

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
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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 Grimmit 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.

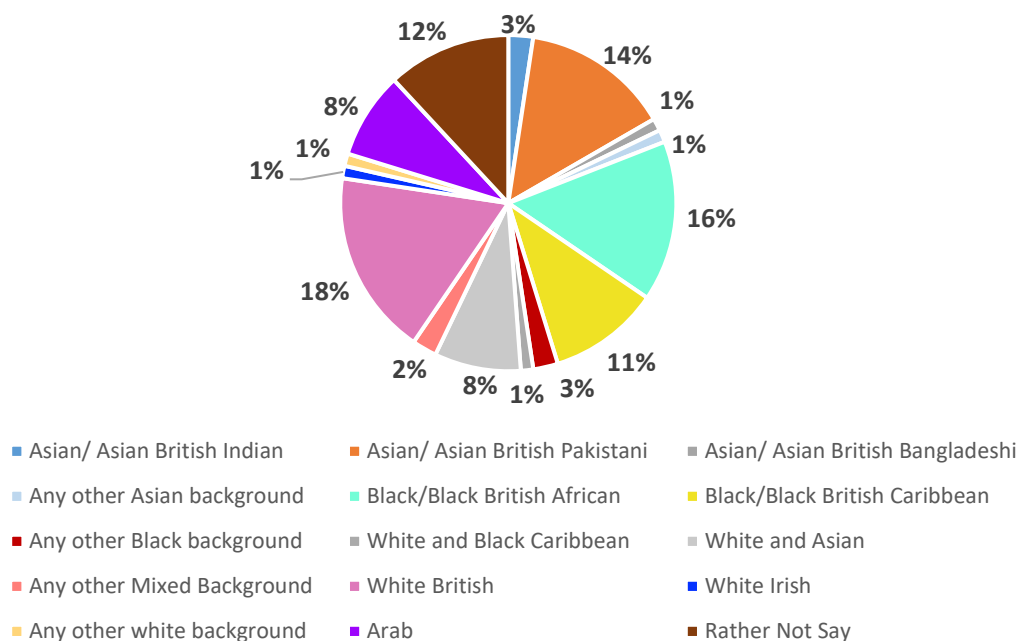
1. Four Hubs- year-round programme

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)



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.

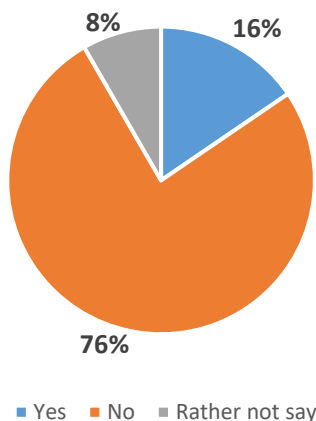
66 x Performances:

- 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.

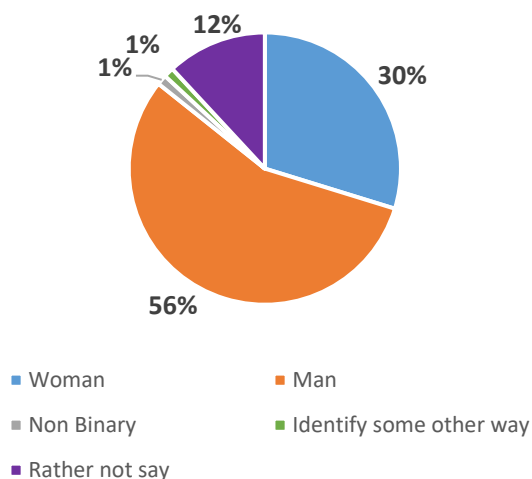
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**D/deaf, Disabled and Long
Term Health Conditions Four
Hub Participants**
(Sample Size= 84)



**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.

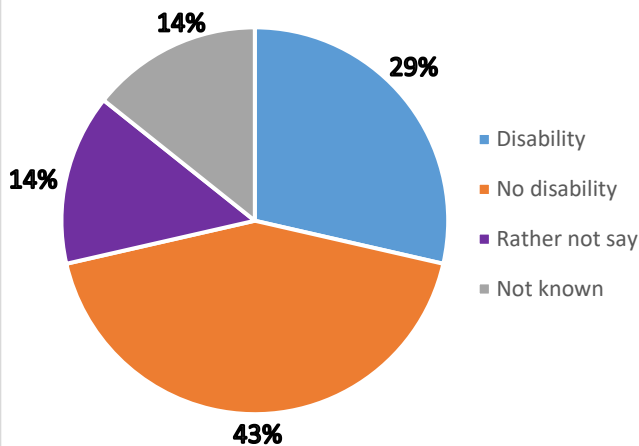
5. Smetana's *The Two Widows* – July 2023 – June 2024

- *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.

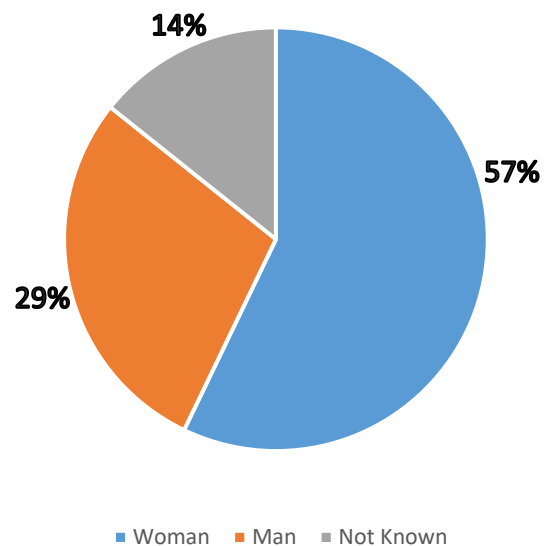
BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
(A company limited by guarantee)

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.

**BIRMINGHAM OPERA COMPANY (Registration number: 01850467)
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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

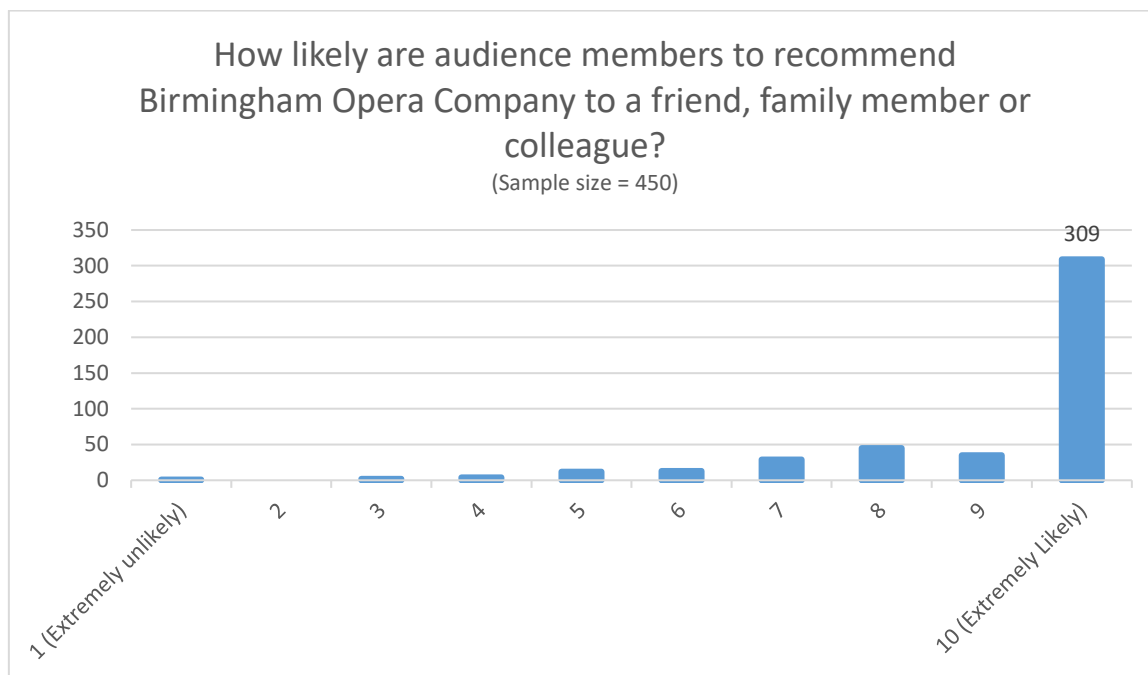
"Accessible, Different, Zany"

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)

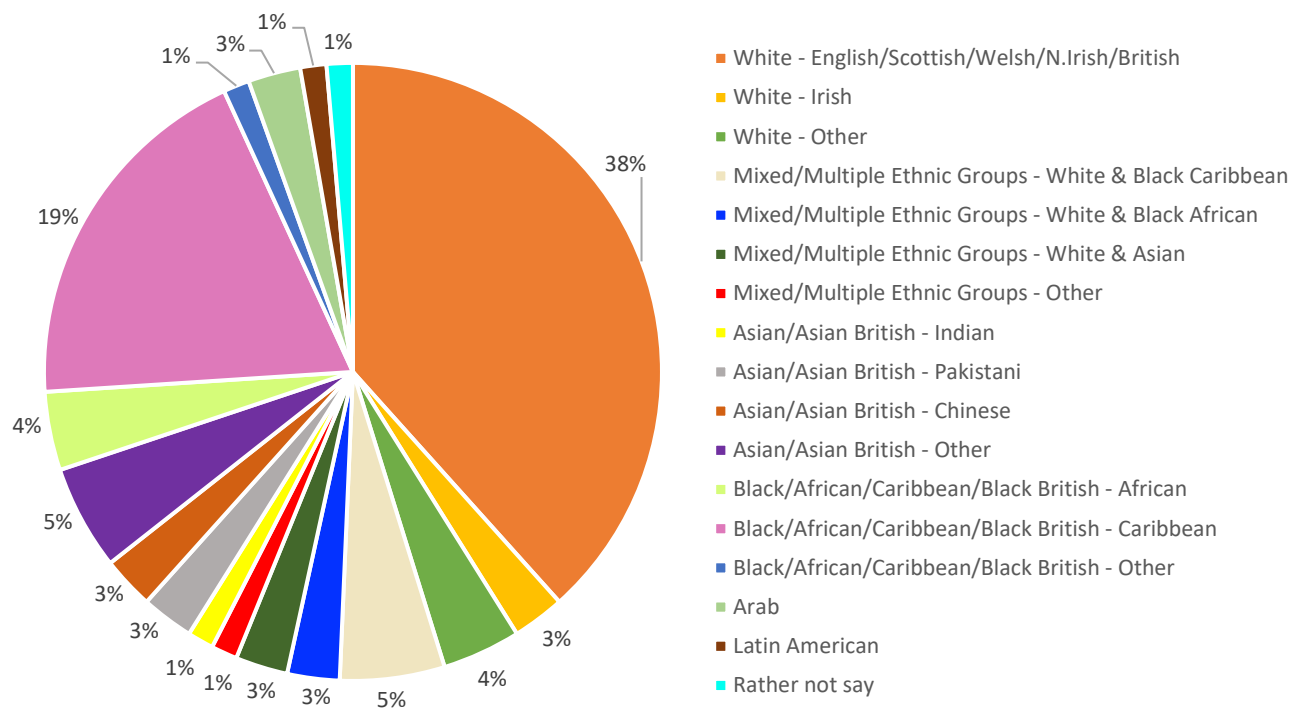
Gender Identity	No. of volunteers
Female	45
Male	30
Identify in another way	2
Disability	
D/deaf, disabled or with a long-term health condition	13
Not disabled	61
Age	
0-19	1
20-24	2
25-34	3
35-49	26
50-64	23
65-74	24
75+	5

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TRUSTEES' REPORT

Ethnic Diversity of New Year Volunteers

(Sample size = 73)

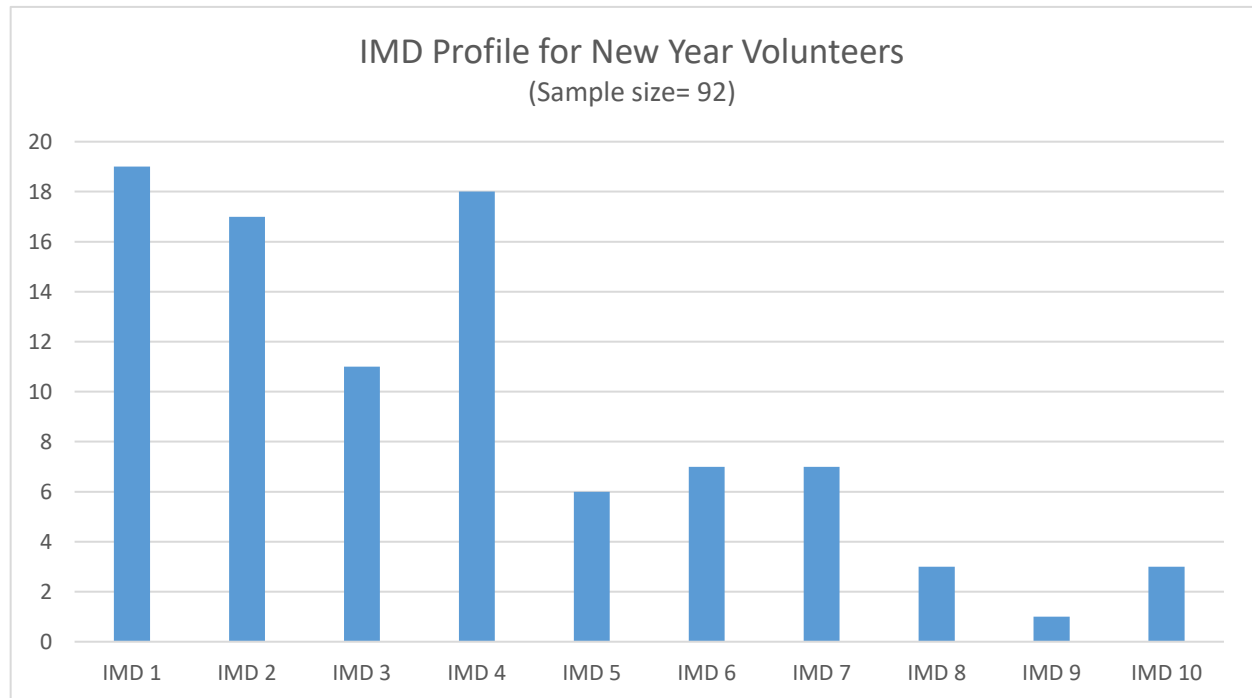


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TRUSTEES' REPORT

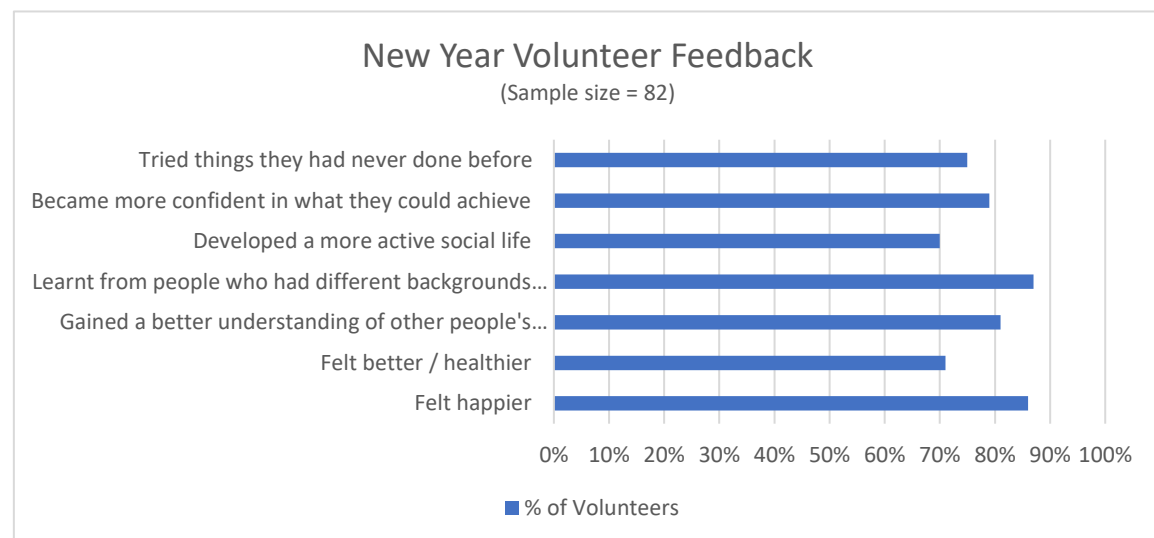
New Year: Index of Multiple Deprivation Data

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

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 (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		40,000		40,000
			<u>41,160</u>		<u>41,639</u>
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

		2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities	Note		
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 Tippet 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	<u>19,241</u>	<u>13,767</u>
	<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	<u>479</u>	<u>480</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	<u>22,637</u>
Accumulated Depreciation	
At 1 July 2023	20,998
Charge for the period	479
On disposals	-
At 30 June 2024	<u>21,477</u>
Net book value	
At 30 June 2024	<u>1,160</u>
At 30 June 2023	<u>1,639</u>

9. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

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

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	5,200	5,200
	<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	-	-
Carried forward	150,000	124,046	274,046	726,106

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	-
	31,000	65,993	61,043	35,950

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	(637,608)	-	(637,608)
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>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