SongEasel

Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial Statements

For the Year to 31 October 2025

Registered Charity number: 1197751

SongEasel
Bringing Song to South East London

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Report of the Trustees

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report and financial statements for the year to 31 October 2025. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and Activities

The charity's purposes, as set out in its governing document are:

To advance the education of the public, groups and individuals in, and promote the understanding, appreciation, composition, and performance of song, both its poetry and music, through a series of events governed by a strong artistic vision including (but not limited to):

a) The arrangement of an annual song recital series; and

b) A significant outreach and audience development component incorporating:

(i) Workshops with local schoolchildren;

(ii) A Young Artist programme;

(iii) Talks and educational events; and

(iv) Ad hoc events to bring music and poetry to new audiences;

for the benefit of all sectors of the community in South East London and elsewhere.

During the course of the year the charity was successfully able to undertake all of the activities set out above in relation to its purposes, as set out in more detail in Achievements and Performance below.

The Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'.

Achievements and performance

Activities in 2025 contained a varied and inspirational range of initiatives aimed at bringing Song to the community in South East London through a carefully designed programme offering cultural enrichment, educational value and professional development: an acclaimed recital series featuring world-class musicians; and a community engagement programme comprising fringe programme, Young Artist Programme, and Schools' Project.

SongEasel's 2025 programme was themed *DREAMS: A Place*, a song series embracing utopian ideals and cross-cultural dialogue, and celebrating the much-anticipated marital union of Clara and Robert Schumann 185 years ago. Programming for 2025 was the most ambitious to date, increasing the number of ticketed recitals by 50% from four to six, including our first ever Intensive Weekend, combining the Young Artist Programme activities with three ticketed performances by world class artists across one weekend (our *Schumann Weekend*). This year's recitals included a new venue: St Matthew's Elephant & Castle, as well as returning venues the Old Library at Dulwich College, St George the Martyr, Borough, and St Laurence, Catford.

Ticketed Recitals

Myrthen

The recital series opened in May with *Myrthen* featuring acclaimed soprano Francesca Chiejina, SongEasel Artist-in-Residence bass-baritone Stephan Loges, emerging baritone Isaac Tolley, and SongEasel Artistic Director, Jocelyn Freeman. Held in the church of St George the Martyr, Borough, the recital presented Schumann's romantic cycle *Myrthen,* written as a wedding gift for his bride-to-be Clara Wieck. The performance also included works by Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms.



SongEasel Founder & Artistic Director Jocelyn Freeman, soprano Francesca Chiejina, SongEasel Artist in Residence Stephan Loges, and baritone Isaac Tolley at SongEasel's opening concert Myrthen *(credit: Kate Kantur)*

> *"The three vocalists were all superb. A brilliant, moving performance of Schumann's Myrthen. The accompanist also deserves tribute for a flawless and perfectly balanced performance. Top quality."*
>
> Audience Member, *Myrthen*

Dichterliebe

The second recital was *Dichterliebe* featuring celebrated tenor James Gilchrist and SongEasel Artistic Director Jocelyn Freeman. The recital presented Schumann's epic *Dichterliebe* alongside musical settings of lyrical Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, a wonderful new commission by Isabella Gellis, works by William Mathias and Rhian Samuel, and a selection of idyllic English Song. Before the recital, the performers along with two Welsh actors, Rhys Rusbatch and Chris Jared, and composer Rhian Samuel presented a poetry reading and discussion of some of Dylan Thomas' life and best loved works.



Art song at its best - a varied and interesting programme skilfully performed in an intimate setting."

Audience Member, *Dichterliebe*

Jocelyn Freeman and tenor James Gilchrist perform Dichterliebe *(credit: Kate Kantur)*

Schumann Weekend

The Schumann Weekend comprised three recitals by world-class artists, all at St Matthews Church, Elephant & Castle, home to the first bi-lingual parish in the Church of England (English and Spanish).



Former BBC New Generation Artist mezzo-soprano Helen Charlston and pianist Sholto Kynoch kicked off the weekend with their programme Knight's Dream.

Helen Charlston performs Knight's Dream (credit: Kate Kantur)

SongEasel 2025 Artist-in-Residence Stephan Loges and Jocelyn Freeman paid homage to the 185th anniversary of the marriage of Clara Wieck to Robert Schumann with their programme Clara & Robert.



Stephan Loges and Jocelyn Freeman perform Clara & Robert (credit: Kate Kantur)

"…'Mondnacht' combined magical piano playing with Loges' intimate, confiding vocals giving a sense of time suspended."

Planet Hugill



Star German soprano Juliane Banse and renowned Finnish pianist Pauliina Tukiainen provided the heart-felt Schumann Weekend finale.

Their programme combined Spanish songs by Obradors, works by Viardot, selections from Wolf's *Spanisches Liederbuch,* and Robert Schumann's heart-felt *Frauenliebe und -leben*.

Pauliina Tukiainen and Juliane Banse perform Frauenliebe und Leben *(credit: Kate Kantur)*

Free Recitals and Events

As in previous years SongEasel held three free recitals at St Laurence Church Catford, a parish in an area high in statistics of overall deprivation, to provide access to world-class performances to the local community, particularly those who might not otherwise be able to experience song performance of this quality and beauty.

Our celebrations for the 185th anniversary of Clara and Robert Schumann's marriage led to a special Listening Club event featuring some of the composers' best-loved works and providing insight into their lives. Artist-in-Residence Stephan Loges joined SongEasel Young Artist Alumna Catherine Hooper, alongside Jocelyn Freeman.

Exceptional young Zambian baritone Themba Mvula performed a personal recital inspired by his identity and journey from Zambia to the UK, which included rarely performed works by Mokale Koapeng and Robert Fokkens, accompanied by Jocelyn Freeman.

Celebrated British soprano of Jamaican-Indian heritage Nadine Benjamin MBE joined us for our 2025 series finale, curating a recital that reflected on her life and journey. Also a renowned coach, she introduced her former mentees, sopranos Hannah MacCauley, Danae Eleni and Danielle Williams along with pianist Nigel Foster for a programme that featured a wide variety of songs and cultural influences.



Pianist Nigel Foster, sopranos Danielle Kamilah, Danae Eleni, Nadine Benjamin MBE, and Hannah Macauley performing My Journey, a personal recital curated by Nadine Benjamin MBE (credit: Kate Kantur)

Fringe Performances

> *"SongEasel is doing amazing things for this artform: the future of song is not in Wigmore Hall for most of us and this is making it relevant and taking it to a new audience to create a future for the genre.*"
>
> Pianist and Arts Leader Keval Shah

SongEasel continued its mission to take classical song to places it doesn't usually go with performances by former SongEasel Young Artists soprano Emily Beech and pianist Roxanna Shini at regular partner Rocketvan, a café in Elephant and Castle.

Current SongEasel Young Artists mezzo-soprano Samantha Lewis and pianist Beth Haughan also performed two events in this series. One of these performances was at Rocketvan, and the other at the Catford Bridge Tavern following Themba Mvula's recital Belonging.

Young Artist Programme

SongEasel created spaces for five Young Artist duos from nearly sixty applicants from around the globe. Of the selected young people, three duos were based in the UK, with one duo from Holland and another from Spain. One of the British duos withdrew from the Blackheath Halls platform, creating space for three further duos to benefit from that platform and associated coaching. One of these reserve duos then jumped in for two Fringe performances, bringing the total number of individuals supported this year to sixteen.

The Young Artists took a full part in our inaugural "Intensive Weekend" participating in Masterclasses provided by the world class artists performing in the weekend's recitals. Feedback from the programme was positive, particularly about being able to watch artists of the highest calibre perform and then learn with them, as well as the peer support provided by being part of a four-day cohort. The Young Artist duos who presented a Community Performance Platform had an immensely positive experience, which they described as "freeing," "inspiring," and "so important". Young Artists provided useful feedback about scheduling and communication, which will help to improve the Young Artist experience in future years. Aligning the YAP with a small festival increased the audience and volunteer base significantly.



SongEasel Young Artists perform Lebendige Lieder *at Blackheath Halls (credit: Kate Kantur)*

Schools' Project

SongEasel's Schools' Project in 2025 was inspired by the life of Mary, Queen of Scots. Schumann's Maria Stuart Lieder in English translation by Jeremy Sams were complemented by works by Claudin de Sermisy and Dee Isaacs, and participants' own works of art in response to our theme. The children learned about Mary, Queen of Scots and her life moving between France and the UK. Youth-voice led workshops devised creative responses in a range of media, including paintings in vivid colours, and poetry using engaging techniques such as rhyming, alliteration and onomatopoeia.

We set out to expand our programme and it grew successfully, reaching 1,656 students at five schools across South East London (Athelney Primary School, The Cathedral School of St Saviour & St Mary Overy, Elfrida Primary School, Childeric Primary School, and Rushey Green Primary School). This was a significant increase from last year's 1,220 children reached, and an increase from just under 1,000 in 2023, 400 in 2022 and 230 in 2021. The schools involved had pupil premium rates averaging 37.26%, and ranging from 19.2% to 44.8%.

Workshops were led by a total of 11 talented artists including Spanish soprano Lorena Paz Nieto, Irish-Greek soprano Anna Sideris, British-American soprano Shafali Jalota and pianist Jocelyn Freeman, and culminated with a showcase during which children shared the songs they had learnt and their unique creative responses as part of the final performance.

> *"Your performance cured my tummy ache."*
> Student in Year 2 at a SongEasel Schools' Workshop

Financial Review

Significant Events

SongEasel completed its fourth year of operations with income increasing by just under 10%. As the charity had funds brought forward of over £4,000 a deficit was budgeted to reduce funds carried forward to just under £2,000 prioritising our charitable activities over building a reserve. That enabled us to increase the spend on charitable activities by over 20% and saw the number of children participating in the schools' programme increase by 35% to 1,656 this year.

Financial Summary

The charity's income for the period was £50,119 (2024 - £45,779) made up of donations from Trusts and Foundations of £16,785 – 34% of total income (2024 £21,820 – 48%), private donations augmented by Gift Aid of £16,249 –33% (2024 £10,317 – 22%), donations in kind of £3,800 – 7% (2024 £3,800 – 8%) made up of facilities hire of £800 plus Artistic Director's and administrative fees waived to support the charity's activities, and corporate sponsorship of £1,629 – 3% (2024 £3,577 – 8%) giving total donations of £38,463 (2024 £39,514).

The remaining income came from ticket sales plus hospitality of £11,656 – 23% (2024 £6,265 – 14%). This included the auction of a private recital by SongEasel's Artistic Patron Mark Padmore who generously gave his services free of charge.

The shift in the mix of Income reflects the challenging environment that all charities face in competing for grants from Trusts and Foundations with that source of income down as a percentage and in absolute terms, and the success that SongEasel had in 2025 in growing other areas. The charity is particularly grateful to its private supporters whose contributions increased in 2025 to offset the reduction in grants. The other main increase was in the innovation of a private recital auction which enabled the increased in earned income.

The charity's largest area of expenditure was for Artistic and Creative costs at £19,768 – 38% of total expenditure (2024 £19,553 – 45%) primarily made up of musicians' fees for ticketed and free recitals, plus some pre-recital talks and recital programmes. Venue Hire and Stewarding represented a further £2,160 – 4% of costs (2024 £1,800 – 4%), much of it through donations in kind in the form of hall hire fees waived.

Outreach and educational expenditure in the form of Schools and Young Artists programmes made up the second largest outgoing for the year at £15,861 – 30% (2024 £7,506 – 18%) while support costs were largely in line with the previous year at £11,633 – 22% (2024 £10,520 – 24%). In 2024 SongEasel invested in additional administrative support to support the charity's growth and it is satisfying to see that in 2025 those costs have remained stable but have enabled considerable growth in the funds devoted to outreach.

The remaining expenditure was for Fundraising which accounted for £3,100 – 6% of total expenditure (2024 £3,077 – 7%), representing an allocation of 20% of website costs, the cost of preparing submissions to Trusts and Foundations and administering private donations. Donations in Kind of fundraising effort of £2,000 from SongEasel's Artistic Director made up the majority of this cost.

SongEasel started 2025 with charitable funds broughtcarried forward of £4,247 and the budget foresaw a deficit in order to reduce reserves and devote the funds to charitable activities. The result for the year was slightly favourable compared to budget with a deficit of £2,403 for 2025 (2024 £2,229 surplus).

Reserves

At the end of the financial year cash and bank balances stood at £4,833 (2024 £4,701), and net reserves totalled £1,844 (2024 £4,247). As a relatively new charity with limited funds SongEasel does not have the capacity to hold a material reserve and the figure of £1,844 is a balance between providing some financial resilience for the future and ensuring that funds are mainly directed towards our charitable activities.

Trustee Benefits

No Trustee was paid for carrying out their role as a Trustee, claimed expenses or was employed by the charity.

One Trustee received fees for specialist services provided to the charity as Artistic Director and for performances in some of the charity's recitals. There were no other related party transactions.

Details of the services and fees are disclosed in Note 8 to the Accounts.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing document

The charity is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and governed by its Constitution.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are chosen on the basis of merit and their ability to contribute to the charity in terms of skills, knowledge and experience. All Trustees are provided on appointment with the charity's governing document, the relevant guidance from the Charity Commission and the latest Annual Report and Accounts and are given informal personal guidance by an existing Trustee.

Reference and Administrative Information

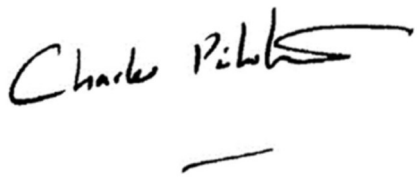
Name of Charity	SongEasel
Charity Registration number	1197751
Date of Registration	1 February 2022
Principal Address	The Rectory Meadow Row London SE1 6RG

Trustees

The Trustees who have served during the year and since the establishment as a charity were as follows:

Jocelyn Freeman
Matthew Gasser
Clare Glover
The Rev'd Canon Charles Faulkner Pickstone
Jeremy Young

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



The Rev'd Canon Charles Faulkner Pickstone
Chair

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SongEasel

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the SongEasel Trust (the Trust) for the year ended 31 October 2025.

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 all 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 giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed:



Name: Rory Young

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any): Chartered Accountants of New Zealand and Australia, membership number: 3022930

Address: 62 Balcara AVE, Carseldine, 4034 AUSTRALIA

Date: 13 August 2026

SongEasel
Bringing Song to South East London

SongEasel
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year to 31 October 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income:					
Donations	2	24,663	13,800	38,463	39,514
Charitable Activities	3	11,656	-	11,656	6,265
Total Income		**36,319**	**13,800**	**50,119**	**45,779**
Expenditure:					
Charitable Activities	4	37,622	11,800	49,422	40,473
Raising Funds	5	1,100	2,000	3,100	3,077
Total Expenditure		**38,722**	**13,800**	**52,522**	**43,550**
Net Income / (Expenditure)		**- 2,403**	**-**	**- 2,403**	**2,229**
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total Funds brought forward		4,247	-	4,247	2,018
Total Funds carried forward		**1,844**	**-**	**1,844**	**4,247**

SongEasel
Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 October 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Current Assets			
Cash at Bank and in hand		4,833	4,701
Debtors	9	1,524	2,609
		6,357	7,310
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	4,513	3,063
Net Current Assets		1,844	4,247
Total Assets less current liabilities		**1,844**	**4,247**
Charity Funds			
Restricted Funds	11	-	-
Unrestricted Funds	11	1,844	4,247
Total Charity Funds		**1,844**	**4,247**

SongEasel
Bringing Song to South East London

SongEasel
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year to 31 October 2025

Notes

1 **Accounting Policies**

Basis of Accounting
The Charity constitues a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (October 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities Act 2011. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going Concern
The financial statements are prepared, on a going concern basis, under the historical cost convention.

Fund Descriptions
a) Unrestricted Funds
Unrestricted Funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objects of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.
b) Restricted Funds
Restricted Funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions set out by the donors or which have been raised by the Charity for particular purposes.

Income Recognition
Income is included in the statement of financial activities when the Charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Donated Goods, Services and Facilities
Donated goods and services are disclosed as restricted donations with corresponding expenditure, and are valued at the amount that the charity would pay in the open market.

Expenditure Recognition
All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

2 **Income from Donations**	**Unrestricted Funds £**	**Restricted Funds £**	**Total 2025 £**	**Total 2024 £**
Private Donations	13,043	-	13,043	8,295
Gift Aid Recoverable	3,206	-	3,206	2,022
Trusts and Foundations	6,785	10,000	16,785	21,820
Corporate Sponsorship	1,629	-	1,629	3,577
Support in Kind	-	3,800	3,800	3,800
	24,663	**13,800**	**38,463**	**39,514**

3 Income from Charitable Activities	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Ticket Income for events	**11,656**	**-**	**11,656**	**6,265**

4 Costs of Charitable Activities	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Artistic and Creative Costs	18,418	1,350	19,768	19,553
Venue Hire and Stewarding	1,360	800	2,160	1,800
Schools Projects	4,359	5,674	10,033	5,086
Young Artists Projects	2,572	3,256	5,828	2,420
Cost of sales	100	-	100	1,094
Support	10,813	720	11,533	10,520
	37,622	**11,800**	**49,422**	**40,473**

5 Costs of Fundraising	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Website and media	936	-	936	424
Trust Applications and Supporter administration	164	2,000	2,164	2,653
	1,100	**2,000**	**3,100**	**3,077**

6 Analysis of support costs	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Website and other media	2,116	-	2,116	1,695
Marketing	1,629	-	1,629	1,252
Fundraising	1,100	2,000	3,100	3,077
Administrative Support	7,068	720	7,788	7,573
	11,913	**2,720**	**14,633**	**13,597**

7 Particulars of Employees	2025	2024
Number of employees	0	0

8 Trustee Benefits

No Trustee was paid for carrying out their role as a Trustee or received expenses.

One Trustee, Jocelyn Freeman, received fees for services provided to the Charity as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Performance in recitals	3,050	2,650
Preparation and delivery of Schools Projects	4,346	1,390
Preparation and delivery of Young Artists Programme	3,690	595
Programme Management and Artistic Design	2,267	4,765
	13,353	9,400

In addition Jocelyn Freeman provided services as donations in kind to the value of £3,000 (2024 £3,000), as well as carrying out her role as a Trustee. The Support in Kind was primarily in the areas of fundraising, and support for Schools Projects and Young Artists.

The Trustees have fully disclosed the circumstances of the services and Trustee benefits to the Charity Commission and are satisfied that they comply with the standard constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Oorganisation, with Charity Commission guidance and with Section 185 to 188 of the Charities Act 2011.

The work of the charity requires a high degree of skill in curating, organising and managing the projects, and performing the works involved. Jocelyn Freeman is a concert standard pianist and curator of music with considerable experience and has organised similar activities promoting song for the benefit of the community for several years. The Trustees believe that Jocelyn's intimate knowledge of the specific requirements of the charity and it's working environment, her competence in this specialist field, and her willingness to carry out the services for less or no more than the market rate mean that using her services in such circumstances is in the best interest of the Charity and supports delivery of the charity's object.

Fees do not exceed what is reasonable for the services provided; are measured by market comparison; the Trustee to benefit is absented from the Board discussion and vote; no other Trustee receives any benefits; remuneration for the services from the Trustee is approved only when it is in the best interests of the charity and in support of the charity's object.

9 Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts due within one year:		
Prepayments and Accrued Income	1,524	2,609

10 Creditors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts due within one year:		
Accruals	4,513	3,063

11 Fund Reconciliation

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £		Outgoing Resources £	Carried Forward £	Carried Forward £
Unrestricted	4,247	36,319	-	38,722	1,844	4,247
Restricted	-	10,000	-	10,000	-	-
	4,247	46,319	-	48,722	1,844	4,247

Funds carried forward represent the 2024 funds brought forward of £4,247 less the deficit for the year of £2,403.