

# DEAL MUSIC & ARTS

Inspire • Inform • Entertain • Educate

## Deal Music & Arts Festival Report 2023

The 2023 Deal Festival was my first as artistic director and I absolutely loved it. There was an immense buzz in the town and among the audience as we packed in over 50 events in just 10 days. These ranged from orchestral concerts to poetry readings, salon performances, late night DJ sets, early years events, walks and talks.

For the first time we staged a Town Takeover where local musicians popped up around the town on 3 of the festival's busiest days. Appearing along the High St and iconic Deal locations they brought free performances to the whole town, spread the word that the Deal Festival was happening and contributed to the festival buzz which permeated the full 10 days. This was complemented by our community stage on the two festival Saturdays which gave an even bigger platform to our fantastic local bands and ensembles. We inhabited another Deal icon, the castle, with a festival long sound and art installation, created by Goliard Recordings in the castle's basement. Featuring all living British sound artists and paintings by local artist John Corley.

**DEAL MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL 2023**  
7 JULY - 16 JULY

BOX OFFICE OPENS 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY

INCLUDING

- TREVOR PINNOCK WITH ENGLISH CONCERT
- NATIONAL YOUTH JAZZ ORCHSTRA WITH TOMMY BLAIZE
- RESONATE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
- NORMA WINSTONE
- IAIN BALLAMY TRIO
- PHILIPPA GREGORY
- LOVE'S LABOUR LOST AT WALMER CASTLE
- HILARY SUMMERS
- JESSICA WALKER
- MELA GUITAR QUARTET
- TREDEGAR BRASS BAND
- KULJIT BHAMRA
- OLD TIME SAILORS
- KEGELSTATT TRIO

[www.dealmusicandarts.com](http://www.dealmusicandarts.com)

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

The 2023 festival theme of Rebels and Royals was very much inspired by Deal's history of Royal visitors, residents, rebellious characters and activities. The arts are full of rebels and works created for royalty. Be it music composed and performed for Royal occasions by Mozart and Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, who we heard in our opening concert by the Resonate Chamber Orchestra, or the music of rebellious and hilarious women in (Dead) Funny Women, performed by Jessica Walker and Joe Atkins.

The opening concert by the Resonate Chamber Orchestra allowed our audience to witness the talents of their young superstar conductor Henry Kennedy in a programme which announced the festival's commitment to diversity, placing composers of colour; Alberga and Boulogne in a programme with Mozart, Cimarosa, Beethoven and local composer David Matthews, whose 80<sup>th</sup> birthday we celebrated across the entire festival.

Our first ever poetry day kicked off the festival's exploration of the written word. It was also the first time the festival worked at Deal's Landmark Centre, in their beautiful wood panelled Cleary



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Hall. Showing our commitment to working in new venues and across a greater diversity of Deal's communities. Jacob Sam-La Rose and Luke Styles led the audience through four performance poetry events showcasing the diverse talents of the Barbican Young Poets (current and former) from a host of backgrounds, as well as Kent based South Asian heritage poets Jessica Mookherjee and Sarah Estruch. The day concluded at the Linden Hall and was one of several Linden Hall collaborations over the festival, with a sold-out performance of poetry and music by Jacob and viola player Fiona Winning. This was a true festival highlight and a day which marked the multi-arts nature of the festival and the ability to innovate and work in new ways.



Writers talking about their books as well as reading from their most recent work formed a successful strand to the festival. The broadcaster Gavin Esler our chair Christopher Cook and trustee Amanda Holloway in collaboration with The Deal Bookshop joined authors Philippa Gregory whose novel *The Other Boleyn Girl* shone a new light on women in the Tudor period, Guardian columnist Polly Toynbee who explored her own radical family in a new memoir and Anna Sayburn Lane a crime writer who makes her home in Deal.

The focus on young people was exceptionally strong across the whole festival. Both young professionals at the start of their careers in the form of pianists Milda Daunoraite and Thomas Kelly, duo partners Maja Horvat (violin) and Joseph Havlat (piano) or harpist Milo Harper. All of whom gave incredible lunchtime concerts that audiences were talking about days afterwards. Our very own young jazz players (NYJO Academy South East) featured as part of the sell-out National Youth Jazz Orchestra with Tommy Blaize, intoxicating the capacity crowd at St George's Church with the music of Ray Charles and other funky grooves.

We also featured our young musicians from our year-round education work in their very own Showcase Concert at the Astor Theatre. Our youngest Deal residents (0-5yrs) benefited from The Great Big Bag of Fun early years musical experience which was a hit with the young ones and their carers, and a strand of the festival we will build upon with more early years specific events next year.



Through the festival we offered a host of workshops for schools and the community, delivered by our performing artists. These included composition and writing workshops in Dover and Sandwich, open jazz workshops at the Lighthouse Pub, taiko drumming and an on stage tabla workshop with tabla virtuoso Kuljit Bhamra. Connecting the concerts in the festival with workshops within schools and the community delivered by the same artists who perform our concerts is a meaningful way to grow our audiences and connections between audiences, participants, and performers.



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We went into many more venues than ever before. We explored four different churches in Dover, Deal and Walmer as part of our first ever organ crawl, where local organist Paul Stubbings took us on a tour of organ music old and new and fostered a sense of shared exploration between the audience traveling with him between each venue. We worked with local bars/pubs Smugglers Records and The Lighthouse, presenting DJ sets and high quality jazz respectively. These venues allowed us to encounter a new Deal audience and show the openness of the festival to different musical styles and event formats. We will build on these relationships and cement our place as a festival for the whole town.

Four eminent local artists featured across the festival and represent our commitment to showcasing local talent. These included jazz legend Norma Winstone whose packed Astor Theatre gig was a festival highlight. We celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of composer and former artistic director of the festival, David Matthews, who engaged in talks and interviews as well as being present for the performance of his music in five festival concerts. Lord Gawain Douglas recited T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and made this complex and abstract masterpiece sparkle with life. The Ringlemere Quartet gave a fine performance of 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Century music including young British composer Hannah Kendall's *Network Bed*.



We also featured Kent's very own Changeling Theatre Company in their production of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. A sell out festival favourite in the beautiful grounds of Walmer castle.

Music by living composers was part of every single concert (with only 2 exceptions). The audience responded positively and with deep interest to each of the new works, especially given they were always contextualised with music of earlier periods, so that it was often the case that the new works sounded much fresher and relevant than the music of previous centuries that we are more familiar with. This response gives me great confidence to continue with both mixed programming and the championing of living composers in future festivals.

Three established chamber music ensembles, the Kegelstatt Trio, Mela Guitar Quartet and the Kreutzer Quartet gave us memorable and moving performances of Mozart, Schumann (Clara and Robert), Kurtag, Matthews, Snowden, Houghton, Saint-Saens, Debussy, Holst, Glinka and Ravel. While our two large ensembles towards the end of the festival; The English Concert conducted by Trevor Pinnock and The Tredegar Brass Band astounded our St George's Church audiences with music making of the absolute highest calibre, whether it be the all Mozart programme of The English Concert or the perfect mix of traditional, popular and new music from Tredegar. I intend to continue the connection with the colliery band tradition of the area which Tredegar tapped into in both festivals 2024 and 2025.



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# Deal Music & Arts Festival Report 2023

Musical and operatic comedy and history combined in two performances. A double bill *What's So Great About Opera?/ Rags to Riches* and *(Dead) Funny Women*. Each of these shows had our audience in stitches whilst also taking us on a journey through musical history. Hilary Summers was the stand out sensation as she underwent multiple costume changes and her wit and one of a kind operatic contralto voice brought the audience to tears of beauty and laughter. This was something special indeed.

Jazz was in focus throughout the festival, namely by Norma Winstone, the National Youth Jazz Orchestra/Tommy Blaize and headline jazz act the Iain Ballamy Trio. This gig sold out The Lighthouse pub and marked both an important start to a collaborative relationship with a local music institution and the bursting enthusiasm for topflight jazz acts.

On the second Saturday of the festival, we were treated to a salon concert at Linden Hall Studio, another important collaborative relationship with a local venue that we strengthened in this year's festival. Violinist Peter Sheppard Skærved was joined by Dover artist Joanna Jones, composer Mihailo Trandafilovski and filmmaker Malene Sheppard Skærved to blend music, art, composition, film and history in a unique and captivating event which epitomizes what a festival can do in its ability to bring together art forms and diverse practitioners to create special events unlike any other for our audiences.



On the final day of the 2023 festival tabla player Kuljit Bhamra led a workshop through demystifying the tabla and teaching us how to play this traditional Indian instrument. He followed this up with the final lunchtime concert to an audience of young and old who were treated to the first ever electric tabla, traditional beats and modern grooves which we joined in with and were astounded by. The festival closed with a party atmosphere and the raucous Old Time Sailors, who had people up dancing and celebrating a festival which was an absolute joy to have put together and to have been a part of. I am extremely grateful to the entire DMA team, volunteers, artists and audiences who made 2023 such a wonderful festival and inclusive experience.



## Luke Styles

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

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