

CITY ARTS TRUST

**REPORT TO CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION
ON 2012 WINTER FREE EVENTS PROGRAMME
JANUARY – APRIL 2012**

'The provision of a varied programme of classical and contemporary music is an essential part of a busy and successful commercial/financial centre and its free entry ensures maximum outreach and success.'

(selected from the many comments on the 2012 series from the public)

May 2012

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REPORT TO CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION ON WINTER PROGRAMME OF FREE CONCERTS: JANUARY – APRIL 2012

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In 2011/12, the City of London allocated the sum of £26,399 to the City Arts Trust to support a programme of 11 free lunchtime concerts in the City between January and April 2012. As with the previous series (2004 – 2011), the proposal involved continuing collaboration between the City Music Society (CMS), City of London Sinfonia (CLS) and City Arts Trust (CAT).
- 1.2 In the original proposal the series aimed to:
- Provide a winter programme of free events raising the profile of the City of London Corporation's support for the arts in the City
 - Benefit those who work in the City, those who live in the City and also visitors to the City
 - Explore and open up different venues across the City
- 1.3 The three organisations set out to achieve these objectives by:
- Programming a wide range of repertoire including classical, jazz and folk music
 - Targeting the City community with a tailored marketing campaign
 - Ensuring convenient timings and locations allowing City workers to enjoy the concerts during their lunch hours
 - Establishing a regular pattern of performance so that potential attendees get into the habit of attending
 - Attracting performers of high quality to perform in the City
- 1.4 Good attendance levels at events, positive audience feedback or comments and self-appraisal by the three collaborative partners confirmed that these objectives were met to a high degree in 2012.
- 1.5 The 2012 series consisted of 11 lunchtime concerts, 5 on Wednesdays and 6 on Tuesdays, covering classical, jazz, world, folk and contemporary music during the period 24 January – 3 April 2012.
- 1.6 Effective publicity through distribution of the Free Winter Concert flyers, hits on websites of the three partners and by email, in combination with the preceding reputation of past seasons, produced audiences totalling 2,197 for this series – 12% higher than last year's audience figure.
- 1.7 Audience feedback through the 286 questionnaires returned was extremely positive, with many patrons commending the high standard and wide variety of performance and stressing the beneficial impact that the concerts have on life in the City.

- 1.8 The City Arts Trust is delighted to have the support of the City of London Corporation for the 2013 series and is keen to build on the success of this year.
- 1.9 The Free Winter Concert series delivers against several key criteria of the City of London Corporation's City Together strategy, as well as strongly delivering the main aims of the Cultural Strategy.

2. THE PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

- 2.1 The artistic programme consisted of four strands: classical music, jazz, folk and world music. The high calibre of artists was remarked upon by many audience members as a factor that sets this series of programmes apart from other chamber music concerts in the City venues. The standard of performance was excellent, including outstanding contributions from the likes of Mercury Prize-nominated pianist Gwilym Simcock, the internationally renowned Endymion Ensemble and the award-winning guitar/flute duo of Morgan Szymanski and Adam Walker.
- 2.2 The series again proves the benefit of good partnership with close co-operative planning between CAT, CMS and CLS. As in 2011, a jazz ensemble from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama performed a particularly well-received concert, this year held in St Anne & St Agnes, maintaining the established and highly productive links between the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the City of London Festival. The CLS, as in the previous three years, was able to field a chamber orchestra for each of their three concerts thanks to the continued level of funding.
- 2.3 Six venues were selected to host the series. St Andrew Holborn once again provided a perfect venue for the CLS, offering both a large seating capacity and a wonderful acoustic for chamber orchestral music. Following the successful, and impressive, renovation of Bishopsgate Institute, the series returned for four of the CMS-curated concerts.
- 2.4 The series was programmed by the three parties involved, with close liaison and positive collaboration. The CAT team performed the role of promoter and event manager, liaising with the venues and managing the concerts on the day.

3. MARKETING AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 A total audience of 2,197 attended the 11 events, an average of 199 per event. Many events were presented to capacity audiences, and the total audience figure represents a 12% increase on 2011's reach. In part, this is due to the return of the series to Bishopsgate Institute, which offers a larger capacity, but the programme also proved extremely popular this year.
- 3.2 This audience was achieved implementation of the strategy outlined in the original proposal, namely:

- Mounting a 'City run' leaflet drop to city firms, restaurants, churches and other venues;
- Circulating specially designed print publicity to the offices of the City of London Corporation. We also collaborated with the City of London to ensure maximum coverage, for example, on the website, in the staff bulletin and in the Cityview publication;
- A combined mailing to the audiences of the City of London Festival, City Music Society and City of London Sinfonia;
- Further marketing support was given by CLS and CMS through their own websites

3.3 An audience questionnaire was circulated at six concerts through the series, covering a variety of venues and types of music. This circulation resulted in 286 written responses and this data provides some interesting feedback:

- 7% of respondents live and work in the City
- The concerts are also proving to be quite a draw, with 55% of the respondents coming from London but outside the City, 38% coming from the UK outside London. There were also a growing number of international tourists.

3.4 Sample responses from the audience questionnaires include:

- *'Wonderful use of venue. Introduced me to music I wouldn't otherwise have known and brings the venue alive in a different and special way. Excellent performance, thoroughly enjoyable and educational, more please!'*
- *'A great opportunity to hear such great music and excellent venue'*
- *'Always excellent and well organised in very nice venues, giving people the opportunity to visit churches etc. High standard of music.'*
- *'Excellent idea - wonderful settings, very uplifting and good in a lunch break.'*
- *'Wonderful to hear so many different types of music. The length was perfect for young people, I was able to bring my granddaughter to her first concert during half term and she found the experience amazing.'*

Regarding City of London and the arts:

- *'Very much enjoy the events. Hope funding continues, and more folk music please'*
- *'Superb - their popularity shows they are meeting a wish for top quality (free) music.'*
- *'We enjoy the music and the venues. For those on a tight budget, it allows access to great musicians'*
- *'Magnificent, the idea of free concerts are much appreciated!'*

4. FINANCE

4.1 The grant made to the City Arts Trust has been spent as follows:

	Activity	Expenditure
City of London Sinfonia	3 concerts	£ 10,750
City Music Society	4 concerts	£ 4,500
City Arts Trust	4 concerts	£ 4,000
Marketing, venues, publicity & PRS		£ 7,149
Total		£ 26,399

5. 2013 SERIES

The continued success and public appreciation of the Free Winter Concert series has underlined the demand for this type of activity. However, we remain aware that the current financial climate has placed strain on all areas of funding. The Trust is therefore pleased that an allocation of funding has been made for the current financial year 2012/13.

The 2013 Free Winter Concert series will see 11 concerts, one each week from late January – mid-March. The broad range and high quality of performances will be maintained, and the events actively marketed to those who work in the City, those who live in the City and also visitors to the City.

City Arts Trust
May 2012