

## ***Board of Trustees Annual Summary Report: 2017***

### **Content and Purpose**

This report summarises the work of the Board of Trustees of the German Choir of London (the Choir) including changes to the Board and key achievements. It serves to inform all associate members of the Choir of the work going on 'behind the scenes' to create transparency and a sense of ownership. The summary is based on the minutes kept at all Trustee meetings. Any associate member can request to view the meeting minutes (written in English) by emailing any Trustee at any time. Associate members are also permitted to attend the Board meetings upon request. This is the 3rd summary report.

### **Period covered**

January - December 2017

### **Author**

Victoria Pelka

### **Content**

1. Events in the reporting period
2. Changes to the Board of Trustees in the reporting period
3. Summary of Trustee work in the reporting period
4. Summary of the Annual General Meeting of Associate Members
5. Financial summary
6. Acknowledgements
7. Concerts and events currently programmed for 2018

## **1. Events in the reporting period**

Choral events:

- St Martin in the Fields Reformation service with the Choir of St Martin-in-the-Fields, with prior singing on Trafalgar Square, February 2017
- King's College Chapel, Cambridge - concert with the choir of King's College Cambridge, Reformation event, February 2017
- *Johannespassion* in St Giles Cripplegate, March 2017
- YMCA concert in St James Paddington, June 2017
- Notre Dame, Paris, Evensong, August 2017
- Westminster Abbey Reformation service - sang with 6 other international choirs, October 2017
- Harrods and YMCA Christmas bazaar Christmas Carols, December 2017
- St Mungo's Christmas Carols fundraising in various spots around London, December 2017
- Christmas concert in December in St Lawrence Jewry, December 2017

Training sessions for Choir Members:

- The Musical Director offered training sessions between October to December 2017 on topics such as singing techniques, sight reading, intonation and rhythm. This training was offered to members free of charge and was well received.

Trustee Meetings:

- 3rd January 2017
- 3rd February 2017
- 9th March 2017
- 11th May 2017
- 25th June 2017
- 28th September 2017
- 9th November 2017

Annual General Choir member meeting:

- 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2017 (see detailed notes below)

## **2. Changes to the Board of Trustees in the reporting period**

In March 2017, Sarah Marzi took over as Trustee from Paul Geffert. The Board of Trustees would like to thank Paul for his time and passion he committed to the Choir.

Current Board of Trustees and areas of responsibilities:

- Melanie Allmendinger: new members
- Thomas Hegel: finance and legal; Chair of the Board of Trustees
- Victoria Pelka: marketing and online presence
- Christian Anders: events coordinator including trips abroad
- Sarah Marzi: social secretary and social media

### **3. Summary of the work of the Trustees and the Musical Director in the reporting period**

#### **Marketing**

- We appeared in the biggest choir magazine in the UK, "[Choir and Organ](#)", in September 2017. Two Trustees and some Choir members were interviewed by a journalist – thank you to those who took the time.
- In June 2017, we appeared on German TV in the [WDR die story](#) "Ein Brexit und drei Millionen Sorgen"
- In June 2017, some Choir members were interviewed and filmed by BBC News and we appeared on the evening news as part of Brexit reporting.
- We collaborated with graphic designers to produce a [marketing video](#) for our December concert. Thanks to everyone who let themselves be filmed for this experimental project.
- The marketing team conducted a lot of social media advertising on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Our most successful post in 2017 was a picture of us outside of Notre Dame, Paris on the 26th August. It reached 2,900 people.
- Classic FM ran a competition for UK-based choirs to be featured in the programme performing a carol. We applied by submitting some descriptive text and an mp3 file. Unfortunately, we were not selected this time round but will submit again if the opportunity arises.
- The marketing team updated most of the text on our [Choir website](#), making it more professional and approachable in tone, and up to date.

#### **Concert and event organisation**

##### Johannespassion and Christmas Concert

- The planning and organising for both the Johannespassion performance in St Giles Cripplegate and our Christmas Concert in St Lawrence Jewry was completed by the Trustees and volunteers. This included everything from choosing and hiring the venues, organising seating for the Choir, ticket sales (online and offline), designing the concert booklets, buying the snack and drinks given out at the Christmas concert, buying flowers for the soloists, organising volunteers, and finding a post-concert pub. A big thanks to everyone who gave their time to complete these tasks.
- The costs for putting on Johannespassion were relatively high (> £7,000 - full budget breakdown available upon request) due to the larger orchestra and soloist costs. The Christmas concert costs around £5,500. Both concerts were loss-making, which, considering the charitable aims of the choir, is acceptable. Given the lower costs of the Christmas concert, tickets were £5 cheaper than tickets for Johannespassion.
- For both concerts, Choir members had to purchase three compulsory tickets (see discussion points below).

##### Trip to Paris and mass in Notre Dame, Paris

- The Trustees and the Musical Director organised a whole-choir trip to Paris in August 2017. This included registering the choir to sing in Notre Dame, booking hotels and restaurants, and a boat trip on the Seine.
- The Musical Director invited multiple Alumni who immensely enjoyed being reconnected with their old Choir.
- The Trustees also organised the printing of T-shirts with a tailored logo which was taken up by many current members and Alumni.

### 2018 Tour “Selig sind die Friedfertigen“ („Blessed Are the Peacemakers“)

- Throughout 2017, the Musical Director together with a number of Trustees and Choir members has been setting up the Choir’s programme for 2018 which involves a tour of multiple Cathedrals in the UK and Belgium.

### **Discussion points**

- Rehearsal venue: The choir has grown in size over this past year. The Trustees discussed how suitable our current rehearsal location is for such a growing choir. Arguments for staying in the venue is the very low cost (£1 a year) that the Choir currently pays yearly for the rehearsal room. The number of choir members also traditionally fluctuates so it may be prudent to wait and see whether the numbers remain high. It was decided to remain in the current rehearsal venue for now and monitor member numbers and quality of the Choir performance.
- Compulsory ticket purchase: Before every concert, the Trustees discussed anew the need for members to purchase a minimum number of compulsory tickets, as well as the ticket pricing structure. The cost of each concert was the main driver for ticket prices and the number of compulsory tickets each member had to purchase – bearing in mind we always aim to break even or make a loss, not make a profit. The decision to let Choir members purchase three compulsory tickets were driven by a) the need to have some secured income and b) the desire to sing in front of a large audience. Behind this sits that recognition that our popularity in London is not yet great enough to draw a crowd to fill our concert venues. Our yearly concert in St James’ Church shows time and again that without compulsory tickets and intense marketing, our audience is always very small.

## **4. Summary of the Annual General Meeting of Associate Members**

At the Christmas meeting (General Meeting of Associate Members) on the 12th December 2017, the Choir approved the work of the Trustees, elected new section leaders for 2018, and discussed a number of ideas relating to rehearsals and the running of the Choir. All points were discussed by the Board and the Musical Director and will be implemented as far as possible. In summary:

- The Trustees presented a review of all choral, marketing and other activities of 2017
- The Trustees outlined how they had implemented feedback that was voiced in 2016
- The Trustees thanked particular Choir members who volunteered their time for the Choir
- The Musical Director updated the Choir on plans for 2018
- The Trustees gave a report about the financial health of the choir (see point 5. Financial summary below)
- The Choir members (re)elected section leaders
- Discussion points were:
  - Skills training sessions: Choir members enjoyed the skills sessions that the Musical Director had offered during the autumn and winter. We discussed the options of funding further skills sessions either a) paid for by all members’ fees: though some members might not attend, their fees would be used to improve the quality of the choir, which is legitimate; b) paid for only by those attending the skills sessions. The preference seemed to be for option a).
  - Charging more for tickets at the box office: This could serve as an incentive to buy tickets early and bring extra income. Counterarguments included that this would put choir members in a difficult position with their friends and family. Also, traditionally we hardly sell any tickets at the box office as most people purchase the tickets through members or online in advance.

- The Choir's level of savings: Members enquired why the Choir has a seemingly large sum of money in its savings account. The Finance Officer explained that most of the money is ear-marked to be spent on our 2018 Tour and cannot be spent on anything else. The remaining savings are a buffer which we always tap into to pay for our concerts, which are mostly loss-making. Other views included that savings could be invested to improve the quality of the Choir. The Trustees will discuss options for this in their first meeting in 2018.

All previous section leaders were re-elected.

## **5. Financial summary**

At the time of the Annual General Meeting on the 12th December 2017, the Choir's financial reporting figures were as follows:

Associate Choir members, i.e. paying, active members	54
Passive members, i.e. paying passive membership	2
Savings account	£ 837.52
Current account	£ 42,052.00

### Number of members

	Sopranos	Altos	Tenors	Basses	
January 2017	17	21	6	14	58
January 2018	21	20	9	11	61

### Membership fees

For 2018, the Choir's membership fee will remain stable at £15 a month, and £8 at reduced rate. Again, a discount will apply if you pay all your fees by the first Tuesday in February 2018.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

Aside from the Trustees, several associate members have provided key inputs into the development of the Choir which we wish to acknowledge:

- Laura W.: since the last report, Laura has designed the internal area of the website which every associate member can access with a password
- Steffi H.: designed our new poster for the St John Passion and also helped design the programme booklet for St John Passion
- Stephanie K.: prepares the attendance register and keeps oversight of attendance
- Catherine R.: has written the new text for our website and for our first Wikipedia page. It is currently under peer review with Wikipedia and should be published in March 2018.
- Nathalie N: regularly posts Instagram messages about the choir; she also writes and designs the newsletter that goes out to our followers. She is also helped design the programme booklet for the St John Passion event.
- Christian D.: reliably produces all the midi files for the songs we sing.
- Uta B-S.: organises whenever the choir needs to bulk-order sheet music.
- Simone M.-K.: is running the PR work around our Cathedral tour in 2018.

## **7. Concerts and events scheduled for 2018**

- 24 February, 17:15, Wells Cathedral - Evensong, together with Wells Cathedral Choir, "Blessed are the peacemakers"
- 27 May, 15:30, Wakefield Cathedral - Evensong, "Blessed are the peacemakers"
- 27 May, 19:00, Bradford Cathedral - Concert, together with Bradford Cathedral Choir, "Blessed are the peacemakers"
- 28 May, 17:15, York Minster - Evensong, "Blessed are the peacemakers"
- 21 July, 19:00, Highgate Cemetery – Concert, Brahms Requiem
- 4 August, 20:00, Menin Gate, Ypres (Leper) - Last Post
- 5 August, 11:00, Brussels Cathedral - Service, "Blessed are the peacemakers"
- 13 September: St James' Paddington, London
- 21 September: Canterbury Cathedral
- 6 October: Norwich Cathedral
- 13 October: Coventry Cathedral
- 5 November: St Paul's Cathedral, London
- 17 November: Lichfield Cathedral
- 18 November: Liverpool Cathedral

GERMAN CHOIR OF LONDON  
(REGISTERED WITH  
CHARITY COMMISSION NO: 1162894)

Accounts

31 December 2017

**GERMAN CHOIR OF LONDON**  
**Receipt and Expenditure account**  
**for the year ended 31 December 2017**

	2017 £	2016 £
<b>Receipts</b>		
Member subscriptions	9,316	8,957
General donations	-	800
Grant income	27,725	6,500
Concert ticket sales	6,115	7,378
CD sales	1,801	4,072
Interest income	12	12
	<u>44,969</u>	<u>27,719</u>
<b>Payments</b>		
Conductor fees & rehearsals	9,800	9,827
Venue Hire	1,558	825
CD recording costs	2,505	3,509
Instrumentalists	5,053	6,345
Solo singers	1,550	700
Marketing, events & other expenses	5,244	1,481
Accountancy fees	660	-
	<u>26,370</u>	<u>22,687</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Total expenses	<u>26,370</u>	<u>22,687</u>
<b>Surplus of receipts over expenditure</b>	<u>18,599</u>	<u>5,032</u>
<b>Unrestricted Fund:</b>		
At 1 January 2017	<u>21,035</u>	<u>16,003</u>
Surplus of receipts over expenditure	<u>18,599</u>	<u>5,032</u>
At 31 December 2017	<u>39,634</u>	<u>21,035</u>



**GERMAN CHOIR OF LONDON**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**as at 31 December 2017**


	Notes	2017 £	2016 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		39,634	21,035
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>39,634</u>	<u>21,035</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>39,634</u>	<u>21,035</u>
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUND:</b>			
Fund Balance	2	39,634	21,035
<b>Total funds</b>		<u>39,634</u>	<u>21,035</u>

Signed by two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature:

Print Name:


Date

  
 THOMAS HEGEL  
 17/9/2018

Signature:

Print Name:

Date

  
 Melanie Allmendinger  
 17/9/2018

**GERMAN CHOIR OF LONDON**  
**Notes to the Accounts**  
**for the year ended 31 December 2017**

**1 Accounting policies**

***Basis of preparation***

The Accounts are drawn up on a cash basis.

<b>2 Unrestricted Fund:</b>	<b>2017</b>
	<b>£</b>
At 1 January 2017	21,035
Excess of receipts over expenditure for the year	18,599
At 31 December 2017	<u>39,634</u>



# Independent examiner's report on the accounts

## Section A

## Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/  
members of

GERMAN CHOIR OF LONDON

On accounts for the  
year ended

31 December 2017

Charity  
no (if any)

1162894

Set out on pages

1-3

Respective  
responsibilities of  
trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities 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 procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent  
examiner's statement

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 matter has come to my attention 1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

16/07/2018

Name:

Ilyas Pathan

Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):

CIMA

Address: Suite 201, 1 Alie Street, London E1 8DE

**Section B**

**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

None