



Filling South East London with song

Registered Charity No. 1197751



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ABOUT SongEasel



Francesca Chiejina, soprano, March 2021 (Credit: Nick Rutter/Apple & Biscuit Recordings)

SongEasel was founded by Jocelyn Freeman in 2018 with a mission to fill South East London with song. Operating across Lewisham, Blackheath and Southwark to date, the initiative has grown steadily, being awarded charitable status in February 2022.

The project was inspired by Jocelyn's passion to bring song to a wider audience, building the next generation of concertgoers through innovative musical performances and workshops of an international standard. SongEasel activities reach a wide and diverse demographic of the local population and those from further afield, including many who would not normally have access to live music.

With four song recital series completed, as well as an acclaimed outreach programme and a burgeoning Young Artist Programme launched in 2021, what began as a vehicle to share the joy of song is now gathering momentum and gaining international recognition for its impact on the musical and educational sectors.

Awareness of the local community in which SongEasel operates forms an important part of our planning and development as we aim to support and inspire growth through our partnerships and beneficiaries. Diversity commitments are a significant part of our mission to achieve this and we aim to continue to demonstrate inclusivity within classical music as our activities broaden to reach a wider audience.

TIMELINE



Elin Manahan Thomas, soprano and Jocelyn Freeman, piano, January 2019 (Credit: Matthew Ibbotson Photos)

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| January 2018 | Concept, development, and planning |
| October 2018 | Initial launch concert at the Boas Residence |
| January – July 2019 | ‘From Russia with Love’ song recital series
<i>Blackheath Halls and St Laurence Church Catford</i>
Eight recitals exploring the cultural and political connections between Europe and the former USSR
<i>Supported by the Oleg Prokofiev Trust</i> |
| February 2020 – July 2021 | ‘The Wanderlust Series’ song recital series
<i>Blackheath Halls, St Laurence Church Catford and local schools</i>
Hybrid recital series of seven programmes performed in-person and online, celebrating the nineteenth-century concept of Wanderlust as shown in Wilhelm Müller’s poetry and songs by Franz Schubert.
MiniWinterreise children’s project with local state primary schools.
Partnership begun with the Global Concert Hall (IDAGIO online)
<i>Supported by Arts Council England</i> |
| September – December 2021 | ‘Café Chanson’ song recital series
<i>Blackheath Halls, St Laurence Church Catford & 1901 Arts Club</i>
Four live recitals featuring 2021 bicentenary composer Pauline Viardot and the musical café culture of nineteenth-century Paris through song. Young Artist Programme launched in 1901 Arts club Waterloo with a French song masterclass.
<i>Supported through St Laurence Church and private donors</i> |
| February 2022 | Charitable status awarded |

TIMELINE CONTINUED.



Ailish Tynan, soprano and Jocelyn Freeman, piano, May 2022 (Credit: Kate Kantur)

February 2022 'Icons & Legends' series launched

Blackheath Halls, St Laurence Church Catford, outreach locations

Six live recitals celebrating a famous dinner meeting in Paris in May 1922 featuring creative luminaries such as Proust, Diaghilev and James Joyce. Fringe programme launched at Ninth Life Pub, Catford and Rocketvan Coffee Shop SE17, including repeat events requested. Young Artist Programme expanded to feature professional platforms and greater mentorship.



Lorena Paz Nieto, soprano at the Fringe (Credit: G. Pellingra). Young Artists Clare Ward, soprano JongSun Woo, piano, June 2022

Schools project 'Potpourri' reached over 370 Lewisham state school children and coached performances in English and French languages.

Supported through St Laurence Church, the Friends of SongEasel, The Leche Trust and the Lee Charity of William Hatchliffe

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Francesca Chiejina workshop leading at Beccroft Garden Primary School, April 2021 (Credit: Apple & Biscuit Recordings)

- ☞ Children's outreach project, Miniwinterreise engaged **232 local children**, 75% of whom had *English as an additional language* and 69% *pupil premium* entitlement. **Very moving and insightful creative responses** in dance, poetry, art and musical composition on our YouTube channel alongside committed performances of Schubert's songs.
The wanderlust theme provided a lonely literary character in a safe, musical environment with whom children could empathise, equipping them with **tools to express** their reactions to isolation experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ☞ Young Artist Programme provided performance opportunities and developmental support for **twenty-nine young musicians** to date
- ☞ Steady audience growth throughout the four series, including a trend of **under-35s** forming approximately 30% of our audience in the last series
- ☞ Vibrant *social media* and digital presence reaching:
nearly **61,000** with 'From Russia with Love' 2019
over **141,000** with 'The Wanderlust Series' in 2020/21
data from 'Café Chanson' and 'Icons & Legends' still being collected
- ☞ Features on BBC Radio 3's In Tune programme and IDAGIO's 'Thursdays with Thomas' reach over **2,138,000** listeners across four continents
- ☞ Reviewed as *'fulfilled a deep need'* (Seen & Heard International, July 2020)

VISION

TWO-YEAR PLAN

Incorporating fifth birthday celebrations in 2023

- ☞ Reach 500 children annually across South East London with world-class song workshops, ensuring a platform for youth voice and expression
- ☞ Develop further opportunities for Young Artists with Ageing Well Lewisham
- ☞ Build consistency of quality of artists engaged and programming performed
- ☞ Commission an independent website
- ☞ Expand team to include Administrator and Arts Admin internship
- ☞ Launch fringe programme in local hospitality establishments
- ☞ Continue to increase SongEasel's reach, building new audiences through word-of-mouth, fringe programme, social media and press coverage
- ☞ Commission the composition of new songs for 2023
- ☞ Establish Friends and Patrons scheme
- ☞ Nurture existing partnerships with arts organisations and other local businesses

PREDICTED BUDGET £30k

FIVE-YEAR PLAN

- ☞ Thriving in all the above aims, plus:
- ☞ Recognised as nationally significant organisation
- ☞ Stable income and financial forecast, including reserve, leading to:
- ☞ Several contracted, self-employed roles including Artistic Director, Administrator, and regular Arts Admin internship
- ☞ Consider Arts Council England National Portfolio scheme
- ☞ Pioneering fringe programme
- ☞ Collaborations with a wide range of arts organisations

PREDICTED BUDGET £40k

TEN-YEAR PLAN

- ☞ As above, plus;
- ☞ Reach 1000 children annually by tenth birthday in 2028
- ☞ Young Artist Programme alumni making headlines
- ☞ Recognised as internationally significant organisation
- ☞ International collaborations with arts organisations

PREDICTED BUDGET £50-70k

Tenor Mark Padmore CBE in St Laurence Church Catford
December 2021 (Credit: Parags Photos)

PARTNERSHIPS

Current Partnerships

Blackheath Halls
St Laurence Church Catford

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
University of Oxford (Russian Literature and Music)
University of Birmingham (School of Modern Languages)

St Stephen's CoE Primary School, Deptford
Beecroft Garden Primary School, Lewisham
Prendergast Primary School, Ladywell
Lewisham Education Arts Network
Blackheath Conservatoire
Lewisham Music

IDAGIO's Global Concert Hall
Apple and Biscuit Recordings
Oxford Lieder Festival
Oleg Prokofiev Trust
Nicholas Boas Foundation
Bring Me Sunshine (Lewisham)
Lied the Way workshops (Germany)

A wide variety of artists, professionals and music agencies

Burgeoning Partnerships

Ageing Well Lewisham
Ninth Life pub, Catford
Rocketvan Coffee Shop
Lewisham Train Station
Arts Council England

Various Trusts, Foundations and Press

Blackheath Halls, May 2021 (Credit: Jocelyn Freeman)

CHARITABLE PURPOSE

The object of the CIO is to advance the education of the public, groups and individuals in, and promote the understanding, appreciation, composition, and performance of song, both its poetry and music, through a series of events governed by a strong artistic vision including (but not limited to):

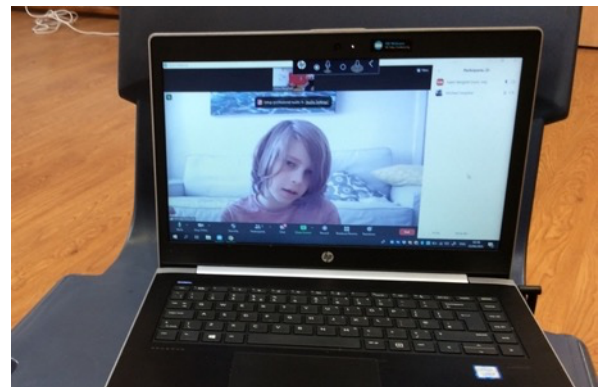
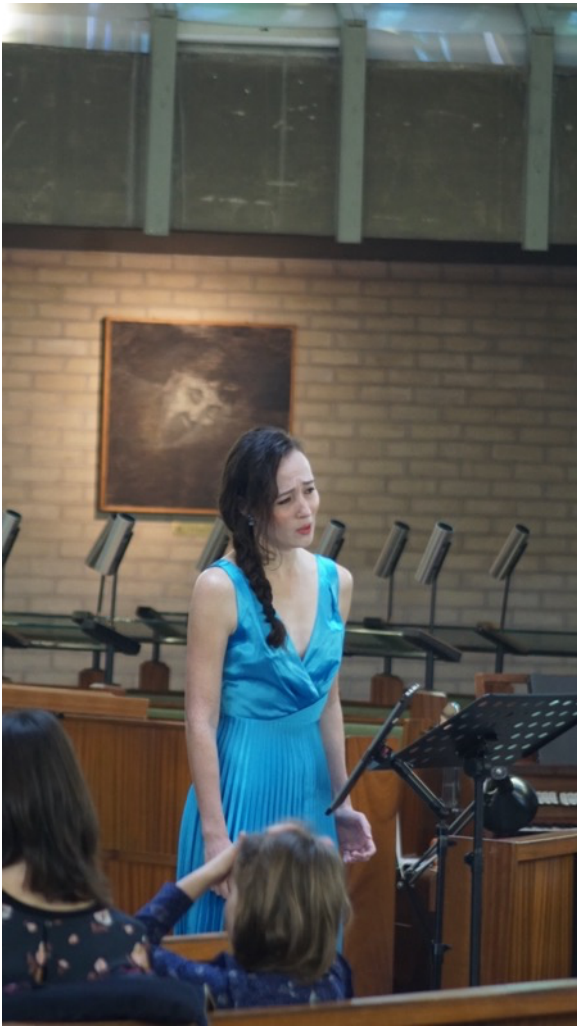
1. a) The arrangement of an annual song recital series; and
2. b) A significant outreach and audience development component incorporating:

- (i) Workshops with local schoolchildren;
- (ii) A Young Artist programme;
- (iii) Talks and educational events; and
- (iv) Ad hoc events to bring music and poetry to new audiences;

for the benefit of all sectors of the community in South East London and elsewhere (the Object).



Tenor Mark Padmore CBE in St Laurence Church Catford, December 2021 (Credit: Parags Photos)




Clockwise from top left:
 Mezzo soprano Fleur Barron and a young audience member in St Laurence Church Catford (Credit: Ewa Korda);
 Bass-baritone Stephan Loges and pianist Jocelyn Freeman recording in Blackheath Halls during the pandemic (Credit: Nick Rutter/Apple & Biscuit recordings);
 Professor Natasha Loges, Natasha Riordan and Jocelyn Freeman delivering pre-concert talk at Blackheath Halls (Credit: Matthew Ibbotson Photos);
 An isolating-yet-committed pupil from Beecroft Garden Primary during Francesca Chiejina's visit (Credit: Kate Hands);
 Participants in lockdown masterclass by Stephan Loges at Blackheath Halls (Credit: Matthew Ibbotson Photos);
 And baritone Julien Van Mellaerts exuberant with pianist Jocelyn Freeman after reopening live performances at Blackheath Halls with Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* in September 2020

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES

MiniWinterreise schools project: April 2021

“I’ve just caught up with this now, barely an hour before I sing some of these songs myself in Jeremy Sams’ wondrous translations... How fabulous is this? Children singing/owning Schubert! It’s a dream come true. Bravo!” (Roderick Williams OBE, July 2021)

A poetic creative response from a pupil at St Stephen’s Deptford:



I am the robe of regret
Engulfing you in a shadow of despair
The ship of sadness,
Crashing into the rocks of harsh reality

I am the centre of sorrow,
Hogging all happiness
I am drowning you in sadness - slowly sinking you in pain

I am the bare branches of the tree of hope
My leaves blown away in a breeze of misery
I am the fan of fear,
Propelling you away from freedom

I am the flower of demise,
Inhaling hope and exhaling despair
The rose of misery, my thorns of radiating gloominess

The bay of a broken heart
Overlooking the forlorn and murky depths of an ocean of depression

Yet Hope and its companion, Joy, are here
Absorbing all the darkness
Replacing it with silver-lined clouds
Floating gently in a forget-me-not blue sky

I am the hope that drains away misery
Converting a gorge of gloominess into fresh opportunities
And a new beginning

A comment from a pupil at Prendergast Primary Ladywell, after hearing Francesca Chiejina’s vocal performance:

“I’d never felt anything like that, I felt sad and happy and so many emotions”

“No words are adequate to describe how wonderful this is!” (Marion Friend MBE, July 2021)

Young Artist Programme

“It’s such a delight to work with young performers of this calibre, and they were so responsive and lovely... bravo @royalacadmusic alum @pianolieder for this superb initiative.

(Dr Emily Kilpatrick, October 2021)

“It was really liberating to perform at the Ageing Well meeting after years of the music college environment... This is what music is all about.” (SongEasel Young Artist, June 2022)



SongEasel Young Artist Programme launch, 1901 Arts Club, Waterloo, October 2021 (Credit: Glenn Kesby)

Fringe Programme

“That was incredible, people were stopping in the street and coming to listen. Some of the residents in the flats opposite were hanging out the windows just to hear better.”

(Venue owner, May 2022)

“So nice to put it in a different location, and it was just really relaxed. The music and performance was excellent... and I loved that kids were bopping away to cabaret classics!”

(Audience member, May 2022)

Free Recitals in Catford

“I’m sorry I’m unable to donate, these are the clothes I sleep in. I love Schubert”

(Audience member, May 2022)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all our supporters and volunteers, without whose generosity these life-affirming projects would not have been possible, notably:

St Laurence Church Catford
Blackheath Halls
University of Oxford (Russian Literature and Music)
University of Birmingham (School of Modern Languages)
The Lee Educational Charity of William Hatcliffe
Oleg Prokofiev Trust
Nicholas Boas Foundation
Arts Council England
Mark Padmore CBE

“It made me laugh and made me cry” (Jake White, December 2021)

“Thanks to you & Huw, for such a wonderful concert. The singing & playing were so moving. What a gamut of emotions! So entertaining, it had everything, including humour, which is always good!” (Sue Dearie, September 2021)

“A real treat this evening with gifted young Kiwi Julien Van Mellaerts in partnership with the impeccable and eloquent Jocelyn Freeman. This was the first event at Blackheath Halls since March. Everyone bowled over by these brilliant young people - and Schubert of course....” (Brian Dickie, September 2020)

“So; here’s an example of the immediate future for chamber music and song recitals - pay-to-view online streaming. Your chance to access world-class music-making and musicians actually making a living (well, it’s a start). Please support... and enjoy a stupendous recital.” (Roderick Williams OBE, July 2020)

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