

# TRUSTEES REPORT 2023

Belfast Operatic Company,  
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NI Charity no. 102042

The aim of the Society over the years has been to provide an avenue for members and the general public to perform in quality concerts and musical productions through the province. The company aims to educate both its members and the public, through production of musical theatre works, often new to the province. Ordinarily the company performs one major musical show each year and various concerts for the general public. We are governed by constitution, which is reviewed at each AGM.

Each season we seem to get busier and busier and this one has been no different. With no Opera House date, we set about taking to a different venue for the company with an upcoming show in Theatre At The Mill, in PHANTOM.

This season we welcomed back musical director Colin Scott, and started the year with a successful concert and social night away in the Marine Hotel in Ballycastle. Always a great night away, and once again entertained audiences in the town, and members in the bar afterwards - the hotel and the surrounding area makes for a great setting and they always provide a strong welcome.

Following this was a collaboration with Festival Brass in aid of Friends of the Cancer centre at Glenmachan, with Peter Corry and Gerry Kelly entertaining audiences and keeping things flowing - we were delighted to continue our charitable partnership with friends of the cancer centre to raise funds for them through the year.

The highlight of our festive season then - our Christmas concert, 2nd December, in the Ulster hall. We were delighted to welcome back the pops orchestra for this one for what turned out to be a sold out evening, with choir stalls going on sale and raising much needed finances to contribute to the running of the company - ably compered by Laura Kerr, again one of our own members, audiences were treated to a variety of Christmas music and song by both orchestra and choir.

Following this members enjoyed a bit of festive mingling in the Europa. This year was slightly different in that we decided to host a full company Christmas dinner at the Hilton, which was organised by Jordan and her team - a great meal and great craic for a Monday evening! Many members remarked this should be an annual feature.

Through all this, the casting process for our upcoming production began and the company set about producing one of the biggest musicals - PHANTOM. Once finally cast, and With a much quieter schedule, this allowed some social activity too, with Peter Scott organising a fundraising quiz on behalf of the company.

With a lot of emphasis on how "iconic" the show was, we set about employing a production team who would bring something different to the show. Kerry Rodgers agreed to direct the production, with a team of people made up from within the company including Kirsten, Donald, Liz and Gary all working on various elements of the show.

What resulted was another fantastic show, a first in another new Northern Ireland venue for Belfast Operatic and a great triumph for the company. Many wondered how we would present an opera house standard show in a smaller venue, and if the quality would suffer, and I'm happy to report the sold out audiences confirmed this was not a concern.

Shortly after the show we had a small break, before hosting our annual friends night at Heron Road, organised by new friends secretary Kevin. Always a great night which offers company members the opportunity to perform pieces of their own making and showcase the amount of talent within the company.

Quickly following this the company organised an open mic night "Miscast" organised by Sarah McLaughlin and featuring the team of Niall and Donal from Miscast Belfast. A great evening of songs from shows people wouldn't be able to perform.

At a previous AGM I recall an audible gasp of excitement as we announced our next show "The Phantom Of The Opera", and wondered where we'd go from here... as the titles get bigger and bigger, what would be next? Well... that question was quickly answered when our involvement in discussions began about a national project the likes of which we'd never seen - the opportunity for BoC to be involved in and spearhead a production of Les Miserables. A project which has huge legacy potential for the company, and for musical theatre in Northern Ireland.



Unfortunately the announcement of "Les Miserables" does mean we have to postpone our production of "Guys and Dolls" but this will now happen in May 2026.

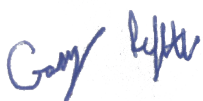
#### Financial review

In accordance with our accounts, this years show sold well and was budgeted accordingly, resulting in a small loss. The committee proceeded with caution in all financial decisions given the smaller potential for income in The Mill, and aimed to build on the financial success of previous years in other activities. As a rule of thumb, we aim to add funds in to an account as a rainy day fund. As always, the risk of putting on shows from a financial point of view is high, a sizable budget is required to maintain standards at the Grand Opera House or similar professional venues.

#### Trustees

As nominated at the AGM, the trustees are advised of the Commission's public benefit requirement guidance, and the guidance on being a trustee. Decisions are taken by the committee with this guidance in mind. This includes management of any potential conflicts of interest, health and safety policies and issues, and risk assessments.

Signed by Secretary:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Rafter".

Date:

Wednesday 16th August 2023