

Annual Report

2024



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bring world-class performers and performances to new places

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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.

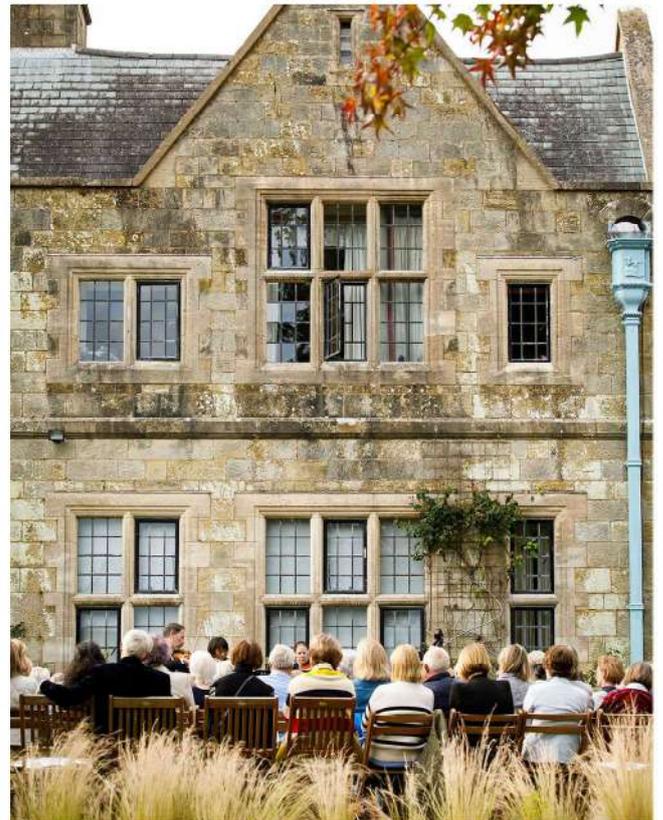
These creative goals come hand in hand with promoting and improving the appreciation of performing and visual arts in young people through our schools outreach projects and affordable ticket offers (with the majority of our tickets priced at less than £30).

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 2.48kgCO₂e 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 1.5kgCO₂e 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
KgCO₂e (CO₂ 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 Poplewell, 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

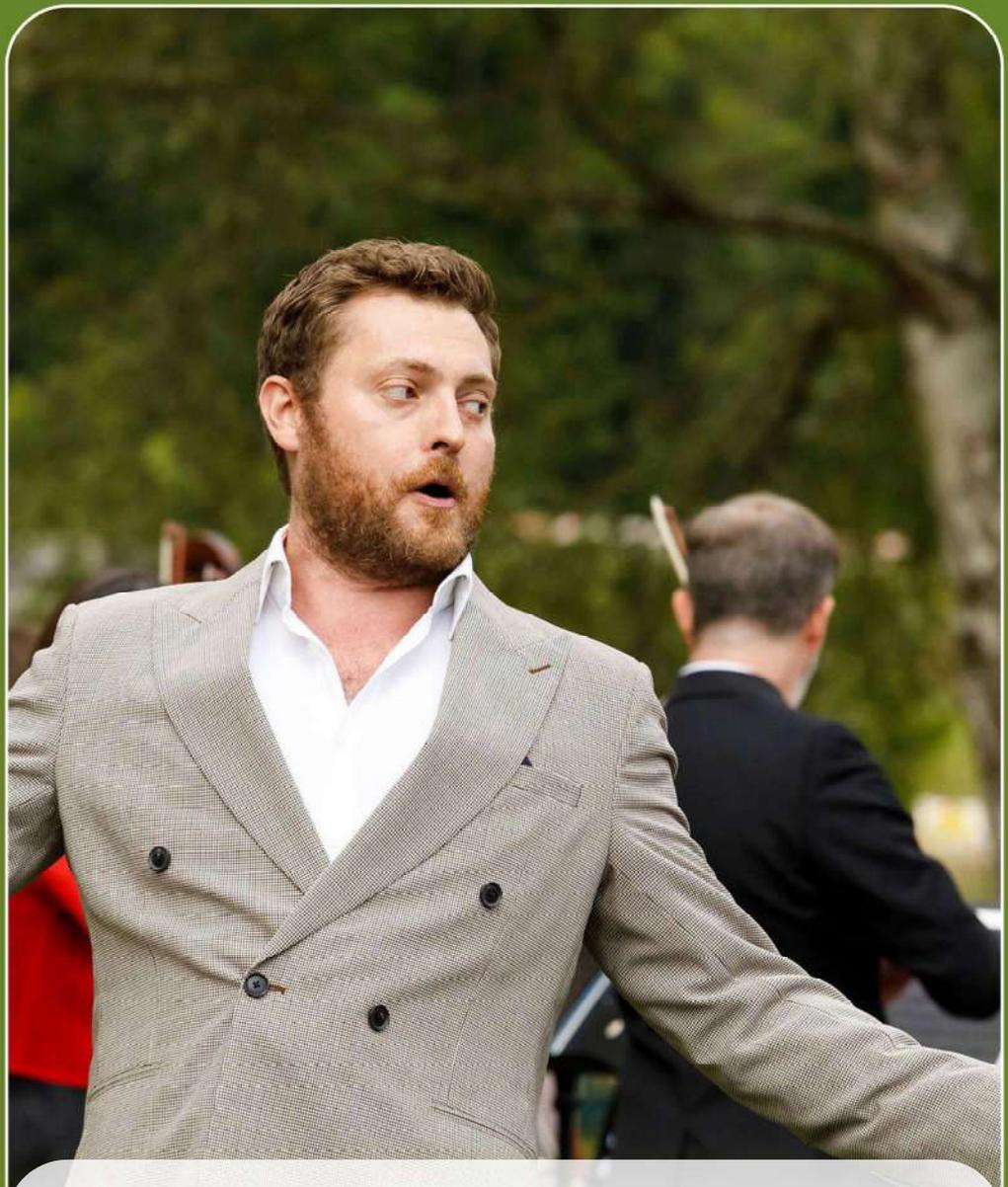
Viola
Kate de Campos
Catherine Bradshaw
Nick Bootiman
John Crockatt
Christine Anderson
Eleanor Waddington
Lorena Cantó Woltèche
Rebecca Chambers
Hannah Shaw
Oscar Hulch
Katie Perrin

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
Sofia 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!"

Wild Arts: Team and Patrons



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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Foundations and Sponsors
Arts Council England, The Arts Society Colchester, Essex Community Foundation, Browns Solicitors, FSJ Charities, Colchester City Council Cultural and Creative Events Fund, Castleacre Insurance.

Thank you to all those who supported our work this year, from our Friends and volunteers, to our high-level Supporters.



Supported using public funding by
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Messiah at Smith Square Hall 2024 (photo by Steve Gregson)