



The Fenton Arts Trust

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Shu-Yao Fenton

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Annual News 2023

Succurrere Artibus

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Fenton News

The Autumn is well upon us as I write, after a year that has brought some very sad events to pass in the life of The Fenton Arts Trust. A memorial to our erstwhile Honorary Treasurer, John Wieland, is adjacent to this article, and I'm sorry to report that his untimely passing was followed by that of our long-standing Trustee and monitor of investments, Gregor Logan, on 23rd August.

Gregor's obituary will follow in a subsequent issue of the newsletter, but together with all of his Trustee colleagues, I would like to say how very greatly he and his many attributes will be missed. Since joining as a Trustee in February 2014, Gregor was valued for his perspicacious and frequently humorous contributions to our lively debates in board meetings, as well as his numerous visits to our beneficiaries' events. Gregor's well-informed confidence in our investment portfolio encouraged TFAT to be more generous than we had hitherto anticipated, particularly in the wake of the impact of Covid upon the arts.

Fellow Trustee Paul Bayley remembers that *"Gregor had that winning combination of no-nonsense views and a subtle sense of humour that made him a very engaging fellow board member; he was always straight to the point, whether discussing investment portfolio performance or individual artist applications."* We send our deep condolences to his wife, former TFAT Treasurer, Sue Logan, and his children, Ben and Tony.



On a happier note, I can report that earlier this year we were delighted to appoint a new Trustee and Honorary Treasurer, **Mark Williamson**.

Mark has spent the majority of his working life as a financial journalist, mainly for The Glasgow Herald, as well as being a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. Mark became involved in the work of the Trust several years ago when he visited some of our beneficiaries' work in Scotland, where he resides, and comes with a wealth of experience from his finance roles in the Scottish Arts Council (now Creative Scotland) and the London Sinfonietta.

Our previous Chair Stephen Morris pays a deserving tribute to James Weymouth on page four. James is retiring as our excellent and industrious pro bono website manager for over ten years. His work has been invaluable in transforming our website and application process, and we would like to echo Stephen's appreciation of James' generous input, and wish him a happy retirement. We also continue to appreciate Stephen's ongoing active engagement as Trust Representative.

We are very grateful indeed to Fiona Thompson for acting as Treasurer in the interim between John's death and Mark's appointment, a task that should not be underestimated in the light of her many other voluntary responsibilities, including those of Chair of both Transparency International UK and the London Sinfonietta.

I continue to be immensely thankful for the indispensable input of each of the Trustees, as well as that of the Trust Representatives who visit beneficiaries' events all over the UK when a Trustee cannot be present. I am glad to say that we all find our work very enjoyable!

Sue Davies-Scourfield, Chair

John Wieland



The Trust is very sad to announce the passing of our Honorary Treasurer, **John Wieland, who died aged 67.**

His wife, Adelaide, writes, *"John died peacefully on 20th March 2023, after a two year struggle with interstitial lung disease."*

"John was born in New York, graduated from SUNY in 1977, and began his career with Peat Marwick (later KPMG) where he qualified as a Certified Public Accountant. He moved to London with Paine Webber in 1992, and latterly worked as a Managing Director at Deutsche Bank, before retiring in 2018. He was a committed Anglophile, delighted to take British Citizenship in 2007, and is remembered for his gentle humour, his intellect, kindness and generosity."

John joined TFAT as both Trustee and Treasurer in November 2019, succeeding Fiona Thompson in that role. According to Adelaide, he was extremely proud to be appointed to the Trust, and thoroughly enjoyed the work; however, very sadly, he was unable to visit beneficiaries as he had hoped due to the pandemic and his increasingly debilitating illness. Nonetheless, he soldiered on as a greatly valued Treasurer and Trustee, and will be greatly missed by all his colleagues.

Royal Scottish National Orchestra



▲ The mentors with their beneficiaries at the screening. L-R: Danai Kokogia (Associate Co-Mentor), John Lunn, participants Alice Mills, John Konsolakis, Joshua Lascar, Joshua Urben, and Sohee Baek. Photo: Chrissie Johnson, RSNO

The RSNO received support with its first Film Composers Lab programme, mentored by distinguished film composer John Lunn. The programme culminated in a celebratory screening featuring animation sequences accompanied by soundtracks written by the five young composers selected to participate. Beneficiary John Konsolakis wrote:

"I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have participated in the RSNO's Film Composers Lab. The masterclasses provided us with a holistic, insider's perspective that we simply couldn't have obtained otherwise. The mentoring sessions with the incredibly generous John Lunn proved a safe space to expand and challenge our approaches to film scoring. Finally, the workshops with the RSNO were an extraordinary privilege. Thank you to The Fenton Arts Trust for helping make this all possible."

Beneficiaries 2022 - 2023

Wise Children

Wise Children Theatre Company's professional development programme 'The School for Wise Children' focuses on mentoring emerging artists. The Trust supported director Meghan Dole to hone her practice in a professional setting whilst receiving structured ongoing support from Wise Children's experienced creative team. Meghan wrote of her experience:

"The support I and my theatre company The Letter Room have received has been totally invaluable. We can already see a huge difference in our thinking of how we lay foundations for a sustainable, fruitful and, above all, happy future as a company. As a director, the time I've spent with (Artistic Director) Emma Rice has really helped me find my voice, she showed such care but also pushed me to challenge myself and it has been nothing short of transformative and life changing."

Ben Weir



▲ Ben's 'part sculpture, part furniture, part infrastructure' radiator works. Photo: Simon Mills.

Artist Ben Weir asked the Trust to help with a new series of semi-permanent works for Catalyst Arts, a non-profit, artist-led organisation run by a team of volunteers in Belfast. The Trustees already knew Catalyst from previous grants and visits, so were happy to help.

"These radiator works form one aspect of the show Core is Concrete curated by Kate Murphy at Catalyst Arts, Belfast. Kate approached me to create a spatial intervention in Catalyst's new premises, which would facilitate and express their act of re-housing. I decided to produce a multifaceted work in response to the fact the gas-fired boiler was not functioning. My intervention took the form of a new heating system - electric radiators suspended inside a series of steel elements that become warm to the touch, heating individuals directly as opposed to the space as a whole."

"This work would not have been possible to produce without the grant from the Trust. This project hopes in a small way to maintain and facilitate the richness and diversity of artist-led culture in the city."

Niamh Downes

Folk singer Niamh (a.k.a. Neev) approached the Trust for help with her debut album.

"I'd like to extend a huge thanks to The Fenton Arts Trust for partially funding the creation of my debut album entitled Katherine. I recorded it during the second half of 2021 and most all of 2022 in a string of home studios including my own and a studio in North London. For this project I took on the bulk of production, engineering and mixing duties so that I could further my skills in this area and learn more about the recording process. Recording the album was a huge and valuable learning curve, as well as a brilliant way to collaborate with the musicians and engineers I truly admire."

Niamh tells us that *Katherine* is now out in the world, available to listen to on all streaming platforms.

Jonny Mansfield



▲ Jonny & violinist Dominic Ingram during the album recording session. Photo: Sam Dye.

The Trust supported Jonny Mansfield to produce a CD of contemporary jazz compositions.

"The grant awarded by The Fenton Arts Trust facilitated the creation of the album The Air In Front Of You. This project has brought together some of my favourite musicians (Dominic Ingham, Midori Jaeger, Will Sach and James Maddren) to record music that I have been working on for many years. I'm really excited about the opportunities the album release will enable us to undertake, specifically our UK release tour and performing at Scarborough Jazz Festival. Many thanks to all the Fenton Trustees for supporting this project."

The Opera Makers



▲ Singers Grace Nyandoro and Matthew Kellet. Photo: Becca Marriott

The young opera company and previous beneficiaries The Opera Makers approached the Trust a second time, for some help with a very interesting R&D project: creating a touring children's production with the help of puppetry specialists from the Little Angel Theatre.

"This March, The Opera Makers spent a week creating their first children's opera. Based on Pergolesi's La Serva Padrona, this 35 minutes part-pantomime, part puppet show was performed to a trial audience of 30 local children and their parents. As a research and development phase, this was a vital chance for us to see how the classical world of 17th Century opera and the raucous chaos of Punch & Judy might work together to make something truly entertaining and exciting for young people aged 4-10 (and their grown-ups!). We've been offered the opportunity to bring the piece to The Little Angel's Summer festival in 2024, which we're really excited about." **Becca Marriott, Founder Director**

Merry Opera Company



▲ Scene from Merry Opera Company's staging of *The Messiah*. Photo Luke Messenger

The Trust supported fees for early career singers in two touring productions. Founder Artistic Director Matthew Quirk and a recent performer both write about the staging of Handel's *Messiah*:

"At the rehearsals for each tour, we noticed how the new singers grapple with this unusual production. Over the years about 60 people have sung in this show and every one of them wants to return because it is so unusual and gives them such a wide range of experience in learning how to convince an audience. We have such demand from churches and from singers that we plan to tour this production each year for the foreseeable future, bringing in new performers each time in order to help as many new singers as possible."

*"I've never before sung in a show that mixes both oratorio and opera. Handel wrote no characters into his *Messiah*. Every church was different, so the staging and our reactions in every performance were different. A previous singer said: "I learnt more on this tour than in four years at College". For me it was a revelation. Judging by audiences' reaction at every performance, they thought so too."*

Alex Marlow

Alex asked the Trust to support him with some time to write and edit his first poetry collection *Nude as Retrospect*. This has now been published by Out-Spoken Press, and he's given us permission to reproduce one here.

Dogwater

Aren't nights across the whole world
low this year?

- so drawn out
Practice hasn't yet fastened itself to the ground
an open sail coursing through.

At home the ceiling crawls all day.
Stretch to night to a controller
indenting hands with routine addictions.

Disappearance has to stop feeling this good.

You keep looking -
God
for fruits
stuffed with white.

Girls pull the tails of spaniels out of brooks
Bake them into pill packets

There's an understanding this time:
help did what it knew best & ran.

Re:Verse Theatre



▲ The *Hamlet Voyage*: L to R: Marième Diouf, Pauline Babula, Joe Feeney, Danann McAleer. Photo: Edward J Felton

Artistic Director Ben Prusiner asked for help in staging his new play. *"The 2022 Bristol Harbour Festival saw the world premiere of Rex Obano's The Hamlet Voyage, a new play about a performance of Hamlet by East India Company sailors in Sierra Leone in 1607. The production took place on board the historic ship The Matthew and was the culmination of an international collaboration between artists from Sierra Leone, India, the US, the UK and across West Africa. The Fenton Arts Trust provided key support at a critical junction, allowing us to secure the ship as our performance venue, finalise the script and bring on board additional artistic collaborators."* **Ben Prusiner**

Jermyn Street Theatre



▲ The 2022 Creative Associate cohort. Photo: Steve Gregson

The Trust supported the Mentorship pillar of Jermyn Street Theatre's 2022 Creative Associates programme. Outgoing Deputy Director Anna Ryder reflected on its impact:

"The support allowed us to pair 10 early-career theatre artists with a 'future them' industry mentor providing them with invaluable creative guidance as they take the next steps in their careers. It is clear that these mentorships have made a meaningful and long-lasting impact and I have seen how their practical knowledge, confidence and skill sets have grown."

Testimony given by one of the Creative Associates echoes this: *"Being able to be vulnerable and chat openly with an experienced and talented artist was really great. It made the industry feel much closer and friendlier. They gave me some excellent notes on my script, writing frameworks and exercises that I will rely on in the future."*

Financial Support 2022-2023

The Fenton Arts Trust awarded 41 individuals and organisations a total of £158,923 in support of the arts in the UK during the financial year.

Beneficiary	Award	Amount
The Albany	Supporting 12 Associate Artists to create work, boost their career & influence the Albany's programme, through funding, space & mentoring.	5,129
Alex Marlow	Funds to support time in writing & editing first full collection of poetry, for publication in 2022/23.	4,500
Art in Perpetuity Trust	Mentoring Award for 4 art graduates, across 2 years, providing free studios and exhibiting opportunities.	6,000
Behn Quartet	Recording for a digital album championing the works of Germaine Tailleferre and Grazyna Bacewicz.	2,990
Ben Weir	A new series of semi-permanent works: architectural interventions within a contemporary art gallery.	2,000
Brighton Early Music Festival	Support for BREMF Live: training & performance opportunities to strengthen career paths within the sector.	3,000
Buxton International Festival	A programme offering musicians in the early stages of their career a professional environment in which to get work experience.	4,000
Catalyst Arts	Graduate Award for Dreambean to provide a public solo exhibition and professional development opportunity.	1,500
Citymoves Dance Agency	Fast and Dirty: A facilitated residency for early career artists leading to commissioned performances at DanceLive and Sound Festival.	3,190
Clean Break Theatre Company	<i>Catch</i> , a new short play, will support the development of individual member artists and their entry into professional creative careers.	5,000
Ella Jones	Funding to employ Engagement Curators to consult on an arts project using Cubism to forge solidarities amongst precarious workers.	750
English National Opera	Support for the ENO Director-Observers diversity scheme to give 4 theatre practitioners the chance to experience working in opera.	4,000
Foundation for Art & Creative Technology	FACT Together 2022 is an online, digital residency and commissioning programme, supporting early-career artists in the North of England	5,000
Farnham Sinfonia	Six aspiring professional musicians will each perform a major concert work in public as a soloist with our professional orchestra.	5,000
Gothic Opera	Singers' fees for Gothic Opera's Halloween 2022 project: a double bill of forgotten works by two French nineteenth-century female composers.	6,600
J. Eva Collins Alonso	Fee to write a theatre show based on alternative histories of radio retold from a female perspective.	2,000
Jermyn Street Theatre	Funding towards the Creative Associates scheme, intended to transform and develop the careers of 10 emerging theatre makers.	5,000
Jonny Mansfield	Support for a CD of contemporary jazz compositions recorded by award winning musicians and released by prominent jazz label.	3,200
Little Angel Theatre	Year-long placement scheme, to diversify a niche art form and upskill emerging puppetry makers.	5,000
Liverpool Philharmonic	Launching 4 talented early career musicians from diverse backgrounds into orchestral life, removing barriers with 12 months crucial support.	5,000
Merry Opera Company	Support with the fees of young up-coming professional opera singers in two touring productions.	5,240
Mid Wales Opera	Support for young artists in both cast and cover roles on the Spring 2022 tour of Puccini's <i>La bohème</i> .	4,000
National Dance Company Wales	Laboratori 2022 encourages the development of new creative partnerships and choreographic ideas under the mentorship of creative innovators.	5,000
Niamh Downes	To record my debut folk album.	1,500
Old Vic Theatre Trust	Support for OV Theatre Makers a programme that supports emerging theatre artists to gain the skills and confidence needed to progress their careers.	5,000
The Opera Makers	R&D support for a new English puppet version of Pergolesi's <i>La Serva Padrona</i> , working with early career performers & theatre makers.	4,000
Orange Tree Theatre	A comprehensive, developmental programme allowing talented, early-career playwrights to work collaboratively with industry professionals.	4,000
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment	The Rising Stars of the Enlightenment scheme supports young singers by offering mentoring and performance opportunities with the OAE.	3,000
Oxford Bach Soloists	OBS Artist Scholarships: a year-long professional development opportunity for 14 early career artists with coaching & performance experience.	5,000
Papatango Theatre Company	Commissions to support five emerging playwrights selected through the Papatango Prize, the UK's biggest annual playwrighting opportunity.	4,000
Phoebé Mallinson	Recording and releasing <i>Lucid Dreams</i> album.	4,714
Re:Verse Theatre	Artistic spending for the creation and staging of the original play <i>The Hamlet Voyage</i> in Bristol and Edinburgh, exploring new approaches.	4,000
Royal Scottish National Orchestra	FILM COMPOSERS' LAB: a career development opportunity for emerging composers wanting to expand their skills in film composition.	2,500
Sherman Theatre	Supporting development opportunities for new & emerging artists to work on main house and youth theatre productions.	3,000
Smorgaschord	A festival with new music at its heart, aiming to explore unexpected connections between musical and literary cultures both local and global.	2,000
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	The SPAB Scholarship gives early career building professionals the skills to make a positive contribution to the historic environment.	7,000
Tara Theatre	4 regional producers support 16 emerging South Asian artists from across the UK to develop work for a festival at Tara and a national tour.	5,000
Waterperry Opera Festival	Support for Young Artist Programme a unique training and development programme focused on diversity and opportunity.	3,850
Wise Children	Support for trainee scheme enabling early career theatre-makers to hone their practice in a professional setting.	2,460
ZooNation: The Kate Prince Company	To support 3 young Hip Hop artists to develop their professional performance skills through training, mentoring and production experience.	4,800
TOTAL		158,923

Current Beneficiaries

Support for the current financial year (2023-2024) includes the following beneficiaries from around the UK:

Annelise Bucher	Leanne Moden
Apples & Snakes	Lewis Coenen-Rowe
Ardent Theatre Company	Lewisham Arthouse
Art in Perpetuity Trust	Lucy Mellors
Arthur Keegan-Bole	Magma Poetry
Buxton International Festival	Manchester Baroque
Chisenhale Dance Space	National Theatre
Contemporary Music for All	New Diorama Theatre
Cove Park	Photographers' Gallery
Curious Directive Theatre Company	RABBLE Theatre
English National Opera	Rhona Stevens
FACT Liverpool	Scherzo Ensemble
Far From The Norm	Sound Festival
Fieldnotes	Tara Theatre
Fifth Word	The Night With...
Gothic Opera	Theatre Royal Stratford East
High Barnet Chamber Music Festival	Theatre-Rites
HOME	UPROAR/Wales New Music Ensemble
International Guitar Foundation	Wild Arts
Kate Lowe	

James Weymouth

The Trust has been extremely fortunate to have had the in-kind support of James Weymouth as Website Manager for more than a decade. As he steps down from the role, previous Chair and long-term friend Stephen Morris wrote this:

"James Weymouth, now about to retire, took up the task of improving the Trust's website in early 2016. Having made a persuasive case that all the Trust's activities should now have their basis in digital documents, James transformed its internet presence. He set up new arrangements to host its web site and then redesigned it completely. Subsequently he provided continual maintenance, support and training, all pro bono. The result was to transform the way in which applicants can approach the Trust and at the same time provided a new digital foundation for its administration. His support has been in a very real sense invaluable."

Supporting TFAT

We aim to help individuals and artistic institutions by awarding grants and funds in keeping with founder Shu-Yao Fenton's wishes. We would welcome any donations in pursuit of this, which can attract further Gift Aid.

Please make cheques payable to *The Fenton Arts Trust*, or by bank transfer: *Lloyds Bank, Sort Code 30-00-08, Account no. 00979513.*

If you would like to support the Trust with a legacy amount, please add the following details along with your gift figure to your will:

*The Fenton Arts Trust (Registered Charity no. 294629)
PO Box 268825, London SE23 9DG*

If you do decide to do this, we would be delighted to hear from you.