



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Joseph Buckmaster

PROJECT NAME:
Flat Pack Music

PREPARED FOR:
Trustees & Funders

Flat Pack Music

Community
Music
Wellbeing

Moving into the future



CHARITY NO.
CIO 1191849

PHONE:
07593861366

WEB:
www.flatpackmusic.co.uk
Flatpackmusic.cio@gmail.com

01 History

Flat Pack Music began in 2017, when Heather and Joseph Buckmaster decided to create the kind of opportunities they had struggled to find themselves. Having both completed conservatoire training, they were living in Eastham on the Wirral and could see that, in the North West, there were far fewer chances for singers and musicians to perform than there should have been.

At the same time, they were already rooted in their local community. They taught singing through their church and took part in a fundraising concert as a way of giving something back. The response to that performance was so encouraging that it sparked a bigger idea: to build a company of their own, one that could create high-quality performances while keeping a strong sense of openness, warmth and community at its heart.

That idea became Flat Pack Music's first production: *Così fan tutte*, reimaged in a modern-day setting, performed in English in Christopher Gill's translation, and directed by Lorna Rushton. It was an exciting beginning, and the production was revived several times. From there, Flat Pack Music began to grow, producing two operas each year alongside a range of themed concerts, while Heather and Joseph continued to shape the company's identity in the North West even as they pursued further studies in London.



When the Covid-19 pandemic brought live performance to a halt, Flat Pack Music found new ways to bring people together. Online events such as Isolation Vocalisation, a live singalong for wellbeing, and Flat Pack Fridays, an open online performance platform, helped keep spirits lifted and communities connected through music. The company also ran an online international singing competition. During this period, Flat Pack Music took an important step forward by becoming a registered charity (CIO: 1191849).

In the years since the pandemic, Flat Pack Music has continued to grow steadily and purposefully. The company currently produces one opera each year, alongside a growing range of paid events that create work for artists and help sustain the charity's wider mission. What began as a small non-profit venture has grown into a charity with a clear sense of purpose: bringing people together through music, creating opportunities for artists, and making opera and live performance feel welcoming, relevant and alive.

02 Future

Flat Pack Music now looks to the future with confidence and ambition.

Over the past four years, and with very limited substantial external funding, we have grown from a turnover of £3,000 to approximately £26,000. This steady growth reflects both the demand for our work and the commitment behind it. As the organisation has developed, so too has our vision: to build a sustainable charity with a range of projects that bring communities together, support artists, and widen access to music and performance.

We now have a number of key strands of work, some well established and others currently in development:

FPM: Opera

FPM: Young Artist Programme

FPM: In Care

FPM: Concerts

FPM: Education

FPM: Norman



COMMUNITY

Bringing people together through accessible musical events that foster connection across generations and communities. Supported by a clear and recognisable brand.

MUSIC

Delivering high-quality performances while creating valuable opportunities for the next generation of artists.

WELLBEING

Drawing on Heather's music therapy expertise to create meaningful musical experiences for people living with SEND or isolation in later life.



03 Projects

03A FPM: Opera

Opera sits at the heart of Flat Pack Music's work. Our aim is to bring high-quality, professional opera to places that may not otherwise have ready access to it, touring productions to community venues, churches, halls and other local spaces rather than relying solely on large theatres.

A key part of our approach is making opera feel immediate, accessible and easy to connect with. We perform in English and often place productions in recognisable settings that help audiences engage more naturally with the story. This might mean *Così fan tutte* set in a present-day coffee shop, or *The Marriage of Figaro* reimagined in an English stately home in the style of *Downton Abbey*. By doing this, we aim to break down barriers around opera and show that it can be entertaining, moving and relevant to modern audiences.

Where possible, our opera work also connects with our wider charitable mission. We take productions into schools as part of our Education strand, helping young people encounter opera in a lively and approachable way. We work with local choral societies wherever we can, giving community singers the chance to be directly involved in performances, and we seek opportunities to collaborate with local orchestras, offering players new experience in opera while strengthening the ties between different parts of a community.

Our opera productions also create valuable opportunities for emerging artists. Through our Young Artist Programme (YAP), young professionals are able to gain performance experience and practical insight through working alongside more established artists in a professional production environment.

Looking ahead, we also hope to develop the accessibility of this strand further, including introducing BSL interpretation for performances and creating a collection of BSL opera translations to make available online free of charge for others to use.

To date, Flat Pack Music has produced six opera productions across five different titles: *Così fan tutte*, *La bohème*, *The Magic Flute*, *Don Giovanni*, and two productions of *The Marriage of Figaro*. This year, we are producing *Tosca*.

03B FPM: Young Artist Programme

Flat Pack Music's Young Artist Programme is designed to give emerging professionals meaningful opportunities to learn, develop and perform within a supportive but professional environment. We know how difficult it can be for young singers and creatives to gain real experience after training, particularly outside London, and YAP is one of the ways we aim to help bridge that gap.

Rather than offering learning in isolation, we place young artists within the life of a production, allowing them to work alongside experienced professionals and gain practical insight into how opera is made and performed. Depending on the project, this can include chorus work, covering principal roles, performing smaller roles, assisting with production responsibilities, and developing the wider skills needed for a career in the industry.

The programme is intended not only to build confidence and experience, but also to give young artists a clearer sense of what it means to work in a professional setting: learning music, rehearsing to a high standard, understanding the demands of performance, and being part of a collaborative company. We want the experience to feel welcoming and developmental, while still giving participants a genuine sense of responsibility and achievement.

YAP also reflects Flat Pack Music's wider mission to create opportunity in the North West and beyond. By embedding young artists within our productions, we are able to support the next generation of performers while strengthening the artistic life of the company as a whole.



The current YAP is in its 2nd year, it is hoped that we can develop this programme into a fully funded YAP. Including:

- Individual role coaching
- Masterclasses with industry professionals
- Professional development workshops
- Cover performance opportunities
- Outreach and community engagement activity
- Public singing competition with award

03C FPM: In Care

FPM: In Care is our project designed to bring high-quality live music into care settings in a way that is personal, thoughtful and genuinely beneficial. Rooted in both performance and wellbeing, the project is shaped by Heather Buckmaster's specialist expertise in music therapy and has been developed to support people who may be experiencing isolation, reduced mobility, memory loss, or other challenges associated with later life.

At the heart of the project is the belief that music can do far more than entertain. It can comfort, stimulate memory, encourage communication, support breathing and relaxation, and create moments of shared joy and connection. FPM: In Care is therefore designed not simply as a concert series, but as a person-centred musical experience that responds to the needs of each setting and the individuals within it.

Sessions combine professional live performance with guided interaction, creating an atmosphere in which residents, staff and family members can take part together. Alongside the immediate enjoyment of the music itself, the project aims to strengthen wellbeing, reduce feelings of isolation, and offer meaningful creative experiences to people who may have limited access to live performance.

A further aim of FPM: In Care is to create lasting impact within each setting. Through shared musical activity, skill sharing with care staff, lasting impact of gifted instruments and the use of carefully shaped sessions, we want the benefits of the project to extend beyond a single visit and become part of the wider life of the home.



03D FPM: Concerts

Alongside our opera productions, Flat Pack Music also delivers a wide range of concerts, both self-produced and commissioned by partner organisations. These performances allow us to share high-quality live music in a flexible way, responding to different audiences, settings and occasions while continuing to support professional artists.

Some of this work comes through bought-in performances for external organisations, such as Walk the Plank, where we are engaged to create and deliver musical events as part of wider projects. These partnerships allow us to bring our performers and creative approach into new contexts, often reaching audiences who may not otherwise encounter live classical music or opera.

Alongside this, we also produce our own concerts, from large-scale events such as our candlelit opera gala in Chester Cathedral to Christmas concerts presented in community venues. These performances help us maintain a visible presence in the areas we serve, build relationships with local audiences, and create welcoming entry points into live music for people of all backgrounds.

Together, these concert projects form an important part of Flat Pack Music's work. They provide performance opportunities for artists, generate income to support the charity, and help us bring music into a wide variety of spaces in ways that feel accessible, engaging and connected to community life.



Looking to the future, FPM hopes to produce more concerts for the communities we work with. Bringing classical music and opera to audiences all year round.



03E FPM: Education

Flat Pack Music's education work is focused on introducing children and young people to music, opera and performance in ways that feel engaging, accessible and fun. We want young people to experience these art forms not as something distant or intimidating, but as something lively, creative and open to them.

As part of this work, we have brought a fully staged production of *The Magic Flute* into a school, giving children the chance not only to watch the performance but also to take part in it. Alongside the production, we delivered acting and vocal workshops, helping pupils engage directly with the story, characters and music in an active and memorable way.

We have also delivered opera-based workshops in schools, using singing, drama and performance activities to introduce young people to opera and build confidence in creative expression. These workshops are designed to be practical, approachable and enjoyable, offering a first encounter with opera that feels exciting rather than formal.

This strand of our work continues to grow. We are actively developing our school workshops further and are planning to deliver them in more schools this year. Beyond the classroom, we have also taken workshops, group music sessions and performances to Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Camp, adapting our work to ensure it is inclusive, participatory and responsive to the young people involved.

Through this project, Flat Pack Music aims to nurture curiosity, creativity and confidence, while helping more children and young people feel that music and performance belong to them.

03F FPM: Norman

Norman is Flat Pack Music's developing sensory opera project, created for children with SEND and shaped around accessibility, imagination and gentle audience engagement. The work is based on Norman Snodgrass and the Pale Blue Dot and is being developed as a piece that allows children to experience music, story and performance in a way that is welcoming, interactive and responsive to their needs.



This project brings together opera, storytelling and sensory theatre, using music not only as a performance medium but as a way of encouraging curiosity, participation and connection. We want Norman to open the door to opera for children who may not feel able to access more traditional performance settings, and to create an experience that feels flexible, inclusive and joyful.

The project is currently being developed in collaboration with specialist artists and practitioners, including composer Frederic Naftel, dramaturg Caroline Clegg, (founder of feelgood theatre productions), and with Heather Buckmaster as Chief Music Therapist Consultant. This combination of artistic and therapeutic expertise is central to the way the piece is being shaped, ensuring that accessibility and the needs of the children are considered from the very beginning of the creative process.

Alongside the opera itself, the project also includes linked creative activity, with opportunities for workshops and hands-on engagement that connect children more deeply to the world of the story. Through Norman, Flat Pack Music hopes to create a new kind of operatic experience: one that is imaginative, person-centred and designed to meet children where they are.



Project Costing



Opera

The average production cost of one of our operas is around **£5000**. Performance costs can range from **£3000-£7000** depending on personnel required.

Y.A.P

A full Young Artist Programme will cost around **£500** per participant. Averaging 8 - 10 participants depending on scale of production, roles available and funding.

In Care

A full 12 month programme of the In Care project. Including Gifted Instruments, Music Therapist oversight and skill sharing. Costs **£5000** per home. We are currently volunteering to bring one off sessions to homes near our touring venues.

Concerts

Our self produced concerts cost approximately **£1800-£2000** depending on personnel, and printing costs. Venue hire and orchestral accompaniment carry an additional cost.

Education

Our education workshops cost **£500-1000** depending on time and personnel required.

Norman

We are currently in need of seed funding for the composer to start writing. Total cost of composition is **£2000**.

The BBC have expressed interest in this project and would like to know more once we have something to show.

Project Planning



01

Produce our production of **Tosca**. Develop and grow the connections with our touring venues and their communities

PROJECTED DURATION:

May - October

02

Finalise Libretto with the author and Caroline Clegg. Secure seed funding to start composition of **Norman** Snodgrass.

PROJECTED DURATION:

April - December

03

Carry out voluntary **In Care** performances in Carehomes close to some of our touring venues.

PROJECTED DURATION:

May - October

04

Forward planning for 2027. Including Opera, Y.A.P, 10 Year anniversary celebration events.

PROJECTED DURATION:

July - August

05

Collate data from all projects and events into year review

PROJECTED DURATION:

December

Trustees



Lynsey Blair: Lynsey is both a Flautist and a peripatetic flute and clarinet teacher. With a background in musical education, Lynsey has passionately supported our educational endeavours.

Gregory Everett: Gregory has worked for charities previously, including Supported Fostering Services as their Business and Panel Administrator and a trustee for Manor Opera. He is currently an Onboarding Specialist and Network Engineer for Absolute Network Solutions Ltd.

Carrie-Ann Everett: Carrie-Ann is a freelance opera singer, working with Glyndebourne and English National Opera as well as other major UK opera companies. She is also a music and singing teacher.

Imogen Garner: Imogen has been a professional Opera singer for over 30 years, working with English National Opera, Buxton Festival Opera and has sung as Soloist in concerts and live performances on BBC Radio 4. She is also an experienced teacher and has worked hard to help the next generation of musicians hone their craft.

Vinny Keating: Vinny has been General Manager for Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Camp Fund, a highly successful holiday camp for children and young adults living with disability, since 2012.

They have been Ofsted registered as Outstanding since 2012: [Report](#)

Heather Buckmaster: Heather is a Music Therapist and Freelance Soprano. Having trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama she now specialises in helping people living with Dementia through her work with the Methodist Homes Association. She volunteers in her position as company manager.