

INSPIRE

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



Written by

ISABELLA FARRELL-GREY

Head of Community Engagement

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INSPIRE

VISION

Inspire is Opera Holland Park's (OHP) award-winning outreach and education programme. It was created in 2010 as part of the company's ethos of the value and impact of community work.

We are dedicated to creating accessible routes into opera, to providing exciting first experiences for those who are new to the art form, and to unlocking memories for those who may not have been for a while. Our ultimate goal is to offer a space of creation and discovery for all people.

MISSION

Integrating

We work with companies, charities, care settings, schools and community groups within our local Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC) and beyond, to engage and immerse all people into the world of opera.

Educating

Through our annual Schools Matinees, workshops and other educational projects, we introduce younger audiences to opera and nurture the next generation of opera-makers and audiences.

Enriching

Our artists and facilitators lead a broad range of bespoke events ranging from workshops to recitals, allowing all people to enjoy the benefits of music making.

Igniting

We aim to spark an enthusiasm for opera through our work. With new projects always in progress, our hope is to build long-term relationships with local people that will keep their love of opera burning throughout their lives.

FOREWORD

I'm incredibly proud of the work Inspire has delivered this year. Under its new strategy guided by three main strands of work, we have built the programme to introduce several new and longer term projects putting impact at the forefront, allowing us to reach more and new members of the community offering free and subsidised opportunities to experience opera.

As a programme which receives no Arts Council funding, we are driven not by box-ticking or a requirement to do this work, but by the real-life impact this work has on the people we reach, and this is demonstrated in the feedback and the data we have collected across the year. We are enormously grateful to our community of supporters at Opera Holland Park who help to fund this work, as well as the trusts and foundations that support individual Inspire projects.

I'd like to also thank the many freelance creatives who have worked for the Inspire programme, without whom we would not be able to deliver this vital work, alongside our Interns and volunteers who have generously given their time to support the programme.

Isabella Farrell-Grey

Head of Community Engagement

FREELANCE CREATIVES

Alex Jones	Eoin Foran
Alexander Wigglesworth	Fran Hills
Ali Sutherland	Jack Holton
Amy Porter	James Bowers
Andre Soares	Jessica Lawley
Aya Robertson	Joe Cummings
Beth Hoare-Barnes	Jonah Halton
Charles Kilpatrick	Josephine Korda
Charlotte Corderoy	Josh Gordon
Christine Cunnold	Katey Rylands
Christopher Killerby	Keith Pun
Daniel Barrett	Kira Charleton
Digory Price	Lindsay Bramley
Dom Walsh	Lucy Anderson
Edwina Strobel	Maciek O'Shea
Eleri Gwylm	Madeline Boreham
Ellen Pearson	Madeline Robinson
Ellie Edmonds	Maria Willis
Elsbeth Wilkes	Markella Syrri

Megan Bowen
Melodie Hornett
Michael Temporal Darell
Naomi Kilby
Nicola Wydenbach
Nigel Foster
Patrick Osborne
Sarah Parkin
Sarah Prestwidge
Sebastian Hill
Simon Brown
Stuart McDermott
Tabitha Reynolds
Tim Keasley
Tom Asher
Tom Benning-Roberts
Valerie Wong
Waiyin Lee
Will Todd

VOLUNTEERS

Caren Saville Sneath
Caroline Longmore
Chris Baldwin
Geraldine Pryor
Louise McCullough
Penny Neilson
Rosamund Robey
Sophie de Chardon

INTERNS

Courtney Thomas
Esther Nyberg
Jay Rockwell
Kyunghyun Koh

THE NUMBERS

BETWEEN OCTOBER 2024 AND SEPTEMBER 2025, INSPIRE HAS :

REACHED
OVER 6,000
PEOPLE

DELIVERED
199

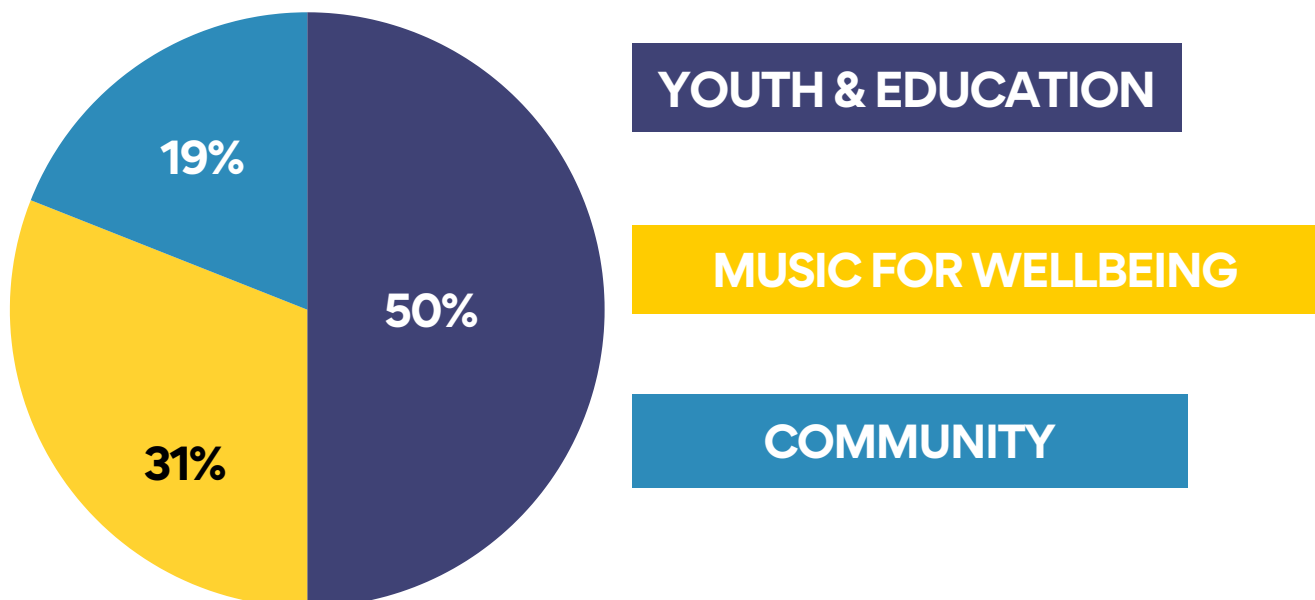
EVENTS/WORKSHOPS FOR
CHILDREN &
YOUNG PEOPLE

DELIVERED
88

MUSIC FOR WELLBEING
SESSIONS IN CARE SETTINGS

PROVIDED
1,653
FREE OR SUBSIDISED
TICKETS

DISTRIBUTION OF INSPIRE BUDGET



OVERVIEW

2024-2025 has proved a successful year for Inspire. This year was the first of a new strategy, focusing on longer-term projects allowing for greater impact, focused on three main strands: Youth & Education, Music for Wellbeing and Community.

Our work focuses on serving our local community of Kensington & Chelsea. We continued to build on our work with schools and young people, and sold-out two schools performances alongside delivering a series of school workshops and educational resources. We established several new youth & education programmes including a Youth Chorus, partnership with a children's charity, and a school partnership scheme.

Building on our long-standing reputation for bringing music into care settings, our development team successfully secured funding to expand our work into a year-round programme for 5 care organisations. We also held a highly successful community event to mark Dementia Action Week.

Access is at the heart of OHP's Inspire programme, and our new community concerts series allowed the community to experience high quality opera for free in a relaxed and accessible environment. We also continued to run our discounted and free ticket schemes, allowing thousands of people to experience our work for free or at low ticket prices.



YOUTH & EDUCATION

Working with young people and promoting the arts in education continues to be a key focus for Inspire with the continuation of our successful schools matinee and workshop programme. We introduced several new projects including our Youth Chorus, school partnership with All Saints Catholic College and AllChild partnership. Collaborating with Waterperry Opera Festival, we reached babies, toddlers and younger children through our programme of library sessions.

Over 3,700
young people reached

Schools performance and workshops



Youth Chorus



Winnie the Pooh library sessions



School partnership



AllChild partnership



YOUTH CHORUS

In January 2025, we piloted a new Opera Holland Park Youth Chorus offering 9-13 year olds the opportunity to join a free weekly singing and drama session designed to equip young people with the skills to be part of an children's opera chorus. Run by professional Musical Director, Joe Cummings, and supported by professional opera singers, these sessions were designed to spark a love of classical singing and performance.

In the Spring term, we hosted the course at All Saints Catholic College where we had 17 members of the Youth Chorus from school years 5 and 6. The term culminated in a sharing for parents, where the Chorus performed songs they had learned across the term including the children's chorus from *Carmen* and a song they had composed together using inspiration from Gounod's *Faust*.

In the Summer term, we moved to the Chelsea Theatre to reach a different area of the borough. 7 children continued from the previous term, and we welcomed 10 new children from the area in school years 4-8. This term was focused on learning a reduced version of *Hansel and Gretel* that was performed to parents and families at the end of term sharing.

20

SESSIONS DELIVERED

34

CHILDREN REACHED

97% of children in the Youth Chorus attend a school in Kensington & Chelsea

65% of children live in Kensington & Chelsea

11% in year 4

53% in year 5

37% in year 6



YOUTH CHORUS

SPRING & SUMMER TERM FEEDBACK

Parents enrolled their children for the following reasons:

- their child expressed an interest in performing
- to build confidence
- to make friends
- free of cost

Of parents surveyed:

100% said their child's confidence has improved

100% said their child enjoyed the Youth Chorus

100% said their child now understands more about opera and singing

100% said they would continue with the chorus (if location was not a factor)

100% said they would recommend the chorus to other parents

92% said their child's singing skills have improved

92% said their child's acting skills have improved

“It is really a wonderful course, run by true professionals and **seriously one of the best clubs my daughter has ever done**, and she's done plenty, I can assure you!

Very grateful and appreciative for our girls to be able to **learn from such great voices**, and to be able to have this service free of charge.

I am very grateful for this opportunity for my daughter to work with such talented professionals. **By far the best performance of a club she has been a part of.**

My **child really loved her time and I can see her start to build confidence**. The team that run it have an amazing energy and **worked brilliantly with the children**. It is great to expose the next generation to Opera.

Thank you for allowing this to be a free of charge class, it helps tremendously considering all the other costs involved with children.

WINNIE THE POOH LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

After our successful collaboration with Waterperry Opera Festival last year, we once again partnered to produce a series of musical workshops for babies and young children. The workshop was based on Waterperry's show *Winnie the Pooh's Songbook* that was performed at the theatre in July. Sessions were delivered by the Waterperry *Winnie the Pooh* team, with support from OHP.

Hosting these at RBKC libraries gave us a unique opportunity to engage with new audiences across our community and utilise local spaces. We held sessions at all 5 local libraries across the borough which were free of charge to families and publicised through the library service and through our own mailing lists and social media.

We had an excellent response, with all sessions very well attended. This allowed us to reach more people in the community and promote *Winnie the Pooh* and our other family friendly shows.

5 SESSIONS DELIVERED



27TH MAY

**KENSINGTON
CENTRAL
LIBRARY**

**NORTH
KENSINGTON
LIBRARY**

KENSAL LIBRARY

29TH MAY

**BROMPTON
LIBRARY**

CHELSEA LIBRARY



WINNIE THE POOH LIBRARY WORKSHOPS

NUMBERS REACHED

KENSINGTON CENTRAL LIBRARY

31 children **27** adults

NORTH KENSINGTON LIBRARY

14 children **15** adults

KENSAL LIBRARY

5 children **5** adults

BROMPTON LIBRARY

18 children **16** adults

CHELSEA LIBRARY

19 children **16** adults

TOTAL

87 children **79** adults

100%

of parents/carers rated the workshop 5 out of 5

100%

said coming to the workshop would make them more likely to bring their family to a performance at Opera Holland Park



“

Very good performance and engaging for children

Please do more of these for small children, they're such a great way for them to engage

Wonderfully engaging and fun for small children

Great initiative, please more children friendly performances!

”

SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Growing our Youth and Education area of work, this year we developed our relationship with All Saints Catholic College, a secondary school in North Kensington with a 40% pupil premium rate. After the school attended our dress rehearsal of *The Barber of Seville* in the 2024 season, we collaborated with the music department exploring ways to support learning for their students.

As part of World Opera Day (p. 37) we ran a careers panel and a directing workshops for selected students.

We also invited their Schola Cantorum to perform as part of our Christmas Concert at St Mary Abbots, Kensington on Saturday 7th December 2024. The Schola, formed of around 30 students in years 7-11, performed Britten's *A Hymn to the Virgin* and Poston's *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree* and joined our OHP Chorus to perform *Sir Christèmas*.

In late December, we held two workshops with composer Will Todd who worked with their Schola on one of his choral pieces and GCSE music students on composition.



ALLCHILD PARTNERSHIP

This year, we established a new partnership with the children's charity AllChild. With AllChild's history of working with schools in Kensington & Chelsea, as well as other surrounding London boroughs, our partnership allowed us to expand our reach and work with local children who are at risk or have needs not provided for in mainstream schools. We delivered weekly sessions focused on inclusive music-making and composition, working with small groups of children in years 3-6 in Avonmore Primary, Park Walk Primary and Ashburnham Primary schools.



In addition to the work delivered in schools, we also welcomed AllChild children as part of our Youth Chorus, and gave AllChild families 42 free of charge tickets to see an opera at our theatre in the 2025 season (see p.40).

Our Head of Community Engagement also ran a continuing professional development session for AllChild staff as part of their all-staff training day.



ALLCHILD PARTNERSHIP

PERFORMANCES

“We are delighted with how well the sessions went at Avonmore and how aligned OHP’s approach to working with children is with the approach we take at AllChild”

ALLCHILD LINKWORKERS

“I love Tuesday because I get to play music”

“I can be very creative in the club”

ALLCHILD STUDENTS

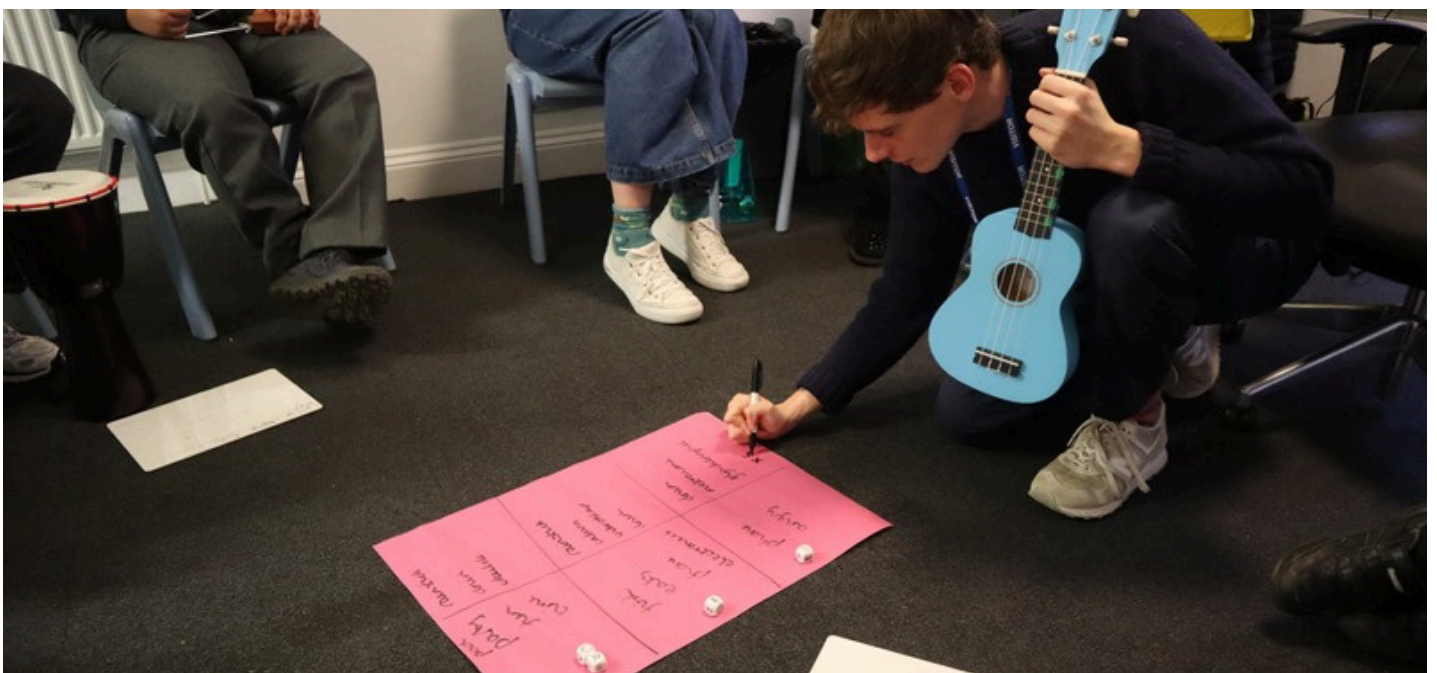
“My child has really started to enjoy music more.”

ALLCHILD PARENT

3 SCHOOLS

32 CHILDREN

45 SESSIONS



SCHOOLS PERFORMANCES

Our schools performances and workshops continue to be a main pillar of the our Youth & Education work. This year's schools matinee performance was Jonathan Dove's *Itch*, commissioned by OHP and based on the book of the same name by Simon Mayo, which was performed by the Young Artists cast. As well as being based on a young people's novel, our production of *Itch* brought together educational themes of chemistry, music, drama and literacy, offering schools the unique opportunity of bringing together multiple curricular subjects in one educational experience.

As a result of increased engagement with schools, we were able to sell-out two performances exclusively for schools: one mini matinee (aimed at primary schools) and one full performance. At the mini matinee, schools were given: an introduction to the characters and voice-types led by the cast; an introduction to sections of the orchestra led by City of London Sinfonia; and demonstrations of pyrotechniques in the show, before watching a reduced, hour-long performance of *Itch*.

Tickets were heavily subsidised and offered to schools for £8 for the performance and an in-school workshop or £6 for only the performance. Any children who were pupil premium eligible were given their ticket for no-cost.



1785
students

210
teachers/staff

85%
state school students

28%
pupil premium students

SCHOOLS

WORKSHOPS

In addition to our schools performances, all schools were offered the opportunity to book a workshop delivered in their school prior to their visit to the theatre to watch the performance. These workshops were run by a musical director and our Head of Community Engagement, supported by a member of the Young Artists cast of *Itch*. These hour-long, interactive sessions were based on *Itch*, allowing students to understand the plot and musical themes of the opera. Children also had the opportunity to hear a Young Artist sing and ask questions about being an opera singer.

Total no. of workshops delivered	Total no. of students reached	State school students	Pupil premium students
28	510	89%	20%

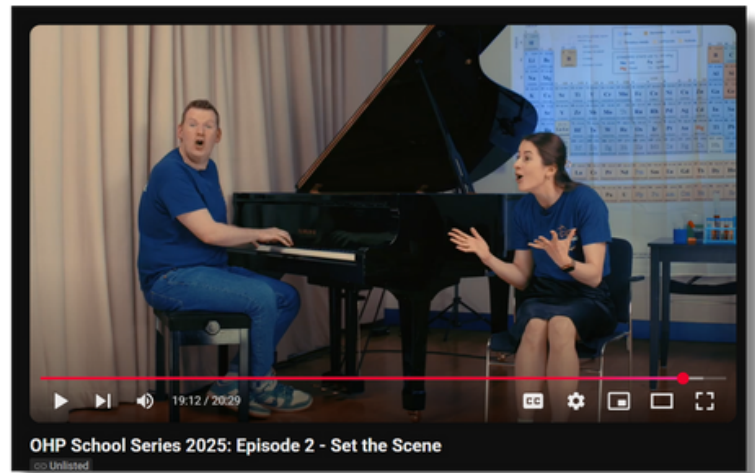


		2ND JUNE	3 workshops
12TH MAY	6 workshops	4TH JUNE	3 workshops
15TH MAY	2 workshops	5TH JUNE	4 workshops
19TH MAY	5 workshops	10TH JUNE	1 workshop + mini matinee performance
21ST MAY	4 workshops	11TH JUNE	full schools performance

SCHOOLS

RESOURCE VIDEOS

Alongside our workshop offering, schools were given educational resources to use with their classes ahead of watching the performance. A series of 5 videos of around 20 minutes in length were delivered by Joe Cummings (lead facilitator) and our Head of Community Engagement and were themed around *Itch*. Each video led children through fun, musical activities introducing the characters and musical themes of the opera. Children could then listen out and recognise these themes when they came to watch the performance at the theatre.



PROGRAMMES

After the excellent feedback we received from our pilot last season, we once again created a bespoke programme and stickers which were given to every student attending our schools matinee. Programmes included information about the characters, plot and cast of *Itch* as well as activities to complete, to further enhance their learning and experience with us. It also provided an opportunity to promote our other family friendly shows.



TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

Repeating our offer from last year, we invited teachers from schools attending the matinee to join the dress rehearsal performance of the main cast of *Itch* and a pre-show networking drinks. This allowed the Inspire team to make connections with local teachers, promote our other educational opportunities and allowed teachers and staff who were not able to accompany the children on the trip to experience the show.

65 teachers/staff joined from **12** schools

“ Thank you so much for the dress rehearsal tickets for Sunday evening - my colleague and I just loved the performance and have recommended to everyone we know. The pre-performance drinks were lovely too! ”

SCHOOLS DEMOGRAPHIC

MINI MATINEE: 10TH JUNE

SCHOOL	BOROUGH	TYPE	YEARS	WORKSHOP	NO. OF STUDENTS	TEACHERS ATTENDED DRESS REHEARSAL
All Saints CofE Primary School	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 4		30	*
All Souls CE Primary School	Westminster	State	Year 5	*	24	
Avonmore Primary school	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 5, Year 6		59	
Barlby Primary School	Kensington & Chelsea	State	Year 5, Year 6	*	73	
Brackenbury Primary School	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 5		44	
Christ Church C of E Primary School	Kensington & Chelsea	State	Year 6	*	29	
Durdan's Park Primary School	Ealing	State	Year 5, Year 6	*	60	
Holy Trinity C of E Primary School	Kensington & Chelsea	State	Year 6	*	29	
Kingshott School	Hertfordshire	Independent	Year 6		58	
Lady Margaret Primary School	Ealing	State	Year 5, Year 6	*	90	
Mulberry Canon Barnett	Tower Hamlets	State	Year 5		22	
Otakar Trust	N/A	Charity group	Year 7, Year 8		3	*
Phoenix Arch School	Brent	State	Year 5, Year 6	*	16	
Rhyl Community Primary School	Camden	State	Year 6		55	*
St Augustine's Primary School	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 5	*	28	
St Barnabas and St Philip's	Kensington & Chelsea	State	Year 5	*	30	
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	Kensington & Chelsea	State	Year 5	*	31	*
St Peter's Church of England Primary School	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 4		30	
St Stephen's CE Primary	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 6		58	*

SCHOOLS DEMOGRAPHIC

FULL MATINEE: 11TH JUNE

SCHOOL	BOROUGH	TYPE	YEARS	WORKSHOP	NO. OF STUDENTS	TEACHERS ATTENDED DRESS REHEARSAL
Addison Primary	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 6		28	*
Blair Peach Primary School	Ealing	State	Year 6	*	60	*
Canterbury home education group	Kent	Home School	Year 5, Year 6, Year 7, Year 8, Year 9, Year 10		17	
Ecole française Jacques Prévert	Hammersmith & Fulham	Independent	Year 5, Year 6		67	*
EdVenture Seekers: Home Educated Group	Ealing	Home School	Year 6, Year 7, Year 8		21	
Fox Primary School	Kensington & Chelsea	State	Year 6	*	60	*
Holland Park School	Kensington & Chelsea	State	Year 7, Year 8	Workshop only	30	*
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 5		60	*
Latymer Upper School	Hammersmith & Fulham	Independent	Year 10, Year 12		25	
Mulberry School for Girls	Tower Hamlets	State	Year 8, Year 9	*	240	
Norland Place	Kensington & Chelsea	Independent	Year 5, Year 6		19	*
Salisbury Primary School	Camden	State	Year 6		90	
Southfield Primary School	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 4		57	
Streatham and Clapham	Wandsworth	Independent	Year 10, Year 12		22	
The London Oratory School Junior House	Hammersmith & Fulham	State	Year 5, Year 6	*	40	

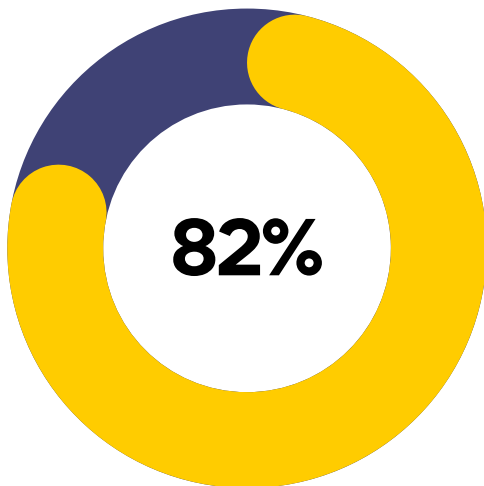
SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

MINI MATINEE FEEDBACK: TEACHERS/SCHOOL STAFF

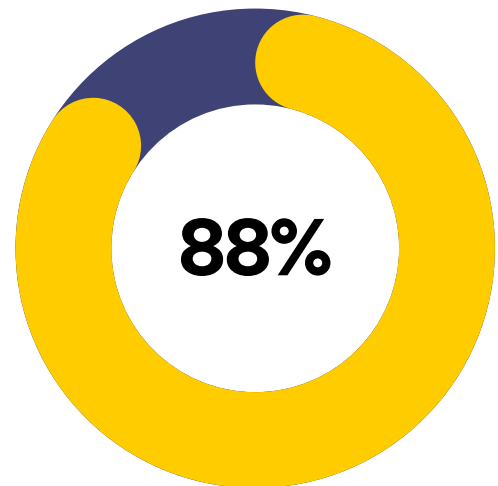
“ Our students just loved coming, and it was a **wonderful introduction to the world of opera and singing**. They were hooked the whole way through the event!

The children particularly enjoyed hearing the actors and musicians at the beginning, explaining their parts, instruments that they played etc. They also loved the engaging way in which the performers encouraged applause, boos etc from the audience. **They were made to feel a part of the performance.**

Great overall experience. **Would 100% recommend.** ”



SCHOOLS WERE NEW TO OHP



WOULD DEFINITELY BOOK A SCHOOLS MATINEE WITH OHP AGAIN



SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

MINI MATINEE FEEDBACK: STUDENTS

It was amazing. I would definitely want to go see it again... especially [the character] Jack. Please do it again.

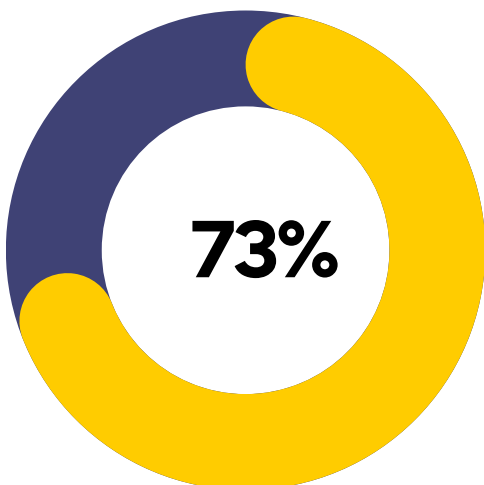
IT WAS REALLY ENTERTAINING AND COOL, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE OPERA SINGERS HIT THE HIGH NOTES. I ALSO THOUGHT IT WAS REALLY INTERESTING WHEN YOU LEARN ABOUT THE ELEMENTS.

I loved the idea, and the science experiment exploded. Also how high and low the singers could go.

It was happy, sunny, and sad. It was fun going through a singing story.

I liked how we got to meet the musicians and the actors before the beginning of the show.

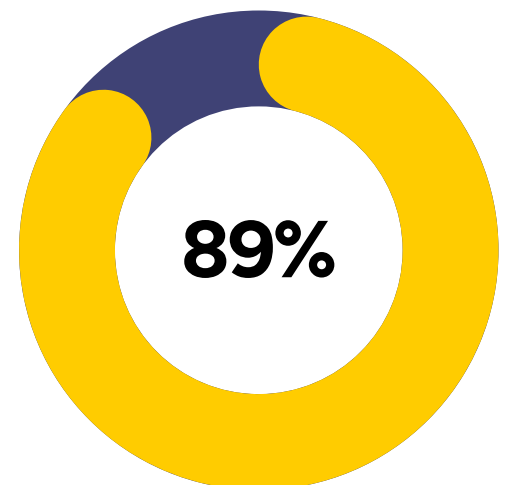
I really liked it. It was funny, interesting, and clear to understand. I liked the music and the singing.



HAD NEVER BEEN TO THE OPERA BEFORE

8/10

AVERAGE RATING FROM STUDENTS



SAID THEY EITHER MIGHT OR DEFINITELY WOULD WANT TO COME BACK TO OHP AGAIN

SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

FULL MATINEE FEEDBACK: TEACHERS/SCHOOL STAFF

Many thanks for a **wonderful occasion** for our students!

The show was **informative and easy to understand**. The children and I thoroughly enjoyed the show.

THANK YOU to Isabella, Joe, and the team. We **all loved the OHP Inspire experience** and the supporting workshops. Joe and yourself are a winning combination! Thank you for the opportunity to take part again. We shall be back again.

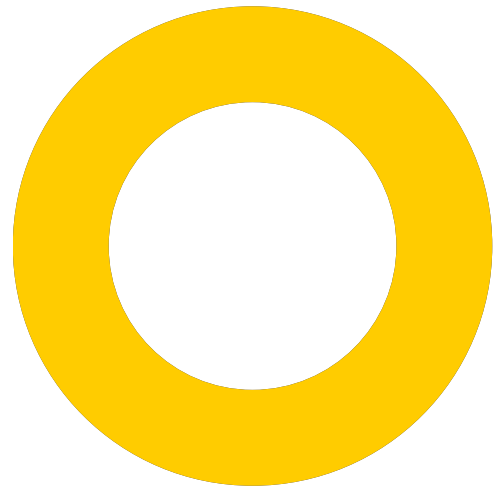
We have been coming for a number of years now, and it has been a **highlight of their educational experience**.

Thank you for inviting us to be a part of a wonderful experience! **A great way into opera/live theatre/high-quality musicianship for children who would very likely never be exposed to the art form.**



50%

SCHOOLS WERE NEW TO OHP



100%

WOULD DEFINITELY BOOK A SCHOOLS MATINEE WITH OHP AGAIN

SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

FULL MATINEE FEEDBACK: STUDENTS

I THOUGHT IT WAS MAGNIFICENT! I HAD AN EXTRAORDINARY TIME, AND THE ACTORS HAD SPECTACULAR VOICES! THE CITIZENS PLAYING THE MUSIC (WITH THE INSTRUMENTS) DID AMAZING AS WELL!

I loved it! The effort put into the singing was absolutely outstanding and mind blowing.

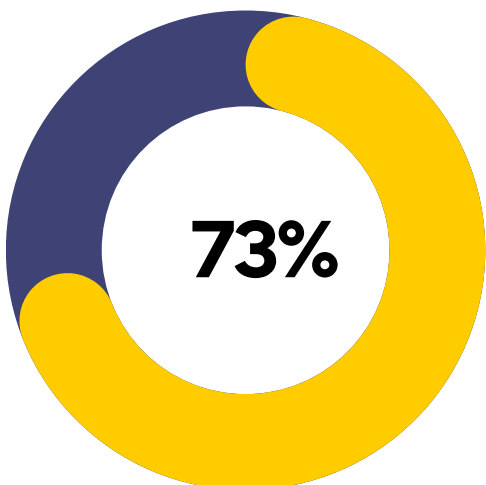
It was absolutely amazing, and the singing was shocking (especially high pitch). Overall, I really enjoyed it!

It was really heart warming and sweet. Quite intense.
Amazing!

Wonderfully humorous. Full of finey passion, emotion, an effort. It was well put together. Everyone in this did incredible, hats off!

I thought the props and set were just BRILLIANT! The transitions were so clever!!

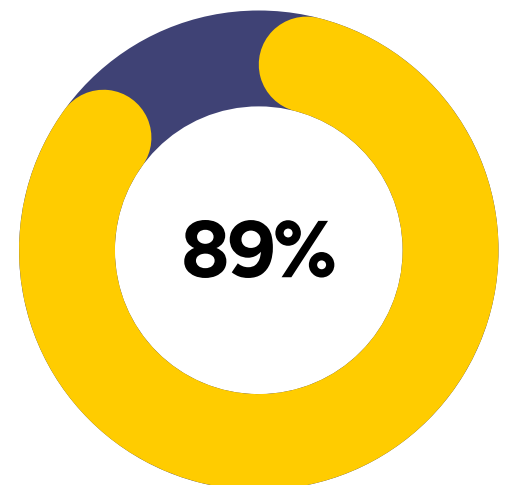
It was super creative and something never-seen before! I've never seen an opera, and I'm glad this is my first!



HAD NEVER BEEN TO THE OPERA BEFORE

8/10

AVERAGE RATING FROM STUDENTS



SAID THEY EITHER MIGHT OR DEFINITELY WOULD WANT TO COME BACK TO OHP AGAIN

SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

RESOURCE VIDEOS FEEDBACK

“

We liked that we could explore the basic plot of the story and learn one of the songs.

Superb resources - children thoroughly enjoyed them. THANK YOU.

Great resource for introducing the opera.

The videos were **so much fun** and quickly taught my Chamber Choir about the main characters of the opera. They especially loved the warm up song and kept singing it.

”



SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

“ The **workshop was superb... Excellent pace and engaging style** which really helped to introduce the opera ahead of its performance. I would describe these sessions as an **absolutely vital part of the whole experience**. Well-organised, high-quality instruction and great to experience live opera singers at our school!

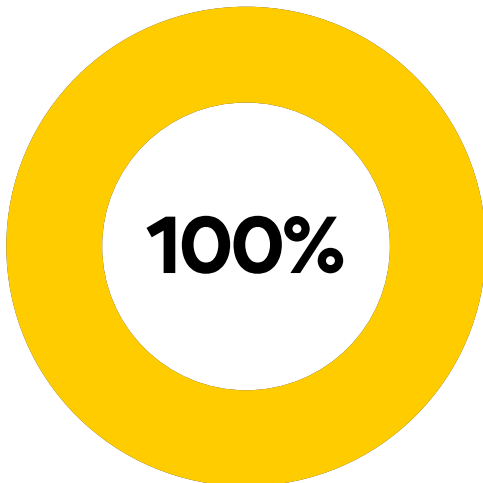
The workshop was **OUTSTANDING!!!!** The workshop and the opera are a perfect couple. Great preparation and the children LOVED EVERYTHING.

We LOVED the workshop. The children found the piano playing and singing excellent.

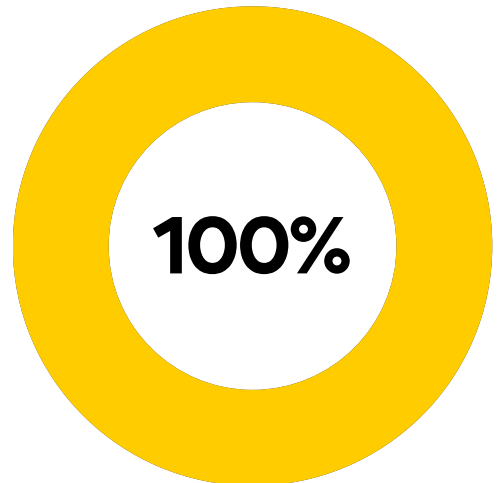
The children were **so engaged and enjoyed a new experience** - was very accessible and loved the drama elements.

The workshop performers were **very knowledgeable and also engaging** which kept the children interested and motivated and also curious.

”



thought it was beneficial for students to have a workshop prior to watching the opera



would book a workshop with us again

9.7/10

**AVERAGE RATING
FROM TEACHERS**

MUSIC FOR WELLBEING

Inspire has a reputation for its numerous, strong partnerships with organisations and charities in the community to bring the joy of music to those who may not be able to attend the theatre. This year, we continued to facilitate work in community care settings, using music as a tool for connection and wellbeing.

Music for Wellbeing in-centre sessions



Dementia Action Week Event



MUSIC FOR WELLBEING

Thanks to funding we secured, this year we were able to substantially increase our work within the wellbeing space from delivering ad-hoc events to a year-round programme.

Alongside our existing relationships with RBKC Learning Resource Centre (caring for adults with learning disabilities), Chamberlain House and Westbourne Park Day Centre (day centres for the elderly and people with dementia), we formed new partnerships with 3 Beatrice Place (an NHS continuing care ward) and the Pullen Centre (a day centre for the elderly). Each of the five centres were offered up to 20 hour-long sessions.

Maciek O'Shea, a highly experienced musician and previous principal singer at OHP, acted as lead practitioner and was responsible for designing and delivering the programme across all five centres. At 3 centres, he was joined by singers Nicola Wydenbach, Christine Cunnold or Amy Porter.

As well as engaging service users and patients, staff were encouraged to participate in the sessions and we received excellent feedback on the impact on their wellbeing as well as the patients'.



“ Today’s session was absolutely brilliant and was really appreciated by everyone present.

You had such wonderful feedback from the parents and carers that attended.

”

JOHN HENDRY
RBKC LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE
SERVICE CO-ORDINATOR

80
SESSIONS DELIVERED

*as at 30 September

FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK FROM SERVICE USERS:

- 93%** rated the sessions 9 or 10 out of 10
- 100%** said they enjoyed the sessions
- 100%** said they looked forward to the sessions
- 100%** said they felt better at the end of the session than they did at the beginning

THE TOP THREE THINGS SERVICE USERS MOST ENJOYED ABOUT THE SESSIONS WERE:

- 1. Listening to the singers**
- 2. Singing along to the songs**
- 3. Making music as a group**



FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK FROM SERVICE USERS:

“

The **music lifts up my spirit each time the group is here**. Always looking forward to seeing them sing and dance.

I love music. I like the fact live music comes to the Day Centre.
I enjoyed my music day.

Music makes me feel good. Great to have singing, dancing and instruments playing.

I love the music and dancing, can't stop dancing.

Enjoy the whole programme and **the entertainers are good and makes us relax**. I want more.

Amy and Mac are the most **wonderful people**. They are so very charming and kind with the most beautiful characters and personalities. I shall always hold them in my heart when I go on with my life - I wish them both a very long, healthy life full of joy.

”



FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK FROM STAFF:

- 100%** rated the sessions 9 or 10 out of 10
- 100%** said the sessions took into account the needs of the service users/patients
- 100%** would recommend our sessions to other centres/staff
- 100%** said that service users found the sessions engaging and interactive
- 100%** said the sessions have improved service users' happiness and mental wellbeing
- 100%** said the sessions have helped spark connection and memories for service users
- 100%** said the sessions have made a positive impact on the physical wellbeing of the service users

“

The patients and staff always look forward to the **joy, energy, and inspiration that the team brings to our unit.** Their performances have become a **cherished highlight for many here, and the impact of the visits is truly profound.**

As a standalone unit within older adult services, our patients do not always have access to the same opportunities as those in acute settings. Their presence offers something **unique and a deeply meaningful experience that brings hope, connection, and a sense of normality** to those who may no longer be able to attend such events in the community.

DEMENTIA ACTION WEEK

As part of our involvement with the Dementia Action Alliance, we hosted a special event at the theatre to mark Dementia Action Week. This was part of a week of events where cultural and artistic organisations offered free activities across Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster to the local community living with dementia and their carers.

Held on a sunny May afternoon, we hosted 43 people in our Dutch Garden room at the theatre. The afternoon consisted of an interactive singing session led by lead practitioner, Maciek O'Shea, and supported by singer Christine Cunnold.



After a tour of the theatre for those able to join, participants listened to a recital from two chorus members: Patrick Osborne and Katey Rylands, accompanied by Elspeth Wilkes, followed by afternoon tea.



DEMENTIA ACTION WEEK

FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES:

48%

new to Opera Holland Park

68%

go to a classical music performance on a yearly or less frequency

100%

said music and singing brings them joy

100%

said the event left them feeling happier than before

100%

said they would like to attend more singing and music events

“

It was so entertaining that all of us were surprised. I wish there should be more events arranged for those over 60 or disabled physically or mentally. **Music and singing helps to heal the mind.**

All the staff were **very charming and helpful.**

Thank you for the **amazing professional and friendly atmosphere** at the concert. Thank you for caring for us!

COMMUNITY

Our third main area of work focuses on taking opera and classical music out into the community and reach new areas of our local borough of Kensington & Chelsea. We want everyone to be able to experience our work regardless of socioeconomic status or background, and this year, we introduced a new, free of charge, monthly community concert programme, performed by professional opera singers. In addition, our annual Songs on the Steps returned, as well as events marking World Opera Day and the Christmas season.

During our Summer season, we offered thousands of tickets free of charge or heavily discounted, as well as free audio description services and touch tours for blind and visually impaired patrons on our relaxed matinee performances.

Community concert scheme



Songs on the Steps



World Opera Day



Audio description & touch tours



Christmas Extravaganza



Subsidised ticket schemes



COMMUNITY CONCERT SCHEME

Held at various venues in Kensington and Chelsea, these free of charge, dementia-friendly concerts were designed to be relaxed and inclusive opportunities for the community to access high quality opera and classical music.

DATE	VENUE	ATTENDEES
16th September 2024	St Peter's, Notting Hill	13
16th October 2024	St Mary Abbots, Kensington	70
4th November 2024	St Peter's, Notting Hill	36
15th January 2025	St Mary Abbots, Kensington	70
20th February 2025	St Philip's, Earl's Court	34
20th March 2025	St Philip's, Earl's Court	24

Age Demographic

18-30	9%
30-50	9%
50-65	19%
65+	62%



COMMUNITY CONCERT SCHEME

FEEDBACK FROM ATTENDEES:

88% said they would definitely come to another Inspire Community Concert

69% said they would like to attend more classical music concerts but ticket prices make this difficult

“How lucky we are to **hear beautiful voices so close up - and for free!**”

“Warm atmosphere with **lovely variety of music**”

“**Very inspiring.** Thank you for doing this for the community!”

“I feel so lucky to have access to this event for free, **what a gift.**”



COMMUNITY CONCERTS & EVENTS



CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA

**Royal Hospital (Chelsea Pensioners) | Chelsea & Westminster Hospital | Chamberlain House
St Charles Hospital | 3 Beatrice Place**

Continuing our annual tradition, we took a choir of 8 singers and a pianist across 5 care settings in RBKC, performing Christmas carols and songs to spread some joy through music to those who need it the most.

COMMUNITY CONCERTS & EVENTS

WORLD OPERA DAY

On 25 October 2024, we produced a day of events to celebrate World Opera Day. Our aim was to bring together our 3 main areas of work: Youth & Education, Community and Music for Wellbeing.

After consulting with teachers at our partner school, All Saints Catholic College, we hosted a panel talk focused on careers in the arts for students in years 7-11 with an interest in music and the arts.

We brought together a range of staff and freelancers from OHP representing the variety of career paths:

- Charlotte Corderoy, conductor (Opera Holland Park Young Artist 2023)
- Beth Hoare-Barnes, company manager
- Aya Robertson, pianist & répétiteur
- Harry Palmer, marketing
- Edwina Strobl, director
- Isabella Farrell, community, learning & participation (chair)

After the panel talk, Edwina ran a directing workshop for a select group of students focused on *Dido & Aeneas*. After a series of exercises, students came up with different concepts for the final scene of the opera. Budding student conductors took turns in conducting a small string quartet accompanying the singers.



“ I found it surprising how there’s so many jobs in opera and listening to professionals from Opera Holland Park was really interesting. It also gave a lot of insight into their everyday lives in a specific career which I found really intriguing.

Year 9 student

”



COMMUNITY CONCERTS & EVENTS

WORLD OPERA DAY

For the second part of the day, we hosted a public event in the atrium at Chelsea & Westminster Hospital. Promoting the social and health benefits of group singing, we produced an interactive singing session, 'scratch chorus' run by chorus member and musical director, Christopher Killerby. Participants were led through a physical and vocal warmup, before learning one of the most famous opera chorus pieces from Verdi's *Nabucco*.

Following this, we presented a recital performed by Ellie Edmonds, Naomi Kilby and Lindsay Bramley. The programme celebrated the history of opera including favourites from *Carmen* and *La bohème*, as well as lesser known pieces.

We received fantastic feedback from CW+ (the hospital charity) who commented it was the best engagement they had seen for an event like this.



COMMUNITY CONCERTS & EVENTS

SONGS ON THE STEPS

During the summer season, our fortnightly concert series offered free, 45 minute lunchtime recitals on the steps in front of the theatre. These recitals provide the community with an opportunity to experience opera up-close at no cost, and are intended to demystify the idea of opera, showcase OHP as a truly inclusive and friendly company, and demonstrate that our work is for the whole community.

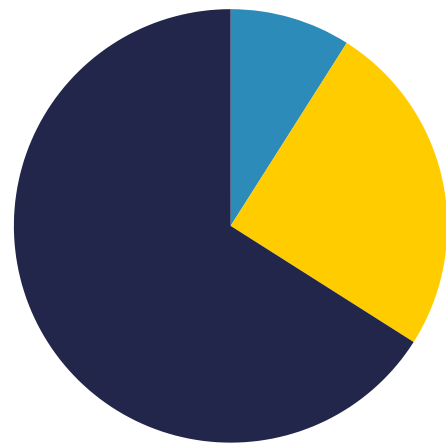
Recitals were programmed to feature singers from this season's production to also help promote the shows on offer.

As well as people who regularly come to these concerts, around 10% were passers-by in the park, expanding our reach and audience.

Age Demographic

● Under 30 ● 30-60

● 60+



“ A wonderful opportunity to enjoy something we otherwise would have no access to i.e. LIVE operatic performances. Thank you!

Thank you for such a wonderful performance, it's a blessing to experience. ”



SUBSIDISED TICKET SCHEMES

We continued to offer multiple subsidised and free ticket schemes for shows across our season. The over 65s free tickets scheme allowed groups (of up to 10 people) and individuals to apply and were allocated via a ballot system. Access tickets allowed those with a disability to purchase tickets at half price for themselves and a carer.

In recognition of our commitment to making opera as accessible as possible whilst protecting the long-term financial stability of the company, we introduced new processes for our Inspire tickets and under 18 tickets.

40% of free under 18s tickets were given out by the Inspire team. 42 tickets were distributed to families living in Kensington & Chelsea through our partnership with AllChild, allowing us to reach new families and offer these to families who would otherwise not have the opportunity to experience opera. 35 tickets were given to Youth Chorus members and their families, allowing them to have the opportunity to see an opera, in many cases for the first time. The remaining allocation were added to the general sale. These changes allowed us to reach new members of the community and ensure the tickets were given to those it was intended for (families from low socioeconomic status and/or experiencing opera for the first time). It also allowed us to collect more data on recipients and feedback of their experience.

We also changed the distribution of our Inspire, subsidised £25 tickets. Previously all tickets were added to general sale. Although communications stated these tickets were intended for those who were unable to pay full price, we had no ability to verify this. To improve this, we introduced a short application form for Inspire tickets, which gave us more opportunity to understand more about the applicants and allocate tickets accordingly.

SUBSIDISED TICKET SCHEMES

GIFT A SEAT

A new initiative, this scheme allowed patrons who had purchased tickets but could no longer attend a performance to donate the seat back to Opera Holland Park to be resold, or to 'gift' the seat to someone who would otherwise be unable to experience opera. Patrons were also given the option to purchase an additional ticket and donate this onwards to a deserving member of the community.

“ Thank you very much for the lovely gift. I really enjoyed *La Traviata*. It was a brilliant performance and brilliant music. I had a lovely time. ”

OPEN AGE CLIENT & GIFT A SEAT TICKET RECIPIENT



Zwakele Tshabalala as Gastone and the Opera Holland Park Chorus in *La traviata* at
(c) Ali Wright

SUBSIDISED TICKET SCHEMES

Over 65s Free Tickets

175
FREE TICKETS

VALUE OF UP TO
£10,500

Under 18s Free Tickets

209
FREE TICKETS

VALUE OF UP TO
£12,540

Access Half Price Tickets

630
HALF PRICE TICKETS

VALUE OF UP TO
£15,975

Inspire £25 Tickets*

639
DISCOUNTED TICKETS

VALUE OF UP TO
£15,975

**ESTIMATED TOTAL VALUE OF DISCOUNTED TICKETS
OFFERED THIS SEASON**

£58,000

*Inspire tickets are OHP's lowest price band intended for those who couldn't attend at the standard price bands. The value stated indicates approximate value of seats if OHP did not offer this price band.

SUBSIDISED TICKET SCHEMES

Over 65s

175 free of charge tickets were issued for our discovery matinees: *Itch* and *La traviata*.

Itch

Sunday 8th June, 2pm

Groups from:

Open Age

Events Group - Community

Housing

Dalgarno Trust

AgeUK Hammersmith & Fulham

AgeUK Richmond & FiSH

3003 Group CultureClub

Queen's Crescent Community

Association

La traviata

Sunday 27th July, 2pm

Groups from:

Chelsea Pensioners, Royal Hospital

Chelsea

Open Age

The Pepper Pot Centre

Newham Retirees LGBT+ Social Group

Hammersmith & Fulham Volunteer Centre

Penford Community Hub

Royal Trinity Hospice

AgeUK Richmond

“**It was extremely interesting to listen to the music and acting of the stars were excellent and the music were very good. It has uplifted our mood and gave us an enjoyable afternoon.**”

Open Age Service User



Chelsea Pensioners with Ali Langer and Matteo Desole after the performance of *La traviata*

SUBSIDISED TICKET SCHEMES

Under 18s

209 free of charge tickets were issued across our two most child-appropriate productions: *Itch* and *La traviata*. These were given to members of our Youth Chorus, through our partnership with the charity AllChild and to the general public.

“ The talent of the singers was incomparable...

The kids enjoyed seeing them act out the story and the beauty of their powerful voices. They also liked trying to read the words and then understand the plot.

Thank you for the opportunity to give us tickets so our family could experience their first opera, very grateful.

”

PARENT



AUDIO DESCRIPTION & TOUCH TOURS

In 2017, we were the first London opera company to offer free audio description services and a pre-show touch tour on certain performances for blind and visually impaired people. This year, we offered this facility at two discovery matinee performances: *Itch* and *La traviata*. The audio description is prepared and delivered by a specialist who describes the action on stage to allow patrons to experience the show beyond the music. Touch tours allow participants to experience the set, props and even instruments used in the production.

Inspire undertook a targeted communication campaign to relevant charities and organisations, including listings on websites advertising events for blind and visually impaired. A4Altruistic also generously funded a discounted ticket offer. We were delighted that uptake of our audio description offering increased by 50% this year, and we welcomed numerous patrons who were visiting Opera Holland Park for the first time.

“

I was with a group of visually disabled people and everyone had only the best things to say about it, both in absolute and relative terms!

”



9

total users of the audio description facility this season

OTHER OFFERINGS

DISCOVERY MATINEE

First introduced in 2015, we continue to programme relaxed performances within our season, encouraging young and old, community groups and children and adults with disabilities to explore live opera. These performances are an ideal introduction to opera for first time audience members, and an inclusive experience for everyone particularly people with learning disabilities. As part of the ‘relaxed’ element of the performance, we have a quiet space available for people who may need to take time out of watching the performance. Our readmittance policy is also relaxed, making performances more accessible for families with children, those with special educational needs or anyone who normally finds theatre performances inaccessible. As part of our efforts to reach more people in the community, ticket prices for these performances are also reduced.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Continuing our tradition to offer a family show within our main season, this year we once again welcomed Waterperry Opera Festival who performed *Winnie the Pooh’s Songbook*, a 30-minute show based on Harold Fraser-Simson’s piece, perfect for little ones aged 0 upwards. Our free workshops at the library helped to promote this show within the community, and we saw excellent uptake with 1399 tickets sold across four performances.



Joe Cummings and Jonathan Jolly as Christopher Robin and Winnie the Pooh in *Winnie the Pooh’s Songbook* at Opera Holland Park
© Sophie Patterson

ACCESSIBILITY

We continue to strive to make our facilities accessible to all. Step-free, accessible and wheelchair seats are offered at all our performances, as well as accessible toilet facilities. A 50% access discount is available for tickets across all shows. This year, we partnered with Resonate Arts to run a dementia-friendly training session for all front of house staff, as part of our commitment to being a dementia-friendly theatre.

2026 AND BEYOND

FUTURE PLAN

In our 30th anniversary year, 2025-2026 looks to be a busy and exciting year for Inspire, where we will continue to work within our three main pillars of the programme: Youth & Education, Music for Wellbeing and Community.

Building on the success of our first two terms, we will continue to run our Youth Chorus, reaching more children in the community and providing opportunities for them to build their skills and perform publicly. In response to our sell-out shows this year, we will be producing two schools shows again in the 2026 season, alongside offering schools workshops and resources. We plan to continue to work with AllChild and our partner school, All Saints Catholic College. We are also exploring partnerships with Streetwise Opera, who work with homeless and displaced people.

Music for Wellbeing will continue to be a major part of the programme, and we hope to secure funding that will allow us to continue to offer this vital service to local care facilities.

Offering inclusive and accessible opportunities to engage with opera and classical music will continue to be the main focus of the programme, and our Inspire community concert series will return. We will continue to run discounted and free ticket schemes, and offer as many opportunities for our local community to experience our work as possible.



The cast of *The Merry Widow*, a co-production with Opera Holland Park, Scottish Opera and D'Oyly Carte Opera
(c) Mihaela Bodlovic

WITH THANKS TO

The Opera Holland Park staff team and trustees

Our many freelance musicians, creatives and facilitators

29th May 1961 Charity

A4 Altruistic

Band Trust

CHK Foundation

Garfield Weston Foundation

Headley Trust

Hollick Family Foundation

Marchus Charitable Trust

Ofenheim Charitable Trust

Old Possum's Practical Trust

Opportunity Kensington

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea: City Living, Local Life