

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The season of 2023-2024 was the first under our new conductor Phillip Colin. I am delighted to report how successful this was, how happy people are working with him and that he has settled in so well. I am also really pleased that the choir has grown in number and welcome our new members and hope for more!

The season started with Elijah, which at times seemed to lift the roof off St Mark's. A fine performance of Messiah followed, in the Victoria Hall due to unavailability of the Cathedral (but we will be back there in 2024). St. John Passion in St Marks was then a great success and well received by another appreciative audience. The final concert of the season was Brahms's Requiem and Shicksalslied. This was a joint concert with Sheffield Oratorio Chorus and future collaborations to tackle the larger works are being considered.

We had a Come Sing Messiah which showcased young soloists from St Johns Ranmoor, who we will be welcoming, along with Steel City Choristers to join us for St Matthew Passion in 2024-25. We also hosted a workshop before the Elijah concert and it is planned that further workshops will take place as part of our seasons. Social events added enormously to the music making and the choir is one of the friendliest I know. The season was enjoyably ended with a Bring and Share Supper organised by our Social Secretary – Anne Adams.

I feel really optimistic about the strength and the potential for the choir to move forward, continue to grow and form new connections, making us a big player on the Sheffield music scene.

It would be remiss not to thank the committee and all of those who contribute to the running of the choir and those who feel able to offer financial support. Without these efforts the choir could not exist in these more challenging times for the arts. We have so much to offer and look forward to an exciting future.

Chris Walker

Chairman

chairman@sheffieldbachchoir.co.uk

TREASURER'S REPORT

Unfortunately, as in recent years since the Pandemic, we continue to run a deficit over the 2023-2024 season. The good news is that the choir has adequate reserves for now and our income is up substantially since last year, with a growing membership bringing in more subscriptions, increased ticket sales and fund raising, plus some generous sponsorship from the late (and much missed) Laurence Coates. However, many of our costs are also rising, most notably professional fees and hall hire (including heating). The most expensive concert from last season was Mendelssohn's Elijah in November, which was a great occasion but cost £7700 for soloists, orchestra and hall hire so the choir is not in a position to put on such large works very often (other than with substantial sponsorship).

Our main sources of income are choir subscriptions and ticket sales - so attracting new members and selling more tickets are the best ways to help us financially. Membership subscription rates have remained at £150 this season and can be paid in instalments, but we will have to increase the annual rate to £200 next season to help cover costs. We are always very grateful for additional donations and sponsorship from any members who feel able to contribute further.

Please do support our fundraising efforts, including the weekly little raffle and monthly stalls, plus carol singing in December. If anyone has any innovative fundraising ideas please to let the committee know!

We are also hoping that more members will join the monthly draw (£4 per month) and to sign up to online gift schemes such as Give as You Live and Easy Fundraising. Please contact me if you would like more information on any of these.

Kitty Ross

Treasurer

treasurer@sheffieldbachchoir.co.uk

CONDUCTOR'S REPORT

It has been a huge pleasure to be your conductor this year. I have been made to feel very welcome and I have very much appreciated your enthusiasm and your committed singing.

Elijah is one of my favourite oratorios and it was great to be able to start with that. A strong quartet of soloists, an augmented chorus and an orchestra on top form. I was grateful to Elizabeth Roberts for standing in at the last minute for Chrissie Birchall-Samson and to Cath Backhouse for standing in for Ailsa Mainwaring. Tenor Nicolas Watts made a very strong impression and William Burn was an imposing and dramatic presence as Elijah. I received very many favourable comments about the choir's performance – clear text, an exciting sound and a strong sense of drama.

Messiah at Victoria Hall was also very memorable. Jane Burnell, who has sung for the society before, Beth Mackay, the returning Nicolas Watts (standing in for an indisposed Peter Wilman) and Sheffield's own Francis Wells were the quartet and the National Festival Orchestra once again accompanying brilliantly, including our accompanist Ruth Nicholson playing harpsichord and organ. The Victoria Hall was an excellent stand in venue but we look forward to returning to the Cathedral in the 24/25 season.

In the Spring was St John Passion. Again, we needed to replace indisposed soloists, this time Evangelist Stephen Lilley, replaced by Ben Thapa, who tragically died later in the year. Chrissie Birchall-Samson, Hannah Mason (again, previously known to the society) and Dean Robinson sang the arias and local baritone Peter Taylor sang Christ. It was a very moving performance, again accompanied by the National Festival Orchestra with Ruth Nicholson playing continuo.

For our final concert in the season, we teamed up with the Oratorio Chorus to perform Ein Deutsches Requiem and Shicksalslied, both by Brahms in Victoria Hall. It was great fun to rehearse and perform with larger forces and it would be great to collaborate again on a large work in the near future.

I am most grateful to the committee for all their hard work.

Philip Collin

Conductor

philipajcollin@gmail.com

SECRETARY'S REPORT

I can confirm that the Committee has continued to work on behalf of members, to meet the 'object' of our Society as outlined in the Constitution, meeting formally three times during the last season and engaging in several additional discussions in person and via email as issues arose. Meetings continued to focus primarily on detailed planning for each forthcoming season and outline planning

for future seasons. We have been very pleased that Philip Collin can now contribute to the forward planning which has included introducing the choir to new works.

The Committee undertook a detailed review of the last season before the summer break, considering 'What went well ...' and 'What could be even better if ...'. The overwhelming view was that our first season with our new conductor had been a real success. Enjoyable rehearsals had included a good balance of singing, training and musical input from Philip. It went without saying that we still needed to recruit more tenors, but it had been very encouraging that over the season we had welcomed more new members in one year than in the last five years! Attendance at rehearsals has been impacted by illness and holidays and sometimes rather concerning. The Committee haven't yet, however, needed to enforce our stated expectation of '75% attendance at rehearsals to sing in the concert', but attendance at rehearsals will be kept under careful review, especially as we add new and less familiar works to our repertoire.

Invitations were accepted by Jane Ginsborg and Barbara Hawley to become Life-Friends of the Society in recognition of their many years of singing with us.

Since the last AGM, we heard of the death of a number of people who had a long association with the Society. Dr Alan Brown, a quiet and unassuming man but truly brilliant musician who accompanied choir rehearsals for many years and served as our Vice-President; Laurence Coates, a former member of the choir who generously sponsored the joint Brahms concert in memory of his late wife Liz, only sadly not to live to attend the concert himself; and more recently we heard of the death of Hazel Elliot-Kemp who continued to support the choir in the audience for many concerts after she stopped singing.

Thank you to everyone for your contribution to the success of the society over the last year as we look forward to another exciting season under the direction of Philip Collin.

Liz Buxton

Secretary

secretary@sheffieldbachchoir.co.uk

Sheffield Bach Society

(Registered charity number 511146)

Financial statements

Season 2023/2024

Year to 31 July 2024

Sheffield Bach Society, Season 2023/2024

Annual Report

The Society is a charity which is governed by its Constitution; it is not also a company.

The Society's Bankers are the Co-operative Bank and the Royal Bank of Scotland plc. The Society opened a Co-operative Bank Community Direct Plus Account in September 2019, and a Business Select Instant Access Account in March 2020. The Instant Save Account in the Royal Bank of Scotland has now been closed and funds transferred to the Co-operative Bank. The Society also had a COIF Charity Funds account with CCLA Investment Management Ltd, in which a sum has been deposited for use as a Reserve Fund. The new banking arrangements mean that payments can now be made by bank transfer online, with all transactions authorised by two signatories. The Honorary Independent Examiner is Mr. Jonathan Andrew Brice, BA, ACA, ACT, of 44 Stumperlowe Park Road, Sheffield, S10 3QP.

The Society does not have a Solicitor; if such were required, it would be entitled, as members, to the free use of the services of the National Federation of Music Societies honorary solicitors.

Sheffield Bach Society, by virtue of its Constitution, aims to educate the public in the arts and sciences and in particular the art and science of music by encouraging the study and performance of the works of J S Bach and such other composers as are deemed appropriate, by promoting concerts and recitals devoted to their music and by maintaining a choir for this purpose, and by such other activities as the Society may from time to time think fit. At present this means that, generally, four concerts per year are given, in Sheffield Cathedral or a similar venue, plus occasional smaller concerts (probably not the whole choir and perhaps without orchestra); in addition various small fund-raising events are held to help to pay for the professional soloists and professional orchestra that are employed for these concerts.

The Society is run by a Committee, elected by the general membership of the Society, and its members (who are the Trustees) during the 2023-2024 Season were as follows:

Chairman	Mr Christopher Walker
Secretary	Mrs Elizabeth Buxton
Treasurer	Miss Catherine Ross
Social Secretary	Mrs Anne Adams
Ordinary Members:	Mr Neil Dummigan, Mr Alan Heath, Mrs Jennifer Nortcliffe, Mrs Elisabeth Paice, Mr StJohn Wright

Also attending Committee meetings but not a Trustee: *Conductor Mr Philip Collin, and Mr John Morton*

Apart from the Trustees, the Society has other-officers, namely:

Hon Conductor	Mr Philip Collin
President	Professor George Nicholson
Box Office Manager	Mr Michael Buxton

Statement of committee's responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the committee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity at the end of the year and of its financial activities during the year then ended. In preparing those 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;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the society will continue its activities.
- It is the society's policy to maintain a reserve of £20,000 to cover commitments for one season plus emergency payments and contingencies. We clearly meet the aim of this policy.

The committee is responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the society and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The committee has general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to it to safeguard the assets of the society and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

	General fund	
	2023/2024	2022/2023
	£	£
Income and Expenditure		
Incoming Resources		
Admission receipts including programme sales	12,826	10,336
Subscriptions	8,730	5,725
Patrons donations	215	100
Donations	1,556	1,545
Friends	461	281
Fundraising	2,572	1021
Gift Aid Tax Recovered	2,461	2,258
Bank interest	503	176
Sponsors	1,500	750
Music	724	225
Special Collections - Archer Project	743	1,158
Written off cheques	45	57
Total Incoming Resources	32,336	23,632

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

	General fund	
	2023/2024	2022/2023
Income and Expenditure <i>continued</i>	£	£
Resources Expended		
Professional Expenses	28,665	18,820
Hire & purchase of music	367	549
Hall, church and piano hire	7,130	4,674
Printing and design	1,068	868
Administration expenses	400	119
Advertising	83	49
Subscriptions - <i>Making Music (Note)</i>	581	634
Classical Sheffield subscription	103	82
Tribute to Simon Lindley		100
Refunds (sub paid twice)	125	
Special Collections - Archer Project	743	1,158
Total Resources Expended	39,265	27,053
Net Movement in Funds - surplus/(deficit)	(6,929)	(3,421)
Fund balance brought forward at 1 August 2023	29,049	32,470
Fund balance carried forward at 31st July 2024	22,120	29,049

(Note) Insurance of music and harpsichord effected through Making Music and included in subscription fees.

Sheffield Bach Society, Season 2023/2024
Balance Sheet at 31 July 2024

	2023/2024	2022/2023
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash at bank:		
Current Account (Co-op)	2,796	2,561
Interest accounts	18,989	27,128
Cash in hand	243	272
Hall hire deposits paid for 2024/25 season	20	465
Music hired in for 2024/25 season	242	
Debtors (gift aid claim)	80	-
	<u>22,370</u>	<u>30,426</u>
LESS LIABILITIES		
Sponsorship paid in advance for 2023/24 season	-	1,000
Design for 2022/23 season paid in 2023/24	240	315
Un-cleared cheques	10	62
Net Assets	<u>22,120</u>	<u>29,049</u>

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

- 1 No account has been made for opening and closing stocks of refreshments.
- 2 Grants and subsidies have been credited to income in the season to which they relate.
- 3 All the society's funds are of an unrestricted nature.
- 4 The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 9 September 2024

C J Ross



Honorary Treasurer

C H Walker



Chairman

Independent Examiner's report to the Committee of Sheffield Bach Society

I report on the accounts of the Society for the year ended 31st July 2024, which are set out on pages 3 to 5.

Respective responsibilities of Committee and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Act and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the 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 accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.


Independent examiner's statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
- or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
 - the accounts did 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

Sheffield Bach Society, Season 2023/2024

Signed:  Date: 13 JANUARY 2025

Name: Jonathan Andrew Brice, BA, ACA, ACT

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
Association of Corporate Treasurers

Address: 44 Stumperlowe Park Road
Sheffield
S10 3 QP

Sheffield Bach Society, Season 2023/2024

Concerts given during the year:

Saturday 18th November 2023, St Mark's Church, Broomhill – Mendelssohn's Elijah

Monday 4th December 2023, Victoria Hall - Handel's Messiah

Saturday 23rd March 2024, St Mark's Church, Broomhill – Bach's St John Passion

Saturday 29th June 2024, Victoria Hall – Brahms German Requiem (joint concert with Sheffield Oratorio Chorus)

The net financial result of these concerts has been detailed in the foregoing accounts.

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