

DEAL MUSIC & ARTS

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Deal Music & Arts Festival Report 2022

The choices that the festival offers our various and varied audiences was apparent in four of the opening events.

Once again the students of the Purcell School orchestra gave the first concert, with Alim Beisembayev, the winner of the Leeds International Piano Competition in 2021 and a former Purcell pupil, the soloist in Beethoven's 'Emperor Concerto'.



DEAL MUSIC & ARTS Festival
1st - 17th July 2022

INCLUDING

- JESS GILLAM with LONDON MOZART PLAYERS
- RONNIE SCOTT'S JAZZ ORCHESTRA
- ALIM BEISEMBAYEV • BEIBEI WANG
- TRIO HLK with EVELYN GLENNIE
- THE CHANGELING THEATRE COMPANY
- ECHÉA QUARTET • DINARA KLINTON
- PRIMAVERA • SAMUELE TELARI
- THE UKULELE ORCHESTRA OF GB
- ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC
- TOM CARRADINE • GAVIN ESLER
- KATIE BRAY portrays FRIDA KAHLO

plus FRINGE FESTIVAL & COMMUNITY STAGES

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Our continuing commitment to young musicians continued with the soloist on the next day. The saxophonist Jess Gillam, playing with the London Mozart Players attracted a gratifyingly younger audience. And it was very good to see students from the Guildhall School of Music playing Handel with members of the Academy of Ancient Music.

Then on the first Sunday of the Festival there were two performances of Joy Spencer's *The Mud Maid*, which in every sense was a community event that grew out of project work in



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local primary schools. And was performed by local musicians and a children's choir. Anecdotally, it was clear that this was the first time that many in the audience had attended a festival event. We continue to ensure that our year-round educational work finds its place in the summer festival.

2022 was the first full festival since 2019. Covid compelled us to cancel our plans for 2020, and the following year we ran what was effectively a chamber music festival that observed the government's regulations about social distancing and other official precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. We therefore chose to honour our original commitment to a number of artists and ensembles that we had had to stand down, Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra and the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, both of which performed to capacity audiences. Again, it was heartening to see two very different audiences enjoying very different kinds of music.

We had been concerned that it would be a while before our overall audience reached the levels that we were used to before the spread of Covid. However, in the event 4600 people bought tickets for a total of over sixty events. And the generosity and the enthusiasm of the Friends and Patrons of the Festival was a great as ever.

As before the Festival championed women as performers. The young soprano Katie Bray sang a programme of songs by Kurt Weil and the title role in an opera based upon the journals of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. The Ukrainian-born pianist Dinara Klinton played all of Prokofiev's Piano Sonatas in three lunch time concerts, the soprano Anna Cavaliero was the soloist with the Echea Quartet in a programme of Benjamin Britten's music and the percussionist Evelyn Glennie performed in St George's Church with the Trio HLK.



A virtuoso recital by the young pianist Thomas Kelly that included an immensely complex arrangement of two scenes from Stravinsky's score for *The Firebird*; and a challenging programme from the percussionist BeiBei Wang were a timely reminder that an arts festival has a responsibility to showcase emerging talent. While other artists reminded us that no festival can afford to be an island. The guitarist Giacomo Susani gave a lunchtime recital in Sandwich and Samule Telari brought his accordion to our party not once but twice winning a standing ovation from an enthusiastic audience. It is becoming increasingly arduous for European musicians to arrange to play in the UK, but we are determined that the festival should continue to welcome international guests.



However, local artists continue to be at the heart of our programme. The Changeling Theatre Company brought two productions to the festival: Shakespeare's *Othello* and Wilde's *The Importance of Being Ernest*. The Ringlemere Quartet played Brahms and Suk, four of Deal's emerging musicians were showcased in a lunchtime recital



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and Primavera gave the Kent premiere of John Carmichael's Piano Trio. The tenor Greg Tassell sang at a Coffee Concert and Jamie Rogers the Assistant Director of Music at Canterbury Cathedral was the pianist.

There was, perhaps, less contemporary music than in previous years but there was music from David Matthews who lives in Deal, new works by Paul Max Edlin and Rebecca Hurst and Michael Betteridge's Voices of the Sands was given its world premiere.

The history of the Goodwin sands was a recurring theme in this year's festival – a vital and dangerous part of the ecology of East Kent and at risk from dredging plans many believe. A whole day was devoted to this history. And shipwrecks were remembered in one of the most striking festival events Stories of Migration and Exploration told by Lord Gawain Douglas with local songs arranged by Natasha Douglas and sung by Singing for Pleasure and the Astor Community Choir. Migration today by men, women and children setting out in fragile crafts from France to Kentish beaches that stretch from Ramsgate to Dungeness featured in Child Migrant Stories led by Gavin Esler. Again no arts festival can afford to be an island.



Child Migrant Stories was part of an ever-growing programme of walks and talks that are designed to explore festival themes and to give audiences a context for the work that they see and hear. There is clear evidence that they appeal to a significant part of our audience.

The 2022 Deal Festival was the last to be programmed by Paul Max Edlin and we might not be where we are today without Dr Edlin's commitment and enthusiasm.

The Trustees have all but finished the process of selecting a successor and it is their hope that a new Artistic Director will be in post by the early Autumn ready to work on the programme for 2023. This is an opportunity to carefully consider what we do at future festivals and where we do it in terms of venues; of identifying and reaching out to the several communities that make up our wider community and teaching ourselves more about inclusion, access and diversity.

Christopher Cook

Deal Music and Arts would like to thank all those who make it possible for us to do this

Arts Council England, The Bernard Sunley Trust, Cavatina Chamber Trust, Guy and Elinor Meynell Charitable Trust Bursary Fund, Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Deal Town Council, Dover Deal and Sandwich Arts Society, Dover Town Council, Dover District Council Community Fund, John Hobson Trust, John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust, Kent Community Foundation, Kent County Council, Kent County Council Members Grant, Kent Music, Lawson Endowment Fund, Mary Farrell Trust, National Youth Jazz Orchestra, Sir Graeme Odgers, Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund, The Countess of Munster Trust, The Foyle Foundation, The Henry Smith Charity, The Overstone Fund, The Keyboard Charitable Trust, The RVW Trust, Walmer Town Council. Benefactors, Education Patrons, Patrons and Friends

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