

# Annual Report

2024



A vertical strip on the left side of the page featuring a bokeh effect of warm, golden-yellow lights against a dark background.

## Contents

3	<b>A Note from the Artistic Director</b>	.....
4	<b>Objective One</b> bring world-class performers and performances to new places	.....
5	<b>Objective Two</b> work with schools, partners, and young artists to foster future talent	.....
7	<b>Objective Three</b> rethink accepted environmental practice and demonstrate a commitment to the natural world	.....
8	<b>Show Details</b>	.....
12	<b>Team and Patrons</b>	.....



# 2024 has been an exciting year for Wild Arts.

**We have performed to over 9,000 people at 54 venues nationwide, worked with 500 primary school students and their teachers, received our first International Opera Award nomination, and made our first steps into Europe – with three performances of *The Magic Flute* in the Neuer Garten, Potsdam.**

**All this from a company in just its second full year of operation.**

The year also saw us offer perhaps our most convincing answer yet to the question that sparked our work: *what does sustainable opera look like?*

In June, Theatre Green Book UK launched their second edition, including a clarified plan to transition groups to net zero across all areas – productions, operations, and buildings. The guidelines offer an incredible guide to organisations, and one we have now instigated throughout Wild Arts. We have already matched their highest environmental requirement, achieving a gold standard of sustainability.

However, while valuable, these standards are defined by what actions are taken, and what materials are used – whereas our focus is on what is not used. On reducing the set and scenery that contributes so greatly both to opera's initial environmental impact, and to the subsequent impacts of touring. Where others have grand scenes, we rely on costume and the magnetism of our performers; where others have lorries full of equipment, we have the boot of an electric car.

The more people we perform to, and the larger the scale of our productions and venues, the more noticeable this approach becomes, and the more pleasing its positive reception. Our work is unique. We bring truly world-class singers to culturally underserved areas around the UK, alongside a full chamber orchestra of internationally renowned performers; we create new, heartbreaking, witty translations and arrangements; we give emerging artists an opportunity not just to understudy a production or perform in a chorus, but to take a leading role, both on and off stage; and our small-scale sets and productions offer a sustainable avenue for touring music in an environmentally-aware age.

These creative goals come hand in hand with promoting and improving the appreciation of performing and visual arts in young people through our schools outreach projects and affordable ticket offers (with the majority of our tickets priced at less than £30).

As you look through this summary of our impact in 2024, we hope that you can share in our pride for all we have achieved, and we are incredibly grateful for the support of all of our Friends, Patrons, and supporters, who have made this work possible. Looking ahead to *Eugene Onegin* and *The Elixir of Love* next summer, *The Marriage of Figaro* in 2026, and *La bohème* the following year, this support matters more than ever – helping us to underpin the next ambitious years of our programme.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.



Orlando Jopling  
**Artistic Director**



Wild Arts' Opera Evening at Falconhurst.

# Bringing world-class performers and performances to new places



67  
Performances  
nationwide

56  
Venues across the  
UK and Potsdam

10,000  
Audience  
members



150  
Performers  
and creatives

72  
Hosts and  
volunteers

38%  
First time  
opera-goers

<£30  
Average ticket  
price



Top to bottom: *The Magic Flute* at Bury St Edmunds, The Essex Summer Opera Festival at Layer Marney Tower, and the Roman Rive Festival in Coggeshall Church.



# Working with schools, partners, and young artists to foster future talent

Now at the end of its second year, Wild Arts' education programme sees us working alongside music teachers to create a series of diverse, creative, and dynamic music lessons constructed around our Summer Opera (this year, Mozart's *The Magic Flute*).

These lessons, taught over the summer term, were designed to aid and empower teachers, and to give students the tools to learn, create, and explore all aspects of opera – from the music to the plot, characters, and even stage design – with each activity complementing a different part of the national music curriculum.

Our outreach team and wonderful Young Artists then attended each school to deliver in-person singing and acting workshops, before bringing everything together with a 45-minute performance of *The Magic Flute* for schools.



The students of Lyons Hall school.

500

Children nationwide

6

Weeks of lessons

6

Workshops for schools

3

Schools' performances of *The Magic Flute*



The students of Braiswick school.

"The children absolutely loved the programme. The lesson plans are fun, stretching, and incredibly easy to follow."

"It was fantastic – from lessons, through the workshops, to the amazing show. A really, really exciting thing to be a part of."

– Schoolteachers of participating schools

The Wild Arts Young Artists Programme gives several musicians each year the opportunity to hone their craft in a professional production setting, gaining confidence through vocal, language, and acting coaching, and through rehearsals and performances with an experienced ensemble of established artists.

**4 young singers** participated in our sophomore Young Artists Programme, giving **3 recitals/showcases** across the Essex Summer Opera Festival, as well as singing in **all 24 performances of *The Magic Flute***.



Eleanor Oldfield, one of our 2024 Young Artists, in costume for *The Magic Flute*.



“Wild Arts’ Young Artist Programme was a wonderful opportunity that I am immensely grateful for. The programme was my first professional role, and it gave me the experience of travelling and working with an amazing team of creatives and musicians, whom I am lucky enough to count as friends, as well as helping me learn, and push myself. This is how careers start – a good chance given by a brilliant group who become like a family. I would wholeheartedly recommend it for any emerging singer.”

– Henry Wright, our Baritone Young Artist, 2024



# Rethinking accepted environmental practice and demonstrating a commitment to our natural world

According to the work done by Julie's Bicycle, a single city-based theatrical show can expect to produce 2.48kgCO<sub>2</sub>e per audience member even before creating its sets and costumes – which traditionally more than double this total.

This year, our opera tours produced a total of less than 1.5kgCO<sub>2</sub>e per audience member, while also offering an example to other companies: *creating reduced-set, minimalist performances, without sacrificing enjoyability or impact.*

As well as renewably sourcing and reusing materials, much of this stemmed from hyper-local audiences. Our audience travelled an average of **less than 10 miles** to see our shows, with just 5% travelling more than 30 miles (fewer than the number who walked).



The driveway of Kelvedon Hall, one of this year's venues for *The Magic Flute*.

**80%**

of materials  
sustainably sourced

**99%**

of materials  
reused or recycled

**63%**

of mileage  
by train

**<1.5**

KgCO<sub>2</sub>e (CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent)  
per audience member

"We humans, alone on earth, are powerful enough to create worlds, and then to destroy them. But we have one more thing – an ability, perhaps unique among the living creatures on the planet – to imagine a future and work towards achieving it."

– David Attenborough



Knebworth Hall, one of this year's Opera Evening venues.

## Cast

Pamina Natasha Page  
 Tamino Richard Dowling  
 The Queen of the Night Luci Briginshaw  
 Papageno Gareth Brynmor John  
     John Ieuan Jones 15 JUN | 3, 6 AUG  
 Sarastro Trevor Eliot Bowes JUN  
     Edward Hawkins JUL-SEPT  
 First Lady Eleanor Oldfield\*  
 Second Lady Martha Jones  
 Third Lady Abbie Ward  
 Monostatos Ben Thapa† JUN-AUG  
     Philip Clieve 15 JUN | 5, 14 SEPT  
     David de Winter 19, 21, 22 SEPT  
 Papagena Eleanor Sanderson-Nash JUN  
     Daniella Sicari JUL-SEPT  
 Speaker Henry Wright\*  
 Priest Lachlan Craig\*

\* 2024 Young Artists

## Players

Violin  
 Sijie Chen (Leader)  
 William McGahon, William Newell

Viola  
 Christine Anderson, Lorena Contó  
 Woltèche, Jon Thorne, Katie Perrin

Cello  
 Leo Popplewell, Seb van Kuijk

Double Bass  
 Marianne Schofield, Joe Cowie, Lucia  
 Polo Moreno, Charles Campbell

Oboe  
 Hannah Condliffe, Adrian Rowlands,  
 Lucy Foster

Clarinet  
 Jernej Albreht, Timothy Lines, Kenny  
 Keppel

Bassett Horn  
 Rowan Jones, Katherine Spencer

Horn  
 Francisco Gomes Ruiz, Jon Farey, Joel  
 Ashford, Anna Drysdale

Bassoon  
 Paul Boyes, Sarah Sesu, Bartosz Kwasecki

## Creatives and Team

Director James Hurley  
 Musical Director Orlando Jopling  
 Designer Sophie Lincoln  
 Translation Jeremy Sams

Producer Max Parfitt  
 Assistant Director Rebecca Milford  
 Stage Manger Elise Frost  
 Wardrobe Manager Eleanor Spray  
 Costume Assistant Honor Bathurst  
 Repetiteur Satoshi Kubo, Alex Norton

## Venues

7 June Treago Castle, Herefordshire  
 14 June Norwich Theatre, Norfolk  
 15 June Lichfield Garrick, Staffordshire  
 16 June Kelvedon Hall, Essex  
 18-23 June The Essex Summer Opera Festival at Layer  
     Marney Tower  
 27 June The Apex, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk  
 30 June Thaxted Festival, Essex  
 4 July Owlpen Manor, Gloucestershire  
 5 July Malvern Forum Theatre, Worcestershire  
 6 July Bletchington Park, Oxfordshire  
 11 July Deal Festival, Kent  
 14 July Childerley Hall, Cambridgeshire  
 21 July Heronsgate, Buckinghamshire  
 25 July Forde Abbey, Dorset  
 3 August Festival Theatre, Hever Castle, Kent  
 6 August Frinton-on-Sea Cricket Club, Essex  
 5 September Repertory Theatre, Birmingham  
 14 September The Charterhouse, London  
 19, 21, 22 September Neuer Garten, Potsdam



## Reviews

"Phenomenally inventive, entertaining, and full of insight.  
 Wild Arts makes magic happen."

– Colin Clarke, Classical Explorer ★★★★★

"With an exceptional company, Mozart's wonderful music  
 played with verve by orchestra and singers, this Magic Flute  
 is, well... magical."

– Mark Aspen ★★★★★

"I saw Wild Arts before and they were sensational. They  
 were again tonight in a production that was innovative,  
 fresh and delightful."

– Fairy Powered Productions ★★★★★

Eleanor Oldfield and Richard Dowling in *The Magic Flute*.



## Cast

Soprano

Galina Averina

Elinor Rolfe-Johnson

Natasha Page

Mezzo

Martha Jones

Catherine Backhouse

Tenor

Xavier Hetherington

Michael Bell

Lachlan Craig\*

Baritone

Timothy Nelson

Jerome Knox

Jean-Kristoff Bouton

\* 2024 Young Artist

## Players

Violin

Sijie Chen

Ellie Fagg

Tristan Gurney

William McGahon

William Newell

Elizabeth Rossi

Viola

Kate de Campos

Catherine Bradshaw

Nick Bootiman

John Crockatt

Christine Anderson

Eleanor Waddington

Lorena Cantó Woltèche

Rebecca Chambers

Hannah Shaw

Oscar Hulch

Katie Perrin

Cello

Orlando Jopling

Leo Popplewell

Emma Black

Seb van Kuijk

Double Bass

Lucia Polo-Moreno

Marianne Schofield

Cole Morrison

Stacey Watton

Chris West

Roberto Carillo-Garcia

Joe Cowie

Ben Griffiths

Alex Jones

## Creatives

Staging James Hurley

All arrangements by

Orlando Jopling



## Venues

8 February Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds

24 February Iscoyd Park, Shropshire

2 May Dorfold Hall, Cheshire

3 May Chillington Hall, Staffordshire

15 May Dulwich Golf Club, London

12 June Theatre by the Lake, Cumbria

21 June Oxshott, Surrey

26 June Thorington Theatre, Suffolk

28 June Falconhurst, Kent

3 July Minterne House, Dorset

6 July Chiltern Open Air Museum, Buckinghamshire

7 July Knebworth House, Hertfordshire

13 July Great Ruffins, Essex

17, 18 July Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire

19 July Painswick Rococo Garden, Gloucestershire

20 July Hilles House, Gloucestershire

21 July Claremont Landscape Garden, Surrey

23 July Burford, Oxfordshire

24 July Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire

28 July Dunster Castle, Somerset

30 July Boconnoc, Cornwall

Timothy Nelson at the Opera Evening in Falconhurst, Kent.

## Spring Concerts at The Old Library, Colchester

20 March Charlotte Spruit and Sergio Bucheli  
 18 April Richard Dowling and Michael Butten  
 16 May The Bloomsbury Players and Katherine Spencer

## The Roman River Festival

22 September Bach to Baby Family Concert: Fiesta!  
*Laver Marney Tower, near Colchester*  
 24 September The Madrigal Reimagined  
*St Mary's Church, Wivenhoe*  
 25 September Ignas Maknickas  
*All Saints Church, Fordham*  
 26 September The Solem Quartet  
*St Andrew's Church, Fingringhoe*  
 27 September Huw Watkins, Sijie Chen, and Orlando Jopling  
*St. James the Great, East Hill, Colchester*  
 28 September Space and Nature: The Hermes Experiment  
*Firstsite, Colchester*  
 28 September Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto and Rachmaninov  
 Symphony No. 2; *St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall*  
 29 September Notes in the Sky: Ant Roberts and Orlando Jopling  
*Jumbo Water Tower, Colchester*  
 29 September Sijie Chen: Strings Masterclass  
*The Old Library, Colchester*  
 29 September Catching Voices: Faith, Love, and Nature  
*St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall*

## Featuring

Toby Carr  
 Hana Chang  
 Sijie Chen  
 Hannah Ely  
 Orlando Jopling  
 Ignas Maknickas  
 Ant Roberts  
 Huw Watkins

The Monteverdi String Band  
 Oliver Weber  
 Theresa Caudle  
 Wendy Kelly  
 David Brooker  
 Mark Caudle

The Solem Quartet  
 Ellie Fagg  
 William Newell  
 Stephen Upshaw  
 Stephanie Tress

The Hermes Experiment  
 Héloïse Werner  
 Oliver Pashley  
 Marianne Schofield  
 Anne Denholm

Catching Voices  
 Hilary Cronin  
 Gabriella Noble  
 Lauren Macleod  
 Jacob Ewens  
 Peter Edge

The Wild Arts Ensemble  
 Simon Blendis (Leader)  
 Sijie Chen  
 Helena Buckie  
 William McGahon  
 Scott Dickinson  
 Christine Anderson  
 Charlotte Kaslin  
 Maya Kashif  
 Ben Griffiths  
 Alex Jones  
 Hannah Condliffe  
 Chloe Vincent  
 Timothy Lines  
 Sarah Burnett  
 Peter Francomb  
 Jo Hensel  
 Aaron Akugbo  
 Tom Lee  
 Emmanuel Joste

Young Performer Spotlights  
 Bethany Reynolds  
 Sofiia Usmanova  
 Ned Bell

with  
 Ben Vonberg-Clark and the  
 Wivenhoe Youth Choir



The Roman River Festival at St Peter ad Vincula Church, Coggeshall.



## Cast

Soprano  
Natasha Page  
Lucy Hall

Mezzo  
Martha Jones  
Catherine Backhouse

Tenor  
Guy Elliott  
Sam Marston

Baritone  
Timothy Nelson

Bass  
Edward Hawkins

## Players

Violin  
Sijie Chen (Leader)  
William McGahon, Magda Loth Hill,  
Gabi Jones, Maxim Del Mar

Viola  
Hannah Shaw, Oscar Holch

Cello  
Jonny Byers, Reinoud Ford, George Ross

Double Bass  
Marianne Schofield, Kate Brooke

Oboe  
Joel Raymond, Oonagh Lee  
Geoff Coates

Bassoon  
Chris Rawley

Trumpet  
Brendan Musk and Sam Lewis  
Ruth Ross

Timpani  
Tom Lee, Louise Goodwin

Harpsichord  
Orlando Jopling

## Creatives and Team

Staging Tom Morris  
Associate Director Rosie Kat  
Crib and Cross Ruth Paton

Producer Kirsty Hopkins  
Associate Producer Max Parfitt  
Marketing Bethan Sheppard

Image by Steve Gregson: William McGahon (Violin)  
and Lucy Hall (Soprano) in *Messiah*.

## Venues

2 December Chelmsford Cathedral, Essex  
7 December Smith Square Hall (formerly St John's Smith  
Square), London  
10 December Hexham Abbey, Northumberland  
11 December Carlisle Cathedral, Cumbria  
12 December Lancaster Priory, Lancashire  
15 December Layer Marney Tower, Essex  
17 December Chichester Cathedral, Sussex  
19 December Rochester Cathedral, Kent



## Critics' Reviews

"Here is a Messiah that speaks... It is a triumph!"  
– Mark Aspen ★★★★★

"The jewel in Wild Arts' crown. A supple, energetic  
interpretation that thrillingly delivers the story as if the  
performers have just discovered it... Exquisite, moving, and  
exuberant."  
– Rachel Halliburton ★★★★★

"Riveting: a real dramatic response which is constantly lifted  
by the full-blooded, sometimes even angry, way in which  
each solo number is tackled."  
– Richard Morrison, *The Times*

## Audience Reviews

"You have collectively raised the bar so high on the  
Messiah performance that I can never go back to an  
ordinary concert version. It was outstanding."

"A faultless and intimate delight... Inclusive and uplifting."

"Totally out of this world. It made my heart leap and the  
hairs stand up on the back of my neck!"

Artistic Director  
**Orlando Jopling**

Managing Director  
**Tim Jackson-Waite**

Producer, Messiah  
**Kirsty Hopkins**

Producer, Roman River  
Festival  
**Jessica Chapman**

Associate Producer  
**Max Parfitt**

Marketing, Messiah  
**Bethan Sheppard**

Fixer  
**William McGahon**

Ensemble Leader\*  
**Sijie Chen**

\*Position supported by  
Patrick and Louise Grattan

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Messiah at Smith Square Hall 2024 (photo by Steve Gregson)