

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus – Who We Are and What We Do

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus (SPC or the Chorus) is a local music making charity which is also a member of Making Music, a national charity which supports music-making individuals and organisations, and Classical Sheffield, a local umbrella organisation for classical music-making in Sheffield.

Our Constitution sets out our charitable objects *'to advance the education of the general public in choral music by the regular performance of such music from the widest possible repertoire and such means as the Committee think fit'*.

Positive reviews and audience feedback confirm that we present high quality and innovative performances that are pleasurable cultural experiences for both audience and participants, even when we select difficult works that extend everyone's musical knowledge. Concerts are open to everyone, with fully accessible venues and concession prices for young people and those in receipt of benefits.

Chorus members greatly value the opportunity to engage in creative, enjoyable and fulfilling performances and recordings that help them to develop their vocal technique and musical repertoire. Singing membership is open to anyone who can sing to the required standard, and we do not exclude people on any other basis than their ability to sing. A number of registered blind people are valued members of the Chorus, and we have ensured that members with limited mobility are able to sing from the rather steep City Hall choir risers by buying and regularly using a stair-climber, which we share with the Montgomery Theatre. We offer special arrangements to those unable to pay the full subscription fee.

We are therefore confident that our activities meet the public benefit requirements set out in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006.

Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus – How We Operate

SPC was an unincorporated charity (registration number 518073) until 17 October 2017 when it was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registration number 1175185. The assets of the unincorporated charity will be transferred to the CIO as soon as Gift Aid for payments have been processed, when the unincorporated charity will be wound up in accordance with the procedure required by the Charities Commission.

Our Constitution was agreed by the members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 15 November 2016. It is based on the Charity Commission's 'Association' model and can only be amended at a meeting of all the members, which happened in October 2017 and again in November 2018.

Our Rules are not part of the formal Constitution, but form an Appendix to it. The Rules include arrangements for appointing the Music Director and Accompanist and for auditions and re-auditions, minimum attendance requirements, concert procedure, and the chorus dress code. The Rules were last updated in May 2018.

Our Trustees plan what we do, ensuring our activities benefit the public by meeting our charitable objects. Anyone can stand as a Trustee, as long as they are eligible under Charity Commission requirements. Trustees are normally elected by the members at the AGM, but may also be appointed by the existing Trustees.

The Trustees form a Chorus Committee, which meets approximately five times a year to plan and manage Chorus affairs. Trustees receive a Trustee Pack which includes guidance documents produced by the Charities Commission to help them understand and meet their responsibilities.

The Trustees appointed on 21 November 2017 were:

Chair: Paul Henstridge	Administrator: Anne Adams
Finance Officer: Graham Dawson	Membership Officer: John Spence
Librarian: Els Pearse	Minutes Secretary: Sue Pennington
New Members' Officer: Sally Turnbull	Marketing and Publicity Officer: Paul Bedwell
Social Events Officer: Helen Kirk	Education and Outreach Officer: Georgina Hulse
Transport Officer: Paul Duffield	Members' Representative: Rachel Mallaband
Members' Representative: Janet Hoyle	

Our Professionals The Trustees are responsible for appointing the Music Director, Accompanist and Voice Coach, whose expertise and commitment play a huge part in enabling the Chorus to meet its' charitable objectives. In addition, from time to time the general membership elects a President in recognition of her/his special contribution to the work of the Chorus. During 2017-18 these were:

President: Rachel Copley	Music Director: Darius Battiwalla
Accompanist: Rachel Fright	Voice Coach: Margaret MacDonald

Our helpers Other than Trustees, various other members helped the Chorus meet its' objectives:

Voice Reps: Katrina Hulse, Pat Hall, Rachel Rowlands, Kate Reece, Jim Monach, Richard Salt, Allan Lacey.

Graphic Designer: Paul Boardman	Website: Anne Adams, Matthew Morgan, Bill Best
Independent Examiner: Richard Pike	Making Music Representative: Richard Salt
Stairclimber: Bill Best, Howard Dore, Rachel Mallaband, John Morgan, Kate Reece.	

The Trustees are most grateful for the work of these generous and committed individuals.

Chairman's Report: What We Did in 2017-18

Another successful season under our belts. With a world premiere, concerts in Edinburgh, Middlesbrough, Manchester, Halifax and Sheffield plus a mini-tour to France and one planned to Germany next year, it seems we can really say that Europe seems to be our oyster.

The season opened on 15th October in the Victoria Hall, Halifax with Philip Wilby's "*The Holy Face*", written to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Halifax Choral Society. We performed the piece jointly with the Halifax Choral Society and a section from the Yorkshire Youth Choir, under the direction of John Pryce-Jones. After the concert Philip Wilby commented "*What a choir and what a concert!*". John Pryce-Jones was impressed with our professionalism and our ability to watch him. Halifax's administrator noted that "*Sunday's performance was absolutely stunning*". The Wilby was performed alongside Mendelssohn's beautiful *Psalm 114* and Bruckner's *Te Deum*.

Our annual Christmas Carol Concerts took place on 16th December, accompanied by the fantastic Black Dyke Band under the direction of Dr Nicholas Childs and our own Darius Battiwalla. Tom Redmond from Radio 3 acted as compere. His quizzes went down particularly well with adults and children alike, only slightly marred by the chorus losing against the audience on both occasions. As seems to be the case every year both concerts went down a storm with the audience. Tom Redmond commented on our performance of Darius' arrangement of "O Holy Night" "Goose bumps don't get much bigger than this!" Our thanks go to Helen Kirk for organising the reception for the Friends of the Chorus and the sherry and mince pies in the evening interval, to Janet Bower for the wonderful cake and to Anne Garbett for the stage decorations, which she brings every year. (It's worth noting that she made them all herself!)

Some of us, as ever, took part in various elective events over the Christmas season. First off were carols at the Millennium Gallery and thanks to Rachel Copley, our President, for taking on the directing. Then a small group sang carols at the Kelham Island annual Victorian Market; thanks to Donald Watts for accompanying on the accordion and to all participants for raising £100 for chorus funds - and all in Victorian costume! A larger group of us entertained commuters with carols at Sheffield Station in aid of Heart Research UK. Apparently they did very well on the collection. We finished with carols at Tickhill Parish Church. Thanks again to Rachel Copley for organising and directing. Our annual visit to Sheffield Cathedral for the St Luke's Carol Service was postponed to 21st January due to bad weather, when it passed off very successfully and, yet again, thanks to Rachel Copley for her direction. Thank you to all those members who were able to give of their time so generously to make all these events so successful and do so much to raise the profile of the Chorus around Sheffield. And to cap it all, our recording of *The Calypso Carol*, from the *Awake, Arise* CD which we recorded with the Black Dyke Band, was chosen for broadcast on Classic FM. Thanks to Rachel Mallaband for applying for this privileged slot along with only four other choirs in the country.

Our first outing in 2018 was the world premiere of Paul Mealor's "*Paradise*" on 27th January in Manchester with the Black Dyke Band as part of the Royal Northern College of Music Brass Band Festival. A very successful performance was followed with a recording of the same work for a CD on 5th February, again with the Black Dyke Band. On receiving a copy of the CD recently, Paul Mealor commented "*I am VERY impressed. It is a fantastic recording of the work. The second movement is exactly as I imagined it and the choir are simply outstanding in their sections. The ending really is incredibly dramatic*". It doesn't get much better than that!

On 3rd February we performed Mozart's *Requiem* with the delightfully energetic young Canadian conductor, Jean-Claude Picard. It was a wonderful evening of music making reflected by the comments that we had afterwards. Jean-Claude commented "*Thoroughly enjoyed performing Mozart's Requiem with this brilliant team*". Other comments from soloists and audience members were such as "*Fantastic choir*", "*Wonderful evening, fabulous performance*" "*They were amazing. What an inspirational evening*". Altogether, it demonstrates the effect that such an inspirational conductor can have on our performance.

On 20th April we had our After Hours concert in the City Hall Ballroom. The two works we performed were Brahms's *Zigeunerlieder* and Mendelssohn's beautiful *Sechs Spruche* under the direction of Darius and with Rachel Fright on the piano, the first time that she's performed with us. Another successful evening, although not to the full house we were hoping for.

Now we come to the Mahler 2 Tour of the UK. Thanks to the hard work of Anne Adams and the individuals from the Leeds Philharmonic Chorus the travel arrangements and concerts passed off with very few issues and everyone involved had a great time. In Edinburgh on 29th April we played to a packed and enthusiastic house. We performed alongside our friends in the Leeds

Philharmonic Chorus with the Bruckner Orchester Linz and under the inspired direction of Markus Poschner. It was a wonderful performance and an unforgettable experience for all of us, although a very long day! Some press comments are quoted below, the last two translated from German correspondents.

“The orchestra were helped by the combined forces of the Leeds and Sheffield Philharmonic Choruses, who did a great job, creating a big, soft and pleasingly accurate sound for their first entrance, building up to a blazing peroration in the final minutes.”

“Filling the organ gallery, the combined choruses of Leeds Philharmonic Chorus and Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus opened with a soft yet supported sound and displayed a majestic power for the final bars.”

“The Philharmonic choirs from Sheffield and Leeds with 140 singers were top notch in the final movement.”

In Middlesbrough on 1st May we gave the inaugural concert to another packed house in their refurbished Town Hall. Another hugely successful performance, followed by rave reviews although there are certainly issues here about the space available for the chorus and the difficulty we had in getting on and off the stage. The late change of date for the concert also caused some problems. However, notwithstanding these difficulties, it was another enjoyable and satisfying day.

The last performance with this wonderful orchestra and conductor was in Sheffield City Hall on 5th May. Another stonking performance to a very healthy-sized audience and even more rave reviews. A press review stated:

“It was [the Chorus] who brought the piece to its rousing conclusion and who, with chorus master Darius Battiwalla, received their well-deserved share of the prolonged applause.”

Many thanks to all those members who were able to give so generously of their time to make these concerts such a resounding success. They have done wonders in raising the profile and respect for our Chorus all over the country and beyond.

On 9th June we concluded our season with Rossini's wonderful *Petite Messe Solennelle* with Jonathan Scott, the internationally renowned organist and harmonium player, with our own Nigel Gyte playing the fiendish piano accompaniment. The concert in the City Hall Ballroom began with a fascinating demonstration of the 1880 Mustel harmonium, one of only a few surviving examples of this instrument in its original form. Our soloists included our very own Maggie MacDonald along with Charlotte la Thrope, an old friend of the chorus, tenor Richard Rowe and bass Charles Murray. Our performance was very well received and prompted some very complimentary comments. Richard Rowe emailed: *“the choir was on splendid form. I have never heard such a large choir so resolutely in tune throughout the a cappella sections. But also accurate in the long, complex Amens, with a lovely rich sound”*. Comments from members of the audience include *“Great concert. The Phil at their best.”*; *“very uplifting”*, *“splendid concert I enjoyed it immensely”*.

For a few lucky members the season was not quite over. In July a group of about forty-five took a trip to Perigeux in France, to give three concerts. The first, in Perigeux Cathedral, was to join with three local choirs to sing Theodore du Bois' *La Messe de la Deliverance*, written in 1918, to celebrate the centenary of the end of the first world war. We attracted a very good audience despite the clash with the World Cup final! In addition, we gave two concerts on our own in local churches with music that most of us knew already. They both included two works given by Darius on their organs. Both concerts went off very well to appreciative audiences. Our particular thanks should go to bass Matthew Morgan who organised the trip, which went very smoothly.

Now we've started the new season it's time to think ahead to our forthcoming After Hours concert in the City Hall Ballroom on 30th November and to Bach's B Minor Mass next year on 6th April. Both are going to need a lot of practice in and out of rehearsal times but, given our record over the last year, I have no doubt that all of us will rise to the challenges. In addition, we have the Classical Sheffield Weekend in March when we hope to contribute with a concert of music by female composers; something else to look forward to.

I'm sure that all of you will join me in thanking our committee members who so willingly give of their time to keep the Chorus running so smoothly and efficiently. However, I have to mention three people in particular. Anne Adams, our Administrative Officer, who works so hard for us and without whom everything would collapse in a confused heap, and Graham Dawson, our Financial Officer, who keeps such a close eye on all our finances – never an easy task! Last but certainly not least, John Spence, who steps down as Membership Officer after many years of hard work and amazing efficiency on behalf of the Chorus. We are all very grateful for his contribution and will miss him enormously.

Lastly, thanks to our professionals Darius, Rachel and Maggie, who continue do so much to help us to improve the quality of our singing and performances. Testimony to their continuing success is clearly shown by the standard of our concerts over the last season.

With my best wishes for the coming season,

Paul Henstridge Chair October 2018

Administrator's Report: Our Achievements in 2017-18 and plans for 2018-19

The Chorus objects are to '*advance the education of the general public in choral music by the regular performance of such music from the widest possible repertoire*', and the people who benefit are chorus members, concert-goers in Sheffield and the surrounding area, and the wider listening public via a broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and a new recording on CD.

The Chorus presented a range of sacred and secular works by composers from across the globe and from the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The programme took some risks, presenting two new works including a world premiere, as well as much-loved symphonic classics and a range of more intimate works designed to be sung in smaller spaces.

Audiences heard us sing unaccompanied and with national and international symphony orchestras, a world famous brass band, harmonium and piano. We sang in Latin, English, French, Latvian and German, to live audiences and on national radio, and took part in the recording of two new CDs. We reached a range of audiences in a variety of venues that included the Usher Hall in Edinburgh, Middlesbrough Town Hall, a ballroom, railway station and both indoor and outdoor museum spaces, and various churches in France as well as in and around Sheffield.

Taking the season as a whole, the Chorus met the aim of presenting choral music from a wide repertoire, and feedback suggests that members both relished the challenges and enjoyed the experience.

Similarly, audience feedback and official reviews indicate that members of the public who attended our concerts enjoyed them very much (see Chair's report for details). Sales of '*The Holy Face*' CD, together with broadcasts on Radio 3 and Classic FM, widened our reach beyond Sheffield.

Two years ago we set a goal to undertake a more detailed analysis of tickets sales, and the results are shown in the table overleaf. We are pleased to report that we met the target of 5000 ticket sales that we set last year, and that the general trend is upwards, though reaching healthy numbers of the local general public continues to present challenges.

Ticket sale figures for our two Christmas carol concerts in December 2017 were unavailable at the time of writing this report, though anecdotal evidence suggests the audience was no smaller than the previous year. However, a more conservative estimate of 2300 has been used in the table below.

SPC TICKET SALES OVER THE THREE YEARS 2015/16, 2016/17 AND 2017/18					
Season	Concert	Possible	Actual	%	
2015/16	Christmas x 2	4540	2620	58%	4346 tickets sold
	Haydn	2270	921	41%	
	V Williams	2270	805	35%	
	After Hours	Not available	Not available	Not available	
	2015/16 TOTALS	9080	4346	48%	
2016/17	Christmas x 2	4540	2439	54%	4574 tickets sold, 228 more than last year, an increase of 5%.
	Elgar / VW	2270	895	39%	
	Tippett	2270	892	39%	
	Classical Sheffield	Not available	Not available	Not available	
	Messiah	360	348	97%	
	2016/17 TOTALS	9440	4574	42%	
2017/18	Holy Face	Not available	Not available	Not available	Target 5000
	Christmas x 2	4540	<i>Conservative estimate 2300</i>	<i>Conservative estimate 51%</i>	
	Paradise	Not available	N/A almost full	N/A almost full	Figure for total tickets sold unavailable. <i>Conservative estimate for Christmas concert tickets sales yields a total of 5062 tickets sold over the year.</i>
	Mozart Requiem	2270	1259	55%	
	After Hours	Not available	Not available	Not available	
	Mahler 2 Ed Midd	N/A almost full	N/A almost full	N/A almost full	
	Mahler 2 Sheffield	2270	1273	56%	
	Rossini	400	230	58%	
	French mini tour	Not available	N/A healthy	N/A healthy	
	2017/18 TOTALS	9480	Conservative estimate 5062	Conservative estimate 53%	
					<i>This is an estimated increase of 11 %age points, reversing the trend and exceeding the target set.</i>

Though no figures are available, audience figures for the After Hours concert in the City Hall ballroom were disappointing, not helped by problems with the City Hall website which adversely affected publicity.

In contrast, attendance for the 'away' legs of the Mahler 2 mini tour concerts was excellent, with almost full houses in both Edinburgh and Middlesbrough. The 56% capacity audience for the same programme in the City Hall illustrates how difficult it is to galvanise equivalent levels of support in Sheffield, which struggles to attract a sufficiently large audience to fill this high capacity hall.

Nonetheless, and somewhat unsurprisingly, ticket sales for the Mozart and Mahler concerts, at around 56% of capacity, were much improved on the less popular Elgar/Vaughan Williams and Tippett concerts the year before which only reached 39% of capacity.

Rather disappointingly our self promoted Rossini concert attracted 230 people, a healthy 58% of the ballroom's relatively small capacity but at fewer than two tickets per chorus member, far short of the full house we ought to have been able to attract.

To summarise, we offered the public eight concerts during 2017-18, including one that was self-funded, compared to six the previous year, again including one that was self-funded, and five in 2015-16. Ticket sales are shown in the table on the previous page; the total is estimated as explained on the previous page. This conservative estimate indicates that we met our target of 5000, with an estimated increase of 11 percentage points. The estimated number of tickets sold in 2017-18 were 53% of the maximum number possible compared to 42% in 2016-17 and 48% of the maximum the previous year – an encouraging upward trend.

Our aim of launching a new website was achieved in December 2017, and feedback has been very positive. The new site is easy to navigate and provides information about forthcoming concerts with links to the relevant online booking facilities. Sixteen articles were featured in the News area, compared to 4 the previous year and 3 in 2015-6. The password-protected Members Area includes a wealth of useful information including links to rehearsal tapes and videos, concert arrangements and singing opportunities as well as weekly updates and official documents such as Chorus Rules, AGM papers and the minutes of trustee meetings. The site built up visitors very quickly from the launch date, with 7073 visits (clicks on a page) over the nine months to the end of August 2018, an average of 785 visits per month and 82 page views per day. These were from 4727 individual visitors (unique devices), an average of 525 individual visitors per month.

The Chorus was very lucky to acquire the services of a new Graphic Designer, Paul Boardman, who very quickly developed a new style of our posters and flyers as well as the entries in the City Hall concert programmes. The new style has been much admired, and we are extremely grateful to Paul for supplying such a high quality service free of charge.

Our plans for the 2018-19 season

Following last year's heavy programme, which included two mini tours and two recording sessions, we have planned four concerts in Sheffield rather than six, yet have ambitiously set the same target, ie 5000 ticket sales. We hope to attract more young people to our concerts via a reduced price voucher scheme to be distributed to schools early in the 2018-19 season.

The season commences with an After Hours concert in the City Hall ballroom on 30 November, rescheduled from 9 November, and featuring music influenced by Wagner, including works by Austrian composer Anton Bruckner and Max Reger from Germany, as well as an extremely challenging work by the Austrian-American Arnold Schoenberg.

In December the Chorus will give two performances of its annual Christmas Carol Concert in Sheffield City Hall with the Black Dyke Band, presented by BBC Radio 3's Petroc Trelawny. In addition to this concert, which forms part of the Sheffield International Concert Season, Chorus members will again sing carols in support of various charities and local events, including the Friends of Museums Sheffield, St Luke's Hospice, Heart Research UK and Tickhill Parish Church in aid of Alzheimer UK.

In February a small group of Chorus members will travel to Bochum in Germany, one of Sheffield's twin cities, to sing Messiah in English at the invitation of the Bochum Choir in their prestigious new concert hall, as part of the Bochumer Symphoniker Orchestra centenary celebrations.

In March the Chorus is pleased to contribute to the Classical Sheffield Festival Weekend 2019, when we plan to sing works by women composers in the City Hall ballroom.

The Sheffield International Concert Season continues in April with a work from the 18th century – Bach's monumental *Mass in B Minor*, widely acknowledged to be one of the greatest choral works every written. This wonderful work will be performed with the Royal Northern Sinfonia in Sheffield City Hall under the baton of Andrew Griffiths.

The season concludes in June with a return to the City Hall for a self funded event, the concert premiere presentation of Philip Wilby's oratorio for brass, organ and massed voices *The Holy Face*, which we recorded in 2017 following the world premiere of the orchestral version in Halifax. We will be joined by the Halifax Choral Society, who commissioned this innovative work, with the Yorkshire Youth Choir and the Black Dyke Band.

Moving to administrative matters, the Chorus does not have a mailing list because on-line publicity is handled on our behalf by Sheffield International Venues, so we were spared the need to send out notices about the May 2018 changes to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We will nonetheless be working through an action plan to ensure that member data is used and stored in accordance with the new regulations.

We are implementing a new marketing and publicity strategy to enhance the work done on our behalf by Sheffield International Venues, the social enterprise which runs the City Hall. We are producing exit flyers for distribution at the classical concert immediately before our own, and are planning to pay for full page adverts in each of the SICS programmes, rather than just those for concerts in which we take part. In partnership with the City Hall, we also plan to offer ticketing vouchers for schools and colleges, Sheffield Music Hub and Sheffield Academy, as our contribution to making classical music more accessible to young people and to encourage the musicians of the future.

Further to this commitment, our Education and Outreach Officer Georgina Hulse plans to offer workshops to a small number of schools, in addition to the 'note-bashing' and sight reading sessions already offered to both current and prospective chorus members. We are very grateful to Georgina for giving so generously of her time in this way

I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all chorus members, our professionals and my fellow committee members, for their unstinting support, endless patience and generous, friendly enthusiasm. Special thanks go to John Spence, who as Membership Officer has worked above and beyond the call of duty on our behalf. His unstinting commitment will be much missed.

Anne Adams September 2018

Financial review - Finance Officer's Report

Advice was received during the year from the Charity Commission was that we should not transfer to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) until Gift Aid for the existing organisation was all reclaimed and that process is now underway. I apologise for the consequential delay in moving to the CIO but that will happen in the near future. Consequently the following tables relate to the CIO which will remain dormant until all relevant gift aid has been secured and the Charity Commission allows the transfer from charity 518073 to the CIO 1175185.

BALANCE SHEET: SUMMARY OF FUND MOVEMENTS 2017-18 Charity 1175185						
	Balances brought forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Gains & Losses	Balances carried forward
Fund Name	£	£	£	£	£	£
General Bank Account	0.00					0.00
Concert Account	0.00					0.00
Savings Account	0.00					0.00
Friends of SPC	0.00					0.00
Friends of SPC Savings	0.00					0.00
COIF Deposit Account	0.00					0.00
Total Funds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

TATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2017-18 Charity 1175185

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Total funds (£)	Previous year funds (£)
Income from				
Totals	0.00	0.00	0.00	0
Expenditure on				
Totals	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net income/(expenditure)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00