World Heart Beat at Embassy Gardens

London’s vibrant new Music Education Centre & Concert Venue
Welcome to World Heart Beat

I established World Heart Beat Music Academy in 2009 to meet the need for affordable music education for disadvantaged young people and to open up pathways into music, the creative industries and wider employment. From an intake of 70 young people in 2010, we currently have 377 students aged between 5 and 25 years, from south London and beyond. Learning a musical instrument gives a child an immense sense of achievement.

With the first lockdown in March, we had to close the doors of our academy, but we have not let COVID slow us down. To continue to provide an important lifeline to our students, particularly those living in challenging conditions, we responded rapidly to the crisis and moved all tuition online, and provided free equipment to those who needed it.

We have fast become one the most prominent music charities in the country, known for our youth-led approach and our exceptional track record of making music education truly inclusive. We are proud that in 2018, we were 1 of only 3 music charities in London awarded National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status by Arts Council England, acknowledging the quality of our work and the contribution we make to their Creative Case for Diversity and Equality.

The main construction of our vibrant new Music Education Centre and Concert Venue has now begun by our builder, ITC. I am delighted to share our vision for the centre, which is set to open in May and formally launch in September 2022. Our project will benefit 1000’s more young people, the local community, musicians performing a breadth of music from across the globe, as well as becoming a destination venue for London.

We believe we are creating a beautiful and inspirational place, and we hope you would like to be part of it all with us.

Sahana Gero MBE
Founder and Artistic Director

“World Heart Beat is a place of excellence and joy that embraces a myriad of musical cultures. Their students love to learn and benefit from programming and teaching of the highest quality and care. I consider it a great privilege and honour to be so closely connected to such a magnificently creative and encouraging musical environment”

Julian Joseph – World Heart Beat Patron, pianist, composer & broadcaster
We envision a world where non-selective, richly diverse music programmes are accessible to everyone. We know that music education can be a powerful tool for positive change for young people, their families and their communities. We want all young people, including those who have struggled within formal education, to have equal access to these transformative benefits.

Our values are to nurture:

- A powerful commitment to musical excellence
- A warm embrace of people, cultures and world music
- A non-exclusive, non-elitist philosophy, with no financial barriers

Our activity is rooted in the knowledge that every young person, no matter their background or level of skill, has it within them to take up an instrument, learn to play and become a musician in a short time. The emotion, discipline and structure involved takes them on a journey far beyond their initial expectations, and they soon recognise that there are no limits.

The impact of our music programmes is made more powerful through sustained relationships with our students. Over 70% of young people attend the Academy for up to seven years, and through this long-term engagement we build life-long impact.

By offering a repertoire, including Jazz, Gospel, Gypsy, Latin, Reggae and Indian Music, that reflects the diversity of London and its large Asian and Black population we have been able to successfully connect with the city’s diverse communities. Reflecting this focus, 70% of our students self-identify as ‘BAME’ and 50% are from low-income households.

Our talent development programme Music Leaders provides 40 exceptional young musicians the chance to develop their skills and experience through performance and training, as well as professional development activities such as masterclasses and mentoring with industry partners. Opportunities extend beyond their chosen instrument to wider vocational music skills, such as production.

Case Studies

Kwadwo…

Kwadwo grew up near the Winstanley Estate where people are on low incomes and there’s not a lot of opportunities. He studied music at World Heart Beat for 8 years and has become a talented saxophone player. Kwadwo started as a trainee solicitor in 2020.

“Having something you can do, something you can be passionate about, a skill you can develop and really hone, makes such a difference. I think expanding World Heart Beat so we can reach more of these kids, and make a difference in that way, is so very important. World Heart Beat has been invaluable to me.”

Lucy…

Lucy’s mother suffered with mental health issues and alcohol abuse. Music was the one ray of light in her life. We provided her with free tuition and a bespoke programme that enabled her to achieve her dream of gaining a place at Music School.

“If it wasn’t for the encouragement and hard work you put into me, I don’t think I would be here now. As you know I got a full music scholarship into the Purcell School and I am totally excited beyond belief. Thank you, thank you and thank you a million times for everything. You are totally amazing at what you do and making us happy through music.”

Please note that names are changed in case studies to protect anonymity.
Selected by London Borough of Wandsworth and property developers Eco-World Ballymore, from a competitive field of 42 cultural organisations, we’ve been awarded an exciting opportunity to expand into a second site: a 750 m² building in the prestigious new Embassy Gardens development at Nine Elms, one of Europe’s most significant regeneration projects. We have secured a 50-year lease (with no break-clause) at £1 p.a. which is estimated to be worth in excess of £10m.

Our new site will extend our work at our existing academy and be a centre for musical excellence, providing thousands more students with music education and doubling our teaching capacity per year. We will continue with our community-informed approach to engage more young people and local residents in the Nine Elms area including those living in the adjacent communities on the Patmore, Savona, Carey Gardens, Dodlington & Rollo estates, which are in the bottom 30% of most deprived areas in the UK. What’s more, the centre will also be the first new community concert hall to open in London since 2008, with state-of-the-art technology and digital infrastructure.

Our vision is to become an affordable destination venue for people who want to hear a wide ranging programme of concerts from emerging artists to high-calibre international musicians. The very latest acoustic technologies will make the venue equally suitable for a solo harp player to a chamber orchestra or large jazz ensemble.

World Heart Beat will become a “cultural anchor” in a rapidly changing neighbourhood, delivering a significant new programme of 150+ events, reaching over 20,300 local residents. Situated just 120m from the new Nine Elms tube station (Northern Line) our new concert venue will also be easily accessible to London-wide audiences (5 minutes to Waterloo and 12 minutes to Kings Cross).

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SKETCHES...
BELOW CLOCKWISE:
Sustainable Café; Recording Studio; Instrumental Teaching Room; The Green Room
OPPOSITE: Auditorium
Our ambitious vision for World Heart Beat at Embassy Gardens is to create a truly distinctive new space, which enables us to extend and enrich our charitable activities, as well as grow successful earned income strands such as commercial recording hires, which in time will help to fund our charitable work. This will be critical for our future resilience as the arts funding sector continues to evolve and becomes ever more competitive, particularly in London.

At the heart of our plans is the aspiration to create a multi-functional space, which is accessible and welcoming. We want to create a destination concert venue, attracting high-calibre international artists and arts-going audiences from across the capital. Equally, we are committed to the local community audiences and to a diversity of young people wanting to learn music, and creative industries’ skills. Through bringing people together in our new space, we hope to engender pride and play a role in social cohesion in an evolving community.

The project management and design team is of an extremely high-calibre and comprises:

- Rory Aitkenhead – Architect
- John Myers – Employer’s Agent
- KUT Partnership – Mechanical & Engineering
- Clyde & Co – Solicitors
- d&b audiotechnik – Audio Specialists
- Hann Tucker Associates – Acoustic Consultants
- MDA – Cost Consultants & Principle Designers (H&S)
- Miloco – Recording Studio Designers
- Sound Space Vision – Auditorium Acousticians
- Veda Associates – Structural Engineers
- White Light – Stage, Lighting and Audio Visual Specialists

Some key features of our new building:

- A flexible 200 capacity auditorium with 120 seats and state-of-the-art acoustics (often found only in large-scale symphony halls). Equipped with instruments including a Steinway D piano. Seats will be fully removable, enabling seated, cabaret and standing concerts, as well as alternative space usage, for example, for recording. Live streaming facilities will also enable us to extend our reach to 30,000. The latest lighting rig and sound deck facilities will provide training opportunities for technicians.

- 3 new teaching spaces including a full media suite, a teaching room with a sound booth (fully soundproofed and a mixing desk), allowing students to gain valuable experience of both professional recording sessions and also sound engineering. Our plans for these spaces were informed by our Heartbeat Generation Board.

- Digital broadcast and production suite with RedNet Audio Distribution technology to record and broadcast teaching, concerts and performances seamlessly and in high fidelity. This technology will be hugely valuable in extending our growing online teaching programme to disadvantaged young people across the capital and beyond.

- Industry-standard recording studio, which will connect to the learning space and auditorium, allowing for professional recording throughout the building. This will create a vital springboard for diverse young musicians to transition into professional work, as well as providing them with valuable experience of recording environments.

- Sustainable community café at the heart of the building will be a convivial space open to students, parents, community members and concert goers, serving as a hub for community cohesion and generating local jobs.
We have worked with ra-l and theatre designers Sound Space Vision and studio/sound designers Miloco to incorporate state-of-the-art digital infrastructure within Embassy Gardens. We have been able to take learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic to inform our designs – in particular, ensuring we can deliver teaching and performances of the very best quality online and adapt our space for live performances to enable social distancing.

The technologies include:

- **RedNet Audio Distribution System** – this system, installed across our auditorium, recording studio and learning spaces enabling recording to occur throughout the building. Paired with fixed PTZ video cameras, the system means that gigs and classes can be recorded and broadcast live in high fidelity. The system overcomes many of the latency and sound quality issues which have prevented online group tuition to date.

- **d&b Immersive Soundscape Audio System** – this innovative dynamic audio relay systems means that we can optimise our auditorium for a diverse range of musical styles and performances, through technology that records live music in real time and instantly adjusts it to an idealised acoustic quality. Not only will this technology create world-class sound within the auditorium which will attract leading music talent to Embassy Gardens, it will also enable real flexibility in teaching and how we use the space. The use of these technologies will position Embassy Gardens as a blueprint for the future of music education, with facilities, available to our students, centred on digital production and performance.

By utilising the very latest equipment, we are giving young people the best tools to learn production and music industry skills, making them highly employable.

The technologies we will incorporate into the auditorium would normally only be seen in some of the major international arts organisations including the National Theatre, the Metropolitan Opera, Sydney Opera House and Lincoln Center. These will enable us to offer an audience experience, which is second-to-none, and often only accessible to more affluent art-goers, able to buy tickets for events at major venues.
Extending our Impact on Young Lives

“Arts Council England recognises that World Heart Beat Music Academy has been experiencing a continued demand for the programmes and support it offers children and young people from challenging backgrounds. The move to Embassy Gardens is extremely positive and will enable the organisation to work with a greater number of children and young people and provide facilities including digital labs and a recording studio which will help broaden the progression routes for young people.” Louise Cleverdon, Arts Council England

Embassy Gardens will enable us to benefit 3,700 young south Londoners annually by 2023/24. It will equip them with the skill, confidence, well-being and professional development associated with arts engagement and performance, and through in-person world-class music activities.

Headlines include:

• Music tuition for 700 children and young people – a 90% increase on current numbers. 70% of these will be from low-income households, 70% Black and ethnically diverse; at least 50% on full subsidy.

• Introducing new music teaching and learning programmes, and at new levels such as foundation courses and diplomas – delivered through high quality teaching equipment and facilities.

• Children and young people will be reached through delivering workshops in youth clubs, mainstream education and settings for those with Special Educational Needs. We will continue to work with grassroot partners to involve young people from refugee and recent migrant backgrounds, outside of education, employment and training and those at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

• Extend our engagement to more young people, both nationally and internationally, through World Heart Beat Online, a programme of online activity designed and delivered in digitally-equipped teaching spaces at our new Academy. We will be able to deliver accessible and affordable teaching to an even wider cohort of young people, including those that currently lack access to high-quality music education.

Enriching our Community

“Wandsworth lacks grassroots live music venues that are accessible to all. World Heart Beat’s new venue will fill a much-needed gap in our arts provision. Their active engagement with the community, in particular the nearby estates, and their proposals for participatory programmes and affordable concert tickets, means that they will address inequalities in the area head-on, removing barriers and bringing people together.” Ravi Govindia, Leader, Wandsworth Borough Council

Our new home will enable us to embed community engagement across our work, rolling out a comprehensive new programme of events, opportunities and initiatives.

There will be a particular focus on engaging audiences in local pockets of deprivation, such as Patmore, Carey Gardens and Savona. Over the next three years, our community work will jump to 24,730 participants and audiences.

Some headlines include:

• 150+ concerts per year in our new auditorium and live streamed to digital audiences. With first-class facilities, we will be able to attract international musicians across a range of musical styles, as well as giving a platform to emerging and underrepresented artists. This programming will be appealing and accessible to many who may not typically engage with live music, delivered from a high-calibre new venue that will significantly enrich London’s cultural landscape.

• 1,000s of concert tickets (30 performances) will have been made available at low or no cost to people from the local community.

• Local residents will take part in events, outreach and education programmes, such as volunteering opportunities, short vocational courses and opportunities to lead local events and activities.

• The community will also be engaged with volunteering opportunities such as event stewarding and skills sharing workshops with young people involved in our Music Leaders programme and our Widening Horizons social action programme.
Support our Project

Why support
Since 2000, we World Heart Beat has been transforming young lives through music, nurturing talent, aspirations and social development with all financial barriers removed. Now, our new centre will enable us to reach thousands more and extend our teaching to include offering qualifications and technical training, using the very latest technology.

Our much-needed new concert venue will be at the heart of the Nine Elms neighbourhood, bringing together our diverse communities. Our programme will be second to none, with a vast array of concerts featuring emerging artists and high-calibre international musicians.

We are delighted to have raised £2.6m and have begun the last phase of our fundraising to raise the final £600,000 needed to hit our target of £3.2m. This will enable us to achieve our full vision, which is to be able to offer young people, musicians and audiences, not just good facilities to learn, perform and listen, but truly outstanding ones. The funds will enable us to fit out the building to the ideal specifications to include industry standard recording studio, high-spec auditorium (including instruments) with the optimum in digital teaching facilities.

How to support

Make a gift
Support from individuals is a vital cornerstone of our work. We welcome donations of all sizes as one-offs or as a regular gift.

For businesses, we have an array of ways you can support the build and our programme for the new education centre and concert venue. We can tailor our packages to meet your needs and can offer a wide range of ways to engage with you to include branding, press, tickets and hospitality.

Name something!
We have a number of spaces and features of the building still available to be named. We would welcome a conversation with you about the opportunities available to find something which may interest you.

You can name a seat in our auditorium. A seat, inscribed with your name, a loved one’s name, your business or in memoriam, leaves a lasting legacy. A seat would make an ideal present for a birthday or other special occasion.

Getting in touch
If you are interested in supporting our project, we would love to hear from you.

You can contact Sal Sherratt, Head of Philanthropy and Partnerships on: 07980 270671
Or email her at sal@worldheartbeat.org

Thanks to all our supporters so far
We are immensely grateful to all the individuals, business, trusts, foundations and livers who have supported our project so far. Without their generosity we would not have been able to progress our vision towards opening our outstanding new building.

We would like to highlight the generous capital support of the following:
- 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- Backstage Trust
- Big Issue Invest
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- Colin Trust
- EcoWorld Ballymore
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- Foyle Foundation
- Garfield Weston Foundation
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