



The Academy Choir Wimbledon
Report and Accounts
for the year ended
31 December 2024

Registered Charity No. 299069
Give As You Earn Registration No. 012910

Trustees' Report 2024

The Academy was founded in 1980 and became a charity pursuant to a meeting of its members held on 13 March 1988 (number 299069). The committee members (who acted as the trustees) during 2023 were:

- Daniel Whitehead – Chairman
- Geoff Woodhouse – Treasurer
- Cathie Jones – Secretary
- Alan Maries
- Tracy Lees
- Lucy Singah
- Sophia Cheung

The address to which any correspondence regarding the Academy should be sent is 13 Haydon Park Road, Wimbledon SW19 8JQ.

Report on Activities

2024 saw the choir undertake a full schedule of concerts under the inspired leadership of Matthew Best. We opened the year with a concert combining works of Haydn (his *Teresienmesse*) and Mozart (his *Vesperae Solennes de Confessore* and his *Sinfonia Concertante* for violin and viola in E flat). It was something of a departure from recent practice to feature instrumental soloists but the performance of Ruth Rogers (who also led the London Mozart Players whom we were again proud to bring to Wimbledon) and Judith Busbridge was captivating, adding a completely new element to the concert which was hugely enjoyed. We were also joined by soloists Nardus Williams (whose appearance was sponsored most generously by Richard Baker, one of the choir's Benefactors), Esme Bronwen-Smith, Aaron O'Hare and Darren Jeffery.

Having performed three "set piece" works in March, Matthew accepted the challenge to pull together an altogether different programme for our June concert which we entitled "Schütz to Stravinsky: A Choral Odyssey" - an apt title for a programme spanning nearly 400 years of composition. Three Schütz psalms (*Herr, unser Herrscher, Ach Herr, straf mich nicht* and *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen*) and his *Deutsches Magnificat* were interspersed with instrumental works by Scheidt (his *Galliard Battaglia* and *Courant Dolorosa*) before the first half was completed with Brahms's *Fest- und Gedenksprüche*. The second half featured four motets from Anton Bruckner (*Ecce sacerdos magnus, Tota pulchra es, Maria, Libera Me* and *Christus factus est*) broken by his *Aequalis 1* for three trombones before concluding with Stravinsky's *Mass*. We were joined by our Academy Brass and Wind, many of whom were called upon to play both period and modern instruments and whose tone was exceptional throughout.

The tradition of our annual appearance at November's Wimbledon International Music Festival this year saw us continue our occasional series of Handel oratorios - this time *Jephtha* for which we were joined by our Academy Baroque Players and soloists Benjamin Hulett, Helen Charlston, James Hall, Rowan Pierce, Clementine Thompson and Conrad Chatterton. We were very fortunate that Helen's appearance was supported by

the generosity of our Benefactor Christine Douse (the financial benefit of which was shared between the Academy Choir and the Festival). We have been privileged to develop a close relationship with Ruth Smith, a leading Handel scholar who has now spoken compellingly before three of our Handel oratorio performances and written absorbing programme essays. The performance itself was among the very best that the choir has given. The intense drama of the story was brought fully to life with choir and soloists alike reaching levels of storytelling that were intensely absorbing for a justifiably very sizeable audience.

The choir has continued to benefit from the generous support of our Friends - not least the two Benefactors mentioned above.

In last year's report I noted that a decline in surplus last year (itself greater than the decline seen in the year before) had to be arrested. I am pleased to report that having seen c. £1,800 of our surplus eroded in 2023 (in addition to exhausting the Restricted Fund) this year's erosion was negligible (£121). This reflects strong budgetary discipline which redounds to the credit both of Matthew Best and of our excellent treasurer, Geoff Woodhouse. Although ticket receipts were reduced (by some £2,700 - 2023 had benefited from significant attendance at our Coronation Concert that Summer) this was more than compensated for by an increase of some £2k in donations over the prior year and a near £3k reduction in the direct concert costs.

Nonetheless the critical figure is that our deficit on concerts (i.e. the difference between concert costs and concert income) was £19,141 (2023: £21,903). This is the amount which simply must be generated every year if we are to continue to exist as the choir that we are. This is achieved primarily through the generosity of our Friends (many of whom are choir members) whose contribution of £11,435 really is the reason that we continue to give the concerts that we do.

It is for this reason that I again express my deepest gratitude to each of you. Thank you.

I would also like to record my sincere thanks to Matthew Best and to each member of the committee for the unstinting hard work of every single one of them. Much of this work goes unseen but it must never go unthanked. We share the vision of making our choir the very best that it can be and through that to sustain a love of high quality choral music in our existing audience as well as to develop that same appreciation in those who have yet to discover just how enjoyable and rewarding it can be. This cannot happen without exemplary commitment and focus. Thank you.

Daniel Whitehead
Chairman
May 2025

Income and Expenditure Accounts for year ended 31 December 2024

		2024	2023
		£	£
CONCERT INCOME			
	Box Office and related income ⁽⁵⁾	7,918	10,652
	Bar receipts (gross)	949	311
	Sponsorship	0	0
	Donations ⁽⁴⁾	2,100	200
		10,967	11,163
CONCERT DIRECT COSTS			
	Professional costs ⁽¹⁾	9,000	9,000
	Soloists	3,300	2,680
	Orchestra/Organist/Orch. Mgmt	9,932	13,216
	Accompanists	1,800	1,790
	Instrument and Music Hire	673	1,215
	Venue hire (rehearsals and concerts)	2,192	2,763
	Refreshments	378	231
	Posters, Programmes, Publicity	2,175	2,172
	Ruth Smith fee + expenses, PRS fee	659	0
		30,108	33,067
DEFICIT ON CONCERTS⁽²⁾		-19,141	-21,903
OTHER INCOME / -EXPENSE			
	Choir subscriptions	4,224	4,729
	Friends' contributions	11,435	10,701
	Income Tax repayment	3,536	3,258
	Donations received	250	392
	Interest received	355	276
	Website	-72	-91
	Fundraising costs	-219	-334
	Auditions	0	-648
	Making Music subscription	-492	-471
	Admin (SUMUP, music storage bags)	2	-220
OVERALL SURPLUS / -DEFICIT for the year		-121	-4,310
SURPLUS brought forward		43,287	47,598
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS		43,167	43,287
Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31 December			
Assets:			
	Cash at bank	12,417	13,287
	Bank deposit	30,000	30,000
	Prepayments for 18 January 2025 concert	750	0
Liabilities:			
	Nil	0	0
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS		43,167	43,287
Of which	Restricted Fund ⁽³⁾	0	0

Notes to the Accounts

These accounts are prepared on the Receipts and Payments basis under Section 133 of the Charities Act 2011.

- (1) Professional costs are the fees for the conductor and for concert management.
- (2) The Deficit on Concerts for 2023 is before taking into account a transfer of £2,500 from Restricted Reserves relating to a bequest of £10,000 received in 2020. See also Note 3.
- (3) The Restricted Fund represents an amount of £10,000 given in 2020 to help finance the performance of works by JS Bach. £7,500 of this Restricted Fund was used for this purpose in 2022, leaving £2,500 at the start of 2023. That remaining balance of £2,500 was used in 2023 for the performance of three Bach pieces. Thus the deficit on underlying reserves in 2023 was £1,810, while the Restricted Fund was exhausted.
- (4) These donations include £1,800 from two Benefactors to sponsor soloists, and £300 from two audience members. They resulted in part from increased effort by the Choir to secure private sponsorship of performers.
- (5) The reduction in Box Office in 2024 is due largely to the small scale of the Summer concert which, for the same reason, cost considerably less than the Summer concert in 2023.

During 2024, as in 2023, the Choir had two own-promotion concerts and one concert for which a fee was received from the Wimbledon International Music Festival (WIMF). The deficits on the two WIMF concerts were virtually identical, as were the deficits on the two Summer concerts. The reduction in the overall concert deficit of some £2,800 between 2023 and 2024 is almost entirely due to the Spring concerts, which involved larger forces. The Haydn/Mozart concert in 2024 cost less and was better attended than the Beethoven/Brahms concert in 2023.

In 2025 and 2026 there will be some financial uncertainty as we seek a replacement for our Music Director, Matthew Best, who has sadly had to retire, whilst WIMF has, independently, appointed a new Festival Director. As costs inevitably increase, we shall need to obtain more income through Friends' subscriptions, other donations and regular sponsorship, at the same time as attracting large audiences.

Our reserves are considered adequate to allow us to do this while we work through the coming uncertainty.

Geoff Woodhouse

Treasurer

Independent examiner's report

Report to the trustees of The Academy Choir Wimbledon (charity number 299069) on accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024, set out on pages 4&5.

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

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

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

Ann F Orton
May 2025

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