing that inclusivity and quality sit well together. Thank you, BOC!”



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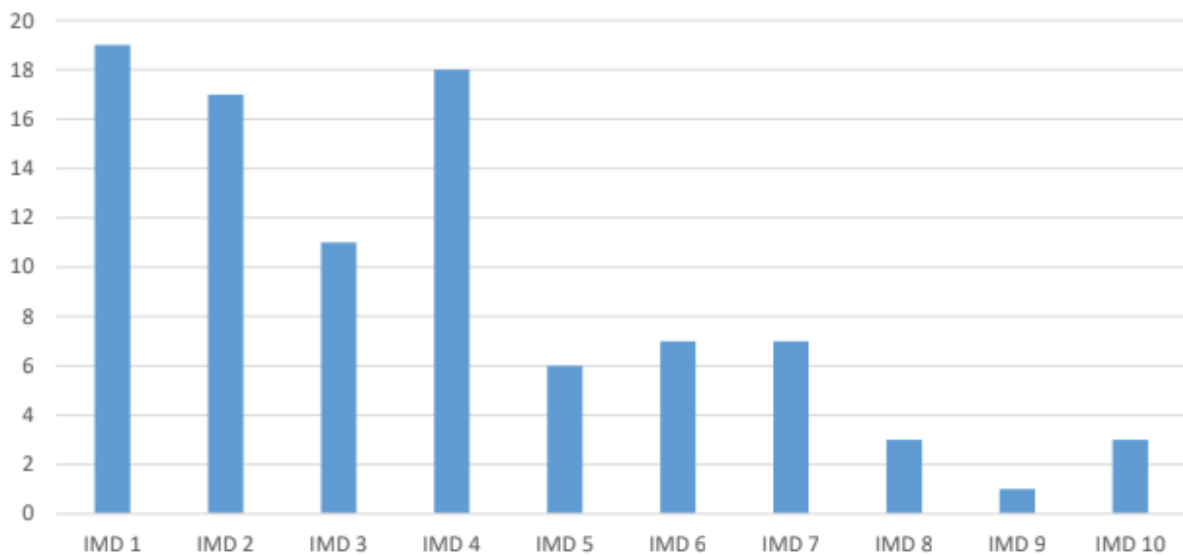
Ethnic Diversity of New Year Volunteers
(Sample size = 73)



New Year: Index of Multiple Deprivation Data

Data collected indicates that 51% of volunteers in New Year came from IMD1-3 areas (30% most deprived areas in England – Index of Multiple Deprivation, ONS 2019 statistical release).

IMD Profile for New Year Volunteers
(Sample size= 92)

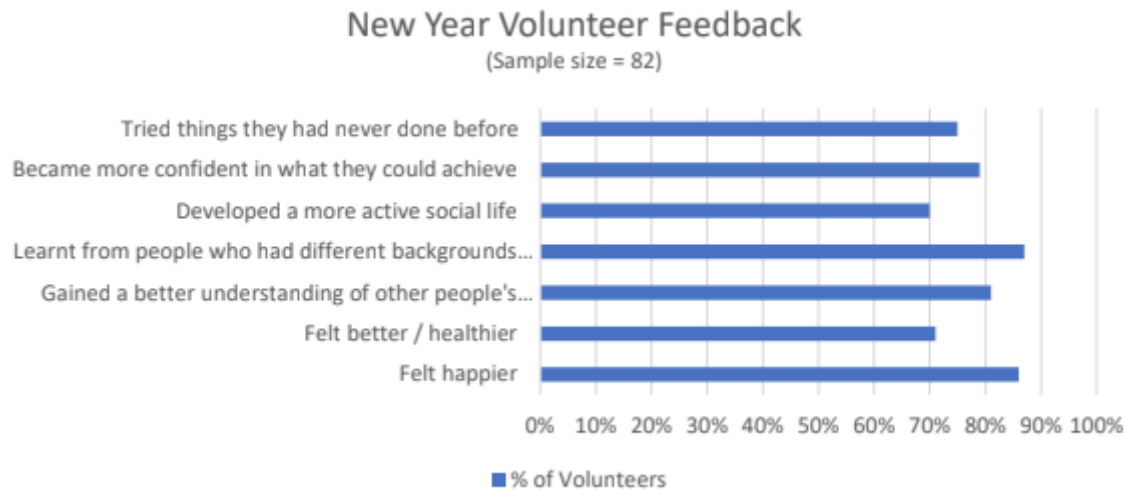


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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Personal & Social Impact

When asked how participating in New Year had helped them, our volunteers reported the following positive impacts: (sample 82 surveys collected):



In addition:

23% said they decided to start some training or a college course.

39% said it helped them go to an arts event or exhibition they wouldn't have gone to before.

51% said they became involved in other community projects.

Participant voices (as written):

"This production came at a difficult time for me personally. Following a sudden medical issue, I felt extreme anxiety and BOC rehearsals were the first thing to get me out of the house. The ambition of this particular production is hugely inspiring and it's an absolute privilege to get to work alongside such hugely talented people" - Female, White Irish, Employed, aged 38, B30

"It's always a joy to be involved in projects like New Year & making friends & music along the way, but such a sad time when it ends" - Male, Mixed Background, Disabled, Employed, age 44, B30

"I love that BOC accepts everyone and ensures we are able to voice ourselves" - Female, White British, Disabled, Unemployed, aged 38, B5

"Birmingham Opera Company is not just an art company but a base to the community mindset, the culture and the wellbeing of society" - Male, Black African, Employed, age 42, B65

"It is a very special place where professionals and amateurs interact really well together to produce high quality work. I have loved it!" - Female, Black Caribbean, Employed, age 53, B42

In addition to the core creative team, the chorus worked alongside Chorus Directors Mariana Rosas, with support from 5 rehearsal pianists and a team of 10 emerging singers as chorus mentors working with their voice parts, helping them to learn the music by ear and explore opera in English. We created learning tracks for different voice parts to support chorus volunteers' learning. The rehearsal period was longer than usual, to try and ensure more volunteers could combine rehearsals with other commitments.

Volunteers had pastoral support from BOC Creative Producer, Diandra McCalla, and two dedicated Participation Managers.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

4. The Opera Lab March 2025

– R&D rehearsal workshops

- 312 volunteer engagements were made over 12 sessions, working on the development of upcoming projects taking place in 2025, made by volunteers in collaboration with our artistic associates
- Artistic associates included Gweneth Ann Rand, Allyson Devenish and Mariana Rosas
- The projects chosen for the workshops were: Judith Weir's *woman.life.song*, and three of our 2026 Brum Commissions
- Participants were introduced to the works, assisted with their development, and many went on to perform in *woman.life.song* in August 2025

5. Judith Weir's *woman.life.song* June 2025 – August 2025- in association with Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) nominated for the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre 2026 Alongside Royal Ballet and Opera and Glyndebourne.

Woman.life.song began with a surprise phone call in the late 1990s to Birmingham Copthorne Hotel. British composer Dame Judith Weir, then Composer in Residence at the City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, received a call from American soprano Jessye Norman. Norman commissioned a new work featuring texts by Maya Angelou, Clarissa Pinkola Estes and Noel Laureate Toni Morrison. The original solo version was premiered by Norman at Carnegie Hall in 2000.

In 2023, Dame Judith received another surprise contact, this time from Birmingham Opera Company General Director Richard Willacy, with a proposal to open up the work for new artists and audiences, performed by multiple soloists, chorus, actors and dancers, and to release its latent theatrical life for the first time.

After some development with artists and volunteers in *The Opera Lab*, the first version and a new choral arrangement by Lead Artists Gweneth Ann Rand and Allyso Devenish was born.

Woman.life.song finally came full circle to Birmingham in 2025, opening at St Martin's in The Bull Ring; not just for soloist and orchestra, but as a large-scale, city-wide collaboration that brought together international artists, over 20 local organisations and the people of Birmingham.

Woman.life.song - 26 rehearsals and training sessions, with 6 performances over the Bank Holiday weekend in August 2025. The rehearsal process ran from June to August 2025.

- 67 volunteers took part in free training towards our production of Judith Weir's *woman.life.song*. 41 participants took part as chorus members and 26 took part as actors or dancers. To ensure there were no barriers to participation, there were no auditions and we reimbursed volunteers' travel expenses up to £5.20
- The Chorus were offered 15 training sessions (2,450.8 hours of guided training, including extra time to learn the material), the actors/dancers were offered 11 training sessions (1,145.1 hours of guided training). Based on registered attendances, we made 695 engagements with chorus members, and 332 engagements with actors/dancers.

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- The chorus were trained by Chorus Director Mariana Rosas, and conductor Alpesh Chauhan, with support from 3 pianists. Volunteers were also supported by new emerging talent of 5 Chorus Mentors in their voice parts, to help them learn the music by ear and explore the opera. The actors/dancers were trained by Director Madeleine Kludje (Deputy Artistic Director at The Birmingham Repertory Theatre) and Movement Director Gabrielle Nimo. They worked closely with the 2 professional singers, Gweneth Ann Rand and Madison Nonoa.
- Volunteers received pastoral support from BOC's Creative Producer, Dlandra McCalla, and from 2 Participation Managers.
- The above culminated in five public performances and one open dress rehearsal of Weir's piece in St Martin Church in the Bull Ring, Birmingham in mid-to-late August. The volunteer cast performed with members of the English Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham Royal Ballet Sinfonia, and freelance musicians establishing their careers in the Midlands. The production, directed by Madeleine Kludje, conducted by Alpesh Chauhan, and designed by Debbie Duru, sold 94% of tickets across all performances, selling out on opening night, and was a hit with audiences and participants alike.

Access at woman.life.song

We were able to offer Access Surtitles at all performances as well as BSL for the film version "*woman.life.song comes home*"

Industry Recognition

"It's the kind of piece that, for practical reasons, comes around once in a blue moon. Therefore it's typically astonishing that Birmingham (specifically Birmingham Opera Company) is about to host six performances over the bank holiday. And typically of BOC, this is a thoroughly imaginative recreation, featuring two soloists (wonderful Gweneth Ann Rand and Madison Nonoa) and a fairly huge chorus"

- Judith Weir

woman.life.song was nominated for a Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre 2026 with the citation- "world class opera with community at its heart"

Audience

947 people from Birmingham and the wider regions attended the dress rehearsal and final performances of *woman.life.song*. We offered seedling tickets for £5 each to under 25-year-olds, care experienced people aged 16+, those who are unemployed or live in low-income households, those who qualify for government and/or voluntary assistance (including foodbanks & benefits), and residents of Erdington, Perry Barr, Ward End and Newly Arrived Communities.

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Audience Quotes

"It blew my mind. Incredible piece of work."

"Unlike any opera I've seen."

"It was even better than I imagined. Absolutely beautiful. This experience will stay with me forever."

"Made me cry."

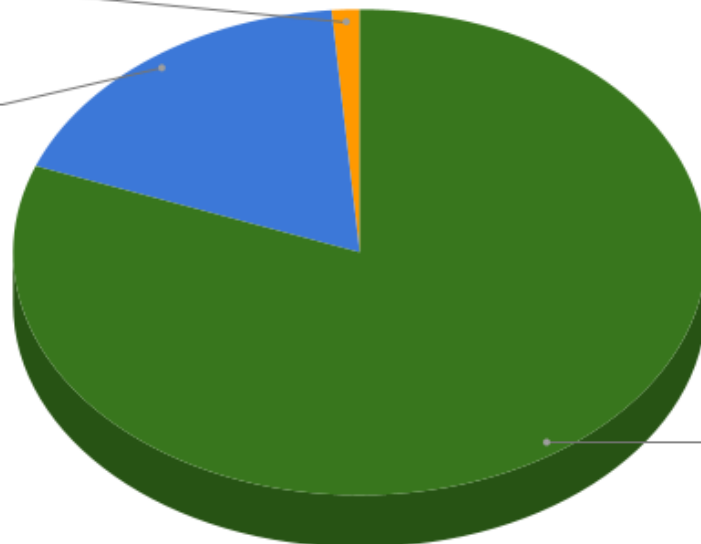
Audience Rating, "Overall Experience"

Neither

1.3%

Good

17.9%



Very Good

80.8%

Response options "Very Good", "Good", "Neither", "Poor", "Very Poor", "Don't Know", "Not Applicable"

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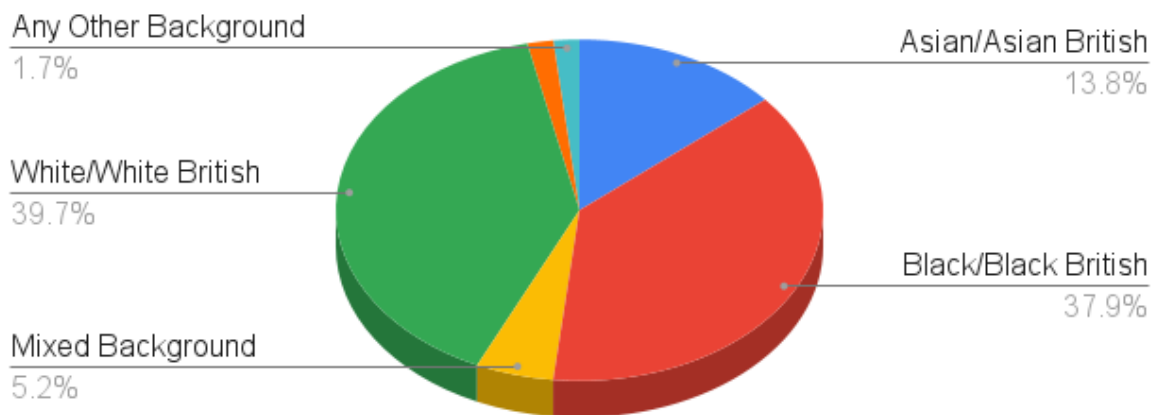
TRUSTEES' REPORT

Beneficiaries – woman.life.song: Volunteers (data from 57 completed surveys out of 67 participants)

Gender Identity	No. of volunteers
Female	32
Male	18
Identify in another way	6
Disability	
D/deaf, disabled or with a long-term health condition	11
Not disabled	36
Age	
Under 35	17
35-64	26
65+	13
Ethnicity	
Black, Asian, Mixed Heritage	34
White (White British, White Irish, any other White background)	23

Ethnic Diversity of woman.life.song volunteers

Sample size: 58



woman.life.song: Index of Multiple Deprivation Data

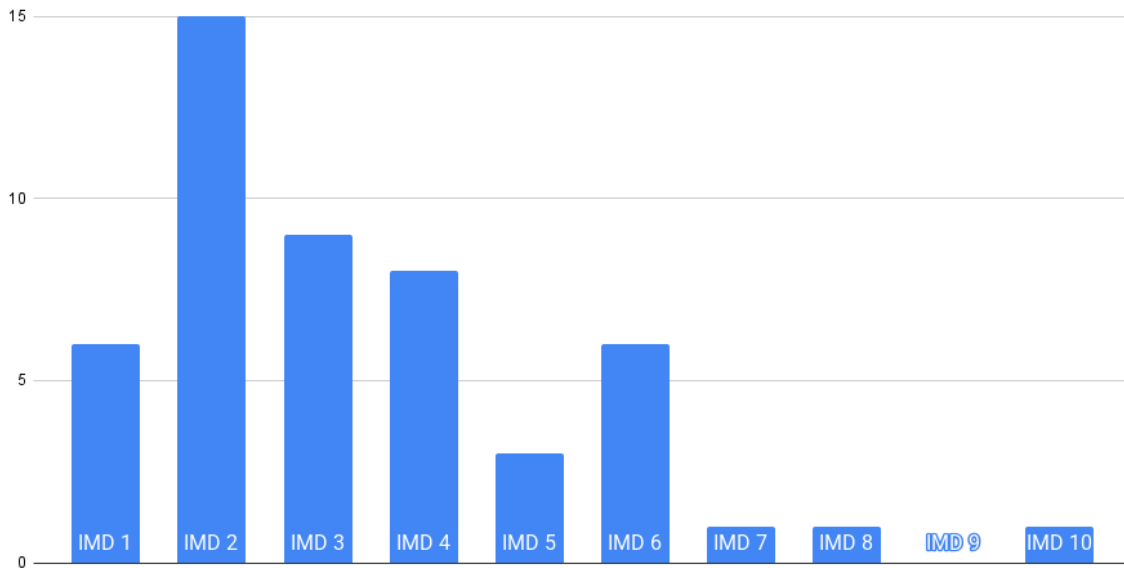
Data collected indicated that 60% of volunteers in *woman.life.song* came from IMD1-3 areas (30% most deprived areas in England - Index of Multiple Deprivation, ONS 2025 statistical release).

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IMD Profile for woman.life.song Volunteers

Sample size: 50

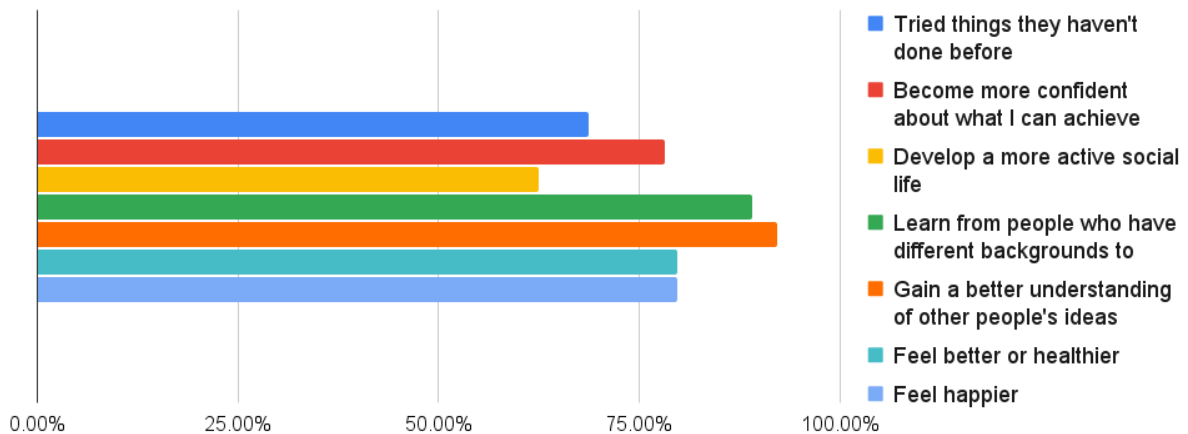


Personal & Social Impact

When asked how participating in *woman.life.song* had helped them, our volunteers reported the following positive impacts:

woman.life.song Volunteer Feedback

Sample size: 64



In addition:

- 34% said they decided to start some training or a college course
- 50% said it helped them go to an arts event or exhibition they wouldn't have gone to before
- 65% said they became involved in other community projects

Participant voices (as written):

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"I am not a naturally social person often suffering from anxiety and panic attacks. Being involved in this project has helped me enormously."

- Female, Black Caribbean, aged 52, B23

"It's great that it's a show that includes the people of Brum! It makes it 'ours!' and it's inspiring"

- Female, Black Caribbean, Disabled, Neurodivergent, age 27, B71

"It has been a collaborative and very welcoming experience. The diversity of Birmingham Opera reflects how Birmingham is."

- Male, White British, aged 30, B67

"This opera has allowed me to make wonderful friends and gave me the opportunity to do what I love! Singing! ...I think I have expanded socially after this experience"

- Female, Indian, age 18, CV8

"Wonderful piece of work and music - I hope to take part again soon... My ideas about the arts and opera have been life changing, thank you BOC."

- Male, White British, age 76, B30

7. "Evolve" – Career Pathways and Creative Skills development in the Region

We have re-invigorated our collaborations with Higher Education and Skills Training in the Region;

University of Birmingham (UoB)

- UoB Careers Network (including 2 paid internships, one of which is part of the "Creative Forward" programme) - A new Collaboration with University of Birmingham has enabled us to support curriculum enrichment for singers and students. We engaged a full-time intern on graduation for 6 months who has now gone on to LSO as an Emerging Artists' Co-ordinator. Richard Willacy has agreed to mentor a production researcher to scope projects for the Barber Opera 2026-2027.

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC)

- We collaborated with RBC by taking a paid placement student from the Applied Theatre course and were also able to employ undergraduate members of their Stage Management course
- RBC singers engaged as Assistant Chorus Mentors
- BOC Creative Producer, Diandra McCalla, delivered a seminar on the company's work and impact to the Year Two Applied Theatre students

Birmingham Ormiston Academy (BOA)

- We were able to engage BOA trainees as Assistant Stage Managers.

Schools and Colleges

- We ran 3 events in schools highlighting opera as a career and a workshop at BMET College for their Performing Arts students.

Job Centre

- We were present in Job Centres offering our participation programmes as a way of returning to work and developing skills.

Regional External Projects' Mentoring

- Richard Willacy continues to mentor/support at least one new initiative per year involving opera in the West Midlands region (in addition to the Barber Opera project above). Currently he is active in supporting an opera project in collaboration with The Belgrade, Coventry.

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The Volunteer Programme and skills development

Beyond immediate personal wellbeing and skills development 23% of New Year volunteers said they decided to start some training or a college course, and 34% of woman.life.song volunteers.

Two Widows- international co-production 2024

In 2023 we hosted the European Opera Directing Prize, co-organised by Camerata Nuova and Opera Europa. The €25,000 prize was awarded to stage director Lorenzo Ponte, choreographer Livia Bartolucci, set designer Alice Benazzi, costume designer Giulia Rossena and LX Designer Emanuele Agliati.

In May/June 2024. The team worked in Birmingham to develop the work preparing it for both Birmingham scratch performance and a world premiere in Litomyšl, Smetana's home town volunteers all over 70 years old. The Czech premiere featured Smetana's home town with British Singers, Italian European Opera Directing Prize team, a crack piano quintet (including Skampa Quartet (CZ)) and UK-CZ conductor Lada Valešová making her CZ debut.

It was the first time since 2001 that Birmingham Opera Company mounted a volunteer-driven production in English outside the UK. Highly successful, it was supported internationally by Camerata Nuova (Wiesbaden), Smetana 200 Festival and the Czech Ministry of Culture.

Digital activity – two full length film versions and more on the way

Short films of the Brum Commissions premiered online in January 2025, with full length film versions of Tippett's *New Year* and the Birmingham Judith Weir's *woman.life.song* currently being edited.

Latest news- creative tech in the hands of the future

We are a partner in the successful CreaTech AHRC bid 2025-2030 announced November 2024 and as such our digital offer will expand.

Building on our previous digital training initiatives we aim to place the technology in pursuit of making work and to substantially grow our work 16-25 year olds in this arena as creators and makers.

Additional Sector Collaboration and Leadership

Birmingham Opera Company hosted the UK Opera Companies face to face meeting to explore future advocacy. Richard Willacy contributed to ENO's "Opera, communities and connection" conference and The Space's Digital Network Talks, sits on the West Midlands' CreaTech Industry Advisory Board, Royal Philharmonic Society Award Jury member.

Diandra McCalla was also Royal Philharmonic Society Award Jury member.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Company had incoming resources of £823,886 (2024: restated £1,069,995) and total funds at 30 June 2025 of £593,481 (2024: restated £509,703). The principal funding source of the charity is Arts Council England, and full details of funding are disclosed in notes 3, 13 and 14 of the financial statements.

RESERVES POLICY

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of resources and to cover unplanned emergencies. The Trustees consider that the ideal minimum level of unrestricted reserves is £75,000, and the ideal level is £150,000 with additional reserves designated as explained overleaf.

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The actual unrestricted reserves are £558,631 (2024: £473,753) of which £408,631 (2024: £323,753) are designated by the Trustees for future production projects. These are subject to a prior year restatement as detailed in Note 19.

Restricted funds are £34,850 (2024: £35,950).

GOING CONCERN

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern with strict controls on spend and analysis of present risk and future scenario planning. With a commitment to adapt and live within our means, we did not apply for or receive any additional government funds such as Cultural Recovery Funds, nor did we furlough staff during Covid.

We remain a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England. This is a significant expression of confidence in the Company to deliver the highest quality work that engages people from the city's many different communities and reflects the city's diversity. Arts Council England funding has been secured going forwards and the grant has been extended.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to provide them with regular reports so that the necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks.

DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES

The directors (who are also the trustees of the charity for the purposes of charity law) are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The directors are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the surplus or deficit for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records which are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the directors are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the directors have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as directors in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditor is aware of that information.

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For the year ended 30th June 2025, the charitable company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of the financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Board on 29th April 2026 and signed on its order by


Richard Willacy (Apr 29, 2026 18:38:57 GMT+1)

Richard Willacy
Trustee and Company Secretary

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Birmingham Opera Company (the 'charity') for the year ended 30th June 2025 which comprise Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as at 30th June 2025 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the "Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements" section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other matter

Without qualifying our opinion, we draw attention to the accounting policies to the financial statements in note 2a and the fact that the comparative information in the accounts was unaudited as the entity was entitled to exemption from an audit.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

Responsibilities of Directors

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below. Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. Based on our understanding of the charity and its sector, we considered that non-compliance with the following laws and regulations Charities Act 2011 the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice, UK tax legislation, pensions legislation and employment regulation and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements.

To help us identify instances of non-compliance with these laws and regulations, and in identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect to non-compliance, our procedures included, but were not limited to:

- Inquiring of management and, where appropriate, those charged with governance, as to whether the company is in compliance with laws and regulations, and discussing their policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations;
- Inspecting correspondence, if any, with relevant licensing or regulatory authorities;
- Communicating identified laws and regulations to the engagement team and remaining alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout our audit; and
- Considering the risk of acts by the charity which were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the preparation of the financial statements, such as such as Charities Act 2011, the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice, UK tax legislation and pensions legislation.

In addition, we evaluated the trustees' and management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements, including the risk of management override of controls, and determined that the principal risks related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance, management bias through judgements and assumptions in significant accounting estimates, in particular in relation to the treatment of revenue recognition (which we pinpointed to the cut-off assertion) and significant one-off or unusual transactions.

Our audit procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to:

- Making enquiries of the trustees and management on whether they had knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- Gaining an understanding of the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud;
- Discussing amongst the engagement team the risks of fraud; and
- Addressing the risks of fraud through management override of controls by performing journal entry testing.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities including fraud rests with management. As with any audit, there remained a risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal controls.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the charity's members as a body in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's members as a body for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Michael Speight

Michael Speight (Apr 30, 2026 09:30:16 GMT+1)

Michael Speight (Senior Statutory Auditor) for and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
Three Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3AX

30/04/2026

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)
(A Company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	Unrestricted			2025	Restated General £	Unrestricted Restated		2024 Restated Total £
		General £	Designated £	Restricted £	Total £		Designated £	Restricted £	
Income from:									
Donations & grants	3	624,136	-	43,350	667,486	650,778	-	65,993	716,771
Other income	4	156,400	-	-	156,400	353,224	-	-	353,224
Total income		780,536	-	43,350	823,886	1,004,002	-	65,993	1,069,995
Expenditure on:									
Fundraising		29,484	-	-	29,484	28,768	-	-	28,768
Performances		323,525	323,753	44,450	691,728	632,240	576,106	61,043	1,269,389
Other costs		28,896	-	-	28,896	19,241	-	-	19,241
Total expenditure	5	381,905	323,753	44,450	750,108	680,249	576,106	61,043	1,317,398
Gain on revaluation of intangible assets	9	10,000	-	-	10,000	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		408,631	(323,753)	(1,100)	83,778	323,753	(576,106)	4,950	(247,402)
Transfer between funds		(408,631)	408,631	-	-	(323,753)	323,753	-	-
Fund balance brought forward 1 July 2024		150,000	323,753	35,950	509,703	150,000	576,106	31,000	757,106
Fund balance carried forward 30 June 2025		150,000	408,631	34,850	593,481	150,000	323,753	35,950	509,703

The charity's income and expenditure all relate to continuing operations.
All surpluses and deficits recognised in the period are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)

BALANCE SHEET

30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025		Restated 2024	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible	8		681		1,160
Intangible	9		50,000		40,000
			<u>50,681</u>		<u>41,160</u>
Current assets					
Stock	10	5,200		5,200	
Debtors	11	481,209		672,369	
Cash at bank and in hand		96,045		428,582	
			<u>582,454</u>		<u>1,106,151</u>
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(39,654)</u>		<u>(637,608)</u>	
Net current assets			542,800		468,543
Total assets less total liabilities			<u>593,481</u>		<u>509,703</u>
The funds of the charity:					
Unrestricted funds					
General	13		150,000		150,000
Designated	13		408,631		323,753
Restricted funds	14		<u>34,850</u>		<u>35,950</u>
Total Charity Funds	15		<u>593,481</u>		<u>509,703</u>

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 29th April 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

N.P.

Nicholas Payne (Apr 29, 2026 18:50:01 GMT+1)

Nicholas Payne - Chair

The notes on pages 35 to 46 form part of these financial statements.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	Note	2025 £	Restated 2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	20	(332,537)	20,678
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(332,537)	20,678
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		428,582	407,904
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward		<u>96,045</u>	<u>428,582</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

1. COMPANY STATUS

The Company is limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, and does not have a share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 2. The liability of members is limited and shall not exceed £1. Any surplus on winding up is to be donated to a charity whose objects are of a similar nature. The Company has taken advantage of section 30(5) of the Companies Act 2006 and deleted the word "Limited" from its name.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a. Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102) and the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102, and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements also comply in all material respects with applicable accounting standards. They are drawn up under the historical cost accounting rules as modified for the revaluation of intangible fixed assets. All operations are classed as continuing and no operations have been acquired during the current or previous year.

The comparative information in the financial statements is unaudited as the Company was entitled to exemption from audit in the prior year.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Company will continue to operate. The validity of this assumption is dependent upon the continuance of support from the Company's key grant funders (Arts Council England) and in response to the progress made by the Company in pursuing a viable budget including the obtaining of further grants and other funds. The Company's current business plan shows that the Company, with continued focus on income diversification and restructure, will be able to operate in the foreseeable future. The going concern assessment concludes that there are no material uncertainties. Based on this understanding, the directors believe that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

b. Income

Donations and sponsorship are accounted for on a cash received basis. Grants receivable are recognised in relation to the year and production cycle to which the grants relate.

Performance rights represent amounts received in respect of translations, arrangements or other such items sold to other performing groups. Income is only recognised on the completion of a sale. Due to the uncertainty of subsequent sales, expenditure in obtaining such items including expenditure on sets, properties, orchestrations and costumes is written off as incurred and is not carried forward in the Balance Sheet.

Covenanted donations are taken to income on a receivable basis, provision for deferred income being established for amounts received in advance of the covenanted date of payment.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

Tax refunds are recognised when the relevant expenditure has been incurred and the refund is considered probable.

c. Fund accounting

The charity maintains various types of unrestricted funds as follows:

Designated funds represent amounts that have been put aside out of unrestricted funds at the discretion of the Trustees for particular projects. The designation is for administrative purposes only and does not legally restrict the Trustees discretion to apply the fund.

General unrestricted funds represent unrestricted income, which is expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the objectives of the charity. Such funds may be held in order to finance both working capital and capital investment.

Where the charity has restricted funds these are to be used for the purpose as specified by the provider of the income.

d. Expenditure

All items of expenditure are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Governance costs are the costs of governance arrangements relating to the general running of the charity.

e. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Equipment is stated at cost and depreciated on a straight line basis over five years. Sets and props are depreciated on a straight line basis over two years where considered appropriate. Only items greater than £1,000 are capitalised.

f. Intangible Fixed Assets

Intangible fixed assets comprise values ascribed to the stock of scores commissioned by the Company and which will provide royalty and performance income over many years in the future. These values are based on the Trustees' assessments of royalties etc. expected supported by a comparative view of the transaction values of similar properties within the publishing industry. The carrying value of the assets is not subject to annual amortisation but is reviewed annually for any permanent diminution in carrying value.

g. Taxation

Any surplus of the Company income over its expenditure is applied solely for the purposes of the charity and its activities are the primary purpose of the charity. Under the provisions of Section 505, Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 the Company is exempt from liability to taxation.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

h. Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions in the Statement of financial activities are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the closing rates at the balance sheet date and the exchange differences are included in the statement of financial activity.

i. Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the lease term.

j. Stock Valuation

The Wardrobe stock is stated at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

k. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

l. Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

Intangible assets

The intellectual property rights of scores have been valued on the basis of the net income derived from royalties based on actual historic figures for the previous 5 years. An informed view has been taken as to an appropriate rate of return, with income forecast into perpetuity, informed by historic trends, known plans and any other pertinent external factors. A discount rate of 7.5% is considered appropriate and has been used for the calculations.

Theatre tax relief (TTR) accrued income

Whilst noting that each production process differs in scale and development, an estimate has been made for the theatre tax relief that will be received post year end based on the expenditure during the period. This estimate has been informed by historic claims made and details regarding the relevant performances during the period.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY**Notes to the Financial Statements****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025****3. DONATIONS AND GRANTS**

The Company gratefully acknowledges the support given by the following during the course of the year:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Grants received from:		
Arts Council England	586,433	586,433
Birmingham City Council	11,839	27,623
Edgar E Lawley Foundation	2,000	-
George Fentham Birmingham Charity	-	2,500
Individuals sponsors and donors	15,864	36,722
Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation UK	10,350	-
Laidlaw Opera Trust	10,000	-
PRS Foundation	4,500	4,500
Smetanova Litomyšl o.p.s.	-	31,543
Souter Charitable Trust	1,500	-
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	8,000	8,000
The Cole Charitable Trust	-	1,200
The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Charitable Trust	3,000	-
The Garrick Trust	5,000	-
The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation	-	10,000
The Roger & Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	2,000	2,000
The Saintbury Trust	5,000	5,000
The Samuel Gardner Memorial Trust	-	1,250
The Thriplow Charitable Trust	2,000	-
	<u>667,486</u>	<u>716,771</u>

4. OTHER INCOME

	2025	Restated
	£	2024
		£
Theatre tax credits	134,476	333,129
Box office income, music library hire and other	<u>21,924</u>	<u>20,095</u>
	<u>156,400</u>	<u>353,224</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

5. EXPENDITURE

	2025	2024
	£	£
Fundraising costs	29,484	28,768
Other salary costs	113,848	164,698
Other production costs	577,880	1,104,691
Governance	<u>28,896</u>	<u>19,241</u>
	<u>750,108</u>	<u>1,317,398</u>

6. NET RESOURCES EXPENDED FOR THE YEAR

Net resources expended for the year are stated after charging:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amount paid to Auditor/Independent Examiner		
- Audit fee	19,500	-
- Accounts Preparation and IE (2024)	2,820	3,100
- Tax	8,184	10,500
Lease payments	640	7,125
Depreciation	<u>479</u>	<u>479</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

7. EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Staff costs	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	124,185	164,553
Social security	9,407	17,923
Pension cost	<u>5,720</u>	<u>7,687</u>
	<u>139,312</u>	<u>190,163</u>
	Number	Number
Average number of employees (excluding trustees) employed during the year	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>

There was one employee (2024: one) with emoluments in excess of £60,000 per annum in the current year, within the bracket of £60,000 to £70,000.

One Trustee, R Willacy, was employed by the charity during the year and has been paid remuneration in the banding of £65,000 - £70,000 (2024 - £65,000 - £70,000) in their capacity as an employee, with pension contributions paid by the charity in the banding of £0 - £5,000 (2024 - £0 - £5,000). This is entirely in relation to their role as an employee and not as a Trustee of the charity, and is paid under the legal authority of approval of the Charity Commission.

Trustees have indemnity insurance with a Policy Aggregate Limit of £500,000, at a cost of £358 (2024: £500,000, at a cost of £358).

Key management personnel include those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the charity. In the charity, key management personnel comprise the General Director, the General Manager and the Creative Producer.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel include salaries of £114,393, employer National Insurance contributions of £13,579 and employer pension contributions of £5,720.

The charity is supported by a number of volunteers who give their time freely and without remuneration. The contribution made by volunteers is not reflected in the financial statements as no reliable measure of value can be attributed to their contribution.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Equipment £
Cost	
At 1 July 2024	22,637
Additions	-
Disposals	-
At 30 June 2025	22,637
	22,637
Accumulated Depreciation	
At 1 July 2024	21,477
Charge for the period	479
On disposals	-
At 30 June 2025	21,956
	21,956
Net book value	
At 30 June 2025	681
	681
At 30 June 2024	1,160
	1,160

9. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	2025 £	2024 £
Valuation of intellectual property rights of scores, future royalties etc. b/f (see note 2f)	40,000	40,000
Revaluation in the year	10,000	-
	50,000	40,000

The Trustees have valued the intellectual property rights over scores commissioned by the Company following advice obtained from the music publishing industry.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

10. STOCKS

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wardrobe stock	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>
	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>

11. DEBTORS

	2025	Restated
	£	2024
		£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	220	640
VAT debtor	-	85,943
Prepayments and accrued income	480,707	585,002
Other debtors	282	784
	<u>481,209</u>	<u>672,369</u>

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade creditors	11,008	412,281
Other tax and social security	4,635	5,462
Accruals and other creditors	24,011	10,667
Deferred grant income	-	209,198
	<u>39,654</u>	<u>637,608</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

13. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	General Reserves	Designated Reserves	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward (restated)	150,000	323,753	473,753	726,106
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	408,631	(323,753)	84,878	(452,060)
Transfer between funds	(408,631)	408,631	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carried forward	150,000	408,631	558,631	274,046
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Designated funds relate to funds intended for future initiatives, projects and performances. The transfer between funds is to keep a consistent level of unrestricted funds, designating the remaining funds.

14. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£
Edward and Dorothy Charitable Trust	-	3,000	-	3,000
Edgar E Lawley Foundation	-	2,000	-	2,000
Garrick Trust	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
George Fentham Birmingham Charity	2,500	-	(2,500)	-
Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation UK	-	10,350	-	10,350
PRS Foundation	-	4,500	(4,500)	-
Souter Charitable Trust	-	1,500	-	1,500
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	8,000	8,000	(8,000)	8,000
The Cole Charitable Trust	1,200	-	(1,200)	-
The Eveson Trust	5,000	-	(5,000)	-
The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation	11,000	-	(10,000)	1,000
The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	2,000	2,000	(2,000)	2,000
The Saintbury Trust	5,000	5,000	(5,000)	5,000
The Samuel Gardner Memorial Trust	1,250	-	(1,250)	-
The Thriplow Charitable Trust	-	2,000	-	2,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	35,950	43,350	44,450	34,850
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

All restricted funds are for emerging artists and participation.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

15. ANALYSIS OF ASSETS AS AT 30 JUNE 2025

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible and intangible fixed assets	50,681	-	50,681
Current assets	547,604	34,850	582,454
Current liabilities	(39,654)	-	(39,654)
Total net assets	<u>558,631</u>	<u>34,850</u>	<u>593,481</u>

16. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

As at 30 June 2025 the Company had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Other 2025 £	2024 £
Less than 1 year	600	-
1 – 2 years	1,200	-
2 – 5 years	600	-
	<u>2,400</u>	<u>-</u>

17. TRUSTEE EXPENSES

There are no Trustee expenses that require disclosure in either year.

18. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year, the charity received a grant of £10,350 (2024: £Nil) from Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation UK, a registered charity with a common Trustee, and accordingly the transaction is considered a related party transaction.

The grant was received on normal charitable terms and was used solely in furtherance of the charitable objectives of the charity. The trustee concerned took no part in the discussions or decision-making relating to the award of the grant. There were no amounts outstanding at the year end in respect of this grant.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

19. PRIOR YEAR ADJUSTMENT

During the year following the receipt of Theatre Tax Relief (TTR) relating to the 2024 financial year, the directors identified that Theatre Tax Relief (TTR) accrued income recognised at the 2024 reporting date did not appropriately reflect the information available at that time and was materially understated. Accordingly, this has been treated as a prior period restatement in accordance with FRS 102.

As a result, other income and accrued income have increased by £199,707. Opening designated funds at the start of the current year has increased by £199,707 as the result of the additional surplus generated from the adjustment being transferred to the designated reserve in line with management's reserve policy.

20 RECONCILIATION OF NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS TO NET CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2025	Restated 2024
	£	£
Net income/(expenditure) for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	83,778	(247,402)
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation	479	479
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	191,160	(327,128)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(597,954)	594,729
(Gain) on revaluation of intangible assets	(10,000)	-
Net cash used in operating activities	(342,537)	20,678

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY

England & Wales - Charity number 291130

Accounts

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Registered number: 01850467
Registered charity number: 291130

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

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BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

Trustees and Directors:	Nicholas Payne (Chair) Tony Colville (resigned 4 October 2024) Katie Fulcher William Husselby OBE Amahra Spence (resigned 19 October 2023) Lauren Williams Justine Themen Richard Willacy Stephen Maddock (elected 4 October 2024)
Personnel:	General Director – Richard Willacy Music Director – Alpesh Chauhan OBE General Manager – Hannah Griffiths Creative Producer – Diandra McCalla
Associate Artists:	Vocal Coach – Jane Robinson Choral Directors- Mariana Rosas, Themba Mvula Casting Consultant – Sarah Playfair Projects Consultant – Sheelagh Barnard
	Chartered Management Accountant – Shohaib Shafiq ACMA, CGMA
Secretary:	Richard Willacy
Registered Office:	205 The Argent Centre 60 Frederick Street Birmingham B1 3HS
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank plc 36/38 New Street Birmingham B2 4LP
Independent Examiner:	David Hoose Forvis Mazars LLP First Floor Two Chamberlain Square Birmingham B3 3AX
Registered Charity Number:	291130

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees, who are also directors of the Company, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30th June 2024 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for the Directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

OVERVIEW

At the heart of the charity's objectives is the aim to bring the best quality opera to the broadest possible audience. To this end, we have built and continue to develop an extraordinary company of volunteer performers drawn from Birmingham's diverse population. They contribute their time, talent and creativity alongside some of the world's leading opera professionals to create truly memorable productions. In return, we enable fantastic training, skills and self-confidence as well as friendships and contacts between people whose paths may not otherwise cross. This is social inclusion and highest quality art in action.

Without the support of our funders and partners Birmingham Opera Company would not exist, so grateful thanks are due to Arts Council England, Birmingham City Council and a number of long- supporting and new Trusts, Foundations and donors.

Birmingham City Council

Support from public funds and civic funds from Birmingham City Council has been critical to the success of the Company. That support acknowledges the role that the Company plays in representing the city in the international opera arena and in enriching the lives of the people and communities of Birmingham

As we write in late 2024, such civic support is under threat and all regularly funded organisations have received a 50% cut 2023-24 and from April 2025, BCC's grant to us and other regularly funded organisations will be zero. We and other arts organisations will strive to work with BCC to look for ways in which BCC can support the cultural offer in the city.

Regional and National Partnerships

We are currently establishing evidence and partnerships which will bolster our sources of income and build resilience. In the current uncertain climate for funding, we are looking to diversify funding streams.

Arts Council England

In the current changing environment of public and civic funding, the Board continues to be appraised of and mitigate for foreseen risks. We were awarded continued National Portfolio Organisation status plus a 20% uplift in ACE funding for the period 2023-26. This additional funding is enabling us to develop a new strand of co-creation work, including a presence in currently underserved areas close to Birmingham. Arts Council England have recently announced that this NPO period will be extended to 2027. Additionally, Arts Council England have indicated that recognising inflationary pressures, outputs may be reduced by up to 15% in consultation with ACE.

International Partnerships

Similar to previous recent years we have taken up work in partnership – hosting the 2023 European Opera Prize supported by Camerata Nuova (Wiesbaden) with partners and significant in-kind support from partners Network Rail in the Research and Development phase. We acknowledge the financial support of the Czech Ministry of Culture.

Private Supporters

Trusts and Foundations

Birmingham Opera Company attracted support from 31 Trusts and Foundations in 2023 and 2024.

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Baron Davenport's Charity, Camerata Nuova, CB and HH Taylor 1984 Trust, Edgar E Lawley Foundation, Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust, Foyle Foundation, G J W Turner Trust, Hodge Foundation, Maria Bjornson Memorial Fund, PRS Foundation, Scops Arts Trust, Souter Charitable Trust, The Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust, The Cole Charitable Trust, The Eric W Vincent Trust Fund, The Eveson Trust, George Fentham Birmingham Charity, The Grantham Yorke Trust, The Grimmitt Trust, The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity, The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation, The Norton Foundation, The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust, The Saintbury Trust, The Samuel Gardner Memorial Trust, The Steel Charitable Trust, The W.E.D. Charitable Trust, Vaughan Williams Foundation, William A Cadbury Charitable Trust, 29th May Charitable Trust, George Cadbury Fund.

The Dreamers' Syndicate – supporting Michael Tippett's *New Year*

Alison and Jamie Justham | Benedict and Katharine Cadbury and the George Cadbury Fund | Claire Barchard, in memory of John Barchard | Jerry Spence | Norman Rosenthal | Sally Groves, in memory of Dennis Marks

Legacies

We would like to note in particular a generous legacy from the Estate of the Late Professor Matthew Rolf Olsen and the late Nicholas Molyneux who was a regular monthly supporter who left a generous bequest. The funds enable significant work with communities and artists.

Ticket income

Box Office income is historically low as much of our work is delivered free at the point of access. We operate the lowest possible ticket prices to promote access, with a maximum ticket price of £24.99. Many paying audience members pay significantly less than this (from £5). We have no "tiers" – there is no better "seat" whether you pay £24.99 or £5. With very few of our year-round beneficiaries in the more affluent sections of society, philanthropy from individuals and Trusts is vital to support the large majority of our beneficiaries who come from the most economically challenged sections of society.

Birmingham Opera Company – where we are now

On 17 July 2021, we sadly lost our Founder Artistic Director, Graham Vick, who was knighted only months earlier for services to music in the regions.

The Board and Executive, artists, volunteers, and community partners aim to ensure that our unique work continues to lead the way in what opera can be and is sustainable for future generations, to ensure that Birmingham Opera Company can continue to sing stories which speak to everyone; opera for a 21st century UK. Front and centre is our mission to make opera which represents the rich variety of cultures and experience in a socially and culturally diverse UK.

In the transition from being a founder-led company, our first tasks were to develop a company structure and to devise a bold, forward-looking strategy.

Opera in Birmingham and the West Midlands

As we write in December 2024, we are the only opera company fully based in Birmingham with a year-round programme in the Midlands. The Opera offer has been diminishing in the region for some time with touring companies visiting less frequently and potentially stopping in the near future. We see our role as striving to represent our city and region in developing an offer for those who live and work here.

We constantly review our work to ensure that it is direct and open to those who have not previously accessed publicly funded culture and especially opera.

Birmingham is at a critical juncture with loss of funding to Culture from the city. We aim to find ways to grow the work of Birmingham Opera Company. To do this will require additional private and public funding and income streams. As we develop a new model for growth we will also look to economic benefit in terms of

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inward investment and employment opportunities for regionally based artists, producers and other freelancers and companies.

Current Structure

Richard Willacy (Associate Director since 2000, on retainer as lead for participation and digital since 2005, Associate Artistic Director from 2008-14, Executive Producer of *Mittwoch aus Licht* for London 2012, Executive Director 2014-21) was appointed General Director with overall responsibility for artistic and financial leadership and elected to the Board as a Trustee on 1 July 2022 after approval from the Charity Commission sought earlier in the year.

Birmingham born Alpesh Chauhan OBE remained as Music Director (appointed 2020), primarily conducting *New Year* with the CBSO, Hannah Griffiths as General Manager, Charlotte Titcombe as Development Co-ordinator, (leaving October 2023). Midlands grown Diandra McCalla remained in the newly created role (November 2022), Creative Producer. Hannah Griffiths has since left to work with Opera Europa as an Associate Director, Development and Collaborations and will maintain a relationship as a BOC Board member.

Around this core structure we employ artistic and production freelancers. The Board would like to express their gratitude to Sheelagh Barnard who has been Projects Director since 2002 and who stepped aside in 2024 having found and inducted a new and experienced production manager.

With an expanded programme we have also been able to engage a greater number and variety of emerging freelance artists.

In consultation with the Board we have created an holistic programme which forges a grassroots presence with an open offer for all to develop their creative capacity in a dynamic shared space.

In consultation with the Board in 2023-26 we seek to explore and develop the following key areas:

- Partnership - open up and develop the apparatus, knowledge and resources to mutual benefit of the partners in Opera, Arts, Education and Social endeavour.
- Presence - local with year-round created and programmed work. National and international through incremental partnerships. Increased and programmed communications.
- Participation - find new ways for participants to take part by creating new approaches to delivery and co-creation.
- Productivity - maximise productivity to deliver quantifiable outputs with clear intention and application.
- Personnel - development of full-time staff, Board, freelance artists and teams.

The Board recognise their role in ensuring that the mission of the Charity is well met by them and the Executive through clear targets and reporting internally and externally to stakeholders. Quarterly review of all targets at Board level and greater proximity to the work by Board members will be the cornerstone of the next phase of work.

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CORE FOCUS

World Class Opera in Birmingham

Birmingham Opera Company draws internationally renowned and emerging artists to the region, gaining national and international recognition for the city and the cultural offer in the region.

Participatory training as a tool to achieve artistically at the highest level

We believe that participatory training in partnership with volunteers is essential to the practice and training of the highest calibre artists and will be at the heart of the art form's future.

Participation as a tool to develop a new generation of diverse UK artists

Conservatoires and training organisations all agree that fewer and fewer socially and ethnically diverse British artists are coming through their doors. We are growing a new generation of diverse, socially responsible singers, directors, designers and choreographers through our work.

Co-Creation as a rewarding method for participants and artists and to access new audiences

With artists and art revitalised by participatory work, we will continue to re-invigorate the genre and the audience.

Leading the way

Birmingham Opera Company's intergenerational and intercultural practice was ahead of the curve in the first year of existence. Birmingham Opera Company's "participatory" model won the Royal Philharmonic Society Award (RPS) for New Audience Development in 2001 and again in 2007, the only company to win it twice in that decade.

In the UK, we have achieved the highest accolade in opera, the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre, firstly in 2012 for *Mittwoch aus Licht* and again in 2019 for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. We were nominated for the South Bank Show Sky Arts Award for Best Opera 2015 and 2020.

Globally we are making a mark, having been awarded the International Opera Award 2015 for Best Production against stiff international competition from Metropolitan Opera New York, Zurich Opera, Dutch National Opera, Festival d'Aix and English National Opera. At the International Opera Awards 2016, Birmingham Opera Company was nominated for the Accessibility Award and Rediscovered Work Award and were winners of both the FEDORA Education Prize 2020 and the International Opera Award for Outreach and Education 2021.

Birmingham Opera Company is the only company to have received both the RPS Award for Opera and Music Theatre and the International Opera Award for Best Production. It is also the only participatory company to receive either award, let alone both.

Additionally, Birmingham Opera Company's model has been adopted in Europe and beyond in collaborations with external producers who pay full costs of the work in their respective cities. International co-productions have taken place in Macerata (Italy), Valencia (Spain) and Poznań (Poland). Our diverse artists and audiences make our work in Birmingham a unique model for the future of opera.

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As 2019 Winner of the **Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre** for the ground-breaking *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* the judges said: "*Another sensational production from Birmingham Opera Company embracing and embedding its community in world-class work. This is the kind of thing we all wish we were doing – a model to us all in being ambitious and truly going for it. It delivers the pure drama and emotional punch of opera without gimmicks – the audience feels right inside it, and it proves how resonant, inclusive and exciting opera is.*"

With Covid in full thrust we were listed in the Top Ten Musical Pivots by Musical America in 2020-21.

Sadly, founder Graham Vick passed away in 2021 and Richard Willacy picked up *RhineGold* as director. In 2022 we were finalists in *Sky Arts South Bank Show Awards for RhineGold* and recognising the contribution to the opera ecology over decades, The Critics' Circle awarded BOC the Outstanding Achievement in Opera Award in recognition of the work of Graham Vick.

In 2023-24, we were European Opera-directing Prize hosts in collaboration with Smetana 200 in the Czech Republic and Lviv National Opera in Ukraine.

In Summer 2024 our production of Michael Tippett's New Year was described as "a major operatic re-discovery" having remained unperformed since its first outings in 1989-90.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Laws applicable to charitable companies in England and Wales require the Trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Company is limited by guarantee and therefore does not have a share capital. The liability of members is limited, and details of their guarantee are detailed in the notes to the accounts. The Company is also registered as a charity.

The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 24th September 1984, amended 19th July 2012.

Overall responsibility for the Company's activities is vested in the Board, whose members also serve as the charity's Trustees. All of the Trustees are in non-executive positions.

The Trustees are appointed at the Company's Annual General Meeting; casual vacancies are filled by appointment agreed by the Board.

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Potential Trustees are invited to an initial interview with the Chair and/or the General Director. The appointment of a new Trustee must be approved at a full meeting of the current Trustees. Trustees receive an induction pack with information about the Company and a detailed written guide to their responsibilities as a Trustee. The Chair is initially responsible with the General Director for the induction and training of a new Trustee.

The day-to-day management of the Company is delegated to the General Director who is expected to report to the Trustees at a minimum of four times each year, and more if required. These meetings monitor the activities of the Company, the finances of the Company, the risk assessments and future planning to achieve the aims of the charity. Officers of our two major funders, Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council, are invited to attend all Trustee meetings.

OBJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The principal activity of the Company is to encourage and promote the advancement of learning and in particular the art and science of music by the production, arrangement, promotion and commissioning of opera under the name of Birmingham Opera Company and other musical performances and concerts, and to foster interest in such operas, concerts and musical performances by such means as may from time to time be considered appropriate by the Company.

Birmingham Opera Company aims to bring the best quality opera to the broadest possible audience. Working outside the norms of most opera companies, it is dedicated to mounting productions away from existing opera houses and theatres and to presenting opera in unusual places at affordable prices. It has a policy of encouraging local people to take part as volunteer performers alongside the professional team of singers, players and technicians as well as attend the performances. A two-way process creating the opportunity for more people to be a part of opera, whilst enriching Birmingham Opera Company's work with a wealth of human experience. Birmingham Opera Company combines the highest artistic standards with an open invitation to the people of the city to join in and explore this deeply transformative art form.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

In shaping our objectives and planning the programme, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance on public benefit and fee charging. Birmingham Opera Company relies on grants and income from fees and charges to cover its operating costs. In setting the level of fees, charges and concessions, the Trustees give careful consideration to the accessibility of the performance space for those on low incomes.

The strategies employed to achieve the charity's aims and objectives are to:

- Offer opportunities for a broad range of people to get involved in expressive arts activities such as singing, acting, dancing and writing.
- Present opera performances for the enjoyment and education of our local community and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for diverse professional artists to develop their skills and artistry.
- Target socially excluded communities to help build bridges to mainstream arts provision available to them but not extensively used.
- Challenge the norms of the opera sector and enrich the artform by employing bold approaches to creating ambitious work.

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To achieve this strategy, we have a programme of targeted events delivered at grass roots level within the underrepresented communities we want to engage. We support and train people who elect to become part of our full-scale productions and make sure that confidence levels rise to match the level of performance we are internationally renowned for. We also support people to progress and pursue other opportunities to take part in arts activities in the city or to pursue further study in either formal or informal settings.

Since its inception, Birmingham Opera Company has shown a unique commitment to offering local people the opportunity to engage with opera first hand and, crucially, to creating work that is enriched by the wealth of human experience that exists among the people of Birmingham. We know that to be embedded in the life of our city, we need to sustain our curiosity about the people who live, work and study here, what their lives are like, and how to build meaningful relationships with them.

In the thirty years of work here, Birmingham itself has become home to even greater ethnic, economic, cultural and social diversity. We aim to serve the broadest possible range of peoples, many underserved by publicly funded art and new to opera. Birmingham gives us such an opportunity to do so.

Key information about Birmingham

Wealth	43% of Birmingham's population live in IMD1 areas – neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived areas in England (Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019 statistical release). 22% of Birmingham's population are in income deprivation. Birmingham is ranked second among English Core Cities for income deprivation.
Education	Birmingham has the highest share of people with no qualifications whatsoever of any UK city. That share is twice the GB average: 8% on average, 16% in Birmingham (Centre for Cities, 2018).
Ethnicity	Birmingham is the most diverse city in England, with a population as follows (2021 census): Asian/Asian British 31.0% Black/Black British 11.0% Mixed 4.8% Other ethnic group 4.5% White 48.6%
Age	Birmingham is the youngest city in Europe. Nearly 40% of the population is under 25 years old (Census 2021).

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We also know that the “wealthiest, better educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the population forms the most culturally active segment of all” in England, in relation to publicly funded culture (Warwick Commission, 2015). Birmingham Opera Company has a long and successful history of cultivating approaches that enable and celebrate diverse communities consuming, participating in and contributing to the Company’s work. For example:

Wealth	Most of Birmingham Opera Company’s work is free at the point of access Tickets to productions are highly subsidised Much of Birmingham Opera Company’s work takes place in IMD1 and IMD2 areas Volunteers are reimbursed for travel expenses
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Free, in-depth training to any Brummie who wishes to volunteer with the Company- Taster sessions enable people to gain confidence and get to know the Company (as well as continually informing the Company’s approach)- Training caters for a range of learning styles and is fully accessible to people with no previous experience in the performing arts
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Strong track record in representing the population of Birmingham in casting and the wider workforce- Development initiatives for diverse artists and workforce across a range of disciplines, feeding the talent pipeline
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bespoke initiatives for 16–25-year-olds (e.g. Voices of the Future, fast-track rehearsal process)

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Programme, reach and impact

Birmingham Opera Company delivers a holistic programme of multi-scale work: grassroots engagement activities, productions, training for volunteer performers, artist development. These are commitments that co-exist, overlap and enrich one another.

As detailed elsewhere, our offer sits in an otherwise regionally diminishing opera offer for a **city of one million residents** and in a **region of three million residents**.

Since 2023 **we have expanded our reach both artistically and geographically with a mission to demonstrate need and opportunity** in this challenging environment.

We especially work hard to engage demographics and locations who are otherwise unlikely to be able to access publicly or privately funded opera.

"An army of Brummies are the backbone of a promenade production." Neil Fisher The Times July 2024

Our programme in 2023-24:

- 1. Four Hubs** (p.12)- our year-round Birmingham programme of events and performances;
- 2. Sandwell Creates** (p14)- a new geographical area and co-creation strand starting from scratch to create new work;
- 3. The Opera Lab** (p15)- a place for artists and participants to engage, test and develop work;
- 4. Brum Commissions** (p15)- a new commission series for emerging artists to develop their craft;
- 5. New Production-** Bedřich Smetana's *Two Widows* (p16);
- 6. New Production-** Michael Tippett's *New Year* (p18);
- 7. Evolve-** Creative Skills in the region (p23)- whilst all our work offers opportunity to grow creatively and professionally, we collaborate with the educational sector and others to offer career opportunities and awareness.
- 8. Digital** (p24) – Two full length film versions released and more on the way.

Ways of understanding our work and impact

One way we try to understand who our work is engaging is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). IMD is a scale that rates deprivation in England in deciles, from 1 (the 10% most deprived geographical areas) to 10 (the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods). Various domains of deprivation are considered and weighted, such as income, employment, education and health.

- For example in the Four Hubs Programme below- If we take IMD profile of venues and events (rather than participants), we see for Four Hubs:
 - 66% venues are in IMD1-2 areas

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The overall picture

We strive for a truly diverse model. Going forward we will continue to direct our resources and efforts to welcome people that opera and publicly funded culture is typically less successful in engaging, including people of the Global Majority, young people, people from lower IMD deciles. Each year, we disaggregate data according to the different ways in which we invite people to engage with Birmingham Opera Company. We do this with a view to understanding how we can best enable the broadest range of people to participate in our work right across the board.

Diversity of workforce

Birmingham Opera Company is still the only opera organisation delivering a truly diverse model at the centre of its work in the UK and Europe. Once again, in line with our “Outstanding” rating in ACE’s Creative Case for Diversity, in 2023-24 we engaged artists and freelance staff in all roles with a resolute commitment to representing the peoples of Birmingham.

Reaching Out – making Opera *accessible* and *available* to all

As detailed above, throughout the year we work with over 80 freelance artists and over 50 partners, performing and engaging with the peoples of Birmingham and Sandwell, free at the point of access. This work creates the foundations by which our productions are underpinned. The productions for which we are renowned are inseparable from such engagement.

Local Partners- each year we partner with organisations which host us

1000 Trades | Acocks Green Library | Birmingham Hippodrome | Birmingham Migration Forum | Birmingham New Street Station | Birmingham REP | Black Country Touring | BMET Sutton College | British Red Cross Birmingham | Causeway Green Primary School | Celebrating Sanctuary | Eastside Projects | Erdington Arts Forum | Erdington Library | GAP Entertainment Studios | Girlguiding Birmingham | Handsworth Library | Jewellery Quarter BID | Journey LGBT+ Asylum Group | Let’s Chat Community Hub | Lion Farm Action Centre | MAC Birmingham | Multistory | Network Rail | Nicholson School of Dance | Northfield Arts Forum | Northfield Community Partnership | Northfield Library | Oddingley Hall | OPUS | Powered By Can | Radio Stall Dreaming | Restore | Royal Birmingham Conservatoire | Royal Orthopaedic Hospital | Sandwell College | Sandwell Music and Arts Service | Shard End Library | South and City College | St Barnabus Church | St Michael and the Holy Angels | Stan’s Cafe | One Stop Shopping Centre | The Birch Network | The Choir with No Name | The Crescent Theatre | The Prince’s Trust | The Printmakers Arms | Waste Paper Opera | West Bromwich BID | West Bromwich Indoor Markets

The result- a powerhouse for socially engaged opera at the highest level.

Birmingham Opera Company delivered three substantial volunteer driven-performance projects in 2023-24: Brum Commissions’ 4 *Notes to The City* and *Leonard*, Bedřich Smetana’s *Two Widows* and the majority of the production process for Michael Tippett’s *New Year* as well as space for R&D “The Opera Lab” for artists and community to test and develop ideas. All involved casts of professional artists and volunteers, and across these projects there were significant programmes of volunteer training for performance and opportunities to engage with – and shape new work in new ways with multiple creative teams.

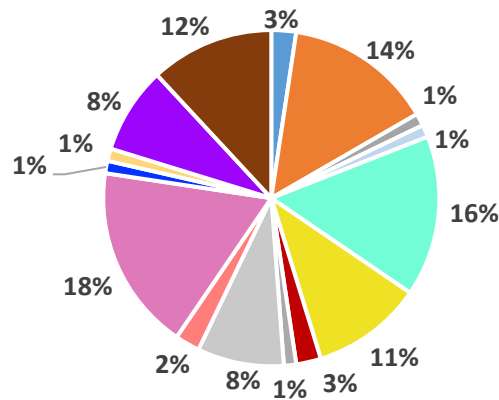
1. Four Hubs- year-round programme

From July 2023 to June 2024, we made **17,138 engagements** with participants, volunteers, and audiences, through a range of free targeted events and activities in collaboration with community organisations across the city. All activities in the year-round programme were free at the point of access for all participants.

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Ethnic Diversity of Four Hubs Participants
(Sample Size= 84)



- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ■ Asian/ Asian British Indian | ■ Asian/ Asian British Pakistani | ■ Asian/ Asian British Bangladeshi |
| ■ Any other Asian background | ■ Black/Black British African | ■ Black/Black British Caribbean |
| ■ Any other Black background | ■ White and Black Caribbean | ■ White and Asian |
| ■ Any other Mixed Background | ■ White British | ■ White Irish |
| ■ Any other white background | ■ Arab | ■ Rather Not Say |

Free targeted events and activities :

We delivered **126 free targeted events and activities** across our Four Hubs in Birmingham. Two of the hubs are geographical (Northfield and Erdington) and two of the hubs are in the interest of community groups (Young People and Newly arrived/ Asylum seekers).

All activities were free at the point of access:

60 x Small-group sessions:

- 1211 local people of all ages and backgrounds took part in small-group sessions in their communities, featuring a live performance and/or participatory event lasting 1-2.5 hours each, exploring music, opera, and performance.
- Participants worked closely with BOC's wide team of lead professional artist mentors (singers, directors, facilitators), including conductor Mariana Rosas (recently appointed Chorus Director of London Symphony Chorus), baritone Themba Mvula, soprano Gweneth Ann-Rand and other freelance artists.

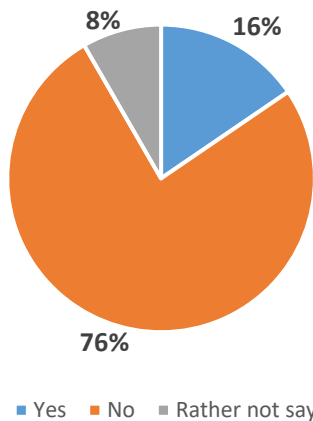
66 x Performances:

- 55 pop-up performances including at Kings Norton Beach, Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, Jewellery Quarter Festival and New Street station concourse
- 14731 people in public free performances with professional artists on their doorstep
- 11 further intimate performances engaged 1196 people in places including Family Fun Holiday Club, Northfield Choir, Acocks Green Library, Oddingley Hall and Shard End Library.

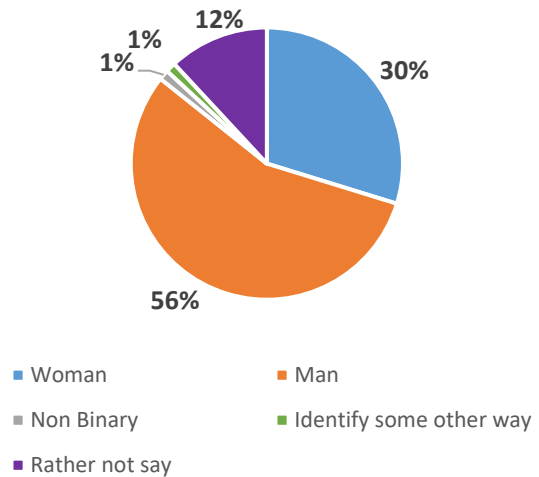
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**D/deaf, Disabled and Long
Term Health Conditions Four
Hub Participants**
(Sample Size= 84)



**Gender Identity of Four Hubs
Participants**
(Sample Size= 84)



2. Sandwell Creates- a new BOC initiative in the wider West Midlands Region

- We launched a new co-creation strand with young people in the Sandwell area where we engaged 34 young people
- In March 2024, we launched a series of events, a limited time radio station and pop-up performances
- Currently, we are organising the second phase of the strand and have employed a staff member on the ground to help us develop our networks and build our relationships with community groups to attract this demographic
- Over the next two years, we will create new work in partnership with the young people
- This is significant project for Birmingham Opera Company aimed at opening up opportunities for young people, currently excluded from engagement in the arts

“The truth is, if this opportunity had been around when I was growing up in Sandwell, I might not have had the courage to get involved. I’d have been worried that I wouldn’t fit in or that I’d embarrass myself. Then, years later, I’d have been an adult who really regretted not being braver and finding out what I was capable of. Believe me, it’s better to risk a little bit of embarrassment than a lot of regret. Go for it!” Frank Skinner

4 Hubs/Sandwell – on the ground

- Heavy investment in the local workforce: 78% practitioners from The Midlands.
- In Sandwell, total of 16 artists involved delivered 37 sessions, including performances, workshops and a radio stall in West Brom Indoor Markets.
- Sandwell participant and audience engagements lower than anticipated, but number of artists involved and number of sessions exceeded.

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3. The Opera Lab October 2023

– R&D rehearsal workshops

- 91 participants collaborated with our artistic associates to work on the development of upcoming projects taking place in 2023-24
- Sessions were one-off standalone sessions, acting, and singing tasters in a former shop in Birmingham New Street Station in October 2023.
- Artistic associates included Gweneth Ann Rand, Allyson Devenish, Daniel Bianco Albert and Roxanne Korda
- The projects chosen for the workshops were: Michael Tippett's *New Year*, Judith Weir's *woman.life.song*, Bedřich Smetana's *The Two Widows* and two of our four 2024 *Brum Commissions*
- Participants were introduced to the works, and many went on to develop them with the artistic associates further and perform in the projects across 2024

4. Brum Commissions July 2023 - March 2024

In response to the lack of opportunity for emerging artists to find space together and to make and perform work with financial support, Brum Commissions aims to engage emerging artists from writers, composers, director/designers, singers, instrumentalists and dramaturgs supported by technical production teams to create new work which speaks. Subjects ranged from the story of a working-class Irish immigrant to Birmingham in the 1950s (a tribute to the composer's grandfather), violence in Education, Codification of Desire for LGBT+ community, Love and the closing down of a bar in Birmingham.

Leonard - 4 rehearsal and training sessions and performed as part of the JQ Festival in a bar 1000 Trades in Birmingham

- Composer Max Gibson along with collaborator Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambaksh (Librettist). Director Nyasha Guido
- *Leonard* involved 7 vols, 4 rehearsal sessions & 1 perf session (2 perfs) = 35 vol engagements.
- Total *Leonard* audience of 84 (across 2 perfs).

In March 2024, we commissioned four emerging composers to present a brand-new short form opera.

We were able to offer leading solo roles alongside 23 emerging artists as performers, writers, composers and directors and players as we aspire to engage a new generation of artists in making new work.

[shut] - composer Daniel Blanco Albert / writer Roxanne Korda). Director, Anna Himali-Howard

Conflict in Numbers - composer Ryan Morgan. Director, Beth Kapila

the heart must weather what the heart was made to take -composer Cassie Kinoshi/ writer Lydia Luke. Director, Abigail Kelly

From Tulip to Orchid (with love) - composer Michael Taplin/ writer Gareth Matthey) Director Tabitha Benton Evans.

Dramaturg – Alice Chambers

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

In the case of composers, librettists & directors:

- 58% women, 25% men, 17% non-binary
- 50% from global majority backgrounds
- 50% from Midlands

The works were performed alongside each other in a dress rehearsal and two performances to a total audience of 152 people. In total, 24 engagements were made with the volunteers.

These new works were also a test for us in engaging ticket buying audiences for a new strand. We also supported Birmingham grown (now London-based) *Waste Paper Opera* National Lottery application to mount a project in the same gallery space.

Through this three-way collaboration of *Eastside Projects*, *Waste Paper Opera* and our *Brum Commissions* we attracted audiences interested in both installation art, new work and new music.

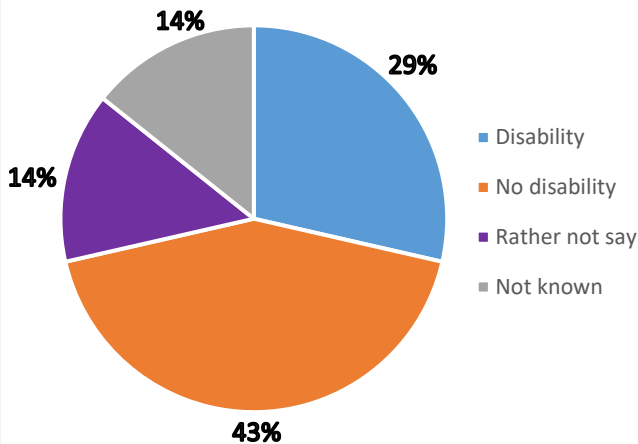
5. Smetana's *The Two Widows* – July 2023 – June 2024

- *Two Widows* - European Opera Directing Prize – 16 rehearsal and training sessions and one sharing session in and 3 performances in Litomyšl, Czechia, Bedřich Smetana's hometown with a British cast Andrew Slater, Ronald Samm, Jeni Bern and Clarissa Meek, Czech-British conductor Lada Valešová and the crack Czech Skampa String Quartet and pianist.
- In July 2023, we hosted 4 creative teams from across Europe and selected the winners of the European Opera Directing Prize. All international teams worked with Birmingham volunteers over 4 sessions with 15 volunteers. The winners were an Italian team led by Lorenzo Ponte.
- In October 2023 and March 2024, we subsequently engaged 16 volunteers in R and D sessions with the winning team who are preparing the production to open in the Czech Republic.
- In May 2024, the winners of the EODP returned to Birmingham and developed the work with 19 volunteers over a 3-week rehearsal period. The volunteers were offered 10 sessions to develop the work and a total of 381 guided learning hours were delivered.
- June 2024 - Showcase and Premiere -The piece was then showcased in a sharing session with an audience of 75 people before the production headed to Litomyšl in June. The production in Litomyšl was performed to critical acclaim in Smetana's hometown in the Riding Hall next to his home re-imagined as a Nursing Home Hospice and with a cast of local volunteers from the city, all over 70 years old.

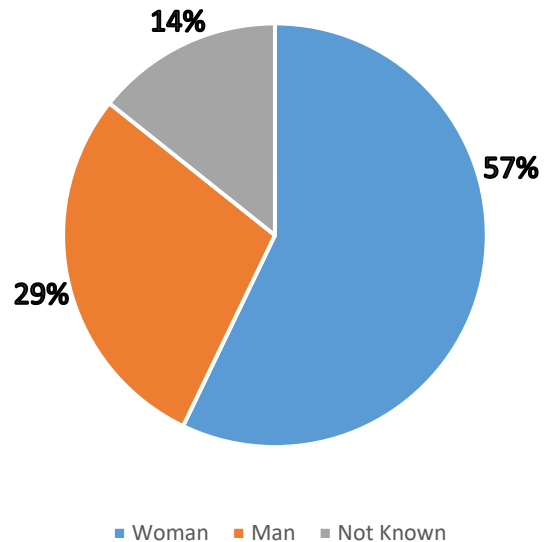
**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

**D/deaf, Disabled and Long Term Health
Conditions of Two Widows Volunteers**
(Sample size - 7)



**Gender Identity of Two Widows
Volunteers**
(Sample size = 7)



Audience Feedback

“Very funny, exciting staging, warm themes. Innovative and inspiring for creative minds”.

Volunteer Feedback

“It’s been a joyous uplifting experience after a long period of heart problems. very supportive, creative, surprising, friendly. Loved the entire team with Lorenzo encouraging us all the way to give our all. BOC are wonderful, I always feel so glad I have participated and hope to do more. B’ham is so lucky to have such a fantastic resource. Thank you.”

“Fascinating to be part of the exploration and creation of an opera production in its infancy and over 8 months; as it came together into a slick performance before transferring to the Czech Republic..... A rarely performed opera will become both a celebration of its composer but also a modern exploration of Human Third Age”

Survey Question - Has it taught you anything? And if so, what?

Answer – “anything is possible”

Two Widows’ Press

“It almost beggars belief that such a degree of empathy, kindness and understanding for people in advanced years, as well as good-natured humour, could be possessed by such a young creative team....The producers have admirably succeeded in combining this storyline with Smetana's score and playing it out with theatrical inventiveness using brilliantly observed situations and gestures from the setting of retirement homes and their clients’ behaviour” Helena Havliková, Opera Magazine

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

6. Michael Tippett's New Year September 2023 – July 2024

When in 2022 and sifting through 60 titles, *New Year* floated to the top as a “must-do” for Birmingham. Unstaged since 1990, much of its futurism is now in our lives; space travel, virtual worlds, societal conflict. Its eclectic musical world riffing on ska, jazz, classical, electronics, haunting blues, constantly shuffling now a way many also listen to music. Tippett's pioneering approach to put urban modern life on stage and brought to life with diverse international cast (UK, USA, South Africa), the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and people of Birmingham, though a massive undertaking and clearly risky, was too much to resist. Joining Alpesh Chauhan, conducting and Mariana Rosas as Choral Director, was a new-to-us creative team led by Keith Warner. *New Year* also enabled us to engage new voices in creating the work from the Midlands as Dramaturg and assistants. Building on our small group sessions and performances, Brum Commissions, chorus training began in April and with over 68 rehearsals with volunteers across chorus, actors and dancers, by the time the mysterious blue Dream Tent appeared, Birmingham was talking Tippett. In partnership with the rights' holders, the city council, property developers and funders, the whole company rose to the challenge.

“Why there's a huge blue tent in Digbeth and you can visit it for £5”- The Birmingham Mail

New Year – 68 rehearsal and training sessions and 6 performances in May - July 2024 – 40 of these training sessions took place before this 30 June year-end.

- 126 volunteers took part in free training towards our production of Michael Tippett's *New Year*. 78 participants took part as chorus members and 48 took part as actors or dancers. To ensure there were no barriers to participation, there were no auditions and we reimbursed volunteers' travel expenses up to £4.60 per session.
- The Chorus were offered 34 training sessions (140 hours of guided training, including extra time to learn the material), the Actors were offered 22 training sessions (98 hours of guided training) and the Dancers were offered 11 training sessions (54 hours of guided training). Based on registered attendances, we made 1,609 engagements with the Chorus members and 546 engagements with the Actors.
- The Chorus were trained by Chorus Director Mariana Rosas, and conductor Alpesh Chauhan, with support from 5 pianists. Volunteers were also supported by new emerging talent of 10 Chorus Mentors in their voice parts, to help them learn the music by ear and explore the opera. The Actors were trained by international director, Keith Warner, and worked closely with the 8 professional singers, Francesca Chiejina, Sakhiwe Mkosana, Sarah Pring, Lucia Lucas, Joshua Stewart, Samantha Crawford, Grace Durham, and Oskar McCarthy.
- Volunteers received pastoral support from BOC's Creative Producer, Diandra McCalla, and from 2 Participation Managers.
- The above culminated in 6 public performances of Tippett's piece in The Dream Tent, Smithfield, Birmingham, a huge blue tent in the centre of Birmingham, in early July. The volunteer cast performed with the wonderful City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. The production, directed by Keith Warner, conducted by Alpesh Chauhan, and designed by Nicky Shaw, sold out on opening night and was a hit with audiences and participants alike.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Access at New Year

In a collaboration with *Talking Birds* we were able to offer hand-held captions in performances via wifi and mobile devices. We also employed Surtitles for the first time.

Press

"An army of Brummies are the backbone of a promenade production" – *The Times*

"With an engaged and utterly fearless community chorus of 100, it's a remarkable and inspiring feat" – Clive Paget, *The Guardian*

"A major operatic re-discovery" – Richard Bratby, *The Spectator*

"Operatic life would be much duller without the music of Michael Tippett and the work of Birmingham Opera Company" [The Times, Neil Fisher](#)

"demonstrating that opera can indeed re-pitch itself in the twenty-first century, Serious art and popular expression, cultural diversity and the very highest standards of performance: these do not always have to be implacable enemies or forced and awkward partners." [Edinburgh Music Review, Simon Barrow](#), July 2024

★★★★ The Times ★★★★ The Guardian ★★★★ The Stage ★★★★ The Telegraph

Audience

1852 people from Birmingham and the wider regions attended the dress rehearsal and final performances of *New Year*. We offered explorer tickets for £5 each to 16–25-year-olds, care experienced people aged 16+, those who are unemployed, those who qualify for government assistance and residents of Erdington, Northfield, Perry Barr and Ward End.

31% of audience members were from IMD 1-2 areas and over 50% of audience members were from IMD 1-3 areas.

Audience Quotes

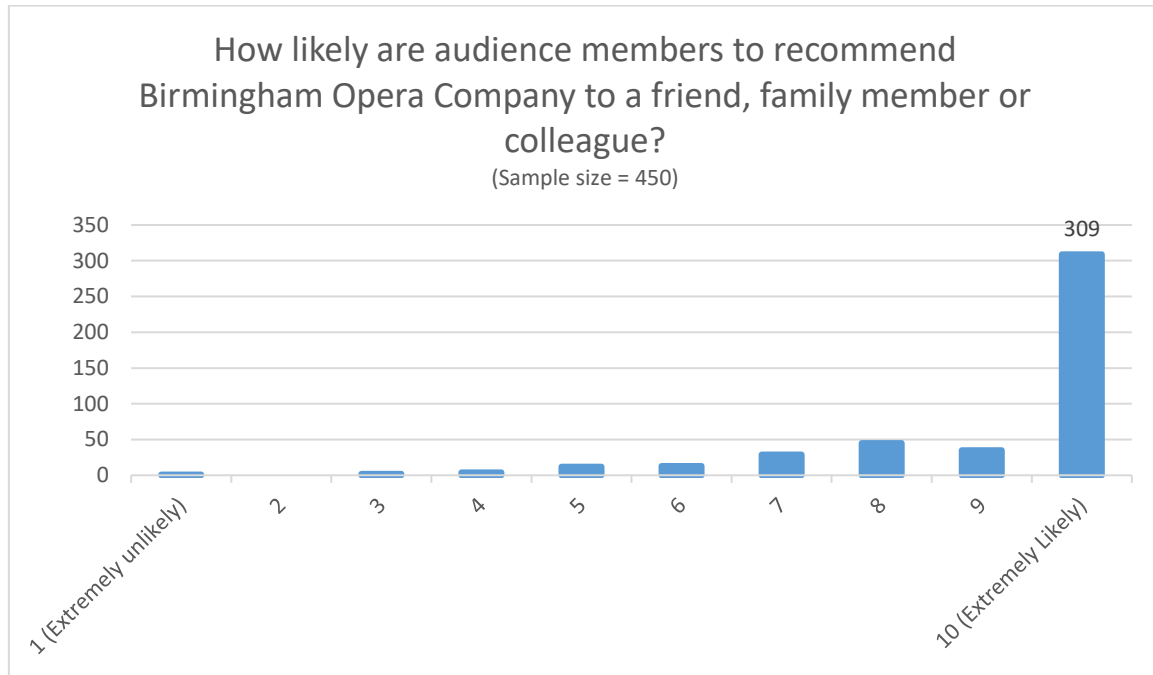
"Accessible, Different, Zany"

Exciting, Confusing and Thrilling

"So proud of Birmingham opera that looks like the people, not some irrelevant art form but living, breathing, telling relevant stories. World-class singing and showing that inclusivity and quality sit well together. Thank you, BOC! "

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TRUSTEES' REPORT



Beneficiaries – New Year: Volunteers (data from 82 completed surveys out of 106 participants)

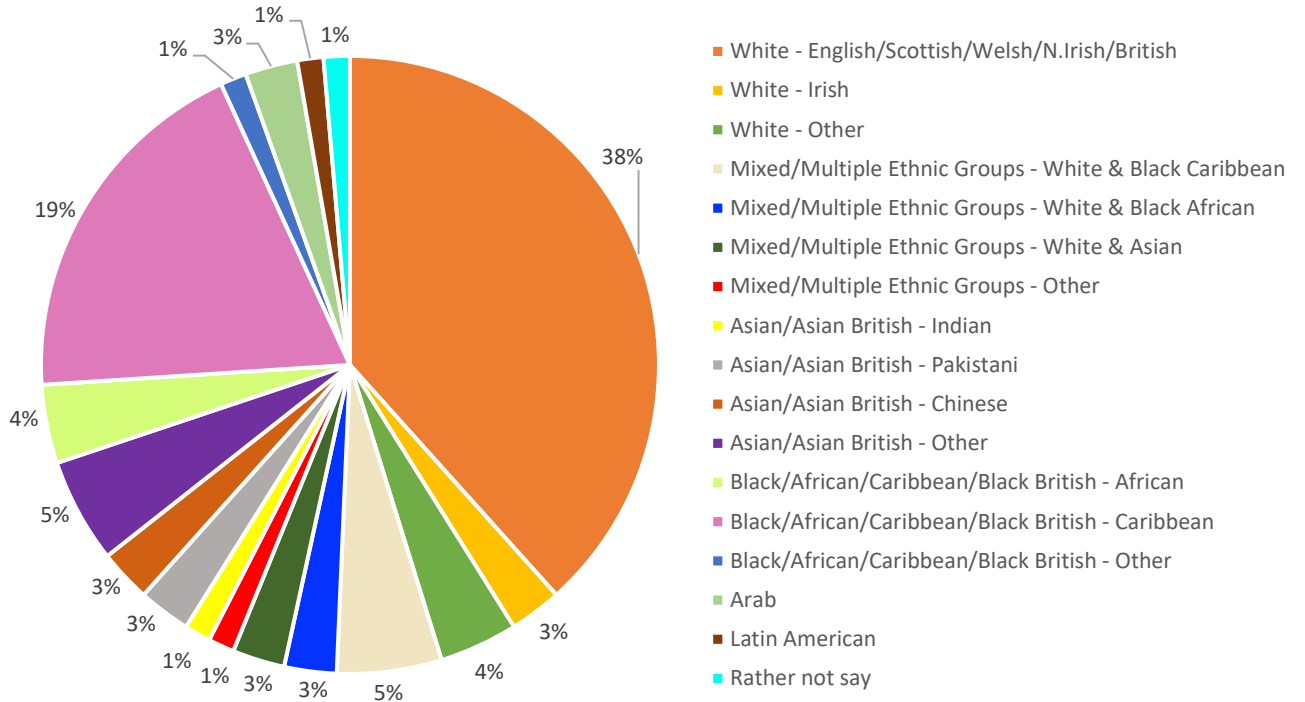
Gender Identity	No. of volunteers
Female	45
Male	30
Identify in another way	2
Disability	
D/deaf, disabled or with a long-term health condition	13
Not disabled	61
Age	
0-19	1
20-24	2
25-34	3
35-49	26
50-64	23
65-74	24
75+	5

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Ethnic Diversity of New Year Volunteers

(Sample size = 73)

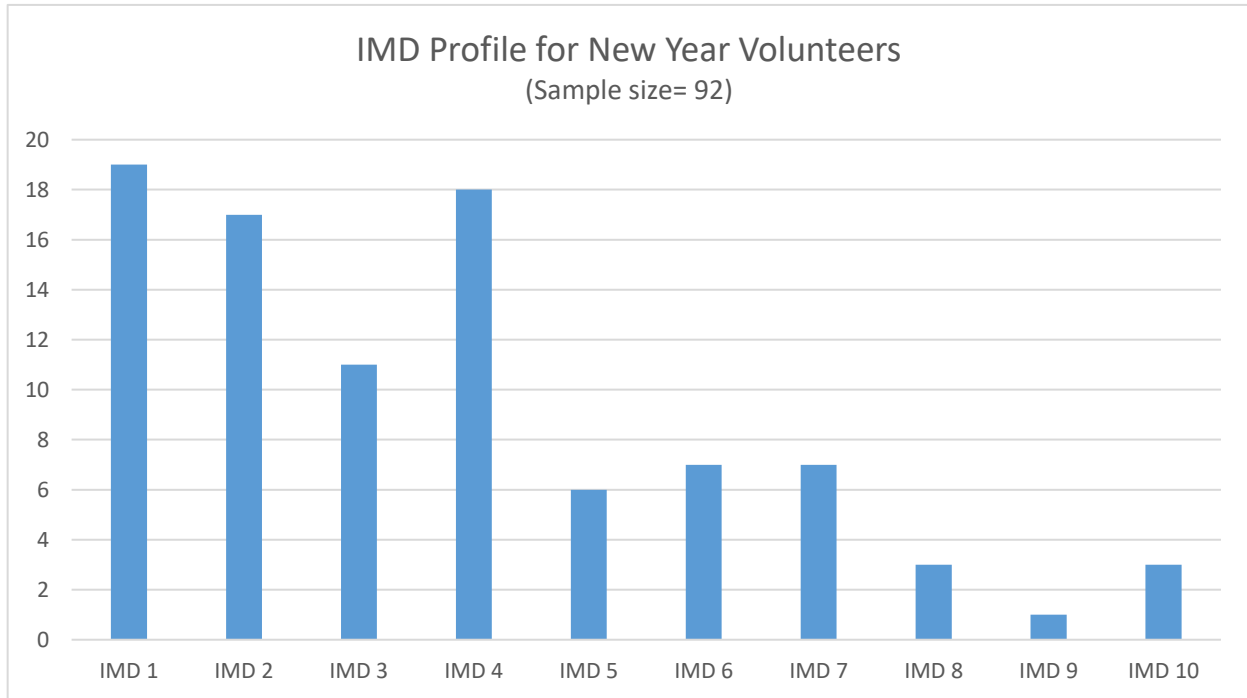


**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

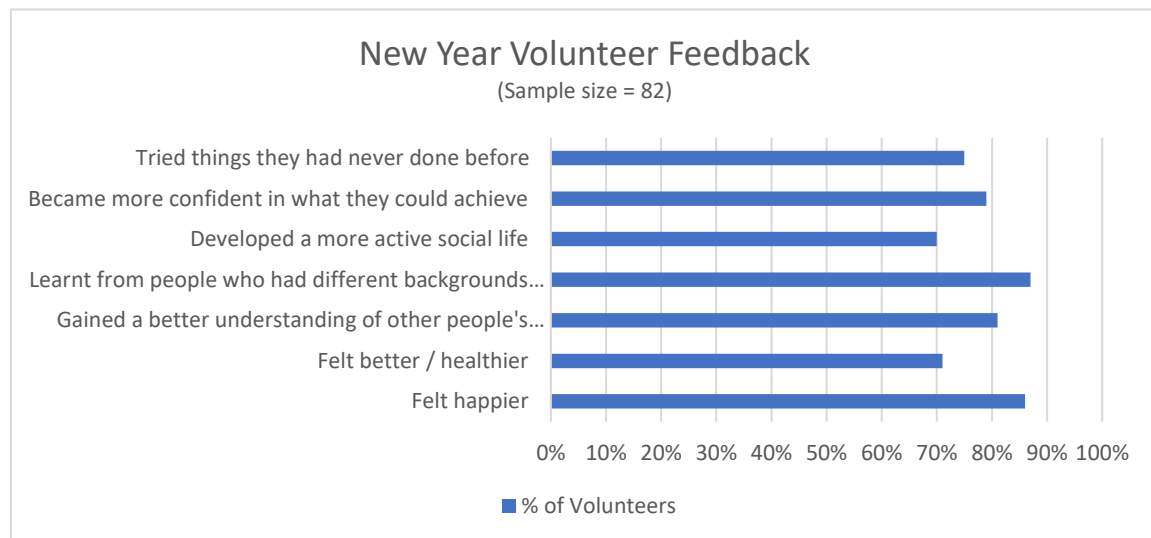
New Year: Index of Multiple Deprivation Data

Data collected indicates that 51% of volunteers in *New Year* came from IMD1-3 areas (30% most deprived areas in England – Index of Multiple Deprivation, ONS 2019 statistical release).



Personal & Social Impact

When asked how participating in *New Year* had helped them, our volunteers reported the following positive impacts: (sample 82 surveys collected):



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TRUSTEES' REPORT

In addition:

23% said they decided to start some training or a college course.

39% said it helped them go to an arts event or exhibition they wouldn't have gone to before.

51% said they became involved in other community projects.

Participant voices (as written):

"This production came at a difficult time for me personally. Following a sudden medical issue, I felt extreme anxiety and BOC rehearsals were the first thing to get me out of the house. The ambition of this particular production is hugely inspiring and it's an absolute privilege to get to work alongside such hugely talented people"

- Female, White Irish, Employed, aged 38, B30

"It's always a joy to be involved in projects like New Year & making friends & music along the way, but such a sad time when it ends"

- Male, Mixed Background, Disabled, Employed, age 44, B30

"I love that BOC accepts everyone and ensures we are able to voice ourselves"

- Female, White British, Disabled, Unemployed, aged 38, B5

"Birmingham Opera Company is not just an art company but a base to the community mindset, the culture and the wellbeing of society"

- Male, Black African, Employed, age 42, B65

"It is a very special place where professionals and amateurs interact really well together to produce high quality work. I have loved it!"

- Female, Black Caribbean, Employed, age 53, B42

In addition to the core creative team, the chorus worked alongside Chorus Directors Mariana Rosas, with support from 5 rehearsal pianists and a team of 10 emerging singers as chorus mentors working with their voice parts, helping them to learn the music by ear and explore opera in English. We created learning tracks for different voice parts to support chorus volunteers' learning. The rehearsal period was longer than usual, to try and ensure more volunteers could combine rehearsals with other commitments.

Volunteers had pastoral support from BOC Creative Producer, Diandra McCalla, and two dedicated Participation Managers.

7. "Evolve" – Career Pathways and Creative Skills development in the Region

We have re-invigorated our collaborations with Higher Education and Skills Training in the Region;

University of Birmingham (UoB)

- UoB Careers Network (including 2 paid internships, one of which part of the "Creative Forward" programme)- A new Collaboration with University of Birmingham has enabled us to support curriculum enrichment for singers and students. We also engaged a full-time intern on graduation for 6 months who has now gone on to LSO as an Emerging Artists' Co-ordinator. Richard Willacy has agreed to mentor a production researcher to scope projects for the Barber Opera 2026-2027.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC)

- We collaborated with RBC by taking a paid placement student from the Applied Theatre course and were also able to employ undergraduate members of their Stage Management course.
- RBC singers engaged as Assistant Chorus Mentors;
- BOC Creative Producer, Diandra McCalla, delivered a seminar on the company's work and impact to the Year Two Applied Theatre students

Birmingham Ormiston Academy (BOA)

- we were able to engage BOA trainees as ASM's.

Schools and Colleges-

- we ran 3 events in schools highlighting opera as a career and a workshop at BMET College for their Performing Arts students.

Job Centre

we were present in Job Centres offering our participation programmes as a way of returning to work and developing skills.

Regional External Projects' Mentoring

- Richard Willacy continues to mentor/support at least one new initiative per year involving opera in the West Midlands region (in addition to the Barber Opera project above). Currently he is active in supporting an opera project in collaboration with The Belgrade, Coventry.

The Volunteer Programme and skills development

Beyond immediate personal wellbeing and skills development 23% of New Year volunteers said they decided to start some training or a college course.

Digital activity – two full length film versions released and more on the way

Birmingham Opera Company's acclaimed production of Wagner's *RhineGold* was released on Sky Arts, OperaVision and is currently available also on Now TV.

We produced two film versions of *RhineGold* at broadcast standard for subsequent distribution, free-to air and online: one for Sky Arts to televise *RhineGold* over a five-year period (first broadcast December 2022) and another for OperaVision running for 9 months in 2023-24 with viewing figures over 30,000). This was our first collaboration with Sky Arts with the aim to reach new-to-us audiences.

The Decision 2023 was also captured by a professional film crew. In Summer 2023 we released a specially made-for-film version including interviews with volunteers and audience members, drone footage of the event and a volunteer actor as studio anchor. *The Decision* ran on OperaVision for 6 months and was launched with during the live-hosted YouTube premiere.

New films under edit

Currently we are editing a full length from version of Tippett's *New Year* and short films of the *Brum Commissions* to be delivered for release in early 2025.

Latest news- creative tech in the hands of the future

We are a partner in the successful **CreaTech** AHRC bid 2025-2030 announced November 2024 and as such our digital offer will expand.

Building on our previous digital training initiatives we aim to place the technology in pursuit of making work and to substantially grow our work 16-25 year olds in this arena as creators and makers.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Additional sector leadership & partnerships

Once again, in 2023-24, there was significant national and international interest in Birmingham Opera Company's work across a range of networks.

Richard Willacy with other regional partners contributed to a regional opera strategy and discussions on the future for opera in the region and presented at *Scen un Film*, Stockholm and was on the judging panel for European Opera Directing Prize. Richard also supported two external opera development projects in the region.

General Manager Hannah Griffiths was invited to teach Audience Development on the 2024 edition of the European Opera Management Course. Hannah was also elected to the board of Opera Europa, the European network of Opera.

Diandra McCalla delivered a session at Teatro Real for Opera XXI Association Conference and RBC and at The Art of Imagination and Volunteering Conference in Sheffield.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Company had incoming resources of £870,288 (2023: £839,555) and total funds at 30 June 2024 of £309,996 (2023: £757,106). The principal funding source of the charity is Arts Council England, and full details of funding are disclosed in notes 3, 13 and 14 of the financial statements.

RESERVES POLICY

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of resources and to cover unplanned emergencies. The Trustees consider that the ideal level of reserves is £75,000, and the higher level of reserves held at the year end will be used for future production projects.

The actual unrestricted reserves are £274,046 (2023: £726,106) of which £124,046 (2023: £576,106) are designated by the Trustees for future production projects.

Restricted funds are £35,950 (2023: £31,000).

GOING CONCERN

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern with strict controls on spend and analysis of present risk and future scenario planning. With a commitment to adapt and live within our means, we did not apply for or receive any additional government funds such as Cultural Recovery Funds, nor did we furlough staff during Covid.

We remain a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England and a revenue funded organisation with Birmingham City Council. These are significant expressions of confidence in the Company to deliver the highest quality work that engages people from the city's many different communities and reflects the city's diversity.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to provide them with regular reports so that the necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks.

Approved by the Board on Jan 23, 2025 and signed on its order by



Richard Willacy
Trustee and Company Secretary

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

I report on the financial statements of Birmingham Opera Company for the year ended 30th June 2024, which are set out on pages 29 to 42.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(b) of the 2011 Act.

This report, including my statement, has been prepared for and only for the charity's trustees as a body. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body for my examination work, for this report, or for the statements I have made.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, 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 no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales which is one of the listed bodies.

In connection with my examination, which is complete, no matters have come to my attention which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of Birmingham Opera Company in accordance with section 386 of the 2006 Act; or

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principals of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



David Hoose (Jan 23, 2025 10:48 GMT)

**David Hoose
For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP
First Floor
Two Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3AX**

Date: Jan 23, 2025

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)
(A Company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Note	General £	Unrestricted Designated £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	General £	Unrestricted Designated £	Restricted £	2023 Total £
Income from:									
Donations & grants	3	650,778	-	65,993	716,771	555,796	-	44,500	600,296
Other income	4	153,517	-	-	153,517	239,259	-	-	239,259
Total income		804,295	-	65,993	870,288	795,055	-	44,500	839,055
Expenditure on:									
Fundraising		28,768	-	-	28,768	25,870	-	-	25,870
Performances		632,240	576,106	61,043	1,269,389	201,346	398,997	53,480	653,823
Other costs		19,241	-	-	19,241	13,767	-	-	13,767
Total expenditure	5	680,249	576,106	61,043	1,317,398	240,983	398,997	53,480	693,460
Net movement in funds		124,046	(576,106)	4,950	(447,110)	554,072	(398,997)	(8,980)	146,095
Transfer between funds		(124,046)	124,046	-	-	(579,072)	579,072	-	-
Fund balance brought forward 1 July 2023		150,000	576,106	31,000	757,106	175,000	396,031	39,980	611,011
Fund balance carried forward 30 June 2024		150,000	124,046	35,950	309,996	150,000	576,106	31,000	757,106

The charity's income and expenditure all relate to continuing operations.

All surpluses and deficits recognised in the period are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)

BALANCE SHEET

30 JUNE 2024

	Note	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible	8		1,160		1,639
Intangible	9		<u>40,000</u>		<u>40,000</u>
			41,160		41,639
Current assets					
Stock	10	5,200		5,200	
Debtors	11	472,662		345,242	
Cash at bank and in hand		428,582		407,904	
			<u>906,444</u>		<u>758,346</u>
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(637,608)</u>		<u>(42,879)</u>	
Net current assets			268,836		715,467
Total assets less total liabilities			<u>309,996</u>		<u>757,106</u>
The funds of the charity:					
Unrestricted funds					
General	13		150,000		150,000
Designated	13		124,046		576,106
Restricted funds	14		<u>35,950</u>		<u>31,000</u>
Total Charity Funds	15		<u>309,996</u>		<u>757,106</u>

For the year ending 30th June 2024 the Company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the Company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in accordance with section 476, the Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on Jan 22, 2025..... and signed on its behalf by:

N. P.
Nicholas Payne (Jan 22, 2025 11:33 GMT)

Nicholas Payne - Chair

The notes on pages 31 to 42 form part of these financial statements.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	19	20,678	57,613
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash provided by investing activities		-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		20,678	57,613
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		407,904	350,291
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward		<u>428,582</u>	<u>407,904</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

1. COMPANY STATUS

The Company is limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, and does not have a share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 2. The liability of members is limited and shall not exceed £1. Any surplus on winding up is to be donated to a charity whose objects are of a similar nature. The Company has taken advantage of section 30(5) of the Companies Act 2006 and deleted the word "Limited" from its name.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a. Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102) and the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102, and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements also comply in all material respects with applicable accounting standards. They are drawn up under the historical cost accounting rules as modified for the revaluation of intangible fixed assets. All operations are classed as continuing and no operations have been acquired during the current or previous year.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Company will continue to operate. The validity of this assumption is dependent upon the continuance of support from the Company's key grant funders (Arts Council for England) and in response to the progress made by the Company in pursuing a viable budget including the obtaining of further grants and other funds. The Company's current business plan shows that the Company, with continued focus on income diversification and restructure, will be able to operate in the foreseeable future. Based on this understanding, the directors believe that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

b. Income

Donations and sponsorship are accounted for on a cash received basis. Grants receivable are recognised in relation to the year and production cycle to which the grants relate.

Performance rights represent amounts received in respect of translations, arrangements or other such items sold to other performing groups. Income is only recognised on the completion of a sale. Due to the uncertainty of subsequent sales, expenditure in obtaining such items including expenditure on sets, properties, orchestrations and costumes is written off as incurred and is not carried forward in the Balance Sheet.

Covenanted donations are taken to income on a receivable basis, provision for deferred income being established for amounts received in advance of the covenanted date of payment.

Tax refunds are recognised when the relevant expenditure has been incurred and the refund is considered probable.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

c. Fund accounting

The charity maintains various types of unrestricted funds as follows:

Designated funds represent amounts that have been put aside out of unrestricted funds at the discretion of the Trustees for particular projects. The designation is for administrative purposes only and does not legally restrict the Trustees discretion to apply the fund.

General unrestricted funds represent unrestricted income, which is expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the objectives of the charity. Such funds may be held in order to finance both working capital and capital investment.

Where the charity has restricted funds these are to be used for the purpose as specified by the provider of the income.

d. Expenditure

All items of expenditure are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Governance costs are the costs of governance arrangements relating to the general running of the charity.

e. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Equipment is stated at cost and depreciated on a straight line basis over five years. Sets and props are depreciated on a straight line basis over two years where considered appropriate. Only items greater than £1,000 are capitalised.

f. Intangible Fixed Assets

Intangible fixed assets comprise values ascribed to the stock of scores commissioned by the Company and which will provide royalty and performance income over many years in the future. These values are based on the Trustees' assessments of royalties etc. expected supported by a comparative view of the transaction values of similar properties within the publishing industry. The carrying value of the assets is not subject to annual amortisation but is reviewed annually for any permanent diminution in carrying value.

g. Taxation

Any surplus of the Company income over its expenditure is applied solely for the purposes of the charity and its activities are the primary purpose of the charity. Under the provisions of Section 505, Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 the Company is exempt from liability to taxation.

h. Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions in the Statement of financial activities are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the closing rates at the balance sheet date and the exchange differences are included in the statement of financial activity.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

i. Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the lease term.

j. Stock Valuation

The Wardrobe stock is stated at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

k. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

l. Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The charity makes estimates, in relation to valuation of assets, and assumptions concerning the future. The estimates and assumptions have no material impact on the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the accounts.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY**Notes to the Financial Statements****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024****3. DONATIONS AND GRANTS**

The Company gratefully acknowledges the support given by the following during the course of the year:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants received from:		
Arts Council England	586,433	511,433
Birmingham City Council	27,624	31,570
Edgar E Lawley Foundation	-	1,500
George Fentham Birmingham Charity	2,500	-
Hodge Foundation	-	5,000
Individuals sponsors and donors	36,722	9,043
Maria Björnsson Memorial Fund	-	3,000
PRS Foundation	4,500	-
Scops Art Trust	-	10,000
Smetanova Litomyšl o.p.s.	31,543	-
Souter Charitable Trust	-	1,000
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	8,000	-
The Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust	-	1,000
The Baron Davenport's Charity	-	1,000
The Cole Charitable Trust	1,200	-
The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust	-	3,000
The Eric W Vincent Trust Fund	-	500
The Eveson Trust	-	5,000
GJW Turner Trust	-	1,000
The Grimmitt Trust	-	1,500
The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation	10,000	-
The Norton Foundation	-	1,000
The Roger & Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	2,000	2,000
The Saintbury Trust	5,000	-
The Samuel Gardner Memorial Trust	1,250	-
The W. E. Dunn Charitable Trust	-	750
The William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust	-	10,000
Vaughan Williams Foundation	-	1,000
	<u>716,771</u>	<u>600,296</u>

4. OTHER INCOME

	2024	2023
	£	£
Theatre tax credits	133,421	75,699
Legacy	-	80,000
Box office income, music library hire and other	<u>20,095</u>	<u>83,560</u>
	<u>153,517</u>	<u>239,259</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

5. EXPENDITURE

	2024	2023
	£	£
Fundraising costs	28,768	25,870
Other salary costs	164,698	143,120
Other production costs	1,104,691	510,703
Governance	19,241	13,767
	<u>1,317,398</u>	<u>693,460</u>

6. NET RESOURCES EXPENDED FOR THE YEAR

Net resources expended for the year are stated after charging:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amount paid to Independent Examiner		
- IE and Accounts Preparation	3,100	2,950
- Tax	10,500	1,650
Lease payments	7,125	18,500
Depreciation	479	480
	<u>17,204</u>	<u>23,580</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

7. EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Staff costs	2023 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	152,271	145,163
Social security	17,923	18,381
Pension cost	<u>19,968</u>	<u>14,225</u>
	<u>190,162</u>	<u>177,769</u>
	Number	Number
Average number of employees (excluding trustees) employed during the year	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>

There were was one employee (2023: one) with emoluments in excess of £60,000 per annum in the current year, within the bracket of £60,000 to £70,000.

One Trustee has been paid remuneration from employment with the charity. This is entirely in relation to their role as an employee and not as a Trustee of the charity.

Trustees have indemnity insurance with a Policy Aggregate Limit of £500,000, at a cost of £358 (2023: £500,000, at a cost of £358).

All employees are deemed to be key management personnel. Pension payments totalled £19,968 (2023: £14,225).

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Equipment £
Cost	
At 1 July 2023	22,637
Additions	-
Disposals	-
At 30 June 2024	22,637
	22,637
Accumulated Depreciation	
At 1 July 2023	20,998
Charge for the period	479
On disposals	-
At 30 June 2024	21,477
	21,477
Net book value	
At 30 June 2024	1,160
	1,160
At 30 June 2023	1,639
	1,639

9. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	2024 £	2023 £
Valuation of intellectual property rights of scores, future royalties etc. (see note 2f)	40,000	40,000
	40,000	40,000

The Trustees have valued the intellectual property rights over scores commissioned by the Company following advice obtained from the music publishing industry.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

10. STOCKS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wardrobe stock	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>
	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>

11. DEBTORS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Grants receivable	-	183,767
Trade debtors	640	2,269
VAT debtor	85,943	10,125
Prepayments and accrued income	385,295	148,427
Other debtors	784	654
	<u>472,662</u>	<u>345,242</u>

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade creditors	412,281	38,039
Other tax and social security	5,462	-
Accruals and other creditors	10,667	4,840
Deferred grant income	209,198	-
	<u>637,608</u>	<u>42,879</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

13. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	General Reserves	Designated Reserves	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward	150,000	576,106	726,106	571,031
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	124,046	(576,106)	(452,060)	155,075
Transfer between funds	(124,046)	124,046	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carried forward	150,000	124,046	274,046	726,106
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

14. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£
George Fentham Birmingham Charity	-	2,500	-	2,500
Hodge Foundation	5,000	-	5,000	-
PRS Foundation	-	4,500	4,500	-
Scops Art Trust	10,000	-	10,000	-
Smetanova Litomyšl o.p.s.	-	31,543	31,543	-
The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	-	8,000	-	8,000
The Cole Charitable Trust	-	1,200	-	1,200
The Eveson Trust	5,000	-	-	5,000
The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation	1,000	10,000	-	11,000
The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	-	2,000	-	2,000
The Saintbury Trust	-	5,000	-	5,000
The Samuel Gardner Memorial Trust	-	1,250	-	1,250
The William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust	10,000	-	10,000	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	31,000	65,993	61,043	35,950
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

All restricted funds are for emerging artists and participation.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

15. ANALYSIS OF ASSETS AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible and intangible fixed assets	41,160	-	41,160
Current assets	870,494	35,950	906,444
Current liabilities	<u>(637,608)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(637,608)</u>
Total net assets	<u>274,046</u>	<u>35,950</u>	<u>309,996</u>

16. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

As at 30 June 2024 the Company had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Other 2024 £	2023 £
Less than 1 year	-	18,500
1 – 2 years	-	-
2 – 5 years	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>18,500</u>

17. TRUSTEE EXPENSES

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association Graham Vick, a former Trustee, was due £Nil (2023: £Nil) (plus VAT) for services from July 2020 to his passing 17 July 2021 for services provided to the Company. This Trustee will reimburse the charity for all mobile telephone costs and £Nil was owed at year end (2023: £2,355).

No other trustees were paid expenses.

18. RELATED PARTY

Nicholas Payne was Director of Opera Europa in the prior year, stepping down on 31st December 2022. The charity paid £Nil (2023: £2,339) to Opera Europa in respect of membership and other fees. Nothing was owed to Opera Europa at either year end. There are no other related party transactions that require disclosure.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

19 RECONCILIATION OF NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS TO NET CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Net (expenditure)/income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	(447,110)	146,095
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation	479	479
(Increase) in debtors	(127,420)	(83,576)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	594,729	(5,385)
Net cash used in operating activities	20,678	57,613

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY

England & Wales - Charity number 291130

Accounts

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2023

Registered number: 01850467
Registered charity number: 291130

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

Trustees and Directors:	Nicholas Payne (Chair) Tony Colville Katie Fulcher William Husselby OBE Amahra Spence Lauren Williams Justine Themen Richard Willacy (appointed 1 July 2022)
Personnel:	General Director – Richard Willacy Music Director – Alpesh Chauhan OBE General Manager – Hannah Griffiths Creative Producer – Diandra McCalla Development Co-ordinator – Charlotte Titcombe
Associate Artists:	Vocal Coach – Jane Robinson Choral Directors- Mariana Rosas, Themba Mvula Casting Consultant – Sarah Playfair Projects Consultant – Sheelagh Barnard
	Chartered Management Accountant – Shohaib Shafiq ACMA, CGMA
Secretary:	Richard Willacy
Registered Office:	205 The Argent Centre 60 Frederick Street Birmingham B1 3HS
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank plc 36/38 New Street Birmingham B2 4LP
Independent Examiner:	David Hoose Mazars LLP First Floor Two Chamberlain Square Birmingham B3 3AX
Registered Charity Number:	291130

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees, who are also directors of the Company, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30th June 2023 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for the Directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

OVERVIEW

At the heart of the charity's objectives is the aim to bring the best quality opera to the broadest possible audience. To this end, we have built and continue to develop an extraordinary company of volunteer performers drawn from Birmingham's diverse population. They contribute their time, talent and creativity alongside some of the world's leading opera professionals to create truly memorable productions. In return, we enable fantastic training, skills and self-confidence as well as friendships and contacts between people whose paths may not otherwise cross. This is social inclusion and highest quality art in action.

Without the support of our funders Birmingham Opera Company would not exist, so grateful thanks are due to Arts Council England, Birmingham City Council and a number of repeat and new Trusts, Foundations and donors. Birmingham Opera Company attracted support from 25 Trusts and Foundations in 2022-23.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Scops Arts Trust, The Saintbury Trust, The Cole Charitable Trust, Love Brum, The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity, CB and HH Taylor 1984 Trust, The Steel Charitable Trust, The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation, The Grantham Yorke Trust, The Norton Foundation, Souter Charitable Trust, The Austin and Hope Pilkington Trust, The W.E.D. Charitable Trust, Vaughan Williams Foundation (awarded by old name The RVW Trust), Baron Davenport's Charity, The Eric W Vincent Trust Fund, The Grimmit Trust, The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust, Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust, G J W Turner Trust, Maria Bjornson Memorial Fund, Edgar E Lawley Foundation, The Eveson Trust, Hodge Foundation, Foyle Foundation.

We would like to note in particular a very generous legacy of £80,000.00 from the Estate of the Late Professor Matthew Rolf Olsen.

Additionally we took on commissioned work supported by Core Education Trust with partners and significant in-kind support from partners Network Rail.

Support from public funds and civic funds from Birmingham City Council has been critical to the success of the Company. That support acknowledges the role that the Company plays in representing the city in the international opera arena and in enriching the lives of the people and communities of Birmingham. In 2022, Birmingham City Council had proposed standstill funding for 2023-26, subject to confirmation from cabinet.

As we write in early 2024, such civic support is under threat and all regularly funded organisations have been seeking to collaborate with BCC to secure funded access to world class and grass roots engagement for all our citizens; but BCC has recently proposed to halve funding in 2024 and withdraw it altogether in 2025.

In the current changing environment of public and civic funding, the Board continues to be appraised of and mitigate for foreseen risks. In 2021-22 we applied for and were awarded continued National Portfolio Organisation status plus a 20% uplift in ACE funding for the period 2023-26. This additional funding should enable us to develop a new strand of co-creation work, including a presence in currently underserved areas close to Birmingham. Arts Council England have recently announced that this NPO period will be extended to 2027. Additionally Arts Council England have indicated that recognising inflationary pressures, outputs may be reduced by up to 15% in consultation with ACE.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

We are currently establishing evidence and partnerships which will bolster our sources of income and build resilience. In the current uncertain climate for funding, we are looking to diversify funding streams.

With very few of our year-round beneficiaries in the more affluent sections of society, philanthropy from individuals and Trusts is vital to support the large majority of our beneficiaries who come from the most economically challenged sections of society. Much of our work is delivered free at the point of access. We operate the lowest possible ticket prices to promote access, with a maximum ticket price of £19.99. Many paying audience members pay significantly less than this (from £5). We have no "tiers" – there is no better "seat" whether you pay £19.99 or £5.

Looking to the future

On 17 July 2021, we sadly lost our Founder Artistic Director, Graham Vick, who was knighted only months earlier for services to music in the regions.

The Knighthood citation read:

"Graham Vick is considered by many to be one of the foremost opera directors of modern times. Director of Productions of Scottish Opera 1984-87 and Glyndebourne 1994-2000, he has been Artistic Director of Birmingham Opera Company since its foundation in 1987 where his pioneering work has brought world premieres of Ravi Shankar, Dove, Battistelli, Stockhausen's *Mittwoch aus Licht* and radical productions of *Votzek*, *Othello*, *Khovanskygate* to the most unlikely places (a disused factory, an abandoned ice rink, a defunct rock venue), integrating local volunteers into the process of making and building bridges with the city's socially diverse, multi ethnic population."

The Board and Executive, artists, volunteers, and community partners aim to ensure that our unique work continues to lead the way in what opera can be and is sustainable for future generations, to ensure that Birmingham Opera Company can continue to sing stories which speak to everyone; opera for a 21st century UK.

In the transition from being a founder-led company, our first tasks were to develop a company structure and to devise a bold, forward-looking strategy.

Richard Willacy (Associate Director since 2000, Associate Artistic Director from 2008-14, Executive Director 2014-21) was appointed General Director and elected to the Board as a Trustee on 1 July 2022 after approval from the Charity Commission sought earlier in the year. Alpesh Chauhan OBE remained as Music Director, Hannah Griffiths as General Manager, Charlotte Titcombe as Development Co-ordinator. Artistic Associate Reisz Amos continued until the end of his fixed term contract. Diandra McCalla took up the newly created role of Creative Producer in November 2022.

In consultation with the Board we created an holistic programme which forges a grassroots presence with an open offer for all to develop their creative capacity in a dynamic shared space.

In consultation with the Board in 2022-26 we will seek to explore and develop the following key areas:

- Partnership - open up and develop the apparatus, knowledge and resources to mutual benefit of the partners in Opera, Arts, Education and Social endeavour.
- Presence - local with year-round created and programmed work. National and international through incremental partnerships. Increased and programmed communications.
- Participation - find new ways for participants to take part by creating new approaches to delivery and co-creation.
- Productivity - maximise productivity to deliver quantifiable outputs with clear intention and application.
- Personnel - development of full time staff, Board, freelance artists and teams.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Board recognise their role in ensuring that the mission of the Charity is well met by them and the Executive through clear targets and reporting internally and externally to stakeholders. Quarterly review of all targets at Board level and greater proximity to the work by Board members will be the cornerstone of the next phase of work.

CORE FOCUS

World Class Opera in Birmingham

Founded by Sir Graham Vick CBE, Birmingham Opera Company draws internationally renowned and emerging artists to the region, gaining national and international recognition for the city and the cultural offer in the region.

Participatory training as a tool to achieve artistically at the highest level

We believe that participatory training is essential to the practice and training of the highest calibre artists and will be at the heart of the art form's future.

Participation as a tool to develop a new generation of diverse UK artists

Conservatoires and training organisations all agree that fewer and fewer ethnically diverse British artists are coming through their doors. We are growing a new generation of diverse, socially responsible singers, directors, designers and choreographers through our work.

Participation as a tool to access new audiences

With artists and art revitalised by participatory work, we will continue to re-invigorate the genre and the audience.

Leading the way

Birmingham Opera Company's intergenerational and intercultural practice was ahead of the curve in the first year of existence. Birmingham Opera Company's "participatory" model won the Royal Philharmonic Society Award (RPS) for New Audience Development in 2001 and again in 2007, the only company to win it twice in that decade.

In the UK, we have achieved the highest accolade in opera, the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre, firstly in 2012 for *Mittwoch aus Licht* and again in 2019 for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. We were nominated for the South Bank Show Sky Arts Award for Best Opera 2015 and 2020.

Globally we are making a mark, having been awarded the International Opera Award 2015 for Best Production against stiff international competition from Metropolitan Opera New York, Zurich Opera, Dutch National Opera, Festival d'Aix and English National Opera. At the International Opera Awards 2016, Birmingham Opera Company was nominated for the Accessibility Award and Rediscovered Work Award and were winners of both the FEDORA Education Prize 2020 and the International Opera Award for Outreach and Education 2021.

Birmingham Opera Company is the only company to have received both the RPS Award for Opera and Music Theatre and the International Opera Award for Best Production. It is also the only participatory company to receive either award, let alone both.

Additionally, Birmingham Opera Company's model has been adopted in Europe and beyond in collaborations with external producers who pay full costs of the work in their respective cities. International co-productions have taken place in Macerata (Italy), Valencia (Spain) and Poznań (Poland). Our diverse artists and audiences make our work in Birmingham a unique model for the future of opera.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

As 2019 Winner of the **Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre** for the ground-breaking *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* the judges said: *"Another sensational production from Birmingham Opera Company embracing and embedding its community in world-class work. This is the kind of thing we all wish we were doing – a model to us all in being ambitious and truly going for it. It delivers the pure drama and emotional punch of opera without gimmicks – the audience feels right inside it, and it proves how resonant, inclusive and exciting opera is."*

In 2022 we were finalists in Sky Arts South Bank Show Awards for RhineGold and recognising the contribution to the opera ecology over decades, The Critics' Circle awarded BOC the Outstanding Achievement in Opera Award in recognition of the work of Graham Vick. We were also named as the European Opera-directing Prize hosts for 2023-24 in collaboration with Smetana 200 in the Czech Republic and Lviv National Opera in Ukraine.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Laws applicable to charitable companies in England and Wales require the Trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.

Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Company is limited by guarantee and therefore does not have a share capital. The liability of members is limited, and details of their guarantee are detailed in the notes to the accounts. The Company is also registered as a charity.

The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 24th September 1984, amended 19th July 2012.

Overall responsibility for the Company's activities is vested in the Board, whose members also serve as the charity's Trustees. All of the Trustees are in non-executive positions.

The Trustees are appointed at the Company's Annual General Meeting; casual vacancies are filled by appointment agreed by the Board.

Potential Trustees are invited to an initial interview with the Chair and/or the General Director. The appointment of a new Trustee must be approved at a full meeting of the current Trustees. Trustees receive an induction pack with information about the Company and a detailed written guide to their responsibilities as a Trustee. The Chair is initially responsible with the General Director for the induction and training of a new Trustee.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The day-to-day management of the Company is delegated to the General Director who is expected to report to the Trustees at a minimum of four times each year, and more if required. These meetings monitor the activities of the Company, the finances of the Company, the risk assessments and future planning to achieve the aims of the charity. Officers of our two major funders, Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council, are invited to attend all Trustee meetings.

OBJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The principal activity of the Company is to encourage and promote the advancement of learning and in particular the art and science of music by the production, arrangement, promotion and commissioning of opera under the name of Birmingham Opera Company and other musical performances and concerts, and to foster interest in such operas, concerts and musical performances by such means as may from time to time be considered appropriate by the Company.

Birmingham Opera Company aims to bring the best quality opera to the broadest possible audience. Working outside the norms of most opera companies, it is dedicated to mounting productions away from existing opera houses and theatres and to presenting opera in unusual places at affordable prices. It has a policy of encouraging local people to take part as volunteer performers alongside the professional team of singers, players and technicians as well as attend the performances. A two-way process creating the opportunity for more people to be a part of opera, whilst enriching Birmingham Opera Company's work with a wealth of human experience. Birmingham Opera Company combines the highest artistic standards with an open invitation to the people of the city to join in and explore this deeply transformative art form.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

In shaping our objectives and planning the programme, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance on public benefit and fee charging. Birmingham Opera Company relies on grants and income from fees and charges to cover its operating costs. In setting the level of fees, charges and concessions, the Trustees give careful consideration to the accessibility of the performance space for those on low incomes.

The strategies employed to achieve the charity's aims and objectives are to:

- Offer opportunities for a broad range of people to get involved in expressive arts activities such as singing, acting, dancing and writing.
- Present opera performances for the enjoyment and education of our local community and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for diverse professional artists to develop their skills and artistry.
- Target socially excluded communities to help build bridges to mainstream arts provision available to them but not extensively used.
- Challenge the norms of the opera sector and enrich the artform by employing bold approaches to creating ambitious work.

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(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

To achieve this strategy, we have a programme of targeted events delivered at grass roots level within the underrepresented communities we want to engage. We support and train people who elect to become part of our full-scale productions and make sure that confidence levels rise to match the level of performance we are internationally renowned for. We also support people to progress and pursue other opportunities to take part in arts activities in the city or to pursue further study in either formal or informal settings.

Since its inception, Birmingham Opera Company has shown a unique commitment to offering local people the opportunity to engage with opera first hand and, crucially, to creating work that is enriched by the wealth of human experience that exists among the people of Birmingham. We know that to be embedded in the life of our city, we need to sustain our curiosity about the people who live, work and study here, what their lives are like, and how to build meaningful relationships with them.

In the thirty years of work here, Birmingham itself has become home to even greater ethnic, economic, cultural and social diversity. We aim to serve the broadest possible range of peoples, many underserved by publicly funded art and new to opera. Birmingham gives us such an opportunity to do so.

Key information about Birmingham

Wealth	43% of Birmingham's population live in IMD1 areas – neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived areas in England (Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019 statistical release). 22% of Birmingham's population are in income deprivation. Birmingham is ranked second among English Core Cities for income deprivation.
Education	Birmingham has the highest share of people with no qualifications whatsoever of any UK city. That share is twice the GB average: 8% on average, 16% in Birmingham (Centre for Cities, 2018).
Ethnicity	Birmingham is the most diverse city in England, with a population as follows (2021 census): Asian/Asian British 31.0% Black/Black British 11.0% Mixed 4.8% Other ethnic group 4.5% White 48.6%
Age	Birmingham is the youngest city in Europe. Nearly 40% of the population is under 25 years old (Census 2021).

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We also know that the "wealthiest, better educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the population forms the most culturally active segment of all" in England, in relation to publicly funded culture (Warwick Commission, 2015). Birmingham Opera Company has a long and successful history of cultivating approaches that enable and celebrate diverse communities consuming, participating in and contributing to the Company's work. For example:

Wealth	<p>Most of Birmingham Opera Company's work is free at the point of access Tickets to productions are highly subsidised Much of Birmingham Opera Company's work takes place in IMD1 and IMD2 areas Volunteers are reimbursed for travel expenses</p>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Free, in-depth training to any Brummie who wishes to volunteer with the Company- Taster sessions enable people to gain confidence and get to know the Company (as well as continually informing the Company's approach)- Training caters for a range of learning styles and is fully accessible to people with no previous experience in the performing arts
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Strong track record in representing the population of Birmingham in casting and the wider workforce- Development initiatives for diverse artists and workforce across a range of disciplines, feeding the talent pipeline
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bespoke initiatives for 16-25 year olds (e.g. Voices of the Future, fast-track rehearsal process)

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Programme, reach and impact

Birmingham Opera Company delivers a holistic programme of multi-scale work: grassroots engagement activities, productions, training for volunteer performers, artist development. These are commitments that co-exist, overlap and enrich one another.

Year-round programme

Birmingham Opera Company's year-round programme of events and activities offers people in Birmingham a wide variety of ways to engage with the Company, often on their own doorsteps. In 2022-23, we delivered a total of 83 events across the city with local audiences and participants, all free at the point of access.

59 small-group sessions took place with 1,356 local people of all ages and backgrounds, with opportunities to explore opera from numerous perspectives and to delve into the many elements that opera incorporates – music, singing, acting, movement, storytelling and more.

Participants worked alongside a wide range of professional artist mentors, including choral conductor Mariana Rosas (appointed Chorus Director of the London Symphony Chorus in April 2023), baritone Themba Mvula, soprano Gweneth-Ann Rand and composer Omar Shahryar.

In addition, we delivered 24 pop-up performances with professional artists. These enabled people to discover the Company's work in their own neighbourhoods and spaces, and at times to join in on a large scale.

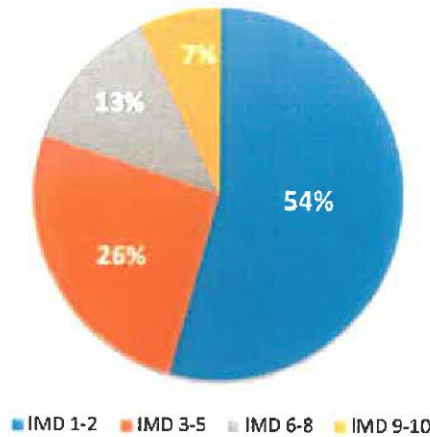
The year-round programme was delivered in partnership with a range of other organisations including Connect and Create (arts and health initiative), Friction Arts, Birmingham 2022 Festival Sites, Birmingham New Street Station, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, CORE Education Trust and partner schools, Crisis, Birmingham REP, Yardley and Northfield Creative Support Hubs, Restore, LouDeemy Productions, Library of Birmingham and The Mailbox shopping centre.

One way we try to understand who our work is engaging is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). IMD is a scale that rates deprivation in England in deciles, from 1 (the 10% most deprived geographical areas) to 10 (the 10% least deprived neighbourhoods). Various domains of deprivation are considered and weighted, such as income, employment, education and health.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

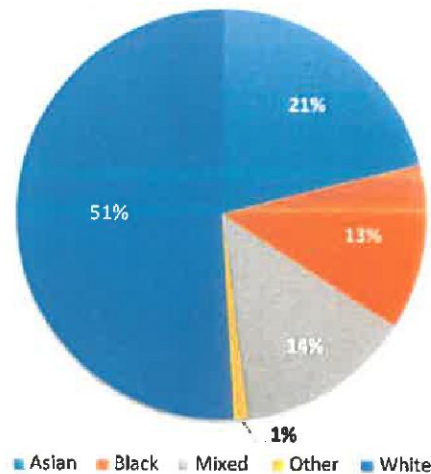
IMD profile of participants in year-round work

(sample = 70)



Ethnic diversity of year-round participants

(sample = 80)



Volunteer training & productions

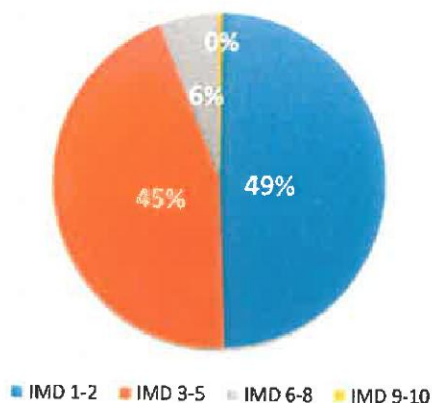
Birmingham Opera Company delivered two substantial performance projects in 2022-23: *We Will Remember* and *The Decision*. Both involved casts of professional artists and volunteers, with significant programmes of volunteer training. Further, a commission gave volunteers opportunities to engage with – and shape – new work.

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**IMD profile of participants in performance training -
*The Decision & We Will Remember***

(sample = 229, based on schools' postcodes where participants under 18)



We Will Remember

In summer 2022, CORE Education Trust approached Birmingham Opera Company about "Echo Eternal", a commemorative arts engagement programme inspired by Holocaust survivor testimony, to promote respect and understanding between different communities. Each year, before Holocaust Memorial Day, the programme culminates in a performance event that shares young people's responses to survivor testimony.

We saw an opportunity to work as creative producers with CORE Education Trust, applying Birmingham Opera Company's model to this new context, to commission new work and to complement the work we do training adult volunteer performers. With CORE funds able to cover the cost of freelancers, including 12 production staff, the central BOC team was able to design, create and deliver a significant event, expanding the reach of our work to a significantly younger demographic.

The collaboration enabled us to commission composer Omar Shahryar to work with the four CORE Academies in Birmingham, plus a further school in Coventry, to compose new songs, co-created with the young people. Additionally, we engaged Johnny Autin to work with 25 students from Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (LIPA) Sixth Form to create new movement. These elements were elaborated and developed into a new song cycle that was finally rehearsed and performed on the main concourse at New Street Station in January 2023. We are grateful for the kind accommodation and in-kind support given by Network Rail, which enabled us to set up shop and rehearse with the young people across multiple shop units in New Street Station.

The song cycle involved large forces: three opera soloists; ensemble of two pianos, violin, bansuri (Indian flute), cor anglais; puppeteer (with newly commissioned puppet); 73 CORE students and 25 LIPA students who had also created material for the song cycle, plus the "COREUs" Choir of a further 70 young people. We commissioned Birmingham-based jeweller to create 100 rings inspired by survivor testimony, which played an important role in the performance.

A further two vocal coaches, rehearsal pianist and dramaturg helped us realise the project. The project also afforded us the opportunity to offer two placements, focusing respectively on design and stage management.

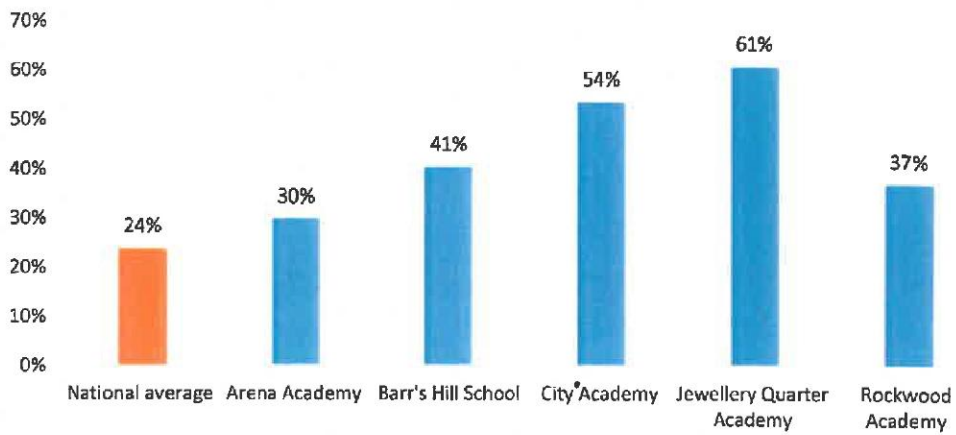
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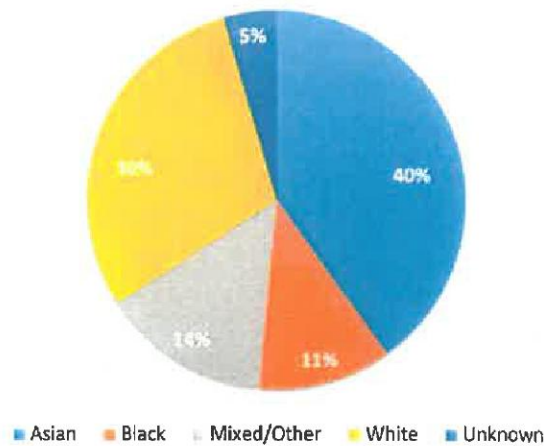
The event was fronted by Natasha Kaplinsky OBE and attended by Holocaust survivors, including people on whose testimony had inspired some of the new songs. Estimated audience for *We Will Remember* was 1,950.

**"The performance was clearly the product of a huge collaboration, and of many, many hours of dedication and preparation. It showed. What was created was ground-breaking and has moved on how we challenge ourselves, how we commemorate and how we remember."
Audience member, *We Will Remember***

Free schools meals profile: *We Will Remember*
all data from gov.uk



Ethnic diversity of Birmingham secondary schools
data from Birmingham Schools Wellbeing census 2022
sample 6,935



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The Decision

In March 2023, Birmingham Opera Company presented five performances of Brecht and Eisler's *The Decision* ("Die Maßnahme") at Great Hampton Works, a disused belt buckle factory in Newtown, inner-city Birmingham. The cast comprised 89 local volunteers (69 chorus and 20 actors) alongside four professional performers (Aimee Berwick, Paksie Vernon, Therese Collins and Wendy Dawn Thompson). The production was created by a diverse young creative team: stage director Anthony Almeida (winner of the Peter Hall Directing Prize 2021 and European Opera Directing Prize 2022), conductor Alpesh Chauhan (BOC Music Director), designer Claudia Fragoso (59 Productions). The 11-strong orchestra combined top-flight players with emerging talent from the CBSO Youth Orchestra and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

In addition to the core creative team, the chorus worked alongside Chorus Directors Mariana Rosas and Themba Mvula, with support from five rehearsal pianists and a team of six emerging singers as chorus mentors working with their voice parts, helping them to learn the music by ear and explore opera in English.

The Decision sold out in advance and was a hit with audiences and volunteers alike.

Volunteer training

The offer of free training to volunteers was substantial. A total of 38 rehearsal and training sessions took place between January and March 2023:

- 21 training sessions for chorus members (110 hours of guided training per volunteer)
- 17 training sessions for actors (61.5 hours of guided training per volunteer)

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In total, we offered 8,820 guided learning hours. Based on registered attendances, chorus volunteers made a total of 1,202 attendances and actor volunteers a total of 306 attendances. We created learning tracks for different voice parts to support chorus members' learning. The rehearsal period was shorter than usual, to try and ensure more volunteers could combine rehearsals with other commitments. Volunteers had pastoral support from BOC Creative Producer, Diandra McCalla, and two dedicated Participation Managers.

Volunteers' feedback (reported as written)

The volunteers who gave the feedback cited here self-reported that they are:

- male and female;
- age 20 to 76;
- Asian Other, Black Caribbean, Indian, South African, White British, White Other;
- employed, unemployed, retired, at university;
- disabled, living with a long-term health condition, not disabled;
- all living in Birmingham postcodes.

"A fantastic production and cast to be part of. Very professional and welcoming to all. Its been amazing to watch and learn how the production comes together and be amongst working professionals."

"It has been extremely good to be involved because I have not been acting for years and this opportunity has allowed myself to experience it again. I have learned so much"

"I just had a wonderful time. It was very challenging but it was presented in an accessible way. There was a sense of community and support. I got to try something new and am now very eager to learn more."

"From Day One as a complete newcomer I have enjoyed the whole experience. It's a revelation to be coached to this high standard in such a short time. Our diversity is really refreshing. You really feel anyone can do this amazing thing."

"I'm now quite old - nearer 80 than 70, and it's good to be taken out of my comfort zone."

"I wasn't aware of BOC before - I rarely go to the theatre and never to see opera - so found this volunteering opportunity by accident. [...] I have grown to love the songs and music in The Decision. I would never have considered going to see an opera before but maybe..."

"BOC has taught me to go for it in life and to throw myself into things, and to welcome people from diverse backgrounds. It's been life changing."

"It is rare to have a production that has something meaningful and relevant to say in relation to current events and the world we live in but the company truly smashed it!"

"BOC is the reason I love Birmingham. Here and nowhere else I get to perform alongside professionals and be treated like one. We are so good because the expectations of us are high until the last minute of the last show. We are never excused because we are amateurs, we are never patronised for it. This is a level of professional respect I cherish."

"Since I retired I don't see as many people as I used to do. This has filled a gap in my social life. It has made me realise more clearly that age, infirmity, disability do not necessarily prevent engagement in a vibrant, exciting performance."

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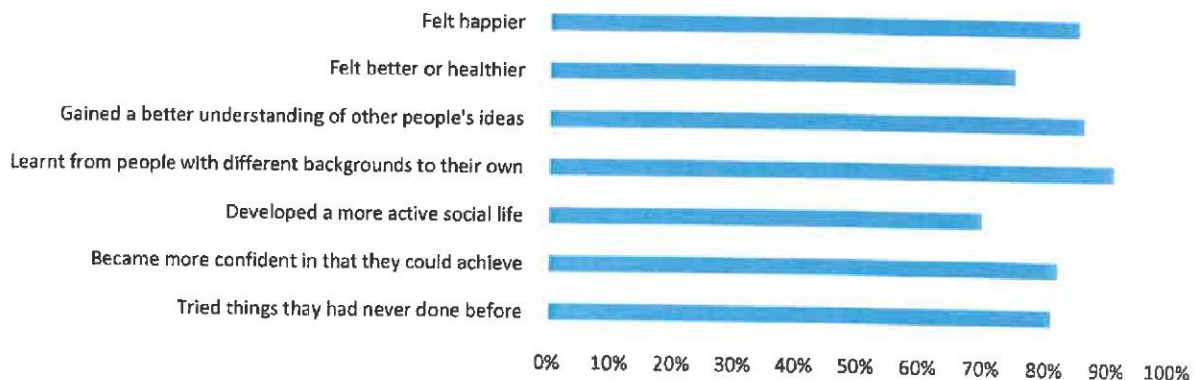
TRUSTEES' REPORT

"I have loved every min of being part of boc, I thank you loads for letting me part of something rather than being isolated, i have enjoyed this loads, the decision is a very good peice espially with what is going on with the world today."

"I absolutely loved being in The Decision. Favourite Opera [of three] that I have been in so far! The company is brilliant! It's the best opera company around!"

"I feel really proud of myself for making that decision to do it. Not going to lie - going to the first rehearsal, was like having my first orgasm - so obviously I'm going to keep coming back for more. Sorry that sounds a bit mad but really great fun."

Volunteers on *The Decision*: self-reported impact of participating
(sample = 71)



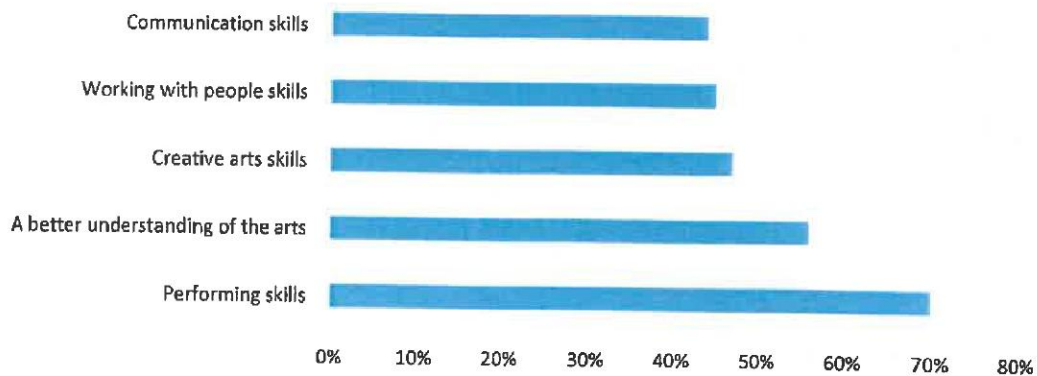
In addition to the above:

- 1 in 4 volunteers said they decided to start some training or a college course
- 43% said it helped them go to an arts event or exhibition they wouldn't have gone to before
- 57% said they became involved in other community projects

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Volunteers on *The Decision*: self-reported skills gained
(sample = 70)



Press responses to *The Decision*

"Impressive...Brecht's 'lesson play' is delivered with conviction"

— Edward Bhesania, The Stage

"The action was strong and coherent. Choruses burst with fervour...exuberance infectious."

— Fiona Maddocks, The Observer

"...the BOC community chorus, clad in red overalls and singing with unvarnished energy..."

— Richard Bratby, The Spectator

Audiences

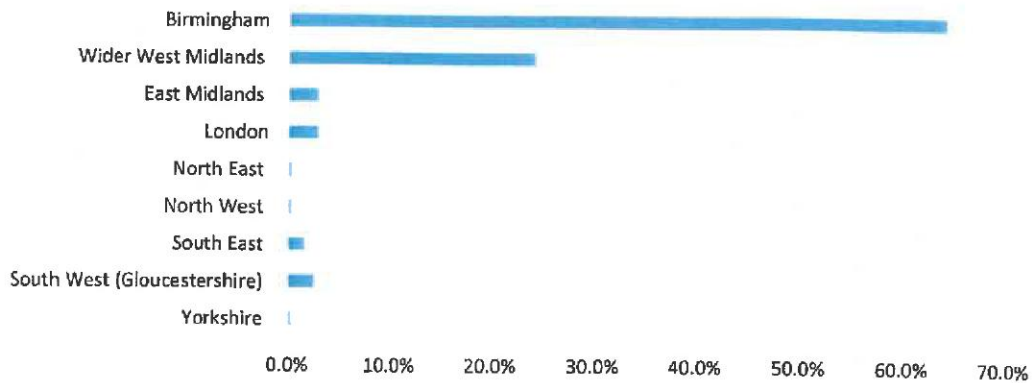
Approximately 730 people from Birmingham and beyond attended our open run-throughs, dress rehearsals and final performances of *The Decision*. To offer the broadest access, we priced all standard tickets at £5 each. We invited audience members to make a donation at the point of sale, on the basis of "pay what you can" / "donate what you would usually pay for a ticket". We also offered many tickets for free, including to volunteers, and at 99p, including to residents near the performance venue (B19 3JP, on border of IMD1 and IMD5 neighbourhoods) and to volunteers' friends and families.

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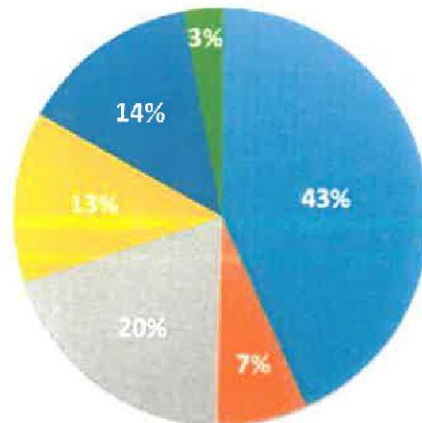
TRUSTEES' REPORT

Audiences postcodes: *The Decision*

(sample = 300)



***The Decision*: had audience members attended a BOC performance before?**



■ No, this was the first time ■ Yes, in the last 12 months ■ Yes, 1-2 years ago
■ Yes, 2-3 years ago ■ Yes, 3-5 years ago ■ Yes, more than 5 years ago

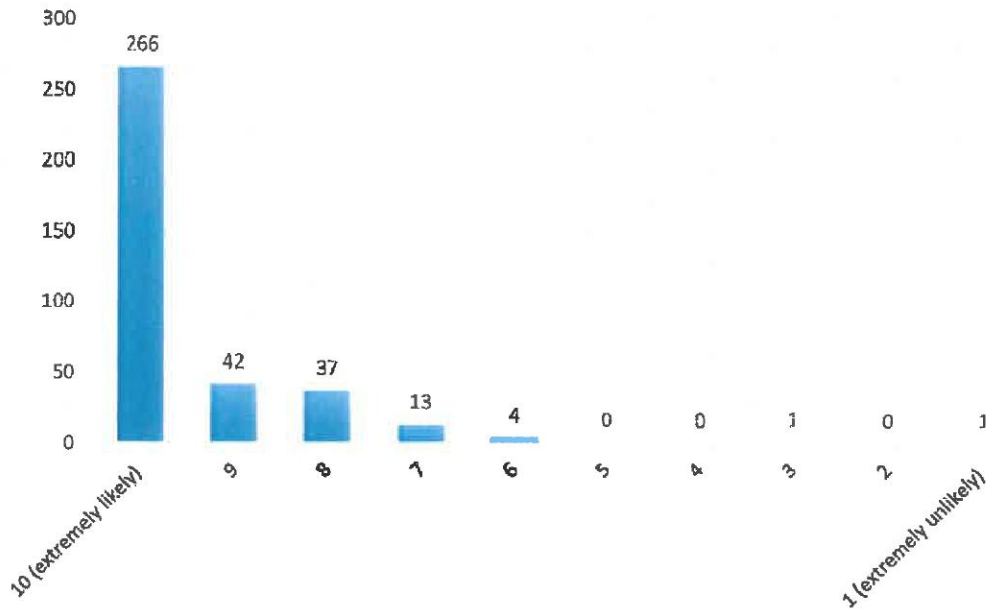
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Decision

How likely are audience members to recommend Birmingham Opera Company to a friend, family member or colleague?

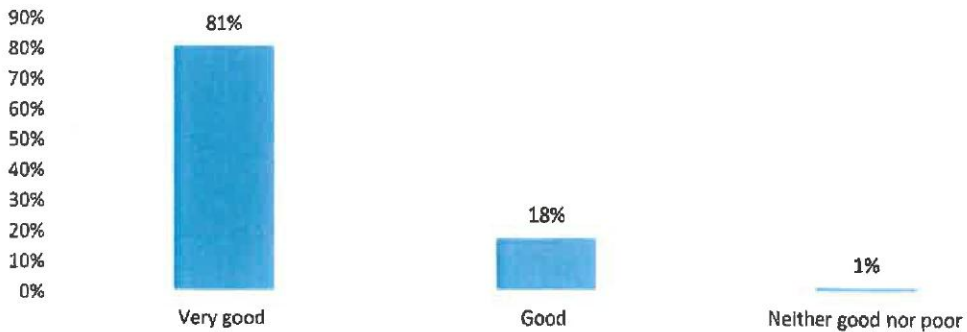
(sample = 364)



The Decision: audience ratings of "the whole experience"

available options: very good/good/neither good nor poor/poor/very poor

(sample = 365)



How to fight and how to stop fighting

As part of our drive to open up opera to new talent, new voices and new stories we offered an open call for composer/librettist duos to create short new works. Birmingham Opera Company commissioned composer Jasmin Kent Rodgman and writer/director Jude Christian to create a piece for soprano, guzheng (Chinese zither) and cello. The piece was based on the ancient text *The Art of War*. 9 local

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volunteers worked with the composer and writer/director to develop the work and also then performed in it as singers. A total of 9 volunteers took part in 8 research and development sessions/rehearsals for the work, totalling 70 attendances. In total we offered 131 guided learning hours.

The commission was presented in pop-up performances at the Library of Birmingham and The Mailbox shopping centre, to an estimated audience of 760 people.

"This has been a really good challenge for me, that I'm glad to have been able to participate in."

- Volunteer performer

Sector leadership & partnerships

Once again, in 2022-23, there was significant national and international interest in Birmingham Opera Company's work across a range of networks.

Birmingham Opera Company won the FEDORA Education Prize 2020 for "Going for Gold", the 18-month creative marathon that culminated in our 2021 production of Wagner's *RhineGold*. In autumn 2022, General Director Richard Willacy was invited on behalf of FEDORA to present and discuss "Going for Gold" in Paris at the conference of RESEO, the European network for opera, music and dance education. *RhineGold* was the topic of Opera Europa's inaugural dramaturgy forum, convened online in October 2022, led by Richard Willacy together with Alpesh Chauhan. Richard led a session entitled "Learning by doing" at Opera Europa's autumn 2022 conference in Budapest. He was a panellist in the session "A different scene" at the spring conference in Wiesbaden in spring 2023. Richard Willacy also wrote the foreword to "Co-creating Opera", the publication that marked the culmination of the EU Traction project on which he was a member of the international core advisory team creating new work and creating new digital tools could support the co-creation of new operas with partners and communities in Barcelona (Liceu), Portugal (SAMP) and Ireland (Irish National Opera) in collaboration with the Gulbenkian Foundation, several academic institutions and Francois Mattarasso.

General Manager Hannah Griffiths was a panellist in the session "Diverse programming" at Opera Europa's Budapest conference. She was invited to teach Audience Development on the 2023 edition of the European Opera Management Course in Wiesbaden. Hannah was also a guest lecturer for the University of the Arts, Stockholm in September 2022, delivering an online session for all staff and students as part of their series "Lectures and conversations about racism and resistance". Hannah was also elected to the board of Opera Europa, the European network of Opera.

Richard and Hannah delivered a workshop on the topic of diversity for the senior management team of the Norwegian Opera & Ballet, as part of that team's study visit to England in October 2022.

In March 2023, Birmingham Opera Company hosted Dr Sebastian Stauss, a researcher at the Institute for Theatre Studies at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. Sebastian carried out three days of ethnographic research during rehearsals and performances of *The Decision*, focusing on the involvement of volunteers. This was part of a wider study that explores strategies for engaging "new" audiences in music theatre, including case studies in Germany and Italy.

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Digital activity

Birmingham Opera Company's acclaimed production of Wagner's *RhineGold* was released on Sky Arts, OperaVision and Now TV.

We produced two film versions of *RhineGold* at broadcast standard for subsequent distribution, free-to air and online: one for Sky Arts to televise *RhineGold* over a five-year period (first broadcast December 2022) and another for OperaVision running for 9 months in 2022-23 (currently with viewing figures over 30,000). This was our first collaboration with SkyArts with the aim to reach new-to-us audiences.

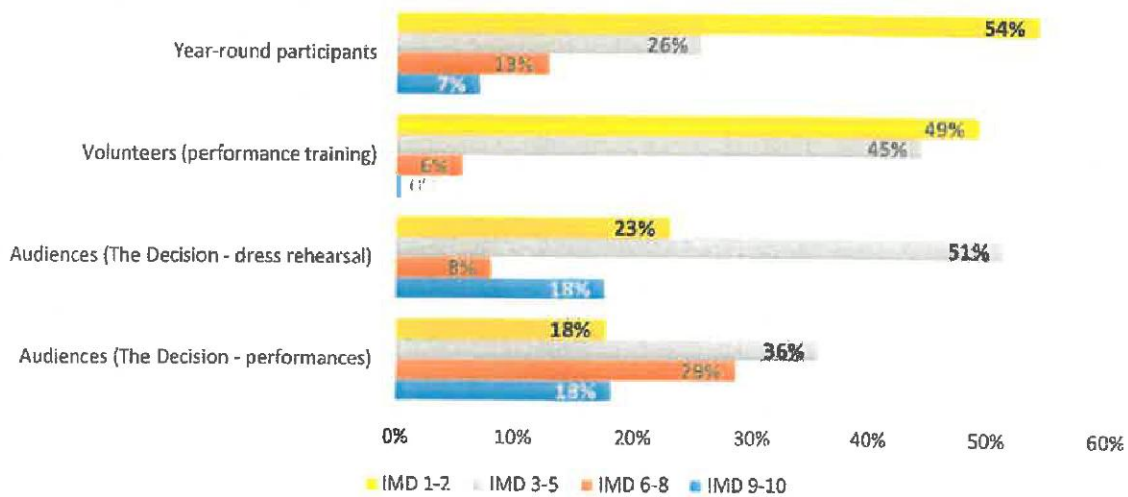
The Decision was also captured by a professional film crew. We created a specially made-for-film version including interviews with volunteers and audience members, drone footage of the event and a volunteer actor as studio anchor. *The Decision* ran on OperaVision for 6 months and was launched during the live-hosted YouTube premiere.

The overall picture

We strive for a truly diverse model. Going forward we will continue to direct our resources and efforts to welcome people that opera and publicly funded culture is typically less successful in engaging, including people of the Global Majority, young people, people from lower IMD deciles. Each year, we disaggregate data according to the different ways in which we invite people to engage with Birmingham Opera Company. We do this with a view to understanding how we can best enable the broadest range of people to participate in our work right across the board.

Comparison of IMD profiles across areas of work 2022-23

(sample = 572)



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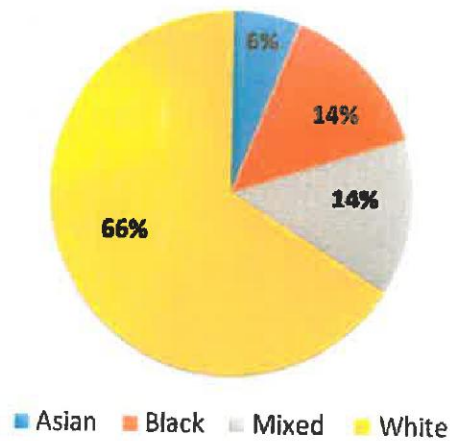
TRUSTEES' REPORT

Diversity of workforce

Birmingham Opera Company is still the only opera organisation delivering a truly diverse model at the centre of its work in the UK and Europe. Once again, in line with our "Outstanding" rating in ACE's Creative Case for Diversity, in 2022-23 we engaged artists and freelance staff in all roles with a resolute commitment to representing the peoples of Birmingham.

Ethnicity of artists 2022-23

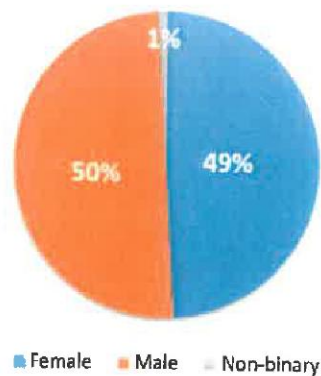
(sample = 35)



The gender identity of freelance, contractual & commissioned staff in 2022-23 was as follows:

Gender identity of all freelance staff (incl artists)

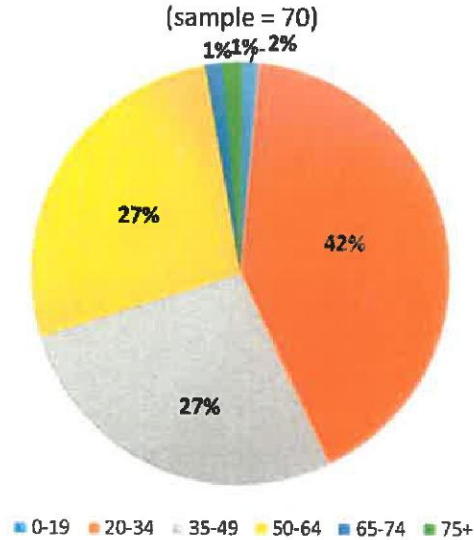
(sample = 72)



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Age of freelance staff (incl artists)



FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Company had incoming resources of £839,555 (2022: £641,653) and total funds at 30 June 2023 of £757,106 (2022: £611,011). The principal funding sources of the charity are Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council (full details of funding are disclosed in notes 13 and 14 of the financial statements), although in this year we also received significant support from Scops Art Trust, The William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust, and a legacy from the Estate of the Late Professor Matthew Rolf Olsen.

RESERVES POLICY

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of resources and to cover unplanned emergencies. The Trustees consider that the ideal level of reserves is £75,000, and the higher level of reserves held at the year end will be used for future production projects.

The actual unrestricted reserves are £726,106 (2022: £571,031) of which £576,106 (2022: £396,031) are designated by the Trustees for future production projects.

Restricted funds are £31,000 (2022: £39,980).

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GOING CONCERN

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern with strict controls on spend and analysis of present risk and future scenario planning. With a commitment to live within our means, we have currently not applied for or received any additional government funds such as Cultural Recovery Funds, nor have we furloughed any staff.

We remain a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. These are significant expressions of confidence in the Company to deliver the highest quality work that engages people from the city's many different communities and reflects the city's diversity. As detailed elsewhere we were awarded a 20% uplift for the period 2023-26 from Arts Council England. Birmingham City Council have proposed standstill funding for the NPO period.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to provide them with regular reports so that the necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks.

Approved by the Board on Mar 28, 2024 and signed on its order by



Richard Willacy
Trustee and Company Secretary

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

I report on the financial statements of Birmingham Opera Company for the year ended 30th June 2023, which are set out on pages 27 to 40.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(b) of the 2011 Act.

This report, including my statement, has been prepared for and only for the charity's trustees as a body. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body for my examination work, for this report, or for the statements I have made.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, 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 no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales which is one of the listed bodies.

In connection with my examination, which is complete, no matters have come to my attention which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of Birmingham Opera Company in accordance with section 386 of the 2006 Act; or

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principals of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.


David Hoose (Mar 28, 2024 13:22 GMT-1)

**David Hoose
For and on behalf of Mazars LLP
First Floor
Two Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3AX**

Date: Mar 28, 2024

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)
(A Company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Note	2023			2022				
		General £	Unrestricted Designated £	Restricted £	Total £	General £	Unrestricted Designated £	Restricted £	Total £
Income from:									
Donations & grants	3	555,796	-	44,500	600,296	532,026	-	45,500	577,526
Other income	4	239,259	-	-	239,259	64,127	-	-	64,127
Total income		795,055	-	44,500	839,555	596,153	-	45,500	641,653
Expenditure on:									
Fundraising		25,870	-	-	25,870	18,256	-	-	18,256
Performances		201,346	398,997	53,480	653,823	150,630	235,000	31,800	417,430
Other costs		13,767	-	-	13,767	10,885	-	-	10,885
Total expenditure	5	240,983	398,997	53,480	693,460	180,051	235,000	31,800	446,851
Net movement in funds		554,072	(398,997)	(8,980)	146,095	416,102	(235,000)	13,700	194,802
Transfer between funds		(579,072)	579,072	-	-	(381,031)	381,031	-	-
Fund balance brought forward 1 July 2022		175,000	396,031	39,980	611,011	139,929	250,000	26,280	416,209
Fund balance carried forward 30 June 2023		150,000	576,106	31,000	757,106	175,000	396,031	39,980	611,011

The charity's income and expenditure all relate to continuing operations.

All surpluses and deficits recognised in the period are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)

BALANCE SHEET

30 JUNE 2023

	Note	2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible	8		1,639		2,119
Intangible	9		40,000		40,000
			<u>41,639</u>		<u>42,119</u>
Current assets					
Stock	10	5,200		5,200	
Debtors	11	345,242		261,665	
Cash at bank and in hand		407,904		350,291	
			<u>758,346</u>		<u>617,156</u>
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(42,879)		(48,264)	
Net current assets			715,467		568,892
Total assets less total liabilities			<u>757,106</u>		<u>611,011</u>
The funds of the charity:					
Unrestricted funds					
General	13		150,000		175,000
Designated	13		576,106		396,031
Restricted funds	14		31,000		39,980
Total Charity Funds	15		<u>757,106</u>		<u>611,011</u>

For the year ending 30th June 2023 the Company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the Company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in accordance with section 476, the Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on ..Mar.28, 2024..... and signed on its behalf by:

N.P.
Nicholas Payne (Mar 28, 2024 14:20 GMT)

Nicholas Payne - Chair

The notes on pages 30 to 40 form part of these financial statements.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash used in operating activities	19	57,613	(282,482)
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		-	(2,399)
Net cash provided by investing activities		-	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		57,613	(284,881)
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		350,291	635,172
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward		<u>407,904</u>	<u>350,291</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

1. COMPANY STATUS

The Company is limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, and does not have a share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 2. The liability of members is limited and shall not exceed £1. Any surplus on winding up is to be donated to a charity whose objects are of a similar nature. The Company has taken advantage of section 30(5) of the Companies Act 2006 and deleted the word "Limited" from its name.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a. Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102) and the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102, and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements also comply in all material respects with applicable accounting standards. They are drawn up under the historical cost accounting rules as modified for the revaluation of intangible fixed assets. All operations are classed as continuing and no operations have been acquired during the current or previous year.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Company will continue to operate. The validity of this assumption is dependent upon the continuance of support from the Company's key grant funders (Arts Council for England and Birmingham City Council) and in response to the progress made by the Company in pursuing a viable budget including the obtaining of further grants and other funds. The Company's current business plan shows that the Company, with continued focus on income diversification and restructure, will be able to operate in the foreseeable future. Based on this understanding, the directors believe that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

b. Income

Donations and sponsorship are accounted for on a cash received basis. Grants receivable are recognised in relation to the year and production cycle to which the grants relate.

Performance rights represent amounts received in respect of translations, arrangements or other such items sold to other performing groups. Income is only recognised on the completion of a sale. Due to the uncertainty of subsequent sales, expenditure in obtaining such items including expenditure on sets, properties, orchestrations and costumes is written off as incurred and is not carried forward in the Balance Sheet.

Covenanted donations are taken to income on a receivable basis, provision for deferred income being established for amounts received in advance of the covenanted date of payment.

Tax refunds are recognised when the relevant expenditure has been incurred and the refund is considered probable.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

c. Fund accounting

The charity maintains various types of unrestricted funds as follows:

Designated funds represent amounts that have been put aside out of unrestricted funds at the discretion of the Trustees for particular projects. The designation is for administrative purposes only and does not legally restrict the Trustees discretion to apply the fund.

General unrestricted funds represent unrestricted income, which is expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the objectives of the charity. Such funds may be held in order to finance both working capital and capital investment.

Where the charity has restricted funds these are to be used for the purpose as specified by the provider of the income.

d. Expenditure

All items of expenditure are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Governance costs are the costs of governance arrangements relating to the general running of the charity.

e. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Equipment is stated at cost and depreciated on a straight line basis over five years. Sets and props are depreciated on a straight line basis over two years where considered appropriate. Only items greater than £1,000 are capitalised.

f. Intangible Fixed Assets

Intangible fixed assets comprise values ascribed to the stock of scores commissioned by the Company and which will provide royalty and performance income over many years in the future. These values are based on the Trustees' assessments of royalties etc. expected supported by a comparative view of the transaction values of similar properties within the publishing industry. The carrying value of the assets is not subject to annual amortisation but is reviewed annually for any permanent diminution in carrying value.

g. Taxation

Any surplus of the Company income over its expenditure is applied solely for the purposes of the charity and its activities are the primary purpose of the charity. Under the provisions of Section 505, Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 the Company is exempt from liability to taxation.

h. Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions in the Statement of financial activities are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the closing rates at the balance sheet date and the exchange differences are included in the statement of financial activity.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

i. Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the lease term.

j. Stock Valuation

The Wardrobe stock is stated at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

k. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

l. Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The charity makes estimates, in relation to valuation of assets, and assumptions concerning the future. The estimates and assumptions have no material impact on the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the accounts.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

3. DONATIONS AND GRANTS

The Company gratefully acknowledges the support given by the following during the course of the year:	2023	2022
	£	£
Grants received from:		
Arts Council England	511,433	486,433
Birmingham City Council	31,570	31,570
CB and HH Taylor 1984 Trust	-	1,000
Edgar E Lawley Foundation	1,500	-
Fenton Arts Trust	-	3,500
Hodge Foundation	5,000	-
Individuals sponsors and donors	9,043	14,023
Love Brum	-	1,000
Maria Björnsson Memorial Fund	3,000	-
Scops Art Trust	10,000	10,000
Souter Charitable Trust	1,000	-
The Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust	1,000	-
The Baron Davenport's Charity	1,000	-
The Cole Charitable Trust	-	1,000
The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust	3,000	-
The Eric W Vincent Trust Fund	500	-
The Eveson Trust	5,000	-
GJW Turner Trust	1,000	-
The Grantham Yorke Trust	-	500
The Grimmitt Trust	1,500	-
The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity	-	500
The Michael Tippet Musical Foundation	-	1,000
The Norton Foundation	1,000	-
The Roger & Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	2,000	2,000
The Roughley Trust	-	1,000
The Saintbury Trust	-	4,000
The Steel Charitable Trust	-	10,000
The W. E. Dunn Charitable Trust	750	-
The William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust	10,000	10,000
Vaughan Williams Foundation	1,000	-
	<u>600,296</u>	<u>577,526</u>

4. OTHER INCOME

	2023	2022
	£	£
Theatre tax credits	75,699	29,905
Legacy	80,000	-
Box office income, music library hire and other	83,560	34,222
	<u>239,259</u>	<u>64,127</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

5. EXPENDITURE

	2023	2022
	£	£
Fundraising costs	25,870	18,256
Other salary costs	143,120	126,974
Other production costs	510,703	290,456
Governance	<u>13,767</u>	<u>11,165</u>
	<u>693,460</u>	<u>446,851</u>

6. NET RESOURCES EXPENDED FOR THE YEAR

Net resources expended for the year are stated after charging:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amount paid to Independent Examiner		
- IE and Accounts Preparation	2,950	2,800
- Tax	1,650	1,500
Lease payments	18,500	19,926
Depreciation	<u>479</u>	<u>280</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

7. EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Staff costs	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	145,163	127,715
Social security	18,381	14,718
Pension cost	<u>14,225</u>	<u>6,696</u>
	<u>177,769</u>	<u>149,129</u>
	Number	Number
Average number of employees (excluding trustees) employed during the year	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>

There were no employees with emoluments in excess of £60,000 per annum in either year.

One Trustee has been paid remuneration from employment with the charity. This is entirely in relation to their role as an employee and not as a Trustee of the charity.

Trustees have indemnity insurance with a Policy Aggregate Limit of £500,000, at a cost of £358 (2022: £500,000, at a cost of £299).

All employees are deemed to be key management personnel. Pension payments totalled £14,225 (2022: £6,696).

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Equipment £
Cost	
At 1 July 2022	22,637
Additions	-
Disposals	-
At 30 June 2023	22,637
 Accumulated Depreciation	
At 1 July 2022	20,518
Charge for the period	479
On disposals	-
At 30 June 2023	20,997
 Net book value	
At 30 June 2023	1,639
At 30 June 2022	2,199

9. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Valuation of intellectual property rights of scores, future royalties etc. (see note 2f)	40,000	40,000

The Trustees have valued the intellectual property rights over scores commissioned by the Company following advice obtained from the music publishing industry.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

10. STOCKS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wardrobe stock	5,200	5,200
	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>

11. DEBTORS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Grants receivable	183,767	181,659
Trade debtors	2,269	1,625
VAT debtor	10,125	3,367
Accrued income	148,427	74,760
Other debtors	654	254
	<u>345,242</u>	<u>261,665</u>

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade creditors	38,039	19,564
Accruals and other creditors	4,840	28,700
	<u>42,879</u>	<u>48,264</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

13. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	General Reserves	Designated Reserves	Total 2023	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward	175,000	396,031	571,031	389,929
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	554,072	(398,997)	155,075	181,102
Transfer between funds	(579,072)	579,072	-	-
	<u>150,000</u>	<u>576,106</u>	<u>726,106</u>	<u>571,031</u>

14. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£
CB and HH Taylor 1984 Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
Edgar E Lawley Foundation	-	1,500	1,500	-
Hodge Foundation	-	5,000	-	5,000
Maria Bjornson Memorial Fund	-	3,000	3,000	-
Scops Art Trust	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Baron Davenport's Charity	-	1,000	1,000	-
The Cole Charitable Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust	-	3,000	3,000	-
The Eric W Vincent Trust Fund	-	500	500	-
The Eveson Trust	-	5,000	-	5,000
The Foyle Foundation	11,980	-	11,980	-
The G J W Turner Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-
The Grantham Yorke Trust	500	-	500	-
The Grimmitt Trust	-	1,500	1,500	-
The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity	500	-	500	-
The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation	1,000	-	-	1,000
The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	-	2,000	2,000	-
The Saintbury Trust	4,000	-	4,000	-
The Steel Charitable Trust	10,000	-	10,000	-
The William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust	-	10,000	-	10,000
Vaughan Williams Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-
	<u>39,980</u>	<u>44,500</u>	<u>53,480</u>	<u>31,000</u>

All restricted funds are for emerging artists and participation.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

15. ANALYSIS OF ASSETS AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible and intangible fixed assets	41,639	-	41,639
Current assets	727,346	31,000	758,346
Current liabilities	(42,879)	-	(42,879)
Total net assets	<u>726,106</u>	<u>31,000</u>	<u>757,106</u>

16. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

As at 30 June 2023 the Company had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Other 2023 £	2022 £
Less than 1 year	18,500	19,128
1 – 2 years	-	-
2 – 5 years	-	-
	<u>18,500</u>	<u>19,128</u>

17. TRUSTEE EXPENSES

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association Graham Vick, a former Trustee, was due £Nil (2022: £Nil) (plus VAT) for services from July 2020 to his passing 17 July 2021 for services provided to the Company. This Trustee will reimburse the charity for all mobile telephone costs and £2,355 was owed at year end (2022: £2,355).

No other trustees were paid expenses.

18. RELATED PARTY

Nicholas Payne was Director of Opera Europa in the prior year and for part of the current year, stepping down on 31st December 2022. The charity paid £2,339 (2022: £1,759) to Opera Europa in respect of membership and other fees. Nothing was owed to Opera Europa at either year end.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

19 RECONCILIATION OF NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS TO NET CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	146,095	194,802
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation	479	280
(Increase) in debtors	(83,576)	(187,143)
(Decrease) in creditors	(5,385)	(290,421)
Net cash used in operating activities	57,613	(282,482)

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY

England & Wales - Charity number 291130

Accounts

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2022

Registered number: 01850467
Registered charity number: 291130

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

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BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

Trustees and Directors:	Nicholas Payne (Chair) Tony Colville Katie Fulcher William Husselby OBE Catherine Allen (resigned 12 May 2022) Amahra Spence Lauren Williams Sir Graham Vick CBE (deceased 17 July 2021) Justine Themen Richard Willacy (appointed 1 July 2022)
Personnel:	General Director – Richard Willacy Music Director – Alpesh Chauhan General Manager – Hannah Griffiths Artistic Associate – Reisz Amos
Associate Artists:	Choreographer – Ron Howell Vocal Coach – Jane Robinson Casting Consultant – Sarah Playfair Projects Consultant – Sheelagh Barnard Chartered Management Accountant – Shohaib Shafiq ACMA, CGMA
Secretary:	Richard Willacy
Registered Office:	205 The Argent Centre 60 Frederick Street Birmingham B1 3HS
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank plc 36/38 New Street Birmingham B2 4LP
Independent Examiner:	David Hoose Mazars LLP First Floor Two Chamberlain Square Birmingham B3 3AX
Registered Charity Number:	291130

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees, who are also directors of the Company, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ending 30th June 2022 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for the Directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

OVERVIEW

At the heart of the charity's objectives is the aim to bring the best quality opera to the broadest possible audience. To this end, we have built and continue to develop an extraordinary company of volunteer performers drawn from Birmingham's diverse population. They contribute their time, talent and creativity alongside some of the world's leading opera professionals to create truly memorable productions. In return, we enable fantastic training, skills and self-confidence as well as friendships and contacts between people whose paths may not otherwise cross. This is social inclusion and highest quality art in action.

Without the support of our funders Birmingham Opera Company would not exist, so grateful thanks are due to Arts Council England, Birmingham City Council and a number of repeat and new Trusts, Foundations and donors. Birmingham Opera Company attracted support from 24 Trusts and Foundations in 2021-22.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of Baron Davenport's Charity, C B and H H Taylor 1984 Trust, The Cole Charitable Trust, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, The Edward & Dorothy Cadbury Trust, The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust, FEDORA, Fenton Arts Trust, The Foyle Foundation, George Cadbury Fund, The Grantham Yorke Trust, The Grimmit Trust, The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation, The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity, The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK), Love Brum, The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation, The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust, The Roughley Trust, The Saintbury Trust, Scops Arts Trust, The Steel Charitable Trust, Thriplow Charitable Trust, William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust.

As detailed in the later digital section, we are grateful for the support of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) which matched funds donated by individual donors, to the individual donors themselves and to FEDORA for their platform and support. We are especially grateful also to Benedict and Katharine Cadbury for their support.

Support from public funds and civic funds from Birmingham City Council is critical to the success of the Company. That support acknowledges the role that the Company plays in representing the city in the international opera arena and in enriching the lives of the people and communities of Birmingham.

In the current changing environment of public and civic funding, the Board continues to be appraised of and mitigate for foreseen risks. Having been awarded Arts Council England National Portfolio status for the period 2018-2022, now extended to 2022-23 in response to the pandemic, Arts Council England remains our major funder. Beyond 2022, with Arts Council England funding critical to the delivery of our work, in 2021-22 we applied for and were awarded continued National Portfolio Organisation status plus a 20% uplift in ACE funding for the period 2023-26. This additional funding will enable us to develop a new strand of co creation work, including a presence in currently underserved areas close to Birmingham.

Birmingham City Council have proposed standstill funding for 2023-26, subject to confirmation from cabinet.

We are currently establishing evidence and partnerships which will bolster our sources of income and build resilience. In the current uncertain climate for funding, we are looking to diversify funding streams.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

With only 3% of our year-round beneficiaries in the more affluent sections of society, philanthropy from individuals and Trusts is vital to support the large majority of our beneficiaries who come from the most deprived sections of society. Much of our work is delivered free at the point of access. We operate the lowest possible ticket prices to promote access, with a maximum ticket price of £19.99. Many paying audience members pay significantly less than this (from £5). We have no "tiers" – there is no better "seat" whether you pay £19.99 or £5.

Sir Graham Vick CBE 30 December 1953 - 17 July 2021

On 17 July 2021, we sadly lost our Founder Artistic Director, Graham Vick, who was knighted only months earlier for services to music in the regions.

The Knighthood citation read:

"Graham Vick is considered by many to be one of the foremost opera directors of modern times. Director of Productions of Scottish Opera 1984-87 and Glyndebourne 1994-2000, he has been Artistic Director of Birmingham Opera Company since its foundation in 1987 where his pioneering work has brought world premieres of Ravi Shankar, Dove, Battistelli, Stockhausen's *Mittwoch aus Licht* and radical productions of *Votzek*, *Othello*, *Khovanskygate* to the most unlikely places (a disused factory, an abandoned ice rink, a defunct rock venue), integrating local volunteers into the process of making and building bridges with the city's socially diverse, multi ethnic population."

We were devastated at Graham's loss and deeply touched by the genuine outpouring of affection from all the artists, volunteers, audiences, colleagues, and many others whose lives he had touched.

Looking to the future

The Board and Executive, artists, volunteers, and community partners aim to ensure that our unique work continues to lead the way in what opera can be and is sustainable for future generations, to ensure that Birmingham Opera Company can continue to sing stories which speak to everyone; opera for a 21st century UK.

In the transition from being a founder-led company, our first tasks were to develop a company structure and to devise a bold, forward-looking strategy.

Richard Willacy (Associate Director since 2000, Associate Artistic Director from 2008-14, Executive Director 2014-21) was appointed General Director and elected to the Board as a Trustee on 1 July 2022 after approval from the Charity Commission sought earlier in the year. Alpesh Chauhan remained our inaugural Music Director, Hannah Griffiths remained General Manager, Charlotte Titcombe as Development Co-ordinator. Artistic Associate Reisz Amos continued until the end of fixed term contract. Diandra McCalla took up the newly created role of Creative Producer in November 2022.

We reviewed the artistic plans for 2021-22 post-RhineGold July 2021 (detailed later in this report) in consultation with the Board to create an holistic programme which forges a grassroots presence with an open offer for all to develop their creative capacity in a dynamic shared space.

In consultation with the Board in 2022-26 we will seek to explore and develop the following key areas:

- Partnership - open up and develop the apparatus, knowledge and resources to mutual benefit of the partners in Opera, Arts, Education and Social endeavour.
- Presence - local with year-round created and programmed work. National and international through incremental partnerships. Increased and programmed communications.
- Participation - find new ways for participants to take part by creating new approaches to delivery and co-creation.

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- Productivity - maximise productivity to deliver quantifiable outputs with clear intention and application.
- Personnel - development of full time staff, Board, freelance artists and teams.

The Board recognise their role in ensuring that the mission of the Charity is well met by them and the Executive through clear targets and reporting internally and externally to stakeholders. Quarterly review of all targets at Board level and greater proximity to the work by Board members will be the cornerstone of the next phase of work.

CORE FOCUS

World Class Opera in Birmingham

Founded by Sir Graham Vick CBE, Birmingham Opera Company draws internationally renowned and emerging artists to the region, gaining national and international recognition for the city and the cultural offer in the region.

Participatory training as a tool to achieve artistically at the highest level

We believe that participatory training is essential to the practice and training of the highest calibre artists and will be at the heart of the art form's future.

Participation as a tool to develop a new generation of diverse UK artists

Conservatoires and training organisations all agree that fewer and fewer ethnically diverse British artists are coming through their doors. We are growing a new generation of diverse, socially responsible singers, directors, designers and choreographers through our work.

Participation as a tool to access new audiences

With artists and art revitalized by participatory work, we will continue to re-invigorate the genre and the audience.

Leading the way

Birmingham Opera Company's intergenerational and intercultural practice was ahead of the curve in the first year of existence. Birmingham Opera Company's "participatory" model won the Royal Philharmonic Society Award (RPS) for New Audience Development in 2001 and again in 2007, the only company to win it twice in that decade.

In the UK, we have achieved the highest accolade in opera, the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre, firstly in 2012 for *Mittwoch aus Licht* and again in 2019 for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. We were nominated for the South Bank Show Sky Arts Award for Best Opera 2015 and 2020.

Globally we are making a mark, having been awarded the International Opera Award 2015 for Best Production against stiff international competition from Metropolitan Opera New York, Zurich Opera, Dutch National Opera, Festival d'Aix and English National Opera. At the International Opera Awards 2016, Birmingham Opera Company was nominated for the Accessibility Award and Rediscovered Work Award and were winners of both the FEDORA Education Prize 2020 and the International Opera Award for Outreach and Education 2021.

Birmingham Opera Company is the only company to have received both the RPS Award for Opera and Music Theatre and the International Opera Award for Best Production. It is also the only participatory company to receive either award, let alone both.

Additionally, Birmingham Opera Company's model has been adopted in Europe and beyond in collaborations with external producers who pay full costs of the work in their respective cities. International co-productions have taken place in Macerata (Italy), Valencia (Spain) and Poznań (Poland). Our diverse artists and audiences make our work in Birmingham a unique model for the future of opera.

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As 2019 Winner of the **Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre** for the ground-breaking *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* the judges said: "*Another sensational production from Birmingham Opera Company embracing and embedding its community in world-class work. This is the kind of thing we all wish we were doing – a model to us all in being ambitious and truly going for it. It delivers the pure drama and emotional punch of opera without gimmicks – the audience feels right inside it, and it proves how resonant, inclusive and exciting opera is.*"

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Laws applicable to charitable companies in England and Wales require the Trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Company is limited by guarantee and therefore does not have a share capital. The liability of members is limited, and details of their guarantee are detailed in the notes to the accounts. The Company is also registered as a charity.

The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 24th September 1984, amended 19th July 2012.

Overall responsibility for the Company's activities is vested in the Board, whose members also serve as the charity's Trustees. All of the Trustees are in non-executive positions.

The Trustees are appointed at the Company's Annual General Meeting; casual vacancies are filled by appointment agreed by the Board.

Potential Trustees are invited to an initial interview with the Chairman and/or the General Director. The appointment of a new Trustee must be approved at a full meeting of the current Trustees. Trustees receive an induction pack with information about the Company and a detailed written guide to their responsibilities as a Trustee. The Chairman is initially responsible with the General Director for the induction and training of a new Trustee.

The day-to-day management of the Company is delegated to the General Director who is expected to report to the Trustees at a minimum of four times each year, and more if required. These meetings monitor the activities of the Company, the finances of the Company, the risk assessments and future planning to achieve the aims of the charity. Officers of our two major funders, Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council, are invited to attend all Trustee meetings.

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OBJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The principal activity of the Company is to encourage and promote the advancement of learning and in particular the art and science of music by the production, arrangement, promotion and commissioning of opera under the name of Birmingham Opera Company and other musical performances and concerts, and to foster interest in such operas, concerts and musical performances by such means as may from time to time be considered appropriate by the Company.

Birmingham Opera Company aims to bring the best quality opera to the broadest possible audience. Working outside the norms of most opera companies, it is dedicated to mounting productions away from existing opera houses and theatres and to presenting opera in unusual places at affordable prices. It has a policy of encouraging local people to take part as volunteer performers alongside the professional team of singers, players and technicians as well as attend the performances. A two-way process creating the opportunity for more people to be a part of opera, whilst enriching Birmingham Opera Company's work with a wealth of human experience. Birmingham Opera Company combines the highest artistic standards with an open invitation to the people of the city to join in and explore this deeply transformative art form.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

In shaping our objectives and planning the programme, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance on public benefit and fee charging. Birmingham Opera Company relies on grants and income from fees and charges to cover its operating costs. In setting the level of fees, charges and concessions, the Trustees give careful consideration to the accessibility of the performance space for those on low incomes.

The strategies employed to achieve the charity's aims and objectives are to:

- Offer opportunities for a broad range of people to get involved in expressive arts activities such as singing, acting, dancing and writing.
- Present opera performances for the enjoyment and education of our local community and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for diverse professional artists to develop their skills and artistry.
- Target socially excluded communities to help build bridges to mainstream arts provision available to them but not extensively used.
- Challenge the norms of the opera sector and enrich the artform by employing bold approaches to creating ambitious work.

To achieve this strategy, we have a programme of targeted events delivered at grass roots level within the underrepresented communities we want to engage. We support and train people who elect to become part of our full-scale productions and make sure that confidence levels rise to match the level of performance we are internationally renowned for. We also support people to progress and pursue other opportunities to take part in arts activities in the city or to pursue further study in either formal or informal settings.

Since its inception, Birmingham Opera Company has shown a unique commitment to offering local people the opportunity to engage with opera first hand and, crucially, to creating work that is enriched by the wealth of human experience that exists among the people of Birmingham. We know that to be embedded in the life of our city, we need to sustain our curiosity about the people who live, work and study here, what their lives are like, and how to build meaningful relationships with them.

In the thirty years of work here, Birmingham itself has become home to even greater ethnic, economic, cultural and social diversity. We aim to serve the broadest possible range of peoples, many underserved by publicly funded art and new to opera. Birmingham gives us such opportunity to do so.

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Key information about Birmingham

Wealth	43% of Birmingham's population live in IMD1 areas – neighbourhoods in the 10% most deprived areas in England (Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019 statistical release). 22% of Birmingham's population are in income deprivation. Birmingham is ranked second among English Core Cities for income deprivation.
Education	Birmingham has the highest share of people with no qualifications whatsoever of any UK city. That share is twice the GB average: 8% on average, 16% in Birmingham (Centre for Cities, 2018).
Ethnicity	Birmingham is the most diverse city in England, with a population as follows (2021 census): Asian/Asian British 31.0% Black/Black British 11.0% Mixed 4.8% Other ethnic group 4.5% White 48.6%
Age	Birmingham is the youngest city in Europe. Nearly 40% of the population is under 25 years old (Census 2021).

We also know that the “wealthiest, better educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the population forms the most culturally active segment of all” in England, in relation to publicly funded culture (Warwick Commission, 2015). Birmingham Opera Company has a long and successful history of cultivating approaches that enable and celebrate diverse communities consuming, participating in and contributing to the Company's work. For example:

Wealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most of Birmingham Opera Company's work is free at the point of access - Tickets to productions are highly subsidised - Much of Birmingham Opera Company's work takes place in IMD1 and IMD2 areas - Volunteers are reimbursed for travel expenses
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free, in-depth training to any Brummie who wishes to volunteer with the Company - Taster sessions enable people to gain confidence and get to know the Company (as well as continually informing the Company's approach) - Training caters for a range of learning styles and is fully accessible to people with no previous experience in the performing arts
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong track record in representing the population of Birmingham in casting and the wider workforce - Development initiatives for diverse artists and workforce across a range of disciplines, feeding the talent pipeline
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bespoke initiatives for 16-25 year olds (e.g. Voices of the Future, fast-track rehearsal process)

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THE PROGRAMME

Wagner's *RhineGold*

Rehearsals began in the previous accounting period for one of the most ambitious productions during COVID times in Europe. Whilst many companies were fielding smaller forces, Birmingham Opera Company's *RhineGold* featured a diverse cast of outstanding international artists and volunteers and an 87-piece City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by BOC's Music Director Alpesh Chauhan.

With Graham Vick falling ill, BOC's then Executive Director and Graham's long-time artistic collaborator, Richard Willacy, took over *RhineGold* as Director and – with COVID rates rising in the city – opted to mount the production not in a warehouse but in a more COVID-safe environment with mixed socially distanced and non-socially distanced seating areas.

RhineGold opened to sold-out public performances at a Symphony Hall that had been well and truly "BOC'd" with a circular performance area and Sports Event floodlights over the stalls on 31st July and 2nd August.

It is testament to the tenacity of the whole Company and to Graham's legacy that *RhineGold* was achieved and to such a high artistic standard in extremely challenging circumstances. *RhineGold* was performed in a new English version by Jeremy Sams.

The production was nationally reviewed and critically acclaimed by audiences and press alike, achieving 5-star and 4-star reviews:

- ★★★★★ The Times
- ★★★★★ The Telegraph
- ★★★★ The Arts Desk
- ★★★★ The Stage
- ★★★★ Midlands Music Reviews

"Ecstasy from Birmingham Opera Company.... incontestably the most artistically significant force in British opera this century." – Richard Bratby, The Spectator, 7 August 2021

"Music-drama at the highest level." – David Nice, The Arts Desk, 3 August 2021

"A triumph." – Ivan Hewett, The Telegraph, 1 August 2021

RhineGold was also listed recently in *The Times'* and *The Telegraph's* cultural picks of the year.

Participant voices:

"My experience with Rhinegold has been more than I could of imagined [...] It has helped me so much in my performing skills with acting and made me really appreciate opera and has strengthened my passion in performing arts."

– Female, Black Caribbean, age 23

"I feel more confident in abilities I already have and the process has allowed me to become much more social and exposed to many different people...It was dope."

– Male, Black Caribbean/African/British, Student, age 18

"I have enjoyed meeting new people and developing new skills."

- Female, Mixed Heritage, age 33

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"....diverse... exemplary and the message in every opera to the current issues is excellent. All involved in making this happen I hold in high regard."

– Female, Black Caribbean, age over 55

Audience voices:

"Fantastic performance – very accessible to a wide audience. Loved to see the ethnic diversity in opera!"
– Female, 25-29, Black/Black British Caribbean, B42

"It was amazing seeing a diverse cast as a BAME music student studying opera in undergrad it's a true inspiration" – Male, 30-34, Black/Black British Caribbean, B5

"I was highly entertained and intellectually stimulated – Have been charmed and motivated to attend another opera performance. Thank you." – Female, 45-49, Black/Black British African, B15

"BOC has provided joy and stimulation in my life for 30 years. Long may it continue." – Female, 70-74, White British, B13

We welcomed many young people as audience members from organisations including Gap Arts, Aston Performing Arts Academy, British Red Cross, LouDeemY Productions and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Other partners included Birmingham Central Food Bank and Great Barr Food Bank. These groups received free tickets to a performance.

2021-22

RhineGold culminated in August 2021. Beyond *RhineGold* and restructuring the company, we instigated a pilot of diverse methods of engagement to explore our strategy for the next decade including one to one vocal coaching, chorus and dance laboratories, multiple Artistic Associates, and digital exploration. We began with R and D sessions with new and returning volunteer chorus members across numerous titles, alongside launching a new commissioning strand. This included work with composer Michael Betteridge working directly alongside volunteers to co-create work, and subsequently commissioning three commissions from: director/writer Jude Christian and composer Jasmin Kent Rodgman; composer Max Gibson and writer Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh; a solo creation by composer and ex-volunteer Ryan Morgan. We laid the groundwork for collaboration with RBC to deliver masterclasses in their Autumn term.

Digital Activity

We produced free digital events and streams across the year, including our award-winning *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* on the streaming platform OperaVision (14,564 online audience engagements), directed by Founder Artistic Director Graham Vick. The production featured over 150 past volunteers from Birmingham aged 16+ in the cast as Chorus and Actors. Further, during the production period of *RhineGold*, soloists Chrystal E. Williams and Eric Greene, with Artistic Associate Reisz Amos, spoke on the Black Gospel radio station Affinity Xtra about their experiences as Black singers and artists working in opera (1,000 engagements).

We captured *RhineGold* at broadcast standard for subsequent distribution, free-to air and online. We created two film versions of the production – one for Sky Arts to televise *RhineGold* over a five-year period (first broadcast December 2022) and another for OperaVision to run for 9 months in 2022-23 (currently with viewing figures over 24,000). This was our first collaboration with SkyArts with the aim to reach new-to-us audiences.

Taking advantage of the digital opportunity and building on the knowledge gained from multiple crowdfunders instigated since 2015, BOC raised almost €50,000 in its FEDORA campaign, by far the largest amount so far raised on the platform since its inception in 2014. We would like to extend our grateful thanks to The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) and to FEDORA for their partnership in such a successful digital campaign. Winning the FEDORA Education Prize also attracted a further €50,000 award from a private foundation.

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Year-round events

Birmingham Opera Company launched a new year-round arts participation programme 2021-22. The programme began with our Summer 2021 production *RhineGold* featuring local volunteers performing as volunteer actors alongside international artists and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at Birmingham's Symphony Hall. Following the production, we made 18,856 engagements with participants and audiences online and in person through 66 free events and activities (small-group sessions, pop-up performances and digital streams) working with over 20 delivery partners. All activities in the year-round arts participation programme were free at the point of access for all participants.

At what was still a challenging time to assemble for many, over 800 local people aged 16+ participated in small-group sessions lasting 1-2.5 hours each, featuring a live performance and/or opportunity to explore voice technique, relaxation, singing, poetry, acting and movement. Participants worked closely with BOC's Artistic Associates: the Birmingham-born and bred Singer-Songwriter Reisz Amos, Composer Michael Betteridge, and BOC's wider team of freelance guest artists. Each event was tailored to suit the skills, motivations and needs of participants. We delivered these sessions in partnership with local social and community organisations including YARD Art House, Black Creative Network, Ashebo (Handsworth), Birmingham Gospel Choir, Birmingham REP, Choir with No Name, NHS forensic mental health services, Birmingham Metropolitan College, St. Francis Church (Bournville), Nottingham Trent University, South & City College, Druids Heath Library, Moseley Road Baths, a women's charity, SIFA Fireside, HER DAY Opera, Connect & Create (Birmingham City Council's arts & health initiative), The Working Class Collective and Friction Arts.

Kyiv – Birmingham

National Operetta Kyiv partnered with us to deliver a series of workshops online and a live concert performance in Kyiv in Autumn 2021 supported by Ukraine Cultural Foundation and The British Council. Ukrainian volunteer youth choruses and professional singers and orchestra worked with Mark Wilde to explore repertoire in English. We aim to maintain our links with Ukraine on the European Opera Directing Prize.

Pop-up Opera performances on your doorstep: 2,492 local people from Birmingham participated in free performances with professional artists in their local area including joining in on a large scale. These performances were delivered in partnership with Erdington Arts Forum, One Stop Shopping, Northfield Arts Forum, SIFA Fireside, Connect & Create and – just outside the parameter of this accounting period – Birmingham 2022 Festival.

At the Birmingham 2022 Festival we went on to deliver 3 free performances: one at Birmingham New Street Station and two at Yardley Festival Site – reaching 1,800 people, representing diverse ages and communities. BOC's own survey at the performances indicates that 86% of participants were from IMD1-2 demographics in the city.

Broader Sector Support and Leadership

Richard Willacy and Hannah Griffiths continued to mentor a new opera for Her Day Opera for Coventry 2022, which was eventually staged in March 2022. Richard Willacy continued his role in developing innovative approaches to the social democratisation of opera using digital technology, first presented in IMZ Vienna/La Scala 2019 and continuing with Traction.eu international advisory board in Portugal/Spain/Ireland. He further presented Birmingham's work in conference settings such as "Building Capabilities: Rethinking the Social Value of Culture" curated by the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian in Lisbon with Creative Europe partners Traction-EU, and The Wagner Society. Hannah Griffiths delivered a keynote address exploring Birmingham's work at the joint symposium of ECHO (European Cities of Historic Organs) and Orgelpark, Amsterdam. She was invited to present the Company's work in the context of the Creative Case for Diversity to members of the British Council and Italian Ministry for Culture. She taught on the European Opera Management Course and is also active as a jury member for the FEDORA Education Prize 2022. Richard Willacy, Reisz Amos and Birmingham Opera Company were founding members of "More Than a Moment – Action with and for Black Creatives", developing a covenant for change in the cultural industries.

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Alpesh Chauhan was awarded an OBE in January 2022 for services to the arts.

Forthcoming: Richard Willacy – RESEO (Paris) and Opera Europa (Budapest and Wiesbaden) Jury Member, European Opera Directing Prize; Hannah Griffiths – University of the Arts, Stockholm (as part of their series “Lectures and conversations about racism and resistance”), Opera Europa (Budapest), guest lecturer on European Opera Management Course 2023, Swedish Performing Arts Biennial 2023.

National and International Prizes in 2020-22

Uniquely, our holistic approach continues to be recognised as delivering the highest quality artistic achievement, participant learning and audience engagement.

The **International Opera Awards 2021** were populated with Birmingham Opera Company artists, with nominations for director Graham Vick, conductor Alpesh Chauhan, now our Music Director who made his UK opera debut with us in 2019, and Chrystal E Williams, who sang the title role in *Lady Macbeth*. Our collaborator Poznań Opera was recognised the Rediscovered Work category with its Birmingham-style *Paria*.

In 2021 Birmingham Opera Company was announced as the winner of the International Opera Award for Education & Outreach. Our Music Director Alpesh Chauhan won the Newcomer of the Year award and Poznan's *Paria* won Rediscovered Work.

Going for Gold (the creative marathon laying the foundations for Wagner's *RhineGold*) was awarded a further international Education & Outreach Prize by FEDORA – the circle of European Philanthropists. This award came with a very welcome €50,000 prize fund from a private foundation.

"[Going for Gold] is an extraordinary project, in many aspects. The characteristic of this project is to integrate education and community work within the artistic process. It is completely organically integrated and that is part of the future of opera. In many aspects, Going for Gold is an avant-garde project about how to integrate cultural rights in the process of making opera."

- Bernard Focroulle, Chair of the **FEDORA Education Prize** Jury

RhineGold was selected as a finalist for the televised **South Bank Show Sky Arts Opera Award 2021**.

Birmingham Opera Company received the **Critics' Circle Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera 2022** in memory of the work of Graham Vick.

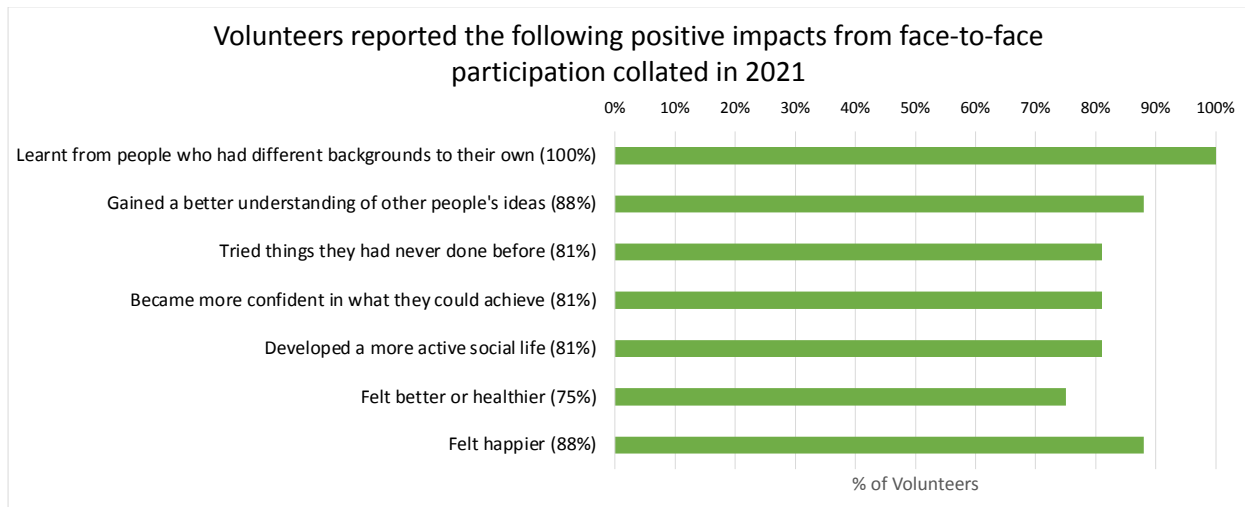
IMPACT

Wellbeing

Our work consistently demonstrates that great art delivers great personal value well beyond the moment and the production. When asked how participating in *RhineGold* had helped them, our volunteers reported the following positive impacts (sample size 84% of all participants, all ages):

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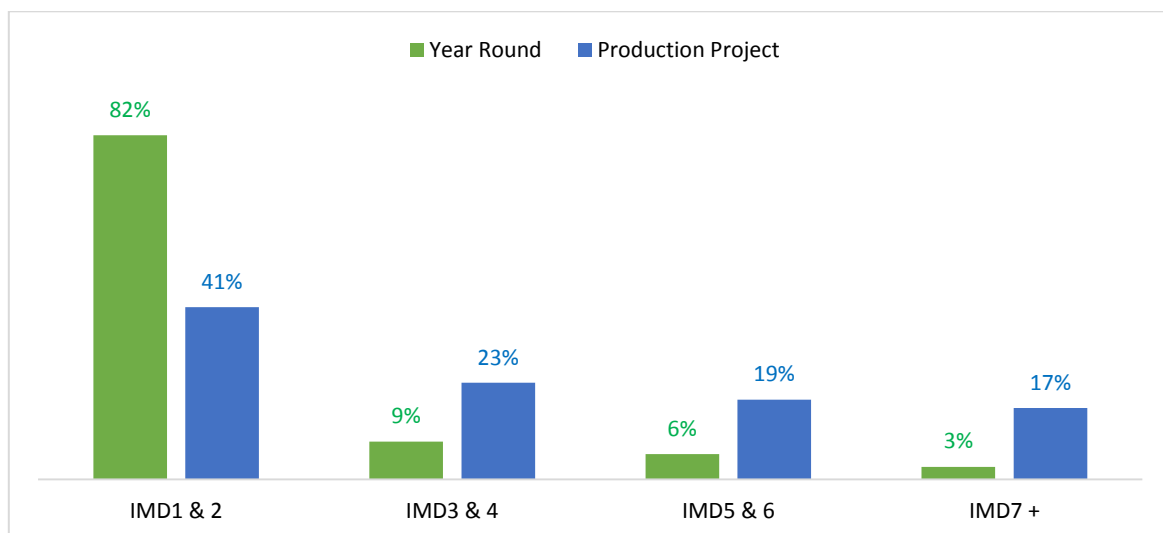


Beyond these significant transformative indicators many volunteers were inspired to pursue a greater involvement in education, training, the arts and in other community projects. They reported gaining skills in creative arts, technical arts, performing, working with people, communication and a better understanding of the arts.

- 1 in 4 said they decided to start some training or a college course
- 56% said it helped them go to an arts event or exhibition they wouldn't have gone to before
- 63% said they became involved in other community projects

Social diversity

The majority of our work continues to be focused on participants from IMD1 and 2 areas, while welcoming people from all walks of life. In our year-round work, 99% will be new to opera. Some data collection was impeded by COVID restrictions and as such data below was collected in 2019-20 and is illustrative of our work. Going forward we will continue to direct our resources and efforts in areas and simultaneously welcome those from the higher IMD categories in our work. We strive for a truly diverse model in which all are welcome by directing our resources at those who may have had little direct access to publicly funded art and culture.

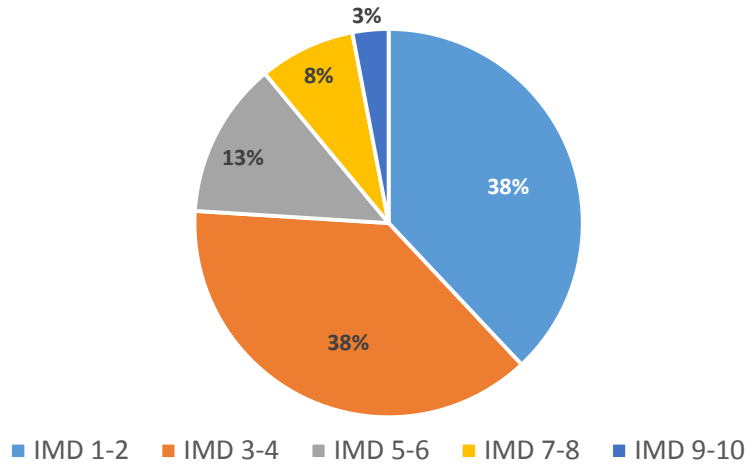


IMD profile of participants in year-round work and volunteers in production, 2019-20

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Year-round participants 2021-22: IMD profile



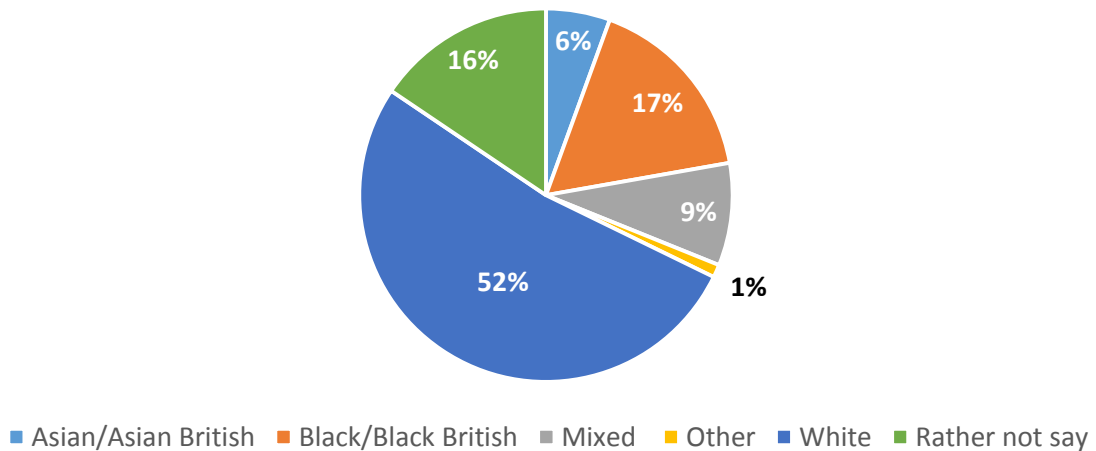
Sample from a limited selection of work, 2021-22

Ethnic Diversity – Artists

In a time where conservatoires and training organisations are reporting fewer ethnically diverse British artists coming through their doors, Birmingham Opera Company are still the only opera organisation delivering a truly diverse model at the centre of its work in the UK and Europe. Again in line with our “Outstanding” rating in ACE’s Creative Case for Diversity, in 2020-21 we fielded a cast of artists representing Global majority ethnicities. And in particular, in *RhineGold*, the leading soloists were Black and Asian. With no salaried chorus or orchestra, we employ freelance artists and continually strive to achieve ethnic representation in all our work.

Further, we employed a majority Black and Asian stage management team and assistant creatives. We contract out larger orchestral projects to our partners CBSO and together are working on diversifying opportunities in instrumental representation.

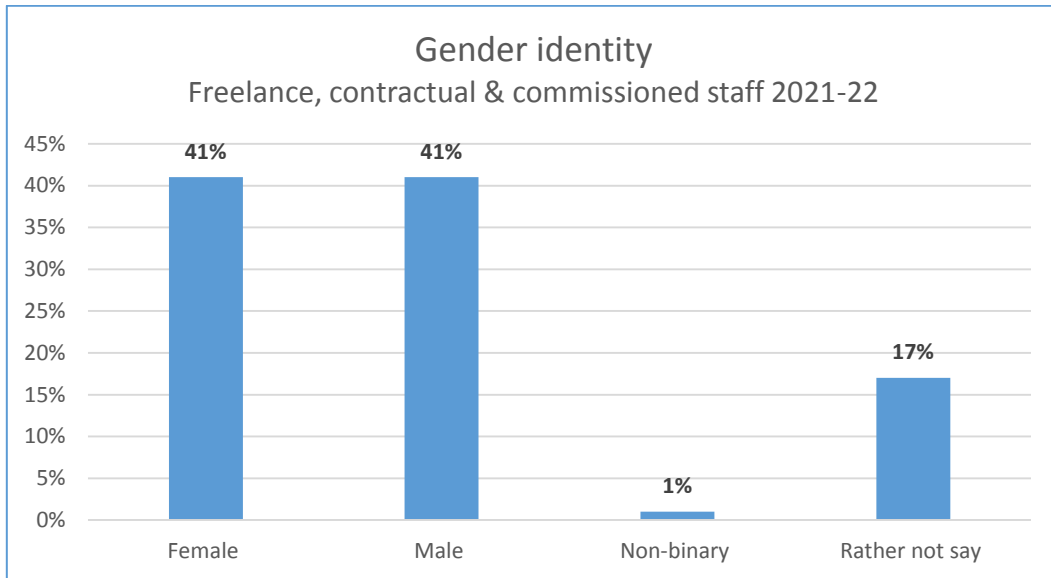
Ethnicity
Freelance, contractual & commissioned staff 2021-22



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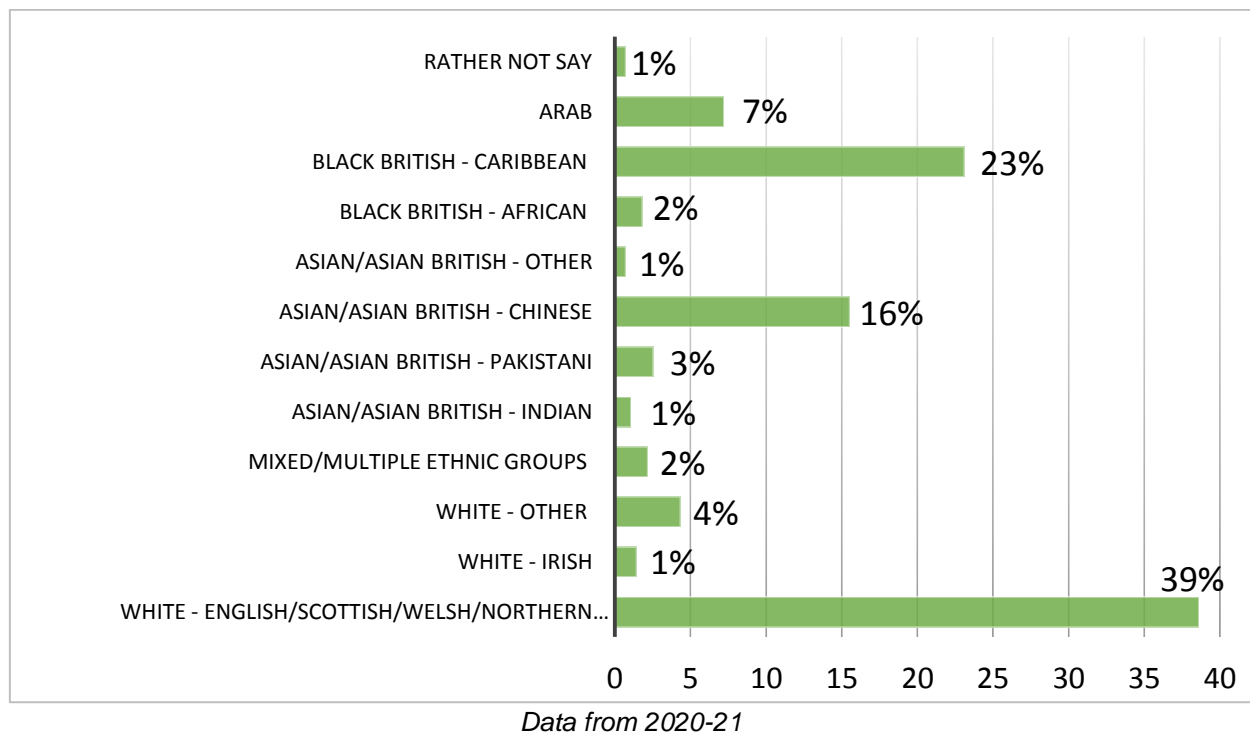
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The gender identity of freelance, contractual & commissioned staff in 2021-22 was as follows:



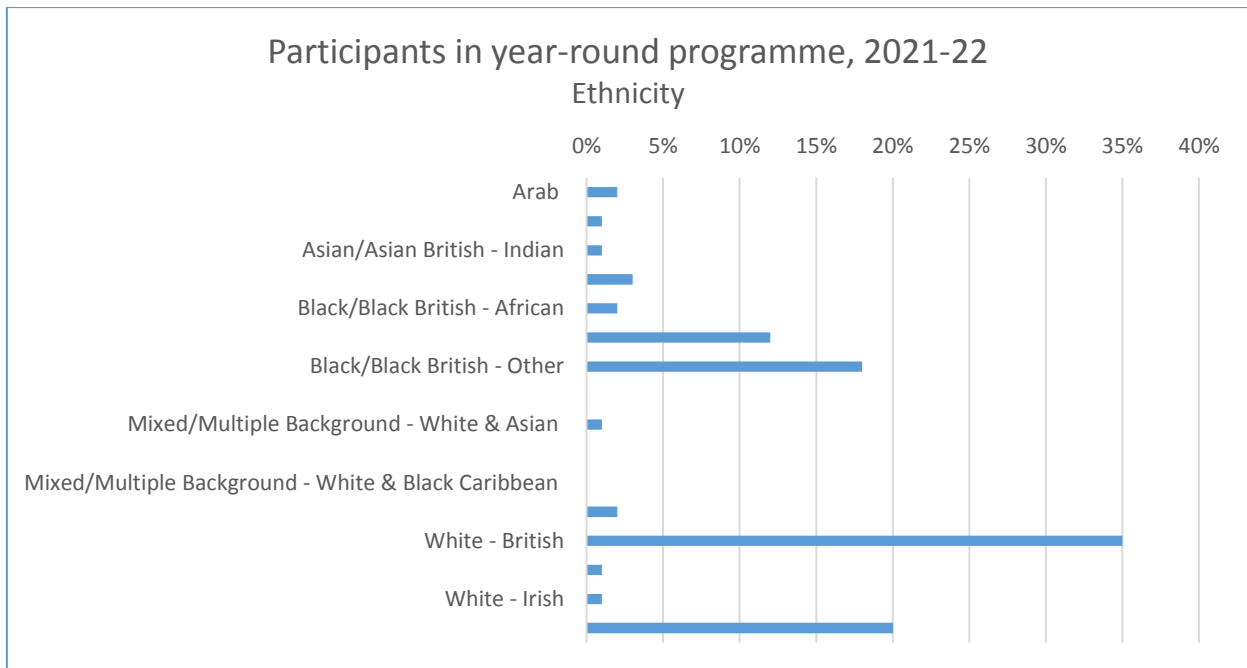
Ethnicity - Volunteers and Participants

Covid clearly challenged many networks and access to shared spaces and work. However during the period we still achieved significant representation across the diverse peoples of Birmingham.



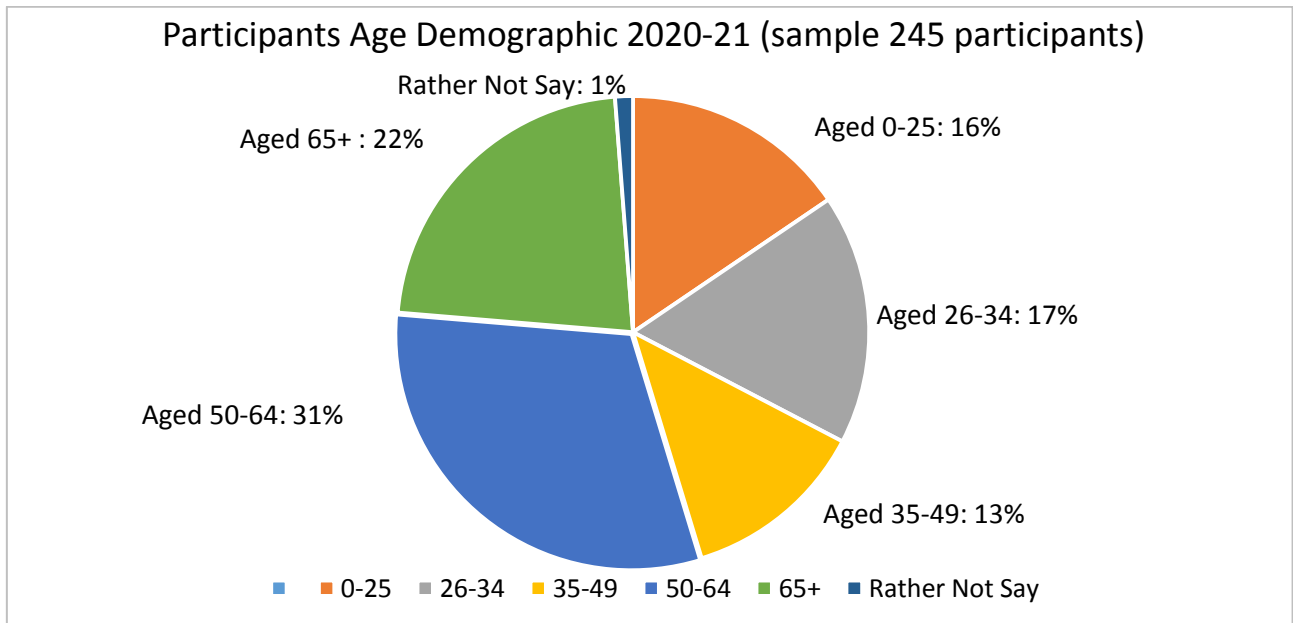
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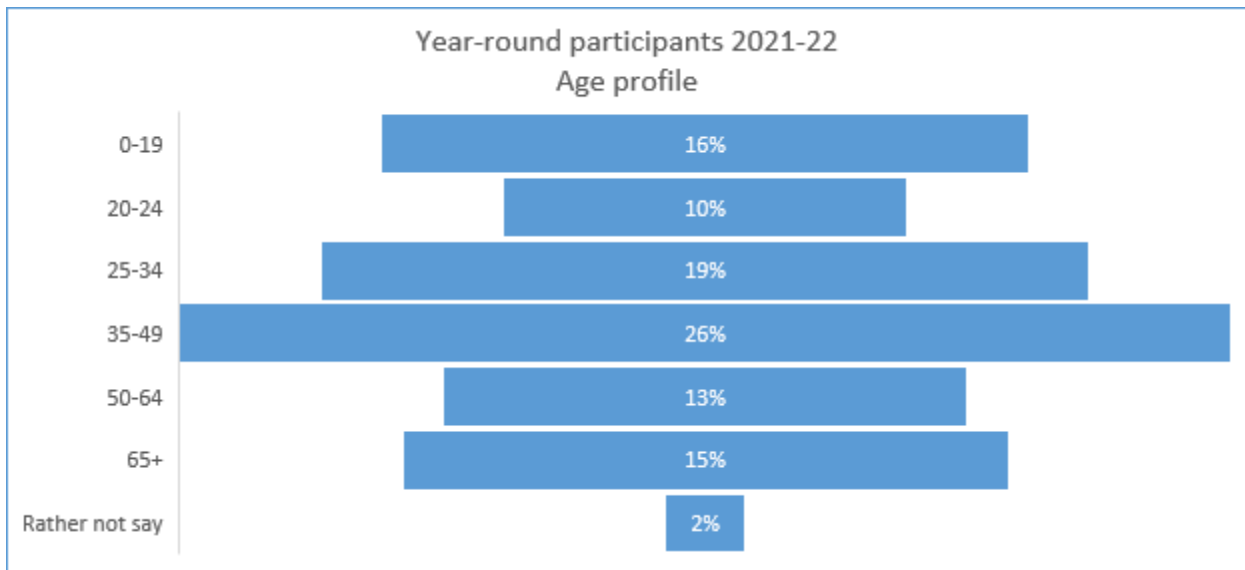
Age

With no separate Education Department and a clear focus on those who sit outside statutory education provision, we have developed a unique multi-generational offer, still maintaining reach across all age groups outside of the statutory education settings.



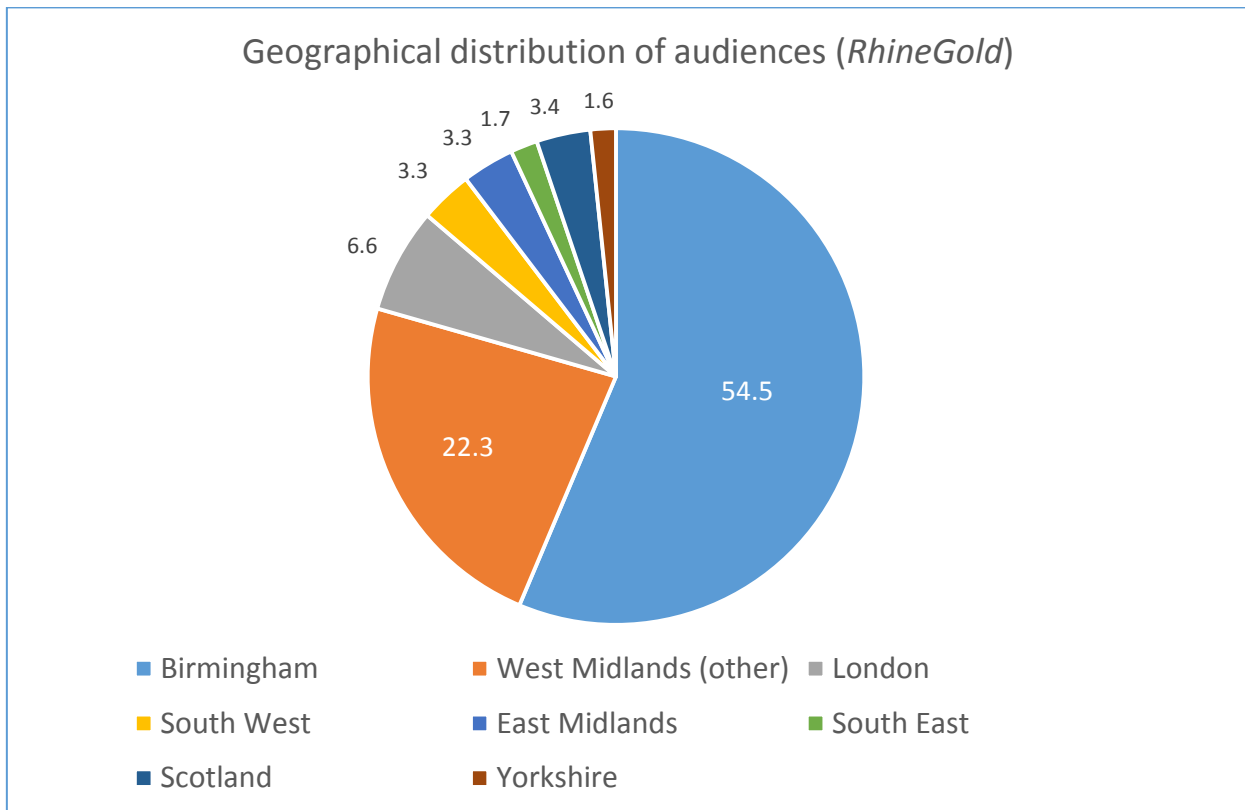
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Audiences

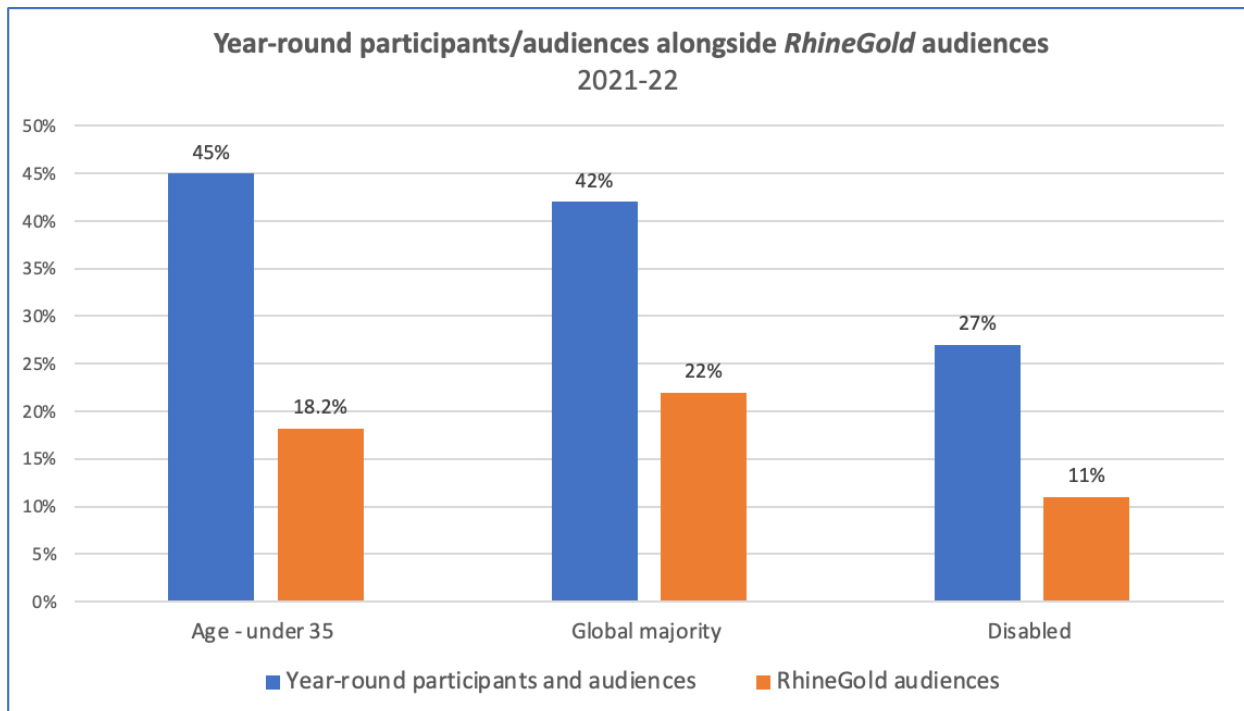
Many of the diverse participants above were also audiences which benefitted from performances “on their doorstep”. Monitoring methods for ticket buying audiences at *RhineGold* proved challenging as we were not able to contact many of them directly due to GDPR on our host venue’s third party box office system.



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Each year, we consider the data we hold for participants and audiences in our year-round programme alongside data for ticketed audiences, with a view to enabling the broadest possible range of people to participate in our work across the board. For 2021-22, that data is as follows:



Covid

Covid had been challenging for all arts organisations, communities and many families and individuals, uncovering stark inequalities in society. Never was it more important to continue to reach out to communities, volunteers, participants, and audiences where possible within COVID guidelines.

Our commitment to freelancers – the lifeblood of the cultural industries

Our small full-time team were acutely aware of many freelancers' difficulties with cancelled contracts. We sought to deliver opportunities for freelance artists, production and stage management, crew and support staff both on and offline throughout the period.

Further, we committed to paying artists their full fee should our projects be cancelled (although none were), thereby taking the burden of risk on to the charity and away from the artist. This enabled freelancers to fully commit to the work, allowing them to continue to develop their craft and continue to reach audiences and participants with their remarkable work for the wider benefit of society. We also committed to underwriting the orchestral freelancers' fees to safeguard those not on full time contracts with our partner CBSO who we required for *RhineGold*. As such many of our *RhineGold* costs were accrued in the previous year's accounts, since the project crossed our year end but the financial commitment was made. The remainder of such costs are to be found in these financial statements.

In line with our "Outstanding" rating in the Creative Case for Diversity (ACE), we targeted work as we would have done pre-pandemic to make digital interactions meaningful and fulfilling to a diverse Birmingham demographic.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Company had incoming resources of £641,653 (2021: £709,573) and total funds at 30 June 2022 of £611,011 (2021: £416,209). The principal funding sources of the charity are Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council (full details of funding are disclosed in notes 13 and 14 of the financial statements), although in this year we also received significant support from Scops Art Trust, The Steel Charitable Trust and The William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust.

FUTURE FINANCIAL REVIEW AND PRICING POLICY

Our plans for 2021-23 are set out in the Business Plan and Trustees review these regularly in the current uncertain climate. Birmingham Opera Company also hold a number of free events including a free ticket preview of the main production and multi-scale performances off site in shopping centres and community centres across the city.

For paying events, ticket prices are held at an affordable level of £19.99 or £10 concessions available. In addition, we allocate tickets to be distributed through participants at a cost of £7.50, plus access to one free ticket to the paying event to ensure that relatives and friends can attend. The major production also has a "free" but ticketed performance to which we invite those we have met through the year, often via our numerous community partners.

2022-23

We have selected a chorus-driven work, *The Decision* (Brecht/ Eisler), to be performed in early 2023 as an opportunity to gather and develop the volunteer chorus and to offer opportunities to emerging and new creative and production teams.

Again opening up BOC as a resource and spreading the method as part of an international programme, we began to lay the groundwork for a European programme including Smetana's *Two Widows* with partners. By the time of writing, this aim has been met and are pleased to announce our hosting the European Opera Directing Prize 2023, with the finals held in Birmingham Summer 2023 and the winning team delivering a site specific project in Czech Republic and Ukraine in 2024 (building on our previous work there in 2021).

In 2022-23 we aim to apply learning from our 2021-22 programme to launch the Four Hubs Initiative, also instigating models of rehearsal which take place on the doorstep with satellite groups and in chosen IMD1-3 districts, including with social and educational partner organisations. We will also hold open rehearsals and hope to extend our residencies in high profile destinations such as New Street Station and Grand Central.

We will invest in Birmingham and its people to develop talent pipelines for creative producers and artists, and explore partnerships with other arts organisations alongside engaging nationally and internationally profiled artists and creative teams.

We will forge ahead with the creation of new and transparent metrics to share our experience with the wider arts sector and society, commission new works from Birmingham-linked artists and developing stronger ties and initiatives with Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and University of Birmingham to kick start Emerging Artist training. We will engage two cohorts of Artistic Associates. Drawing on all the above, partnering with CBSO Youth Orchestra and engaging Birmingham Opera Company Orchestra and others, we will deliver multi-scale performances and other work in English. In this phase – and in preparation for the next – we will seek to open up the amazing resource created especially over that last two decades.

We are exploring further incremental partnerships with organisations to share our work and learning. In future years will continue to build on our partnership with CBSO for larger scale productions.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

RESERVES POLICY

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of resources and to cover unplanned emergencies. The Trustees consider that the ideal level of reserves is £75,000, and the higher level of reserves held at the year end will be used for future production projects.

The actual unrestricted reserves are £571,031 (2021: £389,929) of which £396,031 (2021: £250,000) are designated by the Trustees for future production projects (2021: Going for Gold and post-*RhineGold* events).

Restricted funds are £39,980 (2021: £26,280).

COVID 19

On 15 March 2020 we curtailed all rehearsal and event activity with the aim to re-start at the earliest opportunity, taking into account the information and advice available. In response to increased risks due to COVID, we adapted our programming to deliver digital, hybrid, live and multi-scale activity to address our key mission. We did not furlough staff or claim Cultural Recovery Funds or other public COVID support funds, preferring to maintain our key presence and delivery of our work to beneficiaries.

We delivered a huge uplift in digital activity during Covid times, plus live face-to-face performances in Autumn 2020 between lockdowns. From Spring 2021 we began face-to-face activity once again, closely following the roadmap culminating in *RhineGold* in Summer 2021. From this point, we have undertaken hybrid activity, both face-to-face and online, selected by Musical America Worldwide as at "Top Ten Pivot".

GOING CONCERN

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern with strict controls on spend and analysis of present risk and future scenario planning. With a commitment to live within our means, we have currently not applied for or received any additional government funds such as Cultural Recovery Funds, nor have we furloughed any staff.

We remain a National Portfolio Organisation with Arts Council England (2018-2023) and 2021-23 with Birmingham City Council. These are significant expressions of confidence in the Company to deliver the highest quality work that engages people from the city's many different communities and reflects the city's diversity. As detailed elsewhere we were awarded a 20% uplift for the period 2023-26 from Arts Council England. Birmingham City Council have proposed standstill funding for the NPO period, subject to confirmation March 2023.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to provide them with regular reports so that the necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

TRUSTEES

The trustees who held office during the year are set out on Page 2.

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association Graham Vick, a Trustee, was due £Nil (2021: £37,083) (plus VAT) for services from July 2020 to his passing 17 July 2021 for services provided to the Company. This Trustee will reimburse the charity for all mobile telephone costs and £2,355 was owed at year end (2021: £2,355).

No other trustees were paid expenses.

Nicholas Payne is Director of Opera Europa. The charity paid £1,759 (2021: £1,627) to Opera Europa in respect of membership and other fees. Nothing was owed to Opera Europa at either year end.

Approved by the Board on Apr 25, 2023..... and signed on its order by



Richard Willacy

Trustee and Company Secretary

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

I report on the financial statements of Birmingham Opera Company for the year ended 30th June 2022, which are set out on pages 24 to 37.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(b) of the 2011 Act.

This report, including my statement, has been prepared for and only for the charity's trustees as a body. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body for my examination work, for this report, or for the statements I have made.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, 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 no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales which is one of the listed bodies.

In connection with my examination, which is complete, no matters have come to my attention which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of Birmingham Opera Company in accordance with section 386 of the 2006 Act; or

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principals of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



David Hoose (Apr 25, 2023 15:30 GMT+1)

**David Hoose FCA
For and on behalf of Mazars LLP
First Floor
Two Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3AX**

Date: Apr 25, 2023

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)
(A Company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	General £	Unrestricted Designated £	Restricted £	2022 Total £	General £	Unrestricted Designated £	Restricted £	2021 Total £
Income from:									
Donations & grants	3	532,026	-	45,500	577,526	569,961	-	96,905	666,866
Other income	4	64,127	-	-	64,127	42,707	-	-	42,707
Total income		596,153	-	45,500	641,653	612,668	-	96,905	709,573
Expenditure on:									
Fundraising		18,256	-	-	18,256	18,035	-	-	18,035
Performances		150,630	235,000	31,800	417,430	213,886	413,797	106,125	733,808
Other costs		10,885	-	-	10,885	11,874	-	-	11,874
Total expenditure	5	180,051	235,000	31,800	446,851	243,795	413,797	106,125	763,717
Net movement in funds		416,102	(235,000)	13,700	194,802	368,873	(413,797)	(9,220)	(54,144)
Transfer between funds		(381,031)	381,031	-	-	(349,714)	349,714	-	-
Fund balance brought forward 1 July 2021		139,929	250,000	26,280	416,209	120,770	314,083	35,500	470,353
Fund balance carried forward 30 June 2022		175,000	396,031	39,980	611,011	139,929	250,000	26,280	416,209

The charity's income and expenditure all relate to continuing operations.

All surpluses and deficits recognised in the period are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)**BALANCE SHEET****30 JUNE 2022**

	Note	2022		2021	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible	8		2,119		-
Intangible	9		40,000		40,000
			<u>42,119</u>		<u>40,000</u>
Current assets					
Stock	10	5,200		5,200	
Debtors	11	261,665		74,522	
Cash at bank and in hand		350,291		635,172	
			<u>617,156</u>	<u>714,894</u>	
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(48,264)		(338,685)	
Net current assets			568,892		371,209
Total assets less total liabilities			<u>611,011</u>		<u>416,209</u>
The funds of the charity:					
Unrestricted funds					
General	13		175,000		139,929
Designated	13		396,031		250,000
Restricted funds	14		39,980		26,280
Total Charity Funds	15		<u>611,011</u>		<u>416,209</u>

For the year ending 30th June 2022 the Company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the Company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in accordance with section 476, the Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on ..Apr.25, 2023..... and signed on its behalf by:


Nicholas Payne (Apr 25 2023 15:28 GMT+1)

Nicholas Payne - Chair

The notes on pages 26 to 37 form part of these financial statements.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash used in operating activities	19	(282,482)	336,940
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,399)	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash provided by investing activities		-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(284,881)	336,940
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		635,172	298,232
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward		<u>350,291</u>	<u>635,172</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

1. COMPANY STATUS

The Company is limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, and does not have a share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 2. The liability of members is limited and shall not exceed £1. Any surplus on winding up is to be donated to a charity whose objects are of a similar nature. The Company has taken advantage of section 30(5) of the Companies Act 2006 and deleted the word "Limited" from its name.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a. Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102) and the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102, and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements also comply in all material respects with applicable accounting standards. They are drawn up under the historical cost accounting rules as modified for the revaluation of intangible fixed assets. All operations are classed as continuing and no operations have been acquired during the current or previous year.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Company will continue to operate. The validity of this assumption is dependent upon the continuance of support from the Company's key grant funders (Arts Council for England and Birmingham City Council) and in response to the progress made by the Company in pursuing a viable budget including the obtaining of further grants and other funds. The Company's current business plan shows that the Company, with continued focus on income diversification and restructure, will be able to operate in the foreseeable future. Based on this understanding, the directors believe that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

b. Income

Donations and sponsorship are accounted for on a cash received basis. Grants receivable are recognised in relation to the year and production cycle to which the grants relate.

Performance rights represent amounts received in respect of translations, arrangements or other such items sold to other performing groups. Income is only recognised on the completion of a sale. Due to the uncertainty of subsequent sales, expenditure in obtaining such items including expenditure on sets, properties, orchestrations and costumes is written off as incurred and is not carried forward in the Balance Sheet.

Covenanted donations are taken to income on a receivable basis, provision for deferred income being established for amounts received in advance of the covenanted date of payment.

Tax refunds are recognised when the relevant expenditure has been incurred and the refund is considered probable.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

c. Fund accounting

The charity maintains various types of unrestricted funds as follows:

Designated funds represent amounts that have been put aside out of unrestricted funds at the discretion of the Trustees for particular projects. The designation is for administrative purposes only and does not legally restrict the Trustees discretion to apply the fund.

General unrestricted funds represent unrestricted income, which is expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the objectives of the charity. Such funds may be held in order to finance both working capital and capital investment.

Where the charity has restricted funds these are to be used for the purpose as specified by the provider of the income.

d. Expenditure

All items of expenditure are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Governance costs are the costs of governance arrangements relating to the general running of the charity.

e. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Equipment is stated at cost and depreciated on a straight line basis over five years. Sets and props are depreciated on a straight line basis over two years where considered appropriate. Only items greater than £1,000 are capitalised.

f. Intangible Fixed Assets

Intangible fixed assets comprise values ascribed to the stock of scores commissioned by the Company and which will provide royalty and performance income over many years in the future. These values are based on the Trustees' assessments of royalties etc. expected supported by a comparative view of the transaction values of similar properties within the publishing industry. The carrying value of the assets is not subject to annual amortisation but is reviewed annually for any permanent diminution in carrying value.

g. Taxation

Any surplus of the Company income over its expenditure is applied solely for the purposes of the charity and its activities are the primary purpose of the charity. Under the provisions of Section 505, Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 the Company is exempt from liability to taxation.

h. Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions in the Statement of financial activities are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the closing rates at the balance sheet date and the exchange differences are included in the statement of financial activity.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

i. Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the lease term.

j. Stock Valuation

The Wardrobe stock is stated at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

k. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

l. Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The charity makes estimates, in relation to valuation of assets, and assumptions concerning the future. The estimates and assumptions have no material impact on the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the accounts.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY**Notes to the Financial Statements****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022****3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS**

The Company gratefully acknowledges the support given by the following during the course of the year:	2022 £	2021 £
Grants received from:		
Arts Council England	486,433	486,433
Birmingham City Council	31,570	32,870
CB and HH Taylor 1984 Trust	1,000	-
FEDORA	-	1,792
FEDORA Education Prize	-	44,812
Fenton Arts Trust	3,500	-
George Cadbury Fund	-	25,000
Individuals sponsors and donors	14,023	25,659
The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK)	-	22,251
Love Brum	1,000	-
Scops Art Trust	10,000	-
Baron Davenport's Charity	-	800
The Cole Charitable Trust	1,000	1,000
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	-	3,500
The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust	-	2,000
The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust	-	3,000
GJW Turner Trust	-	2,000
The Grantham Yorke Trust	500	-
The Grimmitt Trust	-	1,500
The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation	-	2,000
The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity	500	500
The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation	1,000	-
R A and V B Reekie Trust	-	1,000
The Roger & Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	2,000	-
The Roughley Trust	1,000	-
The Saintbury Trust	4,000	6,000
The Sheldon Trust	-	2,000
The Steel Charitable Trust	10,000	-
Thriplow Charitable Trust	-	2,000
W. E. Dunn Charitable Trust	-	750
The William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust	10,000	-
	<u>577,526</u>	<u>666,867</u>

4. OTHER INCOME

	2022 £	2021 £
Box office income and music library hire	30,917	8,576
Theatre tax credits	29,905	30,017
Other	<u>3,305</u>	<u>4,114</u>
	<u>64,127</u>	<u>42,707</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

5. EXPENDITURE

	2022	2021
	£	£
Fundraising costs	18,256	18,035
Other salary costs	126,974	152,008
Other production costs	290,456	581,801
Governance	11,165	11,874
	<u>446,851</u>	<u>763,718</u>

6. NET RESOURCES EXPENDED FOR THE YEAR

Net resources expended for the year are stated after charging:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Amount paid to Independent Examiner		
- IE and Accounts Preparation	2,800	2,715
- Tax	1,500	1,350
Lease payments	19,926	14,376
Depreciation	280	315
	<u>280</u>	<u>315</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

7. EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Staff costs	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	127,715	146,506
Social security	14,718	14,916
Pension cost	<u>6,696</u>	<u>7,164</u>
	<u>149,129</u>	<u>168,586</u>
	Number	Number
Average number of employees (excluding trustees) employed during the year	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>

There were no employees with emoluments in excess of £60,000 per annum in either year.

Trustees have indemnity insurance with a Policy Aggregate Limit of £500,000, at a cost of £299 (2021: £500,000, at a cost of £358).

All employees are deemed to be key management personnel. Pension payments totalled £6,696 (2021: £7,164).

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Equipment £
Cost	
At 1 July 2021	36,312
Additions	2,399
Disposals	(16,074)
At 30 June 2022	22,637
Accumulated Depreciation	
At 1 July 2021	36,312
Charge for the period	280
On disposals	(16,074)
At 30 June 2022	20,518
Net book value	
At 30 June 2022	2,199
At 30 June 2021	-

9. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	2022 £	2021 £
Valuation of intellectual property rights of scores, future royalties etc. (see note 2f)	40,000	40,000

The Trustees have valued the intellectual property rights over scores commissioned by the Company following advice obtained from the music publishing industry.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

10. STOCKS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wardrobe stock	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>
	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>

11. DEBTORS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Grants receivable	181,659	8,789
Trade debtors	1,625	2,808
VAT debtor	3,367	10,272
Accrued income	74,760	50,000
Other debtors	254	2,653
	<u>261,665</u>	<u>74,522</u>

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022	2021
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade creditors	19,564	40,062
Other taxes and social security	-	4,050
Accruals and other creditors	28,700	294,573
	<u>48,264</u>	<u>338,685</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

13. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	General Reserves	Designated Reserves	Total 2022	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward	139,929	250,000	389,929	434,853
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	416,102	(235,000)	181,102	(44,924)
Transfer between funds	(381,031)	381,031	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carried forward	175,000	396,031	571,031	389,929
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

14. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£
CB and HH Taylor 1984 Trust	-	1,000	-	1,000
Fenton Arts Trust	-	3,500	3,500	-
Love Brum	-	1,000	1,000	-
Scops Art Trust	-	10,000	-	10,000
Baron Davenport's Charity	800	-	800	-
The Cole Charitable Trust	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust	2,000	-	2,000	-
The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust	3,000	-	3,000	-
The Foyle Foundation	11,980	-	-	11,980
The Grantham Yorke Trust	-	500	-	500
The Grimmit Trust	1,500	-	1,500	-
The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity	-	500	-	500
The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation	-	1,000	-	1,000
The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	-	2,000	2,000	-
The Roughley Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-
The Saintbury Trust	6,000	4,000	6,000	4,000
The Steel Charitable Trust	-	10,000	-	10,000
The William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust	-	10,000	10,000	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	26,280	45,500	31,800	39,980
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

All restricted funds are for emerging artists and participation.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

15. ANALYSIS OF ASSETS AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible and intangible fixed assets	42,119	-	42,119
Current assets	577,176	39,980	617,156
Current liabilities	<u>(48,264)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(48,264)</u>
Total net assets	<u>571,031</u>	<u>39,980</u>	<u>611,011</u>

16. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

As at 30 June 2022 the Company had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Other 2022 £	2021 £
Less than 1 year	19,128	14,057
1 – 2 years	-	1,257
2 – 5 years	<u>-</u>	<u>628</u>
	<u>19,128</u>	<u>15,942</u>

17. TRUSTEE EXPENSES

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association Graham Vick, a Trustee, was due £Nil (2021: £37,083) (plus VAT) for services from July 2020 to his passing 17 July 2021 for services provided to the Company. This Trustee will reimburse the charity for all mobile telephone costs and £2,355 was owed at year end (2021: £2,355).

No other trustees were paid expenses.

18. RELATED PARTY

Nicholas Payne is Director of Opera Europa. The charity paid £1,759 (2021: £1,627) to Opera Europa in respect of membership and other fees. Nothing was owed to Opera Europa at either year end.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

19 RECONCILIATION OF NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS TO NET CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2022	2021
	£	£
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	194,802	(54,144)
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation	280	315
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(187,143)	87,284
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(290,421)	303,485
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash used in operating activities	(282,482)	336,940
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY

England & Wales - Charity number 291130

Accounts

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Registered number: 01850467
Registered charity number: 291130

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

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BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
(A company limited by guarantee)
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

Trustees and Directors:	Nicholas Payne (Chair) Tony Colville Katie Fulcher William Hesselby OBE Catherine Allen Amahra Spence (appointed 8 December 2020) Lauren Williams Sir Graham Vick CBE (deceased 17 July 2021) Justine Themen
Personnel:	Artistic Director – Sir Graham Vick CBE + Music Director – Alpesh Chauhan Artistic Associate – Reisz Amos Executive Director – Richard Willacy (subsequently appointed General Director 2022) General Manager – Hannah Griffiths Development Coordinator – Charlotte Titcombe
Associate Artists:	Choreographer – Ron Howell Vocal Coach – Jane Robinson Casting Consultant – Sarah Playfair Projects Consultant – Sheelagh Barnard Chartered Management Accountant – Shohaib Shafiq ACMA, CGMA
Secretary:	Richard Willacy
Registered Office:	205 The Argent Centre 60 Frederick Street Birmingham B1 3HS
Bankers:	Lloyds Bank plc 36/38 New Street Birmingham B2 4LP
Independent Examiner:	David Hoose Mazars LLP First Floor Two Chamberlain Square Birmingham B3 3AX
Registered Charity Number:	291130

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees, who are also directors of the Company, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ending 30th June 2021 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for the Directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

OVERVIEW

At the heart of the charity's objectives is the aim to bring the best quality opera to the broadest possible audience. To help us with this objective we have now built an extraordinary company of volunteer performers drawn from Birmingham's multicultural population. They contribute their time, talent and creativity alongside some of the world's leading opera professionals to create truly memorable productions. In return, we enable fantastic training, skills and self-confidence as well as friendships and contacts between people whose paths may not otherwise cross. This is social inclusion and highest quality art in action.

Without the support of our funders Birmingham Opera Company would not exist, so grateful thanks are due to Arts Council England, Birmingham City Council and a number of repeat and new Trusts, Foundations and donors. Birmingham Opera Company attracted support from 24 Trusts and Foundations in 2020-21.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of The Nicholas John Trust, The Foyle Foundation, The Eveson Trust, The Grantham Yorke Trust, The Fidelio Charitable Trust, The Leche Trust, The Steel Charitable Trust, The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, FEDORA (FEDORA Education Prize – with support from a private foundation), The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK), W. E. Dunn Charitable Trust, The Sheldon Trust, R A and V B Reekie Trust, The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity, The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation, GJW Turner Trust, The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust, The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust, The Grimmitt Trust, George Cadbury Fund, Thriplow Charitable Trust, The Cole Charitable Trust, The Saintbury Trust, Baron Davenport's Charity.

As detailed in the later digital section, we are grateful for the support of The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) which matched funds donated by individual donors, to the individual donors themselves and to FEDORA for their platform and support. We are especially grateful also to Benedict and Katharine Cadbury for their support.

Support from public funds and civic funds from Birmingham City Council is critical to the success of the Company and acknowledges the role that the Company plays in representing the city in the international opera arena and in enriching the lives of the people and communities of Birmingham. In the current changing environment of public and civic funding, the Board continues to be appraised of and mitigate for foreseen risks. Having been awarded Arts Council England National Portfolio status for the period 2018-2022, now extended to 2022-23 in response to the pandemic, Arts Council England remains our major funder.

We are currently establishing evidence and partnerships which will bolster our sources of income and build resilience. In the current uncertain climate for funding, we are looking to diversify funding streams.

With only 3% of our year-round beneficiaries in the more affluent sections of society, philanthropy from individuals and Trusts is vital to support the 80+% of our beneficiaries who come from the most deprived sections of society. We operate the lowest possible ticket prices to enable access with much of our work delivered free at the point of access and with a maximum ticket price of £19.99. Many paying audience members pay significantly less than this (from £5). We have no "tiers" – there is no better "seat" whether you pay £19.99 or £5.

Sir Graham Vick CBE 30 December 1953 - 17 July 2021

On 17 July 2021, we sadly lost our Founder Artistic Director, Graham Vick, who was knighted only months earlier for services to music in the regions.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Knighthood citation read:

"Graham Vick is considered by many to be one of the foremost opera directors of modern times. Director of Productions of Scottish Opera 1984-87 and Glyndebourne 1994-2000, he has been Artistic Director of Birmingham Opera Company since its foundation in 1987 where his pioneering work has brought world premieres of Ravi Shankar, Dove, Battistelli, Stockhausen's *Mittwoch aus Licht* and radical productions of *Votzek*, *Othello*, *Khovanskygate* to the most unlikely places (a disused factory, an abandoned ice rink, a defunct rock venue), integrating local volunteers into the process of making and building bridges with the city's socially diverse, multi ethnic population."

We were devastated at Graham's loss and deeply touched by the genuine outpouring of affection from all the artists, volunteers, audiences, colleagues, and many others whose lives he had touched.

Looking to the future

The Board and Executive, artists, volunteers, and community partners aim to ensure that our unique work continues to lead the way in what opera can be and is sustainable for future generations, to ensure that Birmingham Opera Company can continue to sing stories which speak to everyone; opera for a 21st century UK.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Laws applicable to charitable companies in England and Wales require the Trustees to prepare the financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

The Company is limited by guarantee and therefore does not have a share capital. The liability of members is limited, and details of their guarantee are detailed in the notes to the accounts. The Company is also registered as a charity.

The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 24th September 1984, amended 19th July 2012.

Overall responsibility for the Company's activities is vested in the Board, whose members also serve as the charity's Trustees. All of the Trustees are in non-executive positions.

The Trustees are appointed at the Company's Annual General Meeting; casual vacancies are filled by appointment agreed by the Board.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Potential Trustees are invited to an initial interview with the Chairman and/or the General Director. The appointment of a new Trustee must be approved at a full meeting of the current Trustees. Trustees receive an induction pack with information about the Company and a detailed written guide to their responsibilities as a Trustee. The Chairman is initially responsible with the General Director for the induction and training of a new Trustee.

The day-to-day management of the Company is delegated to the General Director who is expected to report to the Trustees at a minimum of four times each year, and more if required. These meetings will monitor the activities of the Company, the finances of the Company, the risk assessments and future planning to achieve the aims of the charity. Officers of our two major funders, Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council, are invited to attend all Trustee meetings.

In this accounting period Graham Vick was Artistic Director, Alpesh Chauhan became our inaugural Music Director, Richard Willacy remained Executive Director, Hannah Griffiths remained General Manager, Charlotte Titcombe as Development Co-ordinator, and Reisz Amos Artistic Associate.

Subsequently, Executive Director Richard Willacy (Associate Director since 2000 and Associate Artistic Director from 2008-14) was appointed General Director and elected to the Board as a Trustee (subject to Charity Commission approval at the time of writing).

OBJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The principal activity of the Company is to encourage and promote the advancement of learning and in particular the art and science of music by the production, arrangement, promotion and commissioning of opera under the name of Birmingham Opera Company and other musical performances and concerts, and to foster interest in such operas, concerts and musical performances by such means as may from time to time be considered appropriate by the Company.

Birmingham Opera Company aims to bring the best quality opera to the broadest possible audience and to engage opera as a means of achieving greater dialogue between estranged communities. Working outside the norms of most opera companies, it is dedicated to mounting productions away from existing opera houses and theatres and presenting opera in unusual places at affordable prices. It has a policy of encouraging local people to take part as volunteer performers alongside the professional team of singers, players and technicians as well as attend the performances. A two-way process creating the opportunity for more people to be a part of opera, whilst enriching Birmingham Opera Company's work with a wealth of human experience. Birmingham Opera Company combines the highest artistic standards with an open invitation to the people of the city to join in and explore this deeply transformative art form.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

In shaping our objectives and planning the programme, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance on public benefit and fee charging. Birmingham Opera Company relies on grants and income from fees and charges to cover its operating costs. In setting the level of fees, charges and concessions, the Trustees give careful consideration to the accessibility of the performance space for those on low incomes.

The strategies employed to achieve the charity's aims and objectives are to:

- Offer opportunities for a broad range of people to get involved in expressive arts activities such as singing, acting, dancing and writing.
- Present opera performances for the enjoyment and education of our local community and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for diverse professional artists to develop their skills and artistry.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

- Target socially excluded communities to help build bridges to mainstream arts provision available to them but not extensively used.

To achieve this strategy, we have a programme of targeted events delivered at grass roots level within the excluded communities we want to engage. We support and train people who elect to become part of the main production and make sure that confidence levels rise to match the level of performance we are internationally renowned for. We also support people to progress and pursue other opportunities to take part in arts activities in the city or to pursue further study in either formal or informal settings.

CORE FOCUS

World Class Opera in Birmingham

Founded by Sir Graham Vick CBE, Birmingham Opera Company draws internationally renowned and emerging artists to the region, gaining national and international recognition for the city and the cultural offer in the region.

Participatory training as a tool to achieve artistically at the highest level

We believe that participatory training is essential to the practice and training of the highest calibre artists and will be at the heart of the art form's future.

Participation as a tool to develop a new generation of diverse UK artists

Conservatoires and training organisations all agree that fewer and fewer ethnically diverse British artists are coming through their doors. Over a ten-year period, we will grow a new generation of diverse socially responsible singers, directors, designers and choreographers through our work.

Participation as a tool to access new audiences

With artists and art revitalized by participatory work we will continue to re-invigorate the genre and the audience.

Leading the way

Birmingham Opera Company's intergenerational and intercultural practice was ahead of the curve in the first year of existence. Birmingham Opera Company's "participatory" model won the Royal Philharmonic Society Award (RPS) for New Audience Development in 2001 and again in 2007, the only company to win it twice in that decade.

In the UK, we have achieved the highest accolade in opera, the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre, firstly in 2012 for *Mittwoch aus Licht* and again in 2019 for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and we were nominated for the South Bank Show Sky Arts Award for Best Opera 2015 and 2020.

Globally we are making a mark, having been awarded the International Opera Award 2015 for Best Production against stiff international competition from Metropolitan Opera New York, Zurich Opera, Dutch National Opera, Festival d'Aix and English National Opera. At the International Opera Awards 2016, Birmingham Opera Company was nominated for the Accessibility Award and Rediscovered Work Award and were winners of both the FEDORA Education Prize 2020 and the International Opera Award for Outreach and Education 2021.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Birmingham Opera Company is the only company to have received both the RPS Award for Opera and Music Theatre and the International Opera Award for Best Production. It is also the only participatory company to receive either award, let alone both.

Additionally, Birmingham Opera Company's model has been adopted in Europe and beyond in collaborations with external producers who pay full costs of the work in their respective cities. International co-productions have taken place in Macerata (Italy), Valencia (Spain) and Poznań (Poland). Our diverse artists and audiences make our work in Birmingham a unique model for the future of opera.

As 2019 Winner of the **Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre** for the ground-breaking *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* the judges said: *"Another sensational production from Birmingham Opera Company embracing and embedding its community in world-class work. This is the kind of thing we all wish we were doing – a model to us all in being ambitious and truly going for it. It delivers the pure drama and emotional punch of opera without gimmicks – the audience feels right inside it, and it proves how resonant, inclusive and exciting opera is."*

2020-21

2020-21 has been a challenging year for all arts organisations, communities and many families and individuals, uncovering stark inequalities in society. Never was it more important to continue to reach out to communities, volunteers, participants, and audiences where possible within COVID guidelines.

Music Director

We welcomed Alpesh Chauhan to his first year as Music Director, taking up the role on 1 July 2020. Alpesh's appointment will further strengthen the artistic capacity of the Company and its roots in the City.

Furlough and Cultural Recovery Funds

With no fixed venue and only four full time staff, most of our spend in-year is on work which reaches people directly on their doorstep. We operate a dynamic model, able to respond to need and circumstance and this enabled us to deliver work throughout the COVID pandemic.

As such, the charity did not apply for or receive any furlough or Cultural Recovery Funds.

Our commitment to freelancers- the lifeblood of the cultural industries

Our small full-time team were acutely aware of many freelancers' difficulties with cancelled contracts. We sought to deliver opportunities for freelance artists, production and stage management, crew and support staff both on and offline throughout the period.

Further, we committed to paying artists their full fee should our projects be cancelled (although none were), thereby taking the burden of risk on to the charity and away from the artist. This enabled freelancers to fully commit to the work, enabling them to continue to develop their craft and continue to reach audiences and participants with their remarkable work for the wider benefit of society. We also committed to underwriting the orchestral freelancers' fees to safeguard those not on full time contracts with our partner CBSO who we required for *RhineGold*. As such many of our *RhineGold* costs are accrued in these accounts as the project crossed our year end but the financial commitment was made.

At times of such uncertainty, our only certainty is a shared purpose. We gratefully acknowledge the wholehearted commitment from all our freelancers and partners at such a challenging time.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

A dynamic multi-scale, multi venue, on and offline programme for Covid times

Our small team opened the door to new partnerships both online and face-to-face. We adapted our programme to deliver full year-round activity with tens of thousands of online audiences and participants with meaningful viewing statistics, bucking the trend of online fatigue to deliver statistics over 40 minutes per viewer on some projects. We took the opportunity to host live online events to enable direct access to artists and creative teams, created practical activity-based sessions to gather people in pursuit of personal wellbeing at times of isolation and mounted face-to-face rehearsals and performances where possible between lockdowns; firstly smaller scale and outdoor and socially distanced indoors. With no fixed venue, as ever, our face-to-face work lived in the fabric and peoples of the city: always adapting, reaching out, popping up for a performance in Tesco, rehearsing in a disused warehouse in Ladywood or mounting a full scale Wagner's *RhineGold* production in the iconic Symphony Hall; inspired by its setting in a conference centre to deliver anti-corruption demonstrations as the audiences arrived and a leader in Wotan who insisted that "Your Lives Matter".

Digital Activity, broadcasts and events

We continually strove to make our "digital" output "live" and engaging in all areas of our work from productions to participation to fundraising. In all our "digital" activities, we encouraged two-way and active participation.

"Top 10 Pandemic Pivots of 2020" - Musical America Worldwide.

Birmingham Opera Company pivoted in 2020-21 to deliver a year-round digital programme, including securing a unique BBC agreement for re-broadcasting *Fidelio* on a third-party channel, clearing a live hosted streaming weekend of *Mittwoch aus Licht / Wednesday from Light* on BOC's channel and in Châtelet's *Après Demain* Festival, a BBC iPlayer outing of BOC's and the UK's first *Othello* and premieres of newly edited film versions of our landmark productions of Michael Tippett's *The Ice Break* and Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* on OperaVision, all with live hosted events. In line with our support for freelancers, we directed viewers to third party charitable sites such as Help Musicians' Hardship Fund.

This production-inspired programme was complemented by a series of online participatory 'SOFA Sessions' for those in isolation, *"It gets lighter from here"* - 10 new digital short commissions for emerging artists, and leading a full-scale digital festival for the West Midlands and beyond - *Ritual Weekender* - on behalf of Culture Central in August 2020, featuring over 50 regional artists from new writing, theatre, rock, pop, dance and opera including BBC Introducing and Coventry 2021.

For streaming work and live-hosted events, we worked across platforms (including our own website, Vimeo, Facebook and partner platforms) to gain insights into breadth and depth of engagement. We saw considerable growth in traffic to our website in 2020-21, with monthly visits leaping 10 times from 19-20 to 20-21. Traffic spiked in line with Birmingham Opera Company past productions being made available online and live-hosted events.

In line with our "Outstanding" rating in the Creative Case for Diversity (ACE), we targeted work as we would have done pre-pandemic so to make digital interactions meaningful and fulfilling to a diverse Birmingham demographic.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

"Honestly, I have had a really horrible time of lockdown. This session today made me feel better about myself and more hopeful. It's amazing that it was by zoom because it's difficult for me to travel for sessions. Having a bit of arts education accessible in my home was so great."

Online session, 23rd July 2020 – Poetry & the Power of Music Summer event series, ethnicity breakdown:

- Asian/Asian British, Indian – 3%
- Asian/Asian British, Chinese – 23%
- Asian/Asian British, Other – 3%
- Black/Black British, African – 23%
- Black/Black British, Caribbean – 5%
- Mixed/multiple ethnic groups, White & Black Caribbean – 3%
- White, British – 36%
- White, Irish – 5%
- White, Other – 5%
- Rather Not Say – 3%

We also took the opportunity to partner with other organisations such as Celebrating Sanctuary to deliver online sessions exploring diverse musical styles with artists from each organisation and the residents of Birmingham.

Our work in care settings was enriched by the physical materials delivered to the hands of participants and the collaboration of regular carers and staff onsite.

"Loved being able to shake off my day. I work frontline and having the opportunity to do something completely different and use my voice and body in a different way was amazing"

Online session, w/c 1st March 2021

- Age under 50 = 33%, age 50-64 = 33%, age 65 plus = 33%
- Asian/Asian British - Indian = 3%, Asian/Asian British - Other = 3%, Black/Black British - Caribbean = 8%, Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups = 6%, White British = 72%, White Irish = 3%, White Other = 3%, Rather not say = 3%
- Identify as D/deaf or disabled or with a long-term health condition = 25%

Aware that many in our region and beyond have little or no access to digital output and to address the digital poverty, we constructed partnerships with community radio channels such as Hope FM.

We continued our work with Higher Education artist training online through Graham Vick at Royal Northern College of Music and Richard Willacy at Nottingham Trent University.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

We began digitisation and marketing our Music Library of re-imagined orchestrations for smaller forces and many titles were performed nationally and internationally including Deutsche Oper re-opening June 2020 and ENO's drive-in *La bohème* on Sky Arts later in the year.

Beyond Birmingham, the recent films of our pre-covid three short opera commissions by Birmingham linked composers were featured in O Festival in the Netherlands.

We captured *RhineGold* at broadcast standard for subsequent distribution, free-to air and online.

Taking advantage of the digital opportunity and building on the knowledge gained from multiple crowdfunders instigated since 2015, BOC raised almost €50,000 in its FEDORA campaign, by far the largest amount so far raised on the platform since its inception in 2014. We would like to extend our grateful thanks to The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK) and to FEDORA for their partnership in such a successful digital campaign. Winning the FEDORA Education Prize also attracted a further €50,000 award from a private foundation.

Face-to-face targeted events

Looking to a time at which public face-to-face performances were to be possible, we adapted our artistic plan to deliver a series of pop-up public performances which were realised between lockdowns. In Autumn 2020 we mounted a series of pop-up performances, in partnership with Tesco Spring Hill, Birmingham Museum and Art Galleries and the Birmingham Botanical Gardens.

This was essentially a pilot to establish how we could connect live with audiences in Covid times and to be used as learning for our planned *RhineGold*. We also delivered some live performances in educational settings. These events were free and unticketed.

Broader Sector Support and Leadership

Graham Vick was Professor of International Opera at the Royal Northern College of Music. Richard Willacy and Hannah Griffiths continued to mentor a new opera for Her Day Opera for Coventry 2021. Richard Willacy also continued his role in developing innovative approaches to the social democratisation of opera using digital technology, first presented in IMZ Vienna/La Scala 2019 and continuing with Traction.eu international advisory board in Portugal/Spain/Ireland. Richard Willacy, Reisz Amos and Birmingham Opera Company were founding members of "More Than a Moment – Action with and for Black Creatives", developing a covenant for change in the cultural industries.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Wagner's *RhineGold*

Rehearsals began in this accounting period for one of the most ambitious productions during COVID times in Europe. Whilst many companies were fielding smaller forces, Birmingham Opera Company's *RhineGold* featured a diverse cast of outstanding international artists and volunteers and an 87-piece City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by BOC's Music Director Alpesh Chauhan.

With Graham Vick falling ill, BOC's then Executive Director and Graham's long-time artistic collaborator, Richard Willacy, took over *RhineGold* as Director and with COVID rates rising in the city, opted to mount the production not in a warehouse but in a more COVID-safe environment with mixed socially distanced and non-socially distanced seating areas.

RhineGold opened to sold-out public performances at a Symphony Hall that had been well and truly BOC'd with a circular performance area and Sports Event floodlights over the stalls on 31st July and 2nd August.

It is testament to the tenacity of the whole Company and to Graham's legacy that *RhineGold* was achieved and to such a high artistic standard in extremely challenging circumstances. *RhineGold* was performed in a new English version by Jeremy Sams.

The production was nationally reviewed and critically acclaimed by audiences and press alike, achieving 5-star and 4-star reviews:

- ★★★★★ The Times
- ★★★★★ The Telegraph
- ★★★★ The Arts Desk
- ★★★★ The Stage
- ★★★★ Midlands Music Reviews

"Ecstasy from Birmingham Opera Company.... incontestably the most artistically significant force in British opera this century." – Richard Bratby, The Spectator, 7 August 2021

"Music-drama at the highest level." – David Nice, The Arts Desk, 3 August 2021

"A triumph." – Ivan Hewett, The Telegraph, 1 August 2021

RhineGold was also listed recently in *The Times'* and *The Telegraph's* cultural picks of the year (December 2021).

We have also had an offer from Sky Arts to televise *RhineGold* for which we are currently in negotiations. It will be broadcast by Sky or another platform in due course.

Participant voices:

"My experience with Rhinegold has been more than I could of imagined [...] It has helped me so much in my performing skills with acting and made me really appreciate opera and has strengthened my passion in performing arts."

– Female, Black Caribbean, age 23

"I feel more confident in abilities I already have and the process has allowed me to become much more social and exposed to many different people...It was dope."

– Male, Black Caribbean/African/British, Student, age 18

"I have enjoyed meeting new people and developing new skills."

- Female, Mixed Heritage, age 33

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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TRUSTEES' REPORT

"...diverse... exemplary and the message in every opera to the current issues is excellent. All involved in making this happen I hold in high regard."

– Female, Black Caribbean, age over 55

Audience voices:

"Fantastic performance – very accessible to a wide audience. Loved to see the ethnic diversity in opera!"

– Female, 25-29, Black/Black British Caribbean, B42

"It was amazing seeing a diverse cast as a BAME music student studying opera in undergrad it's a true inspiration" – Male, 30-34, Black/Black British Caribbean, B5

"I was highly entertained and intellectually stimulated – Have been charmed and motivated to attend another opera performance. Thank you." – Female, 45-49, Black/Black British African, B15

"BOC has provided joy and stimulation in my life for 30 years. Long may it continue." – Female, 70-74, White British, B13

We welcomed many young people from organisations including Gap Arts, Aston Performing Arts Academy, British Red Cross, LouDeemY Productions and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. These groups received free tickets to a performance.

National and International Prizes in 2020-21

Uniquely, our holistic approach continues to be recognised as delivering the highest quality artistic achievement, participant learning and audience engagement.

The **International Opera Awards 2021** were populated with our artists with nominations for director Graham Vick, conductor Alpesh Chauhan, now our Music Director who made his UK opera debut with us in 2019, and Chrystal E Williams who sang the title role in *Lady Macbeth*. Our collaborators Poznań Opera's Birmingham-style *Paria* is recognised in the Rediscovered Work category.

In 2021 Birmingham Opera Company was announced as the winner of the International Opera Award for Education & Outreach, alongside our Music Director Alpesh Chauhan winning the Newcomer of the Year award as was Poznań's *Paria*.

Going for Gold (Wagner's *RhineGold*) was awarded a further international Education & Outreach Prize by FEDORA – the circle of European Philanthropists. This award came with a very welcome €50,000 prize fund from a private foundation.

"It is an extraordinary project, in many aspects. The characteristic of this project is to integrate education and community work within the artistic process. It is completely organically integrated and that is part of the future of opera. In many aspects, Going for Gold is an avant-garde project about how to integrate cultural rights in the process of making opera."

- Bernard Focroulle, Chair of the **FEDORA Education Prize Jury**

We were also finalist for the televised **South Bank Show Sky Arts Opera Award 2020**.

TRUSTEES' REPORT

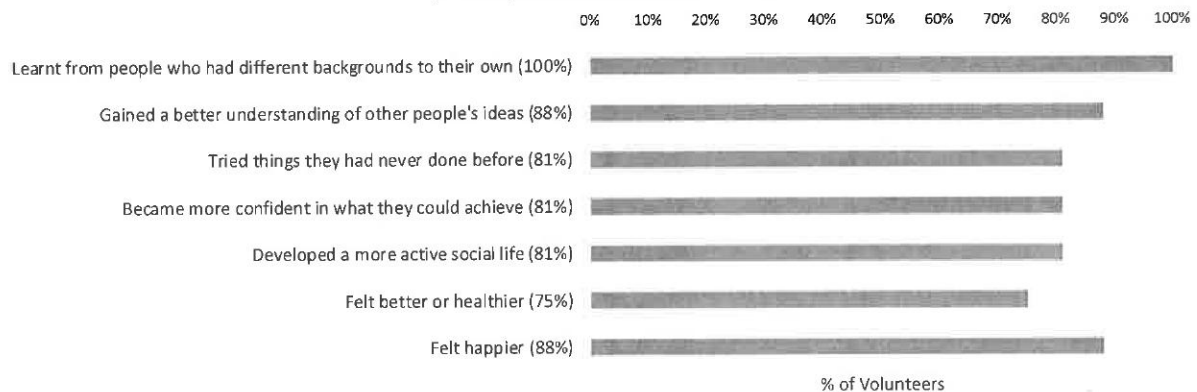
IMPACT:

Wellbeing

Our work consistently demonstrates that great art delivers great personal value well beyond the moment and the production.

When asked how participating in *RhineGold* had helped them, our volunteers reported the following positive impacts: (sample size 84% of all participants, all ages):

Volunteers reported the following positive impacts from face-to-face participation collated in 2021



Beyond these significant transformative indicators many volunteers were inspired to pursue a greater involvement in education, training, the arts and in other community projects. They reported gaining skills in creative arts, technical arts, performing, working with people, communication and a better understanding of the arts.

- 1 in 4 said they decided to start some training or a college course
- 56% said it helped them go to an arts event or exhibition they wouldn't have gone to before
- 63% said they became involved in other community projects

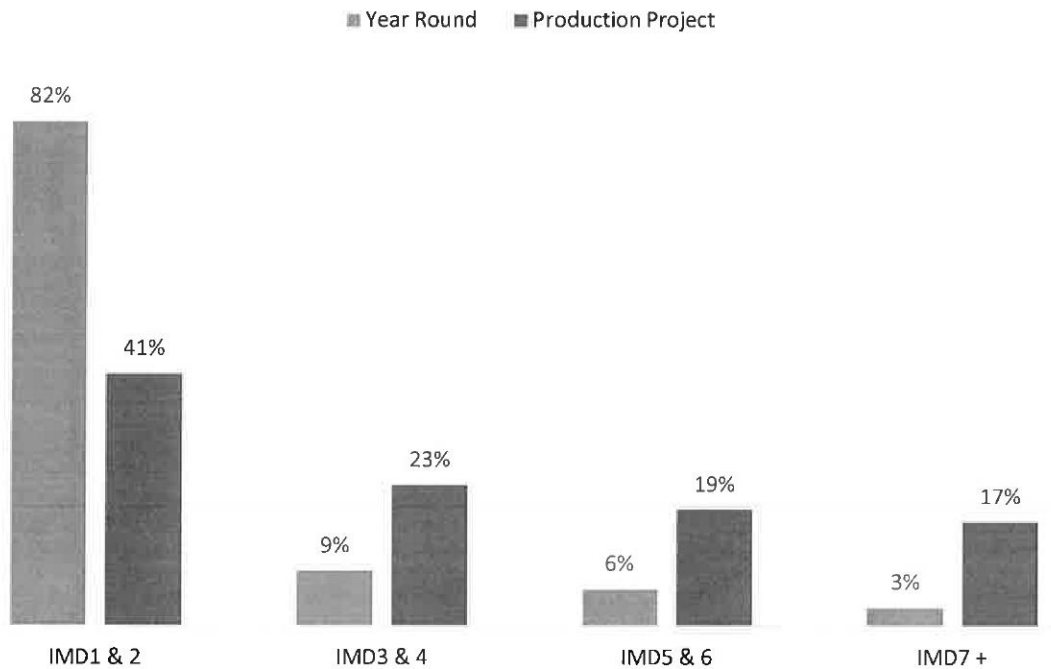
Social Diversity

We target our resources to engage those who may have little access to publicly funded art and culture. By physically locating our work in communities across the city, 99% of those engaged in our year-round work will be new to opera.

The majority of this year-round work is focused on deciles 1 and 2 of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). We also welcome those from the higher, more affluent areas in IMD deciles 5-10. As such, our productions bring together volunteer performers who truly represent the social diversity of Birmingham.

The data below was captured in 2019-20 and clearly illustrates this arts-led social diversity in action.

TRUSTEES' REPORT



Ethnic Diversity – Artists

In a time where conservatoires and training organisations are reporting fewer ethnically diverse British artists coming through their doors, Birmingham Opera Company are still the only opera organisation delivering a truly diverse model at the centre of its work in the UK and Europe. Again, in line with our “Outstanding” rating in ACE’s Creative Case for Diversity, in 2020-21 we fielded a cast of artists representing Global Majority ethnicities. And in particular, in *RhineGold*, the leading soloists were Black and Asian. With no salaried chorus or orchestra, we employ freelance artists and continually strive to achieve ethnic representation in all our work.

Further, we employed a majority Black and Asian stage management team and assistant creatives.

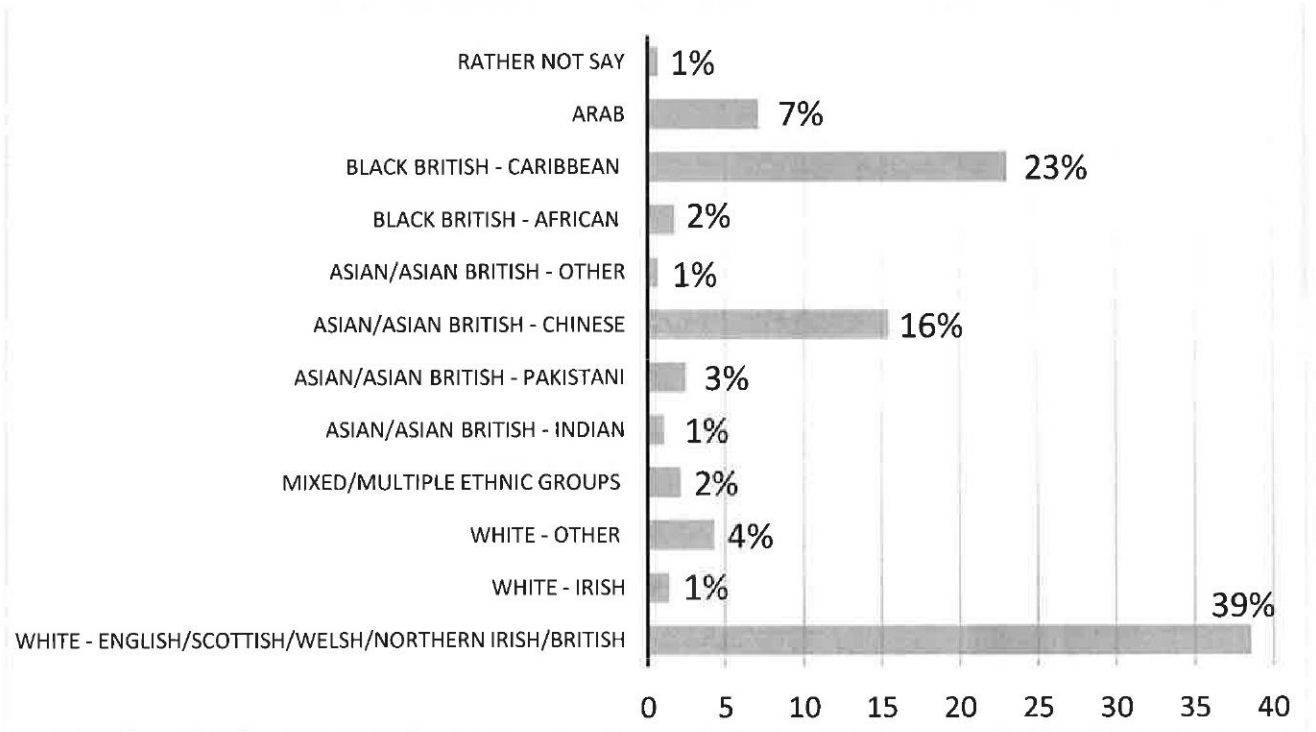
We contract out larger orchestral projects to our partners CBSO and together are working on diversifying opportunities in instrumental representation.

Ethnicity - Volunteers and Participants

Covid clearly challenged many networks and access to shared spaces and work. However during the period we still achieved significant representation across the diverse peoples of Birmingham.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

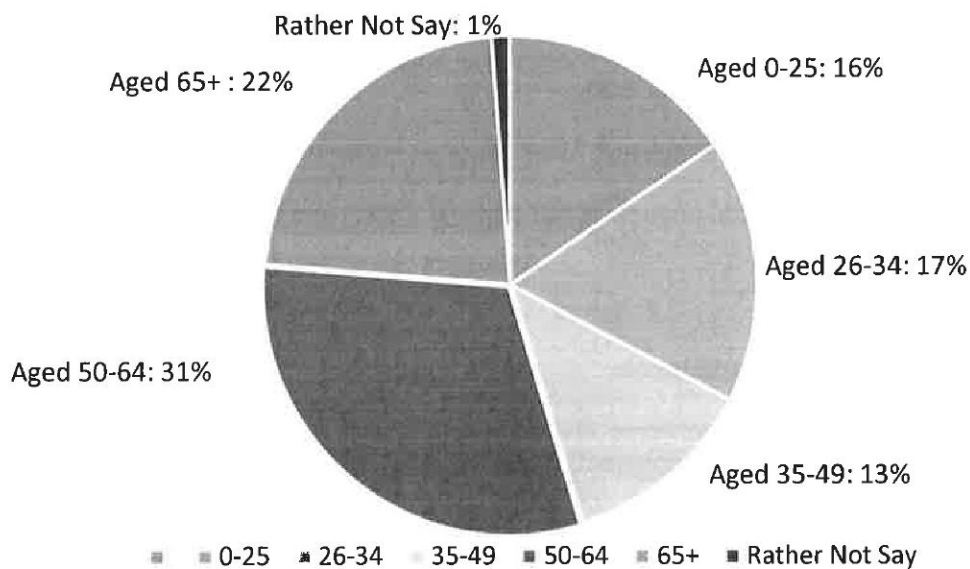
TRUSTEES' REPORT



Age

With no separate Education Department and a clear focus on those who sit outside statutory education provision, we have developed a unique multi-generational offer, still maintaining reach across all age groups outside of the statutory education settings.

Participants Age Demographic 2020-21 (sample 245 participants)



**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Company had incoming resources of £709,573 (2020: £627,130) and total funds at 30 June 2021 of £416,209 (2020: £470,353). The principal funding sources of the charity are Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council (full details of funding are disclosed in notes 13 and 14 of the financial statements), although in this year we also received significant support from KTKF(UK), FEDORA, our "Going For Gold" donors and George Cadbury Fund.

FUTURE FINANCIAL REVIEW AND PRICING POLICY

Our plans for 2021-23 are set out in the Business Plan and Trustees review these regularly in the current uncertain climate. Birmingham Opera Company also hold a number of free events including a free ticket preview of the main production and multi-scale performances off site in shopping centres and community centres across the city.

For paying events, ticket prices are held at an affordable level of £19.99 or £10 concessions available. In addition, we allocate tickets to be distributed through participants at a cost of £7.50, plus access to one free ticket to the paying event to ensure that relatives and friends can attend. The major production also has a "free" but ticketed performance to which we invite those we have met through the year, often via our numerous community partners.

RESERVES POLICY

Reserves are needed to bridge the gap between the spending and receiving of resources and to cover unplanned emergencies. The Trustees consider that the ideal level of reserves is £40,000.

The actual unrestricted reserves are £389,929 (2020: £434,853) of which £250,000 (£314,083) are designated by the Trustees for Going for Gold and post-*RhineGold* events (2020: Going for Gold – an 18-month creative marathon on the trail to Wagner's *RhineGold*).

Restricted funds are £26,280 (2020: £35,500).

COVID 19

On 15 March 2020 we curtailed all rehearsal and event activity with the aim to re-start at the earliest opportunity, taking into account the information and advice available. In response to increased risks due to COVID, we adapted our programming to deliver hybrid, live and multi-scale activity to address our key mission. We did not and do not intend to take any furlough payments and/or Cultural Recovery Funds or other public COVID support funds, preferring to maintain our key presence and delivery of our work to beneficiaries.

We have delivered a huge uplift in digital activity and some live face-to-face performances in Autumn 2020 between lockdowns. From Spring 2021 we began face-to-face activity once again, closely following the roadmap culminating in *RhineGold* in Summer 2021. From this point, we have undertaken hybrid activity, both face-to-face and online.

GOING CONCERN

The Trustees consider the charity to be a going concern with strict controls on spend and analysis of present risk and future scenario planning. With a commitment to live within our means, we have currently not applied for or received any additional government funds such as Cultural Recovery Funds, nor have

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

TRUSTEES' REPORT

we furloughed any staff.

We have conditional funding as a National Portfolio Organisation from Arts Council England (2018-2023) and 2021-23 with Birmingham City Council. These are significant expressions of confidence in the Company to deliver the highest quality work that engages people from the city's many different communities and reflects the city's diversity.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Trustees have examined the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to provide them with regular reports so that the necessary steps can be taken to lessen these risks.

TRUSTEES

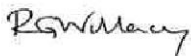
The trustees who held office during the year are set out on Page 2.

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association Graham Vick, a Trustee, was due £37,083 (plus VAT) for services from July 2020 to his passing 17 July 2021 (2020: £26,500) for services provided to the Company. This Trustee will reimburse the charity for all mobile telephone costs. £2,355 was owed at year end (2020: £1,777).

No other trustees were paid expenses.

Nicholas Payne is Director of Opera Europa. The charity paid £1,627 to Opera Europa in respect of membership and other fees (2020: £1,377). Nothing was owed to Opera Europa at year end (2020: £Nil).

Approved by the Board on 28th April 2022 and signed on its order by



Richard Willacy
Company Secretary

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

I report on the financial statements of Birmingham Opera Company for the year ended 30th June 2021, which are set out on pages 20 to 33.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(b) of the 2011 Act.

This report, including my statement, has been prepared for and only for the charity's trustees as a body. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body for my examination work, for this report, or for the statements I have made.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the financial statements presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, 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 no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales which is one of the listed bodies.

In connection with my examination, which is complete, no matters have come to my attention which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of Birmingham Opera Company in accordance with section 386 of the 2006 Act; or

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)**

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO MEMBERS

- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principals of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.


File: H:\Finance\Apr 28 2022 (4 51 04)T11

**David Hoose FCA
For and on behalf of Mazars LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
First Floor
Two Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3AX**

Date: Apr 28, 2022

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)
(A Company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
Incorporating an Income & Expenditure Account
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

Note	General		Unrestricted Designated		Restricted		2021 Total		Unrestricted Designated		Restricted		2020 Total	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income from:														
Donations & grants	3	569,961	-	-	96,905	666,866	-	666,866	-	-	37,000	569,339	-	569,339
Other income	4	42,707	-	-	-	42,707	-	42,707	-	-	-	57,791	-	57,791
Total income		612,668	-	-	96,905	709,573	-	709,573	-	-	37,000	627,130	-	627,130
Expenditure on:														
Fundraising		18,035	-	-	-	18,035	-	18,035	-	-	-	18,715	-	18,715
Performances		213,886	413,797	-	106,125	733,808	-	733,808	-	-	23,500	298,988	-	298,988
Other costs		11,874	-	-	-	11,874	-	11,874	-	-	-	14,423	-	14,423
Total expenditure	5	243,795	413,797	413,797	106,125	763,717	106,125	763,717	106,125	106,125	23,500	332,126	23,500	332,126
Net movement in funds		368,873	(413,797)	(413,797)	(9,220)	(54,144)	(9,220)	(54,144)	(9,220)	(9,220)	13,500	295,004	13,500	295,004
Transfer between funds		(349,714)	349,714	349,714	-	-	-	-	(222,232)	222,232	-	175,349	-	175,349
Fund balance brought forward 1 July 2020		120,770	314,083	314,083	35,500	470,353	35,500	470,353	61,498	91,851	22,000	175,349	22,000	175,349
Fund balance carried forward 30 June 2021		139,929	250,000	250,000	26,280	416,209	26,280	416,209	120,770	314,083	35,500	470,353	35,500	470,353

The charity's income and expenditure all relate to continuing operations.

All surpluses and deficits recognised in the period are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (REGISTRATION NUMBER: 01850467)

BALANCE SHEET

30 JUNE 2021

	Note	2021		2020	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible	8		-		315
Intangible	9		40,000		40,000
			<u>40,000</u>		<u>40,315</u>
Current assets					
Stock	10	5,200		5,200	
Debtors	11	74,522		161,806	
Cash at bank and in hand		635,172		298,232	
			<u>714,894</u>	<u>465,238</u>	
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(338,685)</u>		<u>(35,200)</u>	
Net current assets			371,209		430,038
Total assets less total liabilities			<u>416,209</u>		<u>470,353</u>
The funds of the charity:					
Unrestricted funds					
General	13		139,929		120,770
Designated	13		250,000		314,083
Restricted funds	14		<u>26,280</u>		<u>35,500</u>
Total Charity Funds	15		<u>416,209</u>		<u>470,353</u>

For the year ending 30th June 2021 the Company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the Company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in accordance with section 476, the Directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees on 28 April 2022 and signed on its behalf by:

Nicholas Payne

Nicholas Payne - Chair

The notes on pages 22 to 33 form part of these financial statements.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash used in operating activities	19	336,940	314,197
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		-	-
Net cash provided by investing activities		-	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		336,940	314,197
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward		298,232	(15,965)
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward		<u>635,172</u>	<u>298,232</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

1. COMPANY STATUS

The Company is limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, and does not have a share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 2. The liability of members is limited and shall not exceed £1. Any surplus on winding up is to be donated to a charity whose objects are of a similar nature. The Company has taken advantage of section 30(5) of the Companies Act 2006 and deleted the word "Limited" from its name.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a. Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 (FRS102) and the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102, and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements also comply in all material respects with applicable accounting standards. They are drawn up under the historical cost accounting rules as modified for the revaluation of intangible fixed assets. All operations are classed as continuing and no operations have been acquired during the current or previous year.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Company will continue to operate. The validity of this assumption is dependent upon the continuance of support from the Company's key grant funders (Arts Council for England and Birmingham City Council) and in response to the progress made by the Company in pursuing a viable budget including the obtaining of further grants and other funds. The Company's current business plan shows that the Company, with continued focus on income diversification and restructure, will be able to operate in the foreseeable future. Based on this understanding, the directors believe that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

b. Income

Donations and sponsorship are accounted for on a cash received basis. Grants receivable are recognised in relation to the year and production cycle to which the grants relate.

Performance rights represent amounts received in respect of translations, arrangements or other such items sold to other performing groups. Income is only recognised on the completion of a sale. Due to the uncertainty of subsequent sales, expenditure in obtaining such items including expenditure on sets, properties, orchestrations and costumes is written off as incurred and is not carried forward in the Balance Sheet.

Covenanted donations are taken to income on a receivable basis, provision for deferred income being established for amounts received in advance of the covenanted date of payment.

Tax refunds are recognised when the relevant expenditure has been incurred and the refund is considered probable.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

c. Fund accounting

The charity maintains various types of unrestricted funds as follows:

Designated funds represent amounts that have been put aside out of unrestricted funds at the discretion of the Trustees for particular projects. The designation is for administrative purposes only and does not legally restrict the Trustees discretion to apply the fund.

General unrestricted funds represent unrestricted income, which is expendable at the discretion of the Trustees in the furtherance of the objectives of the charity. Such funds may be held in order to finance both working capital and capital investment.

Where the charity has restricted funds these are to be used for the purpose as specified by the provider of the income.

d. Expenditure

All items of expenditure are accounted for on an accruals basis.

Governance costs are the costs of governance arrangements relating to the general running of the charity.

e. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Equipment is stated at cost and depreciated on a straight line basis over five years. Sets and props are depreciated on a straight line basis over two years where considered appropriate. Only items greater than £1,000 are capitalised.

f. Intangible Fixed Assets

Intangible fixed assets comprise values ascribed to the stock of scores commissioned by the Company and which will provide royalty and performance income over many years in the future. These values are based on the Trustees' assessments of royalties etc. expected supported by a comparative view of the transaction values of similar properties within the publishing industry. The carrying value of the assets is not subject to annual amortisation but is reviewed annually for any permanent diminution in carrying value.

g. Taxation

Any surplus of the Company income over its expenditure is applied solely for the purposes of the charity and its activities are the primary purpose of the charity. Under the provisions of Section 505, Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 the Company is exempt from liability to taxation.

h. Foreign currencies

Foreign currency transactions in the Statement of financial activities are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the date of transaction. Monetary assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the closing rates at the balance sheet date and the exchange differences are included in the statement of financial activity.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

i. Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the lease term.

j. Stock Valuation

The Wardrobe stock is stated at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

k. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

l. Judgments in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The charity makes estimates, in relation to valuation of assets, and assumptions concerning the future. The estimates and assumptions have no material impact on the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the accounts.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

3. GRANTS AND DONATIONS

The Company gratefully acknowledges the support given by the following during the course of the year:	2021	2020
	£	£
Grants received from:		
Arts Council England	486,433	486,432
Birmingham City Council	32,870	30,993
FEDORA	1,792	-
FEDORA Education Prize	44,812	-
George Cadbury Fund	25,000	-
George Fentham Birmingham Charity	-	2,000
Individuals sponsors and donors	25,659	13,268
The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK)	22,251	-
The Leche Trust	-	2,000
Baron Davenport's Charity	800	-
The Cole Charitable Trust	1,000	1,000
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	3,500	-
The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust	2,000	-
The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust	3,000	-
The Eveson Trust	-	3,000
The Fidelio Charitable Trust	-	2,500
GJW Turner Trust	2,000	-
The Grantham Yorke Trust	-	3,000
The Grimmitt Trust	1,500	-
The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation	2,000	-
The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity	500	-
The National Foundation for Youth Music	-	1,646
The Oakley Charitable Trust	-	1,000
R A and V B Reekie Trust	1,000	1,000
The Roger & Douglas Turner Charitable Trust	-	2,000
The Roughley Trust	-	1,000
The Saintbury Trust	6,000	5,000
The Sheldon Trust	2,000	-
The Steel Charitable Trust	-	10,000
Thriplow Charitable Trust	2,000	3,500
W. E. Dunn Charitable Trust	750	-
	<u>666,867</u>	<u>569,339</u>

4. OTHER INCOME

	2021	2020
	£	£
Box office	8,576	12,944
Theatre tax credits	30,017	44,680
Other	<u>4,114</u>	<u>167</u>
	<u>42,707</u>	<u>57,791</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

5. EXPENDITURE

	2021	2020
	£	£
Fundraising costs	18,035	18,715
Other salary costs	152,008	135,329
Other production costs	581,801	163,659
Governance	11,874	14,423
	<u>763,718</u>	<u>332,126</u>

6. NET RESOURCES EXPENDED FOR THE YEAR

Net resources expended for the year are stated after charging:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Amount paid to Independent Examiner		
- IE and Accounts Preparation	2,715	2,635
- Tax	1,350	3,750
Lease payments	14,376	14,176
Depreciation	315	315
	<u>18,756</u>	<u>20,871</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

7. EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Staff costs	2021	Restated
	£	2020
		£
Wages and salaries	146,506	134,471
Social security	14,916	11,144
Pension cost	<u>7,164</u>	<u>6,667</u>
	<u>168,586</u>	<u>152,282</u>
	Number	Number
Average number of employees (excluding trustees) employed during the year	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>

There were no employees with emoluments in excess of £60,000 per annum in either year.

Trustees have indemnity insurance with a Policy Aggregate Limit of £500,000, at a cost of £358 (2020: £500,000, at a cost of £299).

All employees are deemed to be key management personnel. Pension payments totalled £7,164 (2020: £6,667).

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Equipment £
Cost	
At 1 July 2020	36,312
Additions	-
At 30 June 2021	36,312
 Accumulated Depreciation	
At 1 July 2020	35,997
Charge for the period	315
At 30 June 2021	36,312
 Net book value	
At 30 June 2021	-
At 30 June 2020	315

9. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	2021 £	2020 £
Valuation of intellectual property rights of scores, future royalties etc. (see note 2f)	40,000	40,000

The Trustees have valued the intellectual property rights over scores commissioned by the Company following advice obtained from the music publishing industry.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

10. STOCKS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wardrobe stock	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>
	<u>5,200</u>	<u>5,200</u>

11. DEBTORS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Grants receivable	8,789	11,000
Trade debtors	2,808	3,133
VAT debtor	10,272	3,519
Accrued income	50,000	144,154
Other debtors	2,653	-
	<u>74,522</u>	<u>161,806</u>

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade creditors	40,062	4,595
Other taxes and social security	4,050	4,415
Accruals and other creditors	294,573	26,190
	<u>338,685</u>	<u>35,200</u>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY**Notes to the Financial Statements****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021****13. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS**

	General Reserves	Designated Reserves	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£
Brought forward	120,770	314,083	434,853	153,349
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	368,873	(413,797)	(44,924)	281,504
Transfer between funds	(349,714)	349,714	-	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Carried forward	139,929	250,000	389,929	434,853
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

14. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£
FEDORA	-	1,792	1,792	-
FEDORA Education Prize	-	44,812	44,812	-
The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation (UK)	-	22,251	22,251	-
Baron Davenport's Charity	-	800	-	800
The Cole Charitable Trust	-	1,000	-	1,000
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	-	3,500	3,500	-
The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust	-	2,000	-	2,000
The Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust	-	3,000	-	3,000
The Eveson Trust	3,000	-	3,000	-
The Fidelio Charitable Trust	2,500	-	2,500	-
The Foyle Foundation	15,000	-	3,020	11,980
GJW Turner Trust	-	2,000	2,000	-
The Grantham Yorke Trust	3,000	-	3,000	-
The Grimmit Trust	-	1,500	-	1,500
The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation	-	2,000	2,000	-
The Joseph Hopkins and Henry James Sayer Charity	-	500	500	-
The Leche Trust	2,000	-	2,000	-
R A and V B Reekie Trust	-	1,000	1,000	-
The Saintbury Trust	-	6,000	-	6,000
The Sheldon Trust	-	2,000	2,000	-
The Steel Charitable Trust	10,000	-	10,000	-
Thriplow Charitable Trust	-	2,000	2,000	-
W.E. Dunn Charitable Trust	-	750	750	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	35,500	96,905	106,125	26,280
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

The restricted fund in relation to the Foyle Foundation is for the music library. All other restricted funds are for emerging artists and participation.

15. ANALYSIS OF ASSETS AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total £
Tangible and intangible fixed assets	40,000	-	40,000
Current assets	688,614	26,280	714,894
Current liabilities	(338,685)	-	(338,685)
Total net assets	<u>389,929</u>	<u>26,280</u>	<u>416,209</u>

16. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

As at 30 June 2021 the Company had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Other 2021 £	2020 £
Less than 1 year	14,057	14,057
1 – 2 years	1,257	1,257
2 – 5 years	628	628
	<u>15,942</u>	<u>15,942</u>

17. TRUSTEE EXPENSES

In accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association Graham Vick, a Trustee, was due £37,083 (plus VAT) for services from July 2020 to his passing 17 July 2021 (2020: £26,500) for services provided to the Company. This Trustee will reimburse the charity for all mobile telephone costs and £2,355 was owed at year end (2020: £1,777).

No other trustees were paid expenses.

18. RELATED PARTY

Nicholas Payne is Director of Opera Europa. The charity paid £1,627 (2020: £1,377) to Opera Europa in respect of membership and other fees. Nothing was owed to Opera Europa at either year end.

BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

19 RECONCILIATION OF NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS TO NET CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	(54,144)	295,003
Adjustment for:		
Depreciation	315	315
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	87,284	67,965
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	303,485	(49,086)
Net cash used in operating activities	336,940	314,197