



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE	CONTENTS
4.	Message from the Chairperson and CEO
5.	Company Information
7.	2022 at a Glance
8.	Operational Report
9.	Governance
10.	Mission and Vision
11.	Strategic Objectives
13.	Strengthening our Collective Voice
15.	YouthSinging Development
17.	Embracing Singing of all Types
19.	Ensuring a Strong Organisation





## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON & CEO

In 2022, the group singing sector in Ireland and Sing Ireland experienced a bustling year of activity, marking a gratifying return to normality after the pandemic. However, this resurgence was accompanied by significant transformations within the choral sector. Some choirs welcomed new members while others sadly had to disband or temporarily halt their activities. It's important to recognize the collective trauma endured by both the sector and society at large as we all navigate the aftermath of the pandemic.

Despite these challenges, Sing Ireland forged ahead with its initiatives and growth plans, which had been somewhat on hold during the pandemic. In 2022, we witnessed substantial progress in all of our strategic objectives. Our focus was also on fostering a sustainable future for the organisation, one that is impact-driven and significantly enriches the lives of our programme participants. We are delighted to present the results and impact of the work undertaken in 2022 and to take a moment to reflect, celebrate, and acknowledge all those who contributed so dedicatedly for Sing Ireland and the group singing sector.



Virginia Kerr  
Chairperson



Dermot O'Callaghan  
CEO

# COMPANY INFORMATION

## Honorary President

Mrs Justice Catherine McGuinness

*Patron of the Irish Youth Choir* Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

## Directors

Virginia Kerr, Chairperson

Amy Ryan (Joined in December 2022)

Jim Fitzsimons, Company Secretary

Raegnha Zutshi (Stepped down in December 2022)

Mark Armstrong

Sonia Brody (Stepped down in September 2022)

Eva O'Toole

## Executive Team

Dermot O' Callaghan, Chief Executive Officer

Jenny O'Connor-Madsen, Artistic and Operations Manager

Cecelia Molumby, Development Officer

Lily Lacey, Projects and Membership Manager

## Artistic Team

Orla Flanagan, Artistic Director of the International Choral Conducting Summer School

Bernie Sherlock, Artistic Director of the Irish Youth Choirs

Patrick Barrett, Conductor of the Irish Youth Training Choir

**Registered Office:** Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick, Limerick

**Bankers:** Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c., Patrick St., Cork

**Auditors:** Crowleys DFK, 5 Lapps Quay, Cork



2022

# 2022 *at a glance!*



Held  
**47 events**  
online and in-person



Worked with over  
**80**  
professional  
artists



Reached  
**55,000**  
people

from 32 counties  
and 15 countries



Partnered with  
**28**  
organisations



Welcomed  
**45 new**  
members



# OPERATIONAL REPORT

## FINANCIAL REVIEW 2022

Sing Ireland's financial year 2022 was one of significant growth in our operations and financial outturn as strategic change plans started to show in the Company's accounts. The organisation experienced further significant growth in income from other funding sources and there was a return to greater earned income as face to face courses/events could be run post-pandemic. The organisation ran a deficit that was expected and budgeted for at year end (-3,523). In 2022, Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór (t/a Sing Ireland) had an income of €636,919 and spent €640,442 on services for its stakeholders, supporting their needs and those of the sector. The organisation saw a 62% increase in its income in 2022 and we are happy to report that our outturn for 2023, is set to grow this income base further, from a mixed-income portfolio of stakeholders.

Our primary core funding was received via Strategic Funding from the Arts Council of Ireland. Income was also made up of support from Creative Ireland and local authorities, trusts and foundations and others.

Sing Ireland expenditure is centred on the provision of services, events, and resources for the group singing sector and to enrich the musical and cultural lives of people living on the island of Ireland. Staffing at the Company enables us to maximise our reach and impact and the organisation's executive staff grew in 2022.





## Governance

Virginia Kerr served as Chairperson of Sing Ireland throughout 2022 and Jim Fitzsimons continued in the role of Company Secretary. The board led the organisation in continuing best practice in Governance. Sing Ireland registered its renewed compliance with the requirements of the Charities Governance Code in 2022, and the board and executive concentrated on expanding core services whilst looking to the myriad of measures needed to achieve objective 4 of Sing Ireland's strategic plan to 'Ensure a Strong Organisation'.

### Board Meeting Dates 2022:

- Sunday, 23rd January
- Sunday, 24th April
- Wednesday, 10th August
- Friday 23rd September
- Sunday, 11th December





## POLICY AND STRATEGY

# Enhancing Lives Through Singing

### Mission

Sing Ireland is the national body for the support, development and promotion of all forms of group singing. In leading, enabling, and connecting communities of singers in Ireland, Sing Ireland is on a mission to enhance lives through singing and build stronger voices throughout Irish communities.

### Vision

We see a nation that is fully immersed in quality group singing experiences. People living on the island of Ireland will value, recognise and experience the life changing ability that singing has to positively impact on their health, creativity and well-being.

We know the transformative power that singing can have and our vision for the future will see Sing Ireland embed itself as a central cultural player that advocates for and demonstrates the many benefits of group singing for all.

# SING IRELAND STRATEGY

## 1. Strengthening Our Collective Voice

The group singing sector in Ireland is thriving and characterised by exceptional levels of engagement and passion that require support to be sustained and to grow. Training, supports and networking opportunities is central to the work of the organisation during the lifetime of the strategic plan. Community engagement and voluntary structures must be developed in order to enable a more vibrant and active sector.

## 2. Youth Singing Development

Youth singing development is a policy priority for the foreseeable future. We are taking significant action to further this objective and see meaningful and developmental impact made on the number of young people that are engaged in youth singing and the quality of that engagement. We will lead a multi-stakeholder partnership to design and develop the most sustainable and effective models, infrastructure and approaches to transform youth singing in Ireland in range of opportunities, scale, access and geographic spread.

## 3. Embracing Collective Singing of All Types

We embrace collective or group singing of all types. There is a recognition that choirs of the 21st century are diverse and that they operate in a variety of styles and settings. We also acknowledges that many collective singing groups do not connect to the word 'choir'. As we look to the future and seek to operate in a diverse and modern society it follows that the organisation will change and adapt to meet new realities.

## 4. Ensuring a Strong Organisation

Ensure a sustainable and fit.for.purpose organisational structure for SI that will enable growth and development. SI recognises the need for significant and transformative growth of the organisation over the coming years. In order to achieve the high level objectives of the organisation and realise its vision in the medium to long term it must be restructured to meet the demands that the organisation will have placed upon it. Attracting new roles and dynamic people is central to growth.



**45**

**NEW  
MEMBERS**



## STRENGTHENING OUR COLLECTIVE VOICE

Prioritising training, education and networking events for the singer, choir/singing group and conductor remained a key component of Sing Ireland's work in 2022.

### International Choral Conducting Summer School

The 41st Sing Ireland International Choral Conducting Summer School took place from 6th – 12th August 2022 at the University of Limerick. It was the first course that it had been possible to run in-person since 2019, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sing Ireland welcomed participants across six levels from beginner to advanced with Orla Flanagan as Artistic Director of the course. Our international team of expert conducting tutors included: Georg Grün (Germany); Kari Turunen (Finland/Canada); Maria Goundorina (Russia/Sweden); Dónal Doherty (Ireland); and Róisín Blunnie (Ireland). We were also joined by accompanist, Peter Barley, assistant accompanist, Katerina Speranskaya, as well as Hala Jaber who delivered a workshop on building inclusive multicultural singing groups.

### PRESTO

Sing Ireland is working on a two-year partnership project called 'PRESTO: Practices and Resources for Equipping Schools to Teach Music Online'. The consortium of partners developed multimedia resources and best-practice guidance for remote music teaching in the school sector in the areas of classroom-based music, instrumental music, and choral music. Together with choral, university and entrepreneur partners from Finland (Caprice Oy), Scotland (National Youth Choir of Scotland), and Ireland (Dublin City University), the PRESTO project worked to provide innovative solutions for building resilience and flexibility into the sector. This Erasmus+ programme was led by lead partner, the Kodály Institute of the Liszt Academy in Hungary. Sing Ireland's team further developed resources and content for the PRESTO materials in 2022 and all resources are to be made available online in 2023 as an important free resource.

A young woman with dark hair and glasses is smiling broadly and clapping her hands. She is wearing a lanyard with a badge. The background is a blurred crowd of people at an outdoor event. A red curved line is visible in the upper right, and a yellow curved line is in the lower right.

**55,000  
PEOPLE  
REACHED**

FROM **32 COUNTIES**  
AND **15 COUNTRIES**



## YOUTH SINGING DEVELOPMENT

The Irish Youth Choirs (including the Irish Youth Choir for 18 – 28 year olds and the Irish Youth Training Choir for 14 – 17 year olds) continued to be central to the work of Sing Ireland in 2022. The YouthSing Ireland programme moved to the next stage of development, where online resources were used to create SingSpaces for primary school children in arts venues in Galway, Kildare and Dublin.

### Irish Youth Choir

The Irish Youth Choir (IYC) welcomed 50 singers to its summer residential course which began on the 11th August 2022. Bernie Sherlock worked face to face for the first time with the singers of the IYC, having not been able to work with them in 2021, due to the pandemic and culminated in performances in Dublin, Limerick and Cork.

The PATHWAYS programme with Chamber Choir Ireland also ran in June 2022, that saw emerging professional choral singers from IYC work with Bernie Sherlock, and singers of CCI.

### Irish Youth Training Choir

The Irish Youth Training Choir's summer residential course ran from 10th – 15th July 2022. Patrick Barrett conducted the choir in final performances that culminated in Dublin on the 15th July with a performance at WL1, Dublin. The event, with the Lord Mayor of Dublin in attendance, was a celebration of a an intensive and wonderful week of music making by the choir. The IYTC also performed at the Business to Awards at the National Concert Hall, Dublin on the 20th September, 2022.

### YouthSing Ireland

Work on YouthSing Ireland was enabled to move into its final pilot stage with SingSpaces taking place in person during April/May/June 2022. This programme was initially funded and supported by Creative Ireland.

The SingSpace builds upon the YouthSing Ireland resources and the work of the composers Seán Doherty and Anne-Marie O'Farrell and academic/musician, Dr Róisín Blunnie. All of the resources available on the Sing Ireland website.

More than one thousand young people were involved in SingSpaces in 2022 as below:

04 April - Technical University of the Shannon, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

04 May - Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

18 May - Technical University of the Shannon, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

23 and 25 May - Axis, Ballymun, Co. Dublin

31 May - An Taibhdhearc, Galway



WORKED WITH OVER

80

PROFESSIONAL  
ARTISTS





## EMBRACING COLLECTIVE SINGING OF ALL TYPES

In 2022 Sing Ireland continued to embrace collective singing of all types as it pursued programmes for marginalised groups through our **Song Seeking** programme for migrant singers, funded by Rethink Ireland and Edwards Lifesciences Foundation. We also sought to expand our impact through Singing for Health and Wellbeing programmes that were introduced late in 2022 through the **Sing for Life** programmes, funded by the Ireland Funds.

### **Song Seeking**

In 2022 Sing Ireland was successful in receiving funding from two sources to develop work with migrant communities that began in 2019 with the pilot programme of Song Seeking. With funding from the Edwards Life Sciences and the Rethink Ireland Impact Munster Fund, we have begun to develop an advisory group and to make connections with temporary accommodation settings across Munster. This programme will enable us to build on the initial research and to enable migrant communities to build connections and develop a sense of belonging through group singing.

### **Sing for Life**

At the end of 2022 Sing Ireland successfully applied for funding from the Ireland funds for a project titled Sing for Life. This is an innovative programme which aims to bring the transformative benefits of group singing to specific marginalised groups in communities in 2023. We will work closely with four community groups across the four provinces of Ireland (a community in Connacht, in Leinster, in Munster, and in Ulster.) The funding will enable four Sing Ireland musicians, who will be individually paired with targeted community groups, to deliver six integrated group singing workshops. The project brings a novel approach to supporting marginalised people in communities across Ireland who may be affected by a range of health issues. The project will enable a transformative experience for participants and this work will help to establish a model of social prescribing, replicable in communities nationally/internationally.



# 47

## EVENTS

ONLINE & IN-PERSON



## ENSURING A STRONG ORGANISATION

During 2022, Sing Ireland further activated its fundraising and growth plans to deepen its impact across the country and to bring collective singing and its many benefits to as many people living in Ireland as possible.

### Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland

Sing Ireland was one of two organisations in Ireland selected to participate in the Fundraising Fellowship, Ireland programme with *Business to Arts* in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. Because of this opportunity, we were fortunate to hire a full-time Development Officer, Cecelia Molumby, to join the SI team. Since commencing The Fellowship in June 2022, the SI Executive Team and Board have worked on this structured programme of training and mentorship with *Business to Arts*. The ethos and process of this journey has been completely institutional for Sing Ireland and has helped develop further applications and funding streams for Sing Ireland's work.

### Funding Our Vision in 2022

We express our sincere gratitude to the following Trusts and Foundations for believing in our impact in 2022:

- **Community Foundation Ireland**, supporting the YouthSing Ireland programme.
- **Rethink Ireland**, supporting Song Seeking for migrant populations in the Munster Region.
- **Coca-Cola Ireland Thank You Fund**, supporting the SingIn (Singing for Inclusion) initiative.
- **The Ireland Funds**, supporting the Sing for Life programme.
- **Edwards Lifesciences Foundation**, supporting Song Seeking.

These funding opportunities were secured during 2022 and many of the programmes commenced in 2023 and will be activated further.



PARTNERED WITH OVER

28

ORGANISATIONS





Spreading the joy of group singing across Ireland and making a lasting impact on our cultural landscape and to people's lives.