Chamber //\usic Scotland

Activity Report 2023/24

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
Vision, Mission and What We Do	
PROGRAMMES	5
Resident Artists Commissions Artists	
PROJECTS	9
Embedded Musicians Classical EDI Development Fund Waterwords	
PARTNERS	14
Reaching Communities Chamber Music Promoters	
AUDIENCES	17
International Exchange Digital Audiences	
PEOPLE	20
Our Team Our Board New Trustees Training and Development	

INTRODUCTION

Vision, Mission, and What We Do

Chamber Music Scotland: Celebrating chamber music's tradition and exploring its future.

Our mission is to support chamber music performers and creators; promoters and audiences; and communities to share and experience music which represent Scotland, its people, places, and culture. In this year's activity report we look back at some highlights from our work from the past year.

Foreword from the Chief Executive

It's been an exciting year for Chamber Music Scotland, as we continue to develop our vision to make chamber music in Scotland a unique, inclusive, creative environment with its own identity and place on the world's stage.

2023/24 saw us devise and deliver new initiatives such as the Classical EDI Development Fund, in partnership with Creative Scotland. Our PRSF Beyond Borders supported 'Thar Farraige' commission was performed to a sold-out audience at Celtic Connections Festival. The first Embedded Musician's programme was completed with artists working in and with communities across Scotland. We also made new developments in our international reach, with Resident Artists Dopey Monkey performing in Sweden, and exploring Norwegian connections through the Scotland/Norway collaboration 'How to Raise the Wind' touring in both countries, as well as 'Thar Farraige' performed in the UK and Europe.

I would like to thank all our funders, stakeholders and partner organisations for their support and work to help make all this happen.

I hope you enjoy reading through our activities and hearing about the work of some of the inspiring creatives in our sector.

Paul Tracey

Chief Executive



PROGRAMMES

We are committed to making opportunities for musicians to develop bold, creative, and financially sustainable careers in the Scottish chamber music sector. We support musicians' professional development with residencies, mentoring, funding, commissions, and performance opportunities. In this section, you can read the latest news from our artist programmes and projects.

RESIDENT ARTISTS

Ensemble in Residence - Dopey Monkey

Dopey Monkey is a collaboration between Scottish composers and musicians Martin Lee Thomson (Euphonium) and Danielle Price (Tuba). As Ensemble in Residence, Dopey Monkey received bespoke artist development support at CMS, with a focus in 2023/24 on growing as experimental music creators and performers. In Nov. 2023 Dopey Monkey spent two weeks at Hospitalfield (HF) Arts on their Interdisciplinary Residency, in a new development of partnership work with HF, which saw the duo connect and share with artists from UK and international, working across various disciplines. In Apr. 2024 Dopey Monkey released 'Waterwords' - an EP of original music and accompanying 'zine, created with the support of CMS. (Summary on p.12). Dopey Monkey have been supported to perform across Scotland and internationally, and showcase Scottish chamber music to a range of audiences. In May 2023 Martin and Danielle collaborated with Swedish percussionist Ardian Ortmanon on a new project 'Situational Soundtracks', touring the UK and Sweden. Later in the year, the duo embarked on a Scottish tour for 'Ballads & Airs', which explores traditional music collected from the North East of Scotland.

Associate Artist - Linda Buckley

Working with Chamber Music Scotland has been a joy. They created a warm, welcoming space for me to be completely myself and to express the cross-genre strands of my music" - Linda Buckley

As our Associate Artist, Linda spent 2023/24 working with us on 'Thar Farraige (Over Sea)'. Supported by PRS Foundation Beyond Borders programme, Thar Farraige is an new chamber music work for small pipes, string quartet, and electronics, which toured in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Norway.

Thar Farraige was created for Brighde Chaimbeul and Maxwell Quartet, and was performed to a sold-out audience at Celtic Connections, Glasgow; at Moving on Music, Belfast; and at Hemsing Festival, Norway. Later this year, the piece will be performed in the Netherlands and London, continuing our work to share Scottish chamber music and artists on an international stage.

Ambassador

The events all entirely sold out and there was a huge range of people from a fresh listenership. For me, personally, this entire project fulfilled the wish to have local events of real quality in an informal, utterly accessible space."

- Colin Currie

Colin Currie is a world-renowned musician and a champion of new music for percussion. As our Ambassador, Colin has been working with us since 2022 to help us reach new audiences and to support the next generation of chamber music creators and performers.

During 2023/24, Colin worked with Chamber Music Scotland (CMS) to increase our reach and audiences by building deeper relationships with Scottish community and cultural organisations. In Jan-Feb. 2024 Colin curated a pay-what-youcan concert series 'Camglen Concerts', designed to bring chamber music to new audiences in Cambuslang and Rutherglen. (Summary on p.14). In collaboration with CMS, the Colin Currie Quartet toured Scotland, going to Glasgow, Cumnock, Banchory, Biggar, and Castle Douglas in spring 2024. In 2023/24, Colin has also worked with CMS to support a range of opportunities for young and early-career musicians. Since Jun. 2023 Colin has delivered a series of masterclasses for young people in South Lanarkshire, supported by CMS and in partnership with local authorities and schools. Colin worked closely with early career composers Elise-Haller Shannon and Aileen Sweeney to develop the creation of their CMS commissioned works.

COMISSIONS

Thar Farraige (Over Sea)

The work for small pipes, string quartet, and live electronics, draws on Scottish and Irish folk traditions, exploring the potential meeting points and new pathways of contemporary classical and folk music. Thar Farraige draws inspiration from keening (lament for the dead), Gaelic psalm singing and emigration ballads.

Starburst

As part of our commitment to support Scotland-based music creators, we commissioned two early-stage composers to write works for CMS Ambassador Colin Currie. We commissioned Aileen Sweeney to create a new work 'Starburst' for the Colin Currie Quartet. The work was platformed in a Scottish tour by the Quartet and will be performed at King's Place, London as part of the Scotland Unwrapped programme, celebrating Scottish music and spoken word culture.

The Barrel

CMS also commissioned Elise Haller-Shannon to create a new work for solo percussion and electronics - 'The Barrel' which took influence from Gaelic work song and culture and premiered at Loch Shiel Festival, Glenfinnan. Aileen's and Elise's commissions were supported by The Hope Scott Trust and Creative Scotland.

ARTISTS

Support

// As a violinist with roots in a working-class, first-generation British Chinese background, I found myself at times feeling like an outsider in an industry that didn't always reflect or understand my experiences. However, working with CMS has changed that perspective" - Katrina Lee

In 2023/24 we worked to achieve greater diversity in gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, age, and socio-economic background for our artists, communities, and audiences. This included our Embedded Musicians Project, which focussed on creating new chamber music experiences for historically excluded audiences, and the Classical EDI Development Fund, which focussed on supporting diverse artists and developing inclusive industry practices. Through our commissioning, we supported 100% Scotland-based women composers, and through our programmes we supported the development of artists from the global majority, neurodivergent and disabled artists, LGBTQ+ and gender diverse artists, and musicians from low socio-economic backgrounds.

We continue to monitor equalities across all areas of our work, including all of our open calls and opportunities for musicians. We do this for several reasons: to make sure our programme and artists are more diverse, to understand the experiences and needs of our musicians, and to identify areas of future development. Information about our opportunities for musicians is made available through our mailing list when they are live. You can sign up to be the first to hear about them.



PROJECTS

CMS strives to be at the forefront of creating new and innovative ways to create, perform, and engage audiences in chamber music. In this section you can read about how we work with our artists, communities, and audiences to create relevant and innovative chamber music activities and events in 2023/24.

EMBEDDED MUSICIANS

Our artist-led Embedded Musicians Project's first cohort of musicians - Duncan Strachan, Rylan Gleave, Esther Swift, Ailie Robertson, and Calum Huggan completed their programmes of work in Summer 2023.

Embedded Musicians is a 18-month project that saw five Scotland-based creatives working within five regions of Scotland to deliver a programme of work based on the needs and aims of local communities. Following an initial consultation and research stage, the musicians' each developed their own programme of activity with community and cultural groups in their region. Read on to find out more.

North

// Music is and can be a real force for bringing people together...[This project] really is about rethinking the format of concerts, with the idea of making coming to a concert a much more relaxed and accessible thing"

Duncan Strachan

Cellist and composer Duncan Stratchan worked with local arts and mental health organisations - Lyth Arts Centre, New Connections, Lochaber Hope, Thurso Community Health Choir, and Thurso Junior Orchestra Thurso Junior Choir - to programme a series of live chamber music performances and events that focussed on wellbeing for audiences in Lochaber and Caithness.

Delivered between Mar. and May 2023, the twin programme of cross-arts events mixing community music, meditation, chair yoga, and breath workshops, delivered by the Còmhradh Collective: Duncan Strachan, George Smith, Ailie Robertson, Esther Swift, and Rhona Coogan. The double programme culminated in the 'Ceilidh of Calm', a relaxed concert, using ambient lighting and living room furniture, that incorporated music, poetry, and breath work.

Duncan's project successfully experimented with removing conventional barriers between audience and performers, to create intimate events for local communities and groups experiencing mental health issues and social isolation. Attendees were very happy with the events, citing their positive effect on personal wellbeing, the continuing benefits of the breathing and chair yoga practices, and the openness, accessibility, and friendliness of the events.

East

I'm so thankful for the support because it is such challenging music. It's music that exists between contemporary classical, opera, metal, baroque, rock, avant-garde, so it's very weird music...and to have that unwavering support has been really magical at this stage in my career" — Rylan Gleave

Composer and vocalist Rylan Gleave worked with local arts venues and schools – including Elgin High School, Aboyne Academy, and St Vincent's Chapel – to programme a series of music composition and performance events focussing on queer experience, disability, and robotics.

Delivered between Jun. 2022 and Jun. 2023, Rylan developed ASN workshops, graphic scoring, recording, and composition sessions for both children and young people. The programme culminated with a live performance and album launch of 'In Chemical Transit', which explores Rylan's vocal journey from mezzo-soprano to bass-baritone through new live performance and historic recordings of Rylan Gleave's voice — pre-transition, 8 weeks on Testosterone, and 2.5 years on Testosterone. Rylan's project successfully brought a range of chamber musicians together – including Danielle Price, Martin Lee Thomson, Simone Seales, Ed Cohen, Naomi McGillivray, and Ollie Hawke – to share experimental new music with participants from marginalised communities and audiences in Lothian and Aberdeenshire.

South

I conceived this project to bring music and nature together...it is all about the importance of calling, even through the challenges of climate change... of calling to each other...I really wanted everyone to feel ownership and the power of collaboration." – Esther Swift

Composer and Harpist Esther Swift worked with local community and arts organisations to programme community chamber music events for residents in Stranraer and the Peebles. Delivered between Sept. 2022 and Aug. 2023, Esther developed a series of environmentally-focussed improvisation events with Jose Rojas (percussion) and Sue Mackenzie (saxophone) for community spaces

in Stranraer and Peebles. Audience members were invited to talk about their relationship to Scotland's environment, with musicians improvising music in response to the discussion and sounds in nature. Esther's programme culminated in a performance of 'The Call' at the Eastgate Theatre, performed with local community groups, which used improvisation and semaphore to create a soundworld. Esther's project successfully brought Scottish communities together to participate in interactive music events, exploring their creativity and bringing important attention to climate change and sustainability.

West

We really wanted to create a space where everyone felt like they were welcome. Where it was something for people who might not attend a concert because it feels too formal for them." - Ailie Robertson

Composer and Harpist Ailie Robertson worked with local musicians and charity, Oban Hope Kitchen, to programme live chamber music events for audiences in Argyll experiencing homelessness, addiction, social isolation, and mental health issues. Delivered between Sept. 2022 and Jul. 2023, Ailie developed a series of community music events, culminating in a day-long, music festival with performances from Becky Hill and Charlie Stewart, JKL Duo, Hannah Rarity Duo, Ailie Robertson, Joy Dunlop Duo, Juliette Lemoine and Nicky Clark, Gaia Duo, The Jellyman's Daughter, and the Hope Kitchen Community Band. Storytellers from the travelling community Jess Smith and Davie Donaldson were also invited to share stories and increase understanding of the rich culture and tradition of Scottish Travellers.

Ailie's project successfully brought together local communities and groups supported by Hope Kitchen across Oban and the surrounding areas, and provided new chamber music experiences to underserved communities.

Central

// I wanted to use the opportunity to explore and be a bit curious about what chamber music could look like in Scotland today. It's not traditionally the most accessible sort of music and I just wanted to try and connect with different communities, different people and provide an opportunity to as many people as possible." – Calum Huggan

Delivered between Jul. 2022 and Apr. 2023, Calum developed a series of music improvisation workshops for care-experienced young people living in and around Glasgow, in partnership with SoundLab. The free sessions for under 25s

provided participants with a travel bursary and meals, and culminated in a group performance at the CCA. In the second stage of his project, Calum commissioned young composer Gillian Walker to write 'Otherness' for percussion and strings. The commission resulted in a cross-arts performance film, with women and queer performers, which explored experiences of being othered by society. The chamber music film was screened at Il Corpo nel Suono music and dance conference, in Glasgow. Calum's project successfully provided young musicians from diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to create and perform chamber music that represents their stories and experiences, supporting the next generation of talent and bringing new audiences to chamber music.

CLASSICAL EDI DEVELOPMENT FUND

// This was a fantastic event and my mind is full!" - Sharing Event Attendee

In Mar. 2024, we held our Sharing Event for the Classical EDI Development Fund in Glasgow. Featuring presentations and performances from our 2023 cohort -Free-lance musicians Ailie Robertson, Katrina Lee, Paul Chamberlain and Simone Seales, alongside representatives from Scottish Ensemble, NYOS, Live Music Now Scotland, Red Note and Hebrides Ensemble - the Sharing Event presented the outcomes and impact of the year-long project and received a warm reception from a public audience, which included sector executives, union leaders, creative workers, and EDI specialists.

The Classical EDI Development Fund aims to support an annual cohort of artists and representatives of arts organisations to undertake professional development activities that will inform and progress EDI practices within Scotland's classical music sector. The fund is developed and delivered by CMS in partnership with Creative Scotland. Read our Classical EDI Development Fund Report here.

WATERWORDS

In Apr. 2023 Dopey Monkey delivered a community-led project exploring wellbeing, health, memory, and place. Exploring how local people use the Falkirk Pathways, The music created during the project was released as an EP, 'Waterwords', in Apr. 2024, with a launch at Falkirk Library. Accompanied by a specially created printed 'Zine, the album explores the past and present of the canal pathways running through and around Falkirk. The album (cassette and streaming) and zine are available to purchase on Bandcamp here.



PARTNERS

In 2023/24 we worked with over 80 partner organisations – including arts venues, charities, cultural and community organisations - to deliver innovative programmes and projects across Scotland and internationally. In this section you can read about our recent work with cultural and community organisations. Have any questions about working with us? Please get in touch by email: info@chambermusicscotland.com.

REACHING COMMUNITIES

CamGlen Concert Series

Chamber music isn't really my cup of tea but I was looking for company and I got a lot out of attending. You can't help but be in awe of someone with so much talent and it's good to open yourself up to new experiences."

- Audience Member, Rutherglen

In Jan.-Feb. 2024 we delivered a series of sold-out, free and pay-what-you-can chamber music concerts for audiences in Cambuslang and Rutherglen. Designed to bring more diverse communities to chamber music, the events were organised in partnership with local organisation Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust and the programme was curated by CMS Ambassador, Colin Currie, who lives in the local area. Bringing together classical, folk, and experimental chamber music, the series explored new and traditional music for all audiences with concerts by Colin Currie, Hannah Rarity trio, Danielle Price and Bill Wells, and Robin Michael. We also reached communities across Scotland through our targeted activities and projects via Embedded Musicians, Resident Artists and other initiatives, as well as through learning and community funding distributed to local promoters.

CHAMBER MUSIC PROMOTERS

Funding for Promoters

Through our concert series funding for chamber music promoters, we were able to support over 300 concerts across the network of volunteer-run chamber music promoters, reaching Scottish audiences in villages, towns, cities and island communities. Our annual promoter funding call to support 2023/24 concerts opened in June 2023, and funding awards of up to £3k were made to organisations in 27 local authorities in Scotland.

The fund attracted a total of 53 applications, predominantly music clubs and societies, and we were able to support 52 applicants (98%), and each were awarded the full amount (100%) of funding they requested from CMS. We were also able to offer funding towards promoters' learning and community workshops for the final year of the fund, with 10 micro grants of £1000 available. We received 10 applications and so were able to fund all applicants (100%) to help support their ambitions in this area. You can find out more about the network of chamber music promoters we help support on our website.

"Music enriches my life greatly, it's so important for all ages and stages of life...and it's so good for mental health and wellbeing."

- Audience member, Aberdeen Chamber Music Concerts

Resources and Development

In preparation for the change to how we now support chamber music clubs and societies from 1st April 2024, which sees us now focus on concert series funding only, we produced a bespoke Transitional Support Programme to prepare promoters for these changes, and to connect them with support organisations who offer valuable advice, opportunities and resources.

The programme of support included free online sessions and resources designed to support chamber music promoters develop their practice in key areas: arts fundraising, volunteer recruitment and retention, touring networks, membership schemes, Advice and training, Networking & Partnership working.

Sessions were delivered in partnership with:

Ruth Ogston (Arts Fundraiser, Scottish Opera, National Theatre of Scotland and Refuweegee),

Alison Reeves (Deputy CEO and Manager Scotland, Making Music), Fee Shaw (Network Development Manager, Touring Network), Phoenix Archer (Community Engagement Officer, Creative Lives).

In addition to the development sessions, CMS also commissioned a bespoke fundraising resource - the 'Volunteer Music Promoter Fundraising Guide'. This tailored guide gives advice, tips and practical steps for chamber music promoters looking to strengthen existing fundraising, and to identify new income streams to support their concert and community work.



AUDIENCES

CMS works with leading artists and change-makers to explore what Scottish chamber music is and who it can be for. In this section you can read about our recent programmes and projects to reach and engage new and diverse audiences in 2023/24.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

Our international strand supports chamber music that connects Scotland with audiences all over the world. In 2023/24, we expanded our international work with several projects delivered across the UK and Scandinavia.

Situational Soundtrack

In May 2023, we supported Dopey Monkey to tour Scotland, England, and Sweden with 'Situational Soundtrack'. 'Situational Soundtrack' is an original composition exploring the sounds of daily life, and created with Swedish percussionist and composer Adrian Ortman during Dopey Monkey's residency at Britten Pears Arts. For their 2023 tour, Dopey Monkey performed in Glasgow, Bristol, London, Newcastle, and Stockholm.

Thar Farraige (Over Sea)

The performance was fantastic and my absolute highlight of the few days I was at Celtic Connections" - Audience Member

In Nov. 2023 we partnered with the PRS Foundation to support Brighde Chaimbeul, Linda Buckley, and Maxwell Quartet to tour Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Norway with 'Thar Farraige (Over Sea)'. 'Thar Farraige' followed its Belfast premiere with a sold-out show at Celtic Connections 2024, and a performance at Norway's Hemsing Festival. Supported by CMS and the Vaughan Williams Foundation, 'Thar Farraige' will feature on a new album from Linda Buckley, and is due to be performed at Kings Place, London, in early 2025.

How to Raise the Wind

In Nov. 2023 we supported Scottish-Finnish duo Sarah-Jane Summers and Juhani Silvola to tour Scotland, Norway, and Finland with 'How to Raise the Wind'. Winner of the 2023 NOPA Music Prize, 'How to Raise the Wind' is a new music commission for the duo and string quartet that combines Scottish and Nordic traditions. Scotland-based musicians Katrina Lee, Patsy Reid, Sonia Cromarty, and Seonaid Aitken, who performed with the duo on tour, will also feature in the forthcoming album supported by CMS Music Norway, Creo Vederlagsfond and Fond for Utøvende Kunstnere.

CMS enabled us to work with some of Scotland's leading musicians, who lifted our music to the highest possible level" - Sarah-Jane Summers

DIGITAL AUDIENCES

Our digital strand allows us to create and share meaningful work, reach diverse audiences, and foster sustainable, international growth. In 2023/24 our online activities allowed us to connect people and audiences across the globe to Scottish chamber music and musicians.

Chamber Music Films

Our chamber music short films allow us to expand the reach of our projects and share our work with a global audience. In 2024/25 our digital works included films from our Underrepresented Composers Tours, our Scottish touring network, and our Embedded Musicians project. The films have been viewed by over 6,500 users in territories all over the world.

Chamber Music Directory

Our annual Chamber Music Directory provides an online platform for artists and ensembles, connecting them with our chamber music audiences. In Jun. 2023 we launched the 4th edition of our online Directory. With both a public-facing page and a private page available to music promoters, the Directory features everything required to find and book artists. 146 ensembles signed-up for our 2023/24 edition, which has been viewed 8,120 times.

Chamber Music Online

We use our web and social media platforms to share how we're positively impacting the lives of our musicians, audiences, and local communities. Over the past 12 months we've used our channels to share voices, stories, and content from our programmes and projects. Our work and artists have also been featured in a range of online media this year - including radio and press. Follow us for more information: www.chambermusicscotland.com.



PEOPLE

OUR TEAM

We welcomed two brilliant new members of staff to the CMS team in 2023/24: Joni Lindsay and Lou Rowland.

Joni joined CMS in Aug. 2023 as our General Manager. Joni has a background in composition and over 15 years' experience in the community and music sector. She is passionate about supporting disability and inclusion, and delivering innovative music projects.

Lou Rowland joined CMS in Jan. 2024 to support Admin & Comms. Lou has a background in design and is a graduate of the Glasgow School of Art and NCAD, Dublin. Lou is a visual artist and performing musician, creating music as mokusla.

After 2-years as our Projects & Communications Officer, Nat Riley has been promoted to oversee Evaluation & Development at CMS. Nat has a background in research and events. She is passionate about supporting creativity and connection through the arts.

I'm delighted to be moving to this new role in Evaluation & Development! I know first-hand the massive impact that CMS has on musicians, communities, and audiences across Scotland and beyond. I'm excited to be playing my part in securing support for, and shouting about, our excellent programmes and projects." — Nat Riley

OUR BOARD

The CMS Board provides oversight and special knowledge, supporting our staff team to develop and deliver innovative and ambitious aims for our organisation.

In Jan. 2024 we welcomed our new Chair, Ruth Binks. Ruth is currently Corporate Director for Education, Communities, & Organisational Development for Inverclyde Council. She has a strong commitment to equalities and has successfully led the Inverclyde Attainment Challenge to reduce gaps in outcomes for learners linked to deprivation. Ruth takes over from our previous Chair, Lisa Tennant (2020–24), who takes up an exciting new role on the Board of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

// I am looking forward to continuing the strong leadership of the previous Chair of the Board, Lisa Tennant, and working alongside the Board, staff, and all stakeholders to ensure that chamber music remains relevant and fit for the future" - Ruth Binks

NEW TRUSTEES

This year, we welcomed 3 wonderful new trustees to our Board:

Sam McShane (Artistic Director, Kings Place)

Julie Aitken (Policy & Communications Manager, Corra Foundation)

Lesley-Ann Smith (General Manager, Live Music Now Scotland)

We're pleased to be joined by trustees with backgrounds in artistic programming, policy and communications, fundraising, and operations. You can find out more about the CMS Board on our website.

To be appointed as a trustee to Chamber Music Scotland is a privilege. Having known, been supported by, and admired Chamber Music Scotland for over a decade, I am really excited to be a part of this exciting organisation and its direction moving forward." - Sam McShane

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to supporting our staff to constantly improve and grow in their roles through continuous professional development.

In the past 12 months our staff have completed training in a range of key areas - including accounting and financial management training; graphic design development; radical care; sustainability; and arts evaluation – provided by a range of specialist, education, and arts organisations, including Super Hi, Xero, Sniffer, FutureLearn, and Creative Scotland.

Our staff and trustees have also been supported in professional development with appearances at international conferences – including the 2024 SphinxConnect Conference (Detroit, US), the Association of British Orchestras Conference (Bristol, England), and Classical:NEXT (Berlin, Germany) – as well as visits to Celtic Connections and Loch Shiel Festival.

We thank you for your interest and support for our programmes, projects and people.

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