



International Showcase Fund

PRS Foundation



Impact Report 2019-2024

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FOREWORDS



Joe Frankland, CEO, PRS Foundation

The International Showcase Fund (ISF) continues to support the UK's most exciting and talented music creators, continually evolving and responding to complex barriers. This has ensured that artists and creators working in all genres have been able to access vital support during one of the most challenging periods for those looking to develop their careers globally.

Established in 2006, ISF has helped thousands of artists, bands, songwriters, producers and their team members to access transformative showcase events and writing camps, which in turn has enabled creators to get in front of key industry figures while building audiences around the world.

Despite several barriers to international progression, the economic impacts for individual creators, the wider music industry and the UK economy are clear for all to see. ISF funding has generated a cumulative increase of £6.7m for the UK economy over 5 very challenging years, while helping creators to secure international bookings, label and publishing deals, and to grow teams and fanbases.

ISF ensures that a broad range of talented creators take advantage of international opportunities which would be unaffordable without co-investment from ISF partners. 37% of grantees are based in the devolved Nations, and 67% are based outside London – with an appetite to break down barriers to progression no matter where creators are based.

And the Fund has diversified over the last few years. Huge strides have been taken to address inequities within music export and exchange. 57% of grantees are women, gender-diverse or in mixed gender groups. 33% of grantees are from the Global Majority. And partners have been proactively addressing other areas of underrepresentation on an international scale which aligns with ISF partners' inclusive values and domestic approaches, so that ISF support becomes a progression route for music creators from all backgrounds.

Showcasing events and equivalent activities for behind-the-scenes creators remain the most effective way to fast-track business links and audience development. But accessing these opportunities has undoubtedly become more expensive and difficult post-Brexit, post-pandemic and during a cost-of-living crisis.

Emerging artists and creators are feeling the impacts of these world events acutely. Where new barriers are 'a nuisance' for more established acts and large companies to work around, for the emerging creators we serve as a charitable funder, these barriers have become debilitating. Emerging UK talent now misses out on bookings in markets where links were previously strong and in new territories where internationalisation has become less viable.

To this end, the social and cultural impacts laid out in this report feel more important than ever and should underline how critical ISF is in developing UK artists to the point to which they are ready to tour internationally. With more investment, the Fund would further contribute to the robustness of the UK's music export output. PRS Foundation and ISF partners are best placed to boost creators' first-steps into international careers and the creative community is shouting out for more investment in the emerging end of the export talent pipeline.

Partners are especially proud to encourage and support cultural exchange and collaboration globally, and I would like to express PRS Foundation's gratitude to partners the Department for Business & Trade, British Underground, PPL, British Council, The Musicians' Union, Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Wales Arts International and Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

Over the last few years, we have proven just how flexible, creator-friendly and impactful our approach is. We supported artists whose events were cancelled with less than a week's notice in 2020. We helped artists and event organisers to pivot to digital delivery when international artistic connection was most needed. And we have ensured that funding support remains a constant when world events make it harder than ever to thrive.

We must continue to adapt and attract applications from the most exciting creators in the UK, and we require additional investment from the public and private sector to ensure that ISF can continue to boost diverse, exceptional UK music around the world.

Gareth Thomas MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Services, Small Business and Exports)

The UK has a proud history as home to some of the most talented and prolific artists and music creators in the world, producing the soundtrack to so many people's lives, here in the UK and abroad.

This report recognises the importance of supporting artists and music creators from different communities, regions and nations across the UK at the beginning of their international career journey. Those venturing into overseas markets say how vitally important the International Showcase Fund (ISF) is to starting their export journeys, building international audiences and developing their careers.

International showcases are vitally important to the career development of emerging talent where curated, business-focused events enable music creators to perform in front of music industry delegates and new audiences.

The Department for Business and Trade works closely with PRS Foundation and the other ISF partners to support artists and music creators at the start of their export journeys. We are delighted to see that for every £1 of Department for Business and Trade's contribution into the ISF, grants have generated a return of around £27 in total revenues.

It is clear ISF's intervention at the earlier stages of international careers benefits the artists, creators and their team members and plays a vital role in kickstarting economic growth. On 14 October, the Government announced creative industries as a priority for the industrial strategy and sectors like music will help drive further growth.

While the economic and cultural impacts of the ISF outlined in this report are impressive, it also underscores the broader point that investment in this area is crucial to producing the foundations and conditions for artists and creators in the future to be ready to tour internationally. The interdependency of the talent development pipeline in the UK cannot be understated.

I am also delighted to see evidence of the diversification of the fund, which is ensuring that artists and creators based anywhere in the UK, working in any genre, and from any background can access support and opportunities to build sustainable global careers.

The Department for Business and Trade is proud to be a partner of the ISF and I would like to thank PRS Foundation for their expertise in running the fund and fellow partners whose investment and experience is an important contribution to the successes of the fund.



ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASE FUND

The UK is one of the biggest exporters of new music in the world. Every year, a broad range of exceptional emerging artists and creators from the UK's nations and regions are invited to international music industry-focused festivals and showcasing events. Although it is crucial for an act to attract and secure deals in territories outside of the UK, these first steps into international territories can be challenging and expensive. The International Showcase Fund (ISF) exists to help cover the costs of these trips, enabling music creators to connect with and showcase their potential to labels, promoters, music supervisors, sync agents or potential future collaborators and audiences. In 2018 the remit of the ISF was expanded to include international writing camps empowering behind-the-scenes songwriters and producers to develop internationally. British Council joined the partnership in 2024 focusing on showcases across sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, East and South East Asia and Latin America. This has already supported artists to attend Africa Rising, Nyege Nyege and Magnetic Fields.

The ISF is managed by PRS Foundation in partnership with The Department for Business and Trade, PPL, The Musicians' Union, British Underground, Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Wales Arts International, Arts Council of Northern Ireland and the British Council. The Fund was launched in 2006 (as 'British Music Abroad') and offers grants of up to £5,500 for international export opportunities for UK-based artists, bands, songwriters and producers who have been invited to perform or create new music at international industry facing showcasing festivals, songwriting camps or conferences.

ISF complements the work of PRS Foundation's Talent Development Network organisations, such as FOCUS Wales, Wide Days and British Underground, which support the international development of talent and forge stronger relationships with international showcase organisers. Grant support contributes towards travel, accommodation, subsistence and visas, and other associated costs for creators and their teams.

From April 2019 to March 2024, the International Showcase Fund invested over £1.2 million supporting 441 music creators (artists, bands, songwriters and producers) to take their music into new territories. Music creators attended 33 showcase events across six continents ranging from genre specific events such as AmericanaFest, Classical:NEXT and Folk Alliance to global events such as SXSW. Grantees were a mix of independent artists and those represented by 45 different independent labels.

This ISF funding period 2019-2024 has covered the huge global disruption caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. Nearly all travel was curtailed for long periods in 2020 and 2021. ISF pivoted during this time to fund online digital showcasing and new ways to champion outstanding creators and encourage global exchange. This period also coincided with the end of the Brexit transition period, where mobility of UK music creators heading to Europe became at once more costly and complex.

ABOUT THIS IMPACT REPORT

This Report presents the impact that ISF has had on the international development of music creators awarded grants through the Fund during the period 2019-2024. It considers creative, cultural and professional impacts for the individual creators as well as the economic, social and cultural impacts for the wider music industries. It also explores the complexities of exporting music since the pandemic and other world events which have resulted in increased barriers to showcasing and internationalisation - not least the impacts of Brexit increasing costs and the practical challenges of touring in Europe, the rise in cost and time to acquire US touring visas, and wider cost-of-living and touring crises. In addition, the overall production costs for the festival organisers have increased significantly in recent years, in some cases making them more risk averse and wanting to book only 'known acts', with fewer opportunities for emerging artists.

TFCC (Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy) ¹ has undertaken the study which included a series of interviews and focus groups with grantees, ISF partners, managers, showcase presenters, trade bodies and other stakeholders; a review of ISF data and documents; plus a survey of grantees. The survey was sent to 376 ² grantees with 156 responses, a 41% response rate.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all of those who contributed time to giving input, through interviews or survey, to this report.

"ISF is such a vital tool for bands/artists who've reached a certain level in the UK and need to expand their reach and audience outside the UK. Having had artists benefit from funding to attend SXSW and Reeperbahn festivals in the past, it's all helped add to the overall cocktail of ingredients to help build an international presence and touring profile. Long may it continue".

Jonathan Morley, Manager, Coach Party



¹ www.tfconsultancy.co.uk The report was written by Dr Tom Fleming, Tracey Gregory and Dr Nana Lee.

² Some grantees received more than one grant over the five years, hence the survey not being sent to the full 441 grantees

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The financial and artistic outcomes of ISF between 2019 and 2024 are impressive in the context of the challenges of international music showcasing and exchange.

Total Revenue

- Over the five years 2019-2024, ISF investment has generated a cumulative increase of **£6.7m for the UK economy**.
- The **average revenue** for ISF music creators **increased by over £15,110 (76%)** after ISF support, increasing from £19,930 to £35,040.
- For **every £1 of total ISF investment**, music creators **generated an additional £5.40 in revenues**, delivering a return on investment (ROI) of over 500%.
- For **every £1 of DBT's contribution**, music creators **generated £26.90 in total revenues**. Approximately £1.10 (20%) of the £5.40 in the total additional revenues generated were supported by DBT investment.

Export Revenue

- ISF investment between April 2019 to March 2024 has generated a cumulative increase in export income of **over £3.2m for the music industry and UK economy**.
- The total **export revenue** of ISF music creators **increased by 111%** after ISF support, from £2.9 to £6.2 million.
- For **every £1 of ISF investment**, music creators **generated an additional £2.61 in total export revenues**, delivering an ROI of 260%.



Business impacts

- 90% of ISF music creators made new international industry contacts
- 73% of ISF music creators have developed new business from contacts made.
- 64% of grantees have been able to develop the size of their team.

Creative, collaborative and audience impacts

- Average live audience size for ISF music creators has gone from 370 pre ISF to 1,700.
- 82% agree ISF helped them develop as a live act.
- 71% agree ISF has supported ongoing international collaborations.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- 67% of ISF grantees were based outside London, with 16% in Scotland, 13% in Wales and 8% in Northern Ireland.
- 33% of ISF grantees identify as belonging to the Global Majority.
- 57% of grantees identified as Women (39%), as Gender-diverse creators (including non-binary and gender queer) (4%), or are in Mixed Gender groups (14%).
- 25% of grantees identified as LGBTQIA+
- 12% of grantees report having a long-term health condition and/or impairment that affects their day-to-day life.
- 5% of grantees identified as deaf and/or disabled.



International Showcase Fund

April 2019 - March 2024



£1.24 million
invested



441
music creators supported



Average grant award **£2,814**



£6.7 million
generated for the UK economy

Reach and diversity³

67% of ISF grantees were based outside London

16% - Scotland
13% - Wales
8% - Northern Ireland

of England:

33% - London
7% - North West
6% - South West
6% - South East
3% - Yorkshire and the Humber
2% - North East
2% - West Midlands
1% - East Midlands



Financial and business impacts



110% increase in export revenue for music creators post ISF grant



90% of ISF music creators made new international industry contacts



73% of ISF music creators have developed new business from contacts made.



64% have been able to develop the size of their team



For every **£1** of DBT's contribution, music creators generated **£26.90** in total revenues



For every **£1** of total ISF investment, music creators generated an additional **£5.40** in revenues



33% of ISF grantees identified as belonging to the Global Majority⁴

25% of grantees identified as having Black or Mixed Heritage including Black

4% of grantees identified as having Asian or Mixed Heritage including Asian

Less than **1%** of grantees identified as having Arab Heritage

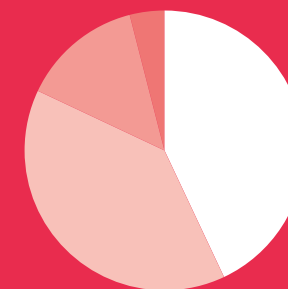
3% of grantees identified as having 'other' Mixed Heritage

1% of grantees identified as 'Other Ethnic Group'

63% of grantees identified as White British

4% of grantees identified as 'White - Other' (e.g. White Irish, White European)

57% of grantees identify as Women, Gender-diverse or are in Mixed Gender groups



43% Men
39% Women
4% Gender-diverse (including non-binary and gender queer)
14% Mixed Gender Groups

⁴ Global Majority is a term which is used to describe people who are not White British or from other White ethnic groups, and is used as a more inclusive alternative to "ethnic minority" or "person of colour". It includes people of Black, Asian, mixed, and other ethnicities, as well as people who are indigenous to the global South, and has been adopted by PRS Foundation in recognition that those belonging to the Global Majority are not 'minorities'.

It should be noted that previously published ISF impact reports used language and terms which reported on 'BAME' (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity) grantees, which at the time also included those identifying as 'White - Other' (e.g. White Irish, White European) who are from minority and marginalised backgrounds within the UK, so the comparison from reporting period to reporting period is not like-for-like.

³ Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding up and down to the nearest whole number.

Creative, Collaborative and Audience Impacts



93%

of grantees agree that ISF helped them reach new audiences



92%

agree ISF has helped them increase their international profile, 55% agreeing strongly. 61% agree ISF has helped them sustain their music careers (only 8% disagreed)



25%

of grantees identified as LGBTQIA+



12%

of grantees report having a long-term health condition and/or impairment that affects their day-to-day life.



5%

of grantees identified as deaf and/or disabled.



82%

agree ISF helped them develop as a live act



71%

agree ISF has supported ongoing international collaborations



92%

said ISF was making a difference for music creators from economically diverse backgrounds, 57% said it was making a significant difference



92%

also felt ISF was making a difference for Women music creators



90%

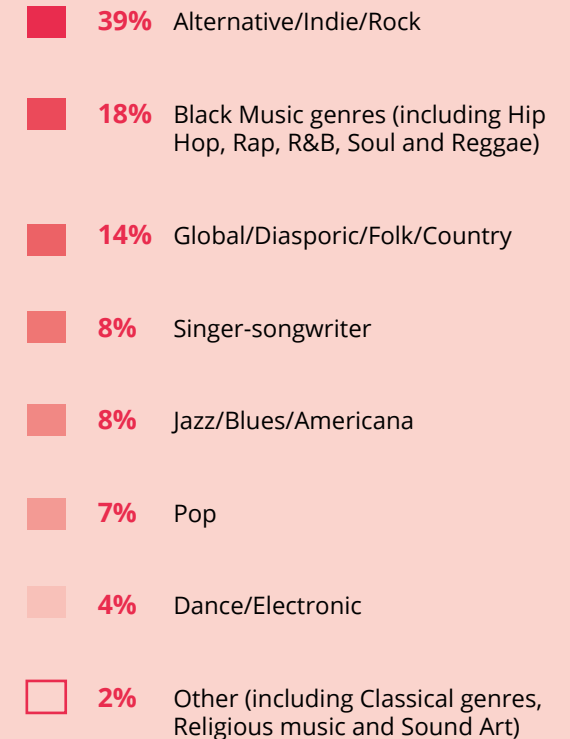
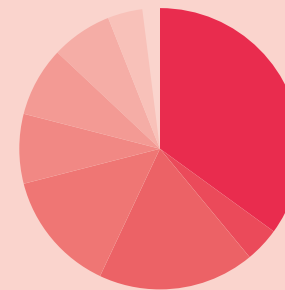
felt a difference was being made for music creators from different parts of the country



87%

felt a difference was being made for creators from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Genre



THE IMPORTANCE OF SHOWCASING



Honeyglaze

International showcasing plays a pivotal role in the career development of emerging music creators by providing a platform to present their work to key industry professionals across borders. Unlike traditional touring or live performances, showcases are curated, business-focused events where music creators perform in front of delegates including promoters, record labels, festival bookers and media in a concentrated B2B environment. These events are instrumental in forging business relationships and networking opportunities that help music creators secure live bookings, label partnerships and other business, and connect with those who can help take them to market in new territories.

Showcasing live in international markets is especially important for ensuring career longevity. International showcases and other face-to-face activities such as

song-writing camps, allow music creators to nurture and deepen relationships with a range of stakeholders across the industry. Showcase events also enable music creators to reach new audiences in person, fostering loyalty and building their fanbase. The personal interaction with audiences in different markets, combined with the confidence gained from performing in different cultural contexts, is essential for developing resilience, stagecraft and “tourability,” which are key factors in becoming a successful international artist.

International showcase opportunities are also critical to provide music creators with access to different markets. This is particularly important for genres that might be less mainstream in the UK domestic market but enjoy a wide listenership abroad. Recognition abroad through strategic showcasing in turn often translates into a surge in domestic popularity and business opportunities. In addition, music creators returning to the UK often bring back new knowledge and perspectives – of connections, audiences, trends and different musical cultures across the world, which in turn supports their longer-term sustainability and enriches the local music ecology.

Media, trade press and social media also play a significant role in maximising artist exposure at international showcases. Press coverage and influencer attention amplify the impact of these performances, boosting music creators' profiles far beyond the showcase event itself. Being selected for a showcase offers an endorsement, signalling to the music industry and audiences that the artist is export-ready, which opens doors to additional opportunities, funding and support.

Writing camps are also critical for songwriters and producers, with ISF the only Fund supporting this. The impacts from writing camps can take longer to come to fruition but they have been equally transformative for grantees careers. Lostboy (Peter Rycroft) who was supported to attend the SXSW writing camp in 2018, this year co-wrote hits for Ellie Goulding and Kylie (and in 2024 collected a Grammy Award for his Kylie collaboration). He signed a publishing deal with Warner Chappell Music and more recently, in 2022 signed a global deal with Sony Music Publishing.

As demand for international showcasing increases, these events have become crucial in breaking into competitive markets. They offer a strategic gateway for music creators to expand their reach, enter new territories, and accelerate their careers on a global scale. By providing access to key decision-makers, international showcasing serves as a vital trade, collaboration and exchange accelerator in today's interconnected music industry.

“Simply put, without the ISF there are several fantastic opportunities offered to artists to help grow their careers that they would have to decline due to the financial strain of the costs of playing. The ISF is responsible for the ability to say yes, and all of the outcomes that can be afforded from international showcases.”

Charlie Williams, Manager, Honeyglaze

INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASE FUND – A PARTNERSHIP

The mix of partners now involved in ISF represents a collaboration of leading music industry expertise.

With Creative Scotland, Wales Arts International and Arts Council of Northern Ireland support, music creators in the devolved UK Nations have access to the Fund. The UK-wide approach has fostered greater coordination and collaboration, bringing creative and business benefits to the sector as a whole. This UK-wide approach also helps foster access to music creators working in different languages, including Welsh and Gaelic, as well as genre diversity from different nations and regions. This helps to promote the distinctive qualities of different music culture, genres and scenes from across the UK.

The expert award panel meet to review applications for SXSW and agree awards. Otherwise, applications are considered on a weekly basis by partners. The ease of application and swift turnaround and payment is crucial and much valued by music creators who need to respond quickly to showcasing invitations.

ISF is a critical part of a package of support from PRS Foundation to support the journey of emerging music creators. Other PRS Foundation funds such as the PPL Momentum Music Fund, the Open Fund and Women Make Music, plus direct grants from other partners - Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Wales Arts International (and Arts Council of Wales), Arts Council of Northern Ireland and British Council - provide small injections of investment at crucial points in a music creator's career.

"PRS Foundation have been an invaluable part of building my career - from being selected as part of Keychange 2023 and the international opportunities this created - to receiving the International Showcase Fund to support and enhance my performance at MUTEK in Montreal. I am so grateful for this support and this year my international career has flourished with multiple sold-out shows generating real profitable income from overseas." **Halina Rice**



Halina Rice

CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASING AND MUSIC EXPORT



FARA

"Support from the ISF and PRS Foundation has been invaluable to musicians across the board, especially in the last few years. It has provided a safety net during a long period of financial uncertainty that has allowed musicians to remain focussed on their primary objective, making music. Long may it continue." **FARA**

UK music creators and the wider music industry have and still do face ...significant challenges, which include:

- The impact of Covid 19, with levels of international showcasing and touring still to recover to pre-pandemic levels.
- Music creators often receive no fee for showcasing. It is an opportunity to present themselves and their music internationally that they are expected to fund themselves. While it is a mark of recognition for music creators to receive invites to be part of international showcases, for those in the early stages of their career it is often almost impossible to self-fund trips to showcase events.
- Increasing cost of US visas and time to get the visas, that can now take up to six months.
- Brexit – increasing cost of touring, sometimes requiring visas and carnets to move equipment for every European country. Plus, a shift in the collaboration priorities of international partners – with the UK less of a priority since its departure from the European Union, and the end

of partnership involvement and full participation in Creative Europe programmes (for which PRS Foundation and other partners are in some cases having to contribute towards in order to maintain access to transformative programmes).

- Performing at showcases without a visa, while just about still possible, limits the chance to build on the opportunity with a tour/other showcases in the same territory. With the climate crisis and increasing touring costs it is all the more important for music creators to build a tour around a showcase rather than travelling for one-off events. This is to ensure a more environmentally responsible approach and one which is more cost efficient – reducing the need for repeat costs for visas, insurance, hires and more. Yet for most music creators, despite the desire to efficiently build out from a showcase, the reality is that such opportunities are limited.
- Being a support on a tour is especially difficult to make pay. Fees are low and music creators have to rely on merchandise sales to make it viable, with some venues taking a significant cut. Opportunities to participate in showcase events as part of the tour can tip the balance in terms of making the process worthwhile as part of a longer-term strategy to build profile and a sustainable level of commercial success.
- Too few music creators have access to the type of knowledge and connections which participation in international showcase events can bring. Exposure to different trends and audience profiles, plus to the diverse ways the music ecosystem operates in different countries, is increasingly a privilege for a minority of music creators.

Studies by music industry partners, confirm these challenges:

- UK Music, in their 2023 This is Music report note: *“Brexit related impacts, the cost-of-living crisis, and the lingering impact of the pandemic are all causing problems. Music creators, in particular, are bearing the brunt of these factors with those earning £25,000 and under losing 49% of their EU earnings.”*
- A recent study by Musicians Union, also found 72% of musicians said their income from work in the EU had decreased since Brexit.
- There has been a 74% decline in artists touring to Europe post-Brexit, as highlighted by David Martin, CEO, Featured Artists Coalition in his evidence to The House of Commons, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, March 2024.

“Having the ISF support during the pandemic was really important and impactful for me as an artist. It helped me still be a part of the global stage during the lockdowns and we have been able to develop relationships made during this time and have since been able to tour in the countries that we connected with.” **Elles Bailey**

DEMAND FOR ISF



Demand for ISF continues to outstrip funds available. Despite the fact that eligible creators must be ‘export-ready’ with an official invite to take part in official events to be deemed eligible, with the increasing challenges to international showcasing, the need for support from ISF is only set to grow. Between April 2019 and March 2024 ISF received 1,096 applications. A significant 40% of those requests were met with 441 grant awards made: An average grant of £2,814.

A total of £3,953,370 was requested and £1,243,668 was awarded, an average of nearly £250,000 a year. While the need and demand for support remains high, the competition for funds to invest grows.

FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS IMPACTS

Electric Jalaba



The music industry contributed £6.7 billion to the UK economy during 2022 in terms of gross value added (GVA). Exports topped £4 billion, in the year the music industry returned after the COVID-19 pandemic. (This is Music 2023, UK Music).

ISF is a significant international trade and investment initiative, ensuring that music export income increases and that foreign partners are encouraged to invest in the UK music industry. The ESNS (European Talent Exchange Program) is a great example of this. At the time of the report four of the top five most booked artists across the exchange were from the UK and funded by the International Showcase Fund, totalling 39 additional European festival bookings for UK artists across Europe. ISF delivers these economic outcomes through an approach which also facilitates cultural exchange. UK music creators and partners such as managers and labels are able to build relations with their peers internationally which enriches creative exchange, fosters a sense of a wider music community, and boosts confidence. ISF supports a process of international cultural relations through which trade follows.

ISF grants have considerable impact for the grantees and their careers, and the music industry more broadly. This remains the case despite the significant challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic travel bans and increasing costs across the board, over the last five years. The impact for the music economy has been similar to previous rounds of ISF but taking five years rather than three years to deliver. The support from ISF for music creators is even more critical with the increased challenges to showcasing, exchange and exporting music.

"ISF made international showcasing possible, and this led to new record deals, and a workable touring market in the US and Canada."

Neil Pearson, Manager, John Smith

ISF Investment

- Between April 2019 and March 2024, ISF has **invested over £1.2 million to support 441 music creators, bands and songwriters** to take their first steps into international territories.
- A recurring sentiment across the music creators interviewed and via the survey for this report is that they **would not have been able to participate in the international showcases without the support of ISF:**

"The ISF helped me get my band to Nashville for AmericanaFest 2023, where I made industry connections not only from North America but all over the world. Without the ISF the costs to showcase with my band would have been too much for me to afford, and I would not have been able to secure the international gigs and expansion of my team that resulted from showcasing at the conference."

Simeon Hammond Dallas

Total Revenue

- Over the five years 2019-2024, ISF investment has generated a cumulative increase of **£6.7m for the UK economy**.
- For **every £1 of total ISF investment**, music creators **generated an additional £5.36 in revenues**, delivering a return on investment (ROI) of over 500%.
- For **every £1 of Department for Business and Trade (DBT) contribution**, music creators **generated £26.90 in total revenues**.

Export Revenue

"Without support from PRS Foundation and ISF we would not have been able to tour and play shows abroad. By doing this we are now releasing music with an international label, selling our records and merchandise internationally and are booking further shows and tours abroad." **Shovel Dance Collective**

- ISF investment between April 2019 to March 2024 has generated a cumulative increase in export income of **over £3.2m for the music industry and UK economy**.
- The total **export revenue** of ISF music creators **increased by 111%** after ISF support, from £2.9 to £6.2 million.
- For **every £1 of ISF investment**, music creators **generated an additional £2.60 in total export revenues**, delivering an ROI of 260%.
- For **every £1 of Department for Business and Trade's (DBT) contribution**, music creators **generated £13.10 in export revenues**.

"ISF has been instrumental in bridging the gap between being a UK artist ... Walt Disco, secured their US booking agents at SXSW. Without ISF, attending SXSW would have been financially unattainable. Since then, Walt Disco has been invited to perform at Austin City Limits, headlined sold-out shows in New York and Los Angeles, and is set to play a festival in Salt Lake City next year. Thanks to the ISF, the US has become a viable market for their growth and success." **Hamish Fingland, Manager, Walt Disco**

Business Impacts

"The International Showcase Fund helped me through financial difficulties, to help get me to LA for the Sync Mission Song Camp. On this camp I worked with some amazing musicians and producers, and had the opportunity to work on some specific briefs for film and television. Without the ISF I would never have been able to afford to go on the camp, and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity I was given." **Fiona O'Kane**

- **73% of grantees say they have developed new business** on the back of the contacts they made through their ISF grant.

"I was selected as an Official Showcase Artist for Folk Alliance International in 2020. The conference was in New Orleans in front of delegates mostly from North America ... being 22 years old and

being an unsigned artist, I simply didn't have the ability to self-fund the flights, fees and cost of the conference. Thankfully the ISF was available and allowed me to showcase at an event where I'd go on to meet delegates that have since given me work." **Iona Fyfe**

- **64% of grantees have been able to develop the size of their team** from new connections and increased revenue.

"Without support from the ISF and PRS Foundation, we [Taff Rapids] would not have had the finances to travel to the US and take part in the IBMA World Of Bluegrass Showcase. Participating in this festival (the most important industry festival in bluegrass) has completely transformed the band's future, presenting us with opportunities to perform internationally and to build a team that will help us grow exponentially over the next few years." **David Grubb, Taff Rapids**

- **61% agree ISF has made them more able to sustain a career in the music industry**. This highlights that the impacts of showcasing are not immediate, that relationships can take time to develop and that the music industry is a precarious business. But for many the support from ISF and the opportunity this has given to break into new territories has been life changing.

"ISF and the support from PRS Foundation have been incredibly important to my journey as a music creator. Thanks to their funding, I had the opportunity to perform not only at an international showcase in Montreal, Canada, in 2022, but also at several other gigs around the festival. This experience allowed me to meet and share stages with talented international artists and connect with key industry professionals. The feedback and advice I received from these encounters have been invaluable, helping to shape my future projects and career." **Kizzy Crawford**

- **21% of grantees have become full-time music creators since their ISF grants**. 43% are still only working part-time on their music, again demonstrating the precariousness and challenges that music creators face even if they are getting international recognition.

"ISF helped Electric Jalaba to showcase at Womex in 2022. Through this process it helped us to become more professional in our presentation and subsequently opened doors for us with agents in various European countries." **Oliver Kenn, Electric Jalaba**

CREATIVE, COLLABORATIVE AND AUDIENCE IMPACTS



ISF has enabled music creators to develop creatively, collaborate and expand their audiences.

- **93% of grantees agree that ISF helped them reach new audiences.**
- **Average live audience size for ISF music creators has gone from 370 pre-ISF to 1,700.**

"PRS Foundation and ISF partially funded the costs of playing Reeperbahn Festival in 2021, the very start of us developing our international audience, which has grown far greater and quicker than if we had not received the funding. Today, we meet audience members who discovered us at Reeperbahn Festival and who have continued to follow our musical journey, and for this we are incredibly grateful." **Hannah Merrick, King Hannah**

- Making international industry connections is a critical part of international showcasing from festival bookers, to record labels, agents and publishers. **90% of grantees agree ISF has enabled them to develop their international industry connections.**

"ISF has allowed us to take advantage of opportunities at overseas festivals that we would not have been able to do so without its support. We have been able to travel as a full band, as opposed to playing solo, if at all. We have built significant contacts with US Labels, Publishers and Bookers accordingly."

Keith Wyatt, Manager, St Catherine's Child

- **92% agree ISF has helped them increase their international profile, 55% agreeing strongly. 61% agree ISF has helped them sustain their music careers (only 8% disagreed).**
- **82% agree ISF helped them develop as a live act.**
- **71% agree ISF has supported ongoing international collaborations.**

Many creators talk of the confidence they have gained from the positive response to their performances on the international stage and the inspiration that travelling to different parts of the world and connecting with other artist gives them:

"I am beyond grateful for the ISF. I have completed a small tour in South Africa and Eswatini, two places I would have never been able to afford to even visit as a British-Moroccan girl from West London. I have gained confidence as an artist, gained new inspirations and created meaningful connections with artists and industry professionals that I will carry long after coming back home ... It was a life changing trip both personally and professionally so thank you once again." **Rita Kamale**

ISF brings diverse music talent from across the UK to international networks and of course to audiences. This includes genres which increasingly converge the **diverse cultural influences of contemporary UK music**, such as those from the 'Global Majority' in Asia, Africa, Caribbean and Latin America. UK music is a syncretic landscape of diverse influences, with the ISF boosting awareness of this diversity in key markets and, critically, fostering opportunities for music creators to connect with audiences, creative peers and industry professionals in places which are connected to their heritage. There is considerable scope to grow ISF as a platform for an increasingly diverse and globally influenced UK music sector. The PRS Foundation is helping to generate a pipeline of music talent into the ISF through its wider portfolio of activities and funds, including its partnership with the British Council which fosters connections between a diverse UK and diaspora communities across the world.

"Without the ISF, I would never have been able to speak on a panel and perform in South Africa this early on in my career. It not only enabled me to make connections across the globe, but also to connect to my African origins first hand for the first time, for which I am deeply grateful for." **KEYAH/BLU**

ISF gives music creators and their teams not just a financial boost but also acts as a **seal of approval, giving an initial confidence boost before their international presentations.** Securing the grant takes away some of the anxiety of financing international trips, many of which would not be possible without the grants. **ISF allows the music creators to focus on presenting their music.**

“One of my main aims on my trip to LUCFest was to reach audiences outside the western-centric sphere. The showcase I played at the venue BB Art was a packed show, full of Taiwanese music lovers and other Thai musicians who performed. This was the first time I ever played to an Asian audience and it felt quite personal and emotional for many different reasons. This was exactly what I had hoped for! ... plus merch sold at the end ... [I also] connected with the co-founder of the festival who passed on a list of contacts for me to get in touch with and I got to chat to James Minor from SXSW (who also came to my performance) and who will be programming the stage I will be playing next year. I also connected with a programmer from Singapore part of BayBeats who runs a series of international showcase events at the Esplanade.” **Helen Ganya**

The recent ISF partnership with British Council, opening up access for music creators to an increased numbers of showcases in Africa, Latin America and across Asia, has also helped more grantees make connections in countries, territories and continents which are tied to their heritage.

“Without the ISF I would not have been able to showcase internationally this year. I usually have to perform solo because of minimal gig fees, but with ISF support I was able to bring my band and pay my musicians a small fee to accompany me. This meant that I felt my music was showcased in its truest and strongest form.”

Iona Zajac

The impact of ISF is also felt domestically, with increased profile internationally bringing increased audiences, industry attention and opportunities back in the UK. It also generates new knowledge – e.g. on international trends and opportunities; and new collaborations with peers across the world. In turn this enriches the UK music sector and supports the sustainability of artists’ careers.

“Thanks to the ISF, Baby Brave was able to travel to Breakout West festival in Canada. The trip led to forging some connections with industry people and Canadian musicians. Thanks to this, we were offered UK festival slots.” **Emily Warren, Manager, Baby Brave**

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND REACH



Despite ISF being available only to music creators who have been invited to industry showcases overseas (or occasionally in the UK where international industry will be present), the Fund is successfully reaching a broad range of grantees from all backgrounds. Music creators across genres are being supported through ISF, alongside women and music creators of Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse heritage. ISF is also reaching beyond the traditional music heartland, London, into Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and different English regions. This is testament to ISF’s work and partnerships with a diverse range of advisors, ambassadors and partners which enhances awareness, suitability and access to the Fund.

Overall, between 2019 and 2024 there has been an increase in the diversity of music creators ISF has invested in:

- **67% of grantees were based outside London at the time of their application.** Between 2019 and 2024:
 - 8% of grantees were based in Northern Ireland
 - 16% in Scotland
 - 13% in Wales.
 - Within England, 46% of grantees were based outside London. This is an increase since 2016-2019.
- ISF continues to reflect genre trends, with **18% of grantees working in Black Music genres**, 14% in global/diasporic/folk and 8% in Jazz/blues.
- **33% of ISF grantees identified as belonging to the Global Majority.** There have been very slight reductions in ISF awards to all global majority ethnic groups, apart from Asian and Asian British grantees, where there has been a 0.5% increase in ISF grants.

- **57% of grantees identify as Woman, Gender-diverse music creators or are in Mixed Gender Groups.** This is a significant increase on previous rounds. Between 2019 and 2024, 39% of grantees identify as Women, 14% are in Mixed Gender Groups and 4% as Gender-diverse creators (including non-binary and gender queer).
- **25% of grantees identified as LGBTQIA+.**
- **12% of grantees report having a long-term health condition and/or impairment that affects their day-to-day life.** 5% identified as deaf and/or disabled.

"The industry is such a closed shop particularly for artists from less well-off backgrounds or those of us with disabilities ... besides the financial support it was also really great to have the contacts with the PRS [Foundation] team who were incredibly supportive. After the pitch, people were coming up and contacting me about my music and this has continued. I feel that this support is key in increasing diversity in the music industry in general." **Liza Bec**

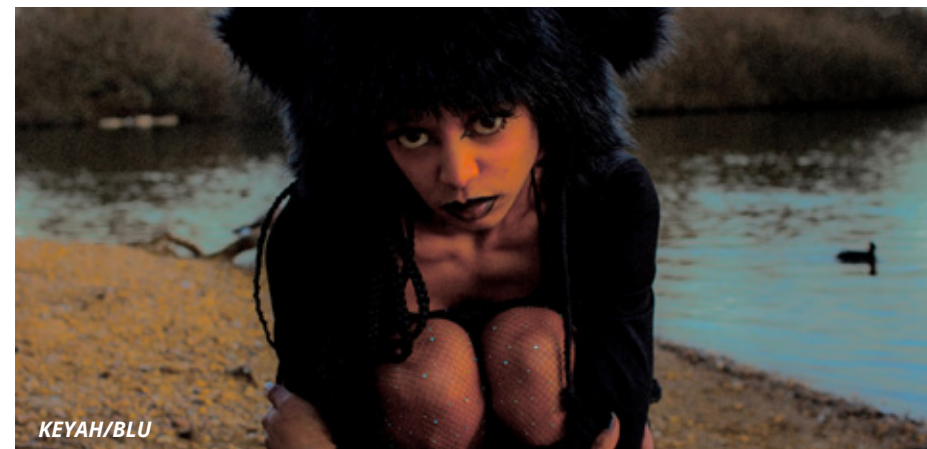
ISF and PRS Foundation are hugely valued for opening access and supporting emerging creative music talent in all its diversity. This includes building opportunities for international collaboration and exchange, so critical for music creators' creative and professional development and enabling them to build long-term sustainable careers.

"At Eurosonic Festival, where we were able to build valuable and longstanding contacts to support our career, as well as having a budget for the recordings and promotion of our releases. ISF and PRS Foundation support is especially crucial for artists who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and don't have access to any of these opportunities without financial help." **CIEL**

It is clear that from a grantee perspective, ISF is shaping a fairer, more equitable music industry, which is a strategic priority of the PRS Foundation. Of the grantees surveyed, who stated a view:

- **92% said ISF was making a difference for music creators from economically diverse backgrounds,** 57% said it was making a significant difference.
- **92% also felt ISF was making a difference for women music creators.**
- **90% felt a difference was being made for music creators from different parts of the country.**
- **87% felt a difference was being made for creators from ethnically diverse backgrounds.**

WIDER ISF VALUE



"ISF is more important than ever with growing international touring expenses making it almost impossible for most artists to transport their shows outside of the UK. We need more help or British music exports will cease to exist beyond major label releases." **Gengahr**

Without ISF grants, hundreds of music creators each year would simply not have the chance to showcase their music and talent, make vital international connections and build international audiences. ISF is filling a significant funding gap for music creators taking those first international steps:

- Some grantees talk of ISF **'catapulting' or 'turbocharging' their careers:** 54% say they would not have achieved the outcomes they have at this stage in their career without ISF. 30% say they would have achieved some but not all of the outcomes.
- Grantees funded before Covid lockdowns talk of not being able to fully capitalise on the connections made. Those funded for virtual showcases during lockdowns are hugely grateful for having an opportunity to showcase when so much of the music industry was shut down, and for the profile this gave.

"Getting the International Showcase Fund in 2021 during lock down enabled me to participate at SXSW online with full production and fair remuneration for my musicians and crew as we worked hard to create an absolutely banging live stream performance for the world. It was a great opportunity to reach a wide new audience through the long-established SXSW platform and one that I'm very grateful for."

Lau.ra

- Grantees highlight the significance of playing live in front of an audience and industry professionals in a new territory as helping test the market and build international market awareness. For many this has led directly to tours and festival bookings.
- In a world of streaming and online content, building a relationship with audiences live is still vital. Showcasing through ISF provides some of the first connections with live audiences in new territories for grantees.
- Showcasing, supported through ISF, also provides critical connections to other music creators which often leads to collaborations and support gig opportunities.
- Showcasing does not happen in isolation. It is underpinned by opportunities to meet and exchange with other music professionals, to learn about different trends and music ecosystems, and to build insight into how to reach audiences and build sustainable careers. This has a direct impact on individual music creators participating in ISF-funded activities, and an indirect impact where the knowledge and connections come back to the UK, where they exchange insights and make introductions as part of local networks. In addition, PRS Foundation generates new knowledge with every ISF activity, and it brings this knowledge into the UK through the information and advice it shares and through the partnerships it fosters.
- The support and expertise of the PRS Foundation team and ISF partners is also widely praised by grantees. From support with the application process, to the swift payments and advice on securing visas and pre-showcase preparedness, to on the ground support at some of the big events like SXSW. Plus ISF-supported music creators benefit from follow-up advice from PRS Foundation and partners to maximise the role and impact of connections made at the event.
- For development partners such as Jazz re:refreshed, ISF is a vital part of development work they do with music creators, They would not be able to take as many creators to international showcases without ISF.
- The Fund's support has been significant to the UK R&B scene for creators that otherwise would not have the access on their own – particularly travelling to the US.

"The ISF was crucial in getting me established on the European jazz scene as well as the international stage. Without it, I just wouldn't have been able to showcase my music." **Camilla George**

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY



Elles Bailey

ISF plays a key role in advancing the UK's cultural and economic interests globally. It helps broker and activate cultural relations in different countries, which in turn supports trade and diplomacy. This is particularly important post-Brexit, with its additional restrictions on mobility and trade, plus diminished UK presence in international cultural networks and programmes. By helping UK music creators break into new international markets, ISF champions the best of UK culture to global tastemakers, decision-makers and buyers, reinforcing the UK's influence and fostering cross-cultural understanding.

"Partners' focus on promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion through the ISF (and other PRS Foundation funds) help to strengthen the UK's global image as an inclusive and welcoming nation. The Fund has focused on supporting music creators from underrepresented backgrounds across gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, language and geography, ensuring that UK music better reflects the full diversity of its population. By supporting music creators from all four nations of the UK — England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — ISF highlights a broader spectrum of UK music, challenging traditional stereotypes of what "UK music" should sound like and feel like.

By prioritising inclusivity, ISF has helped break down barriers for music creators making sure their voices are heard on the global stage, enriching the global music scene and boosting the UK's reputation as a hub of creativity and innovation.

This commitment to diversity also aligns with the UK's broader soft power strategy, promoting the country as a forward-thinking, inclusive and diverse cultural leader.

Moreover, ISF efforts contribute to economic growth by opening new markets and increasing export income. This, in turn, supports a pipeline of globally competitive music creators who can thrive on the international stage. By fostering cross cultural exchange and elevating diverse voices, ISF plays a vital role in reinforcing the UK's position as a cultural powerhouse and in shaping a more inclusive global music industry.

But the UK cannot be complacent:

"The UK's competitors continue to step up their investment in music exports and are now investing far more than the UK. South Korea, Australia, Canada, and the Nordic region have all set up music export offices and are making significant gains. The UK has some successful export schemes (International Showcase Fund and Music Export Growth Scheme), but these are not as generous as international competitors' schemes, nor do they, in themselves, represent an export strategy. The UK must not get left behind." (This is Music 2023, UK Music)

Other nations are not only providing higher levels of targeted financial support to provide a platform for their music creators in priority international markets; they are also providing wider development support such as training, intelligence on market trends, and brokered connections to labels, managers and opinion-formers to boost profile, reach and impact. This has in turn diversified international music markets and supported non-English speaking acts to flourish.

In addition, peers and 'competitors' within the European Union and in neighbouring countries benefit from participation in the Creative Europe programme. The UK left the programme as part of the Brexit process, although other third countries contribute to and benefit from the programme. Creative Europe provides investment across all areas of creative development, including for artist mobility, exchange and showcasing. Such programmes are working to boost cultural exchange and trade, as well as nurturing conditions for skills, enterprise,

access to finance and innovation in different creative sectors. Participating countries are at a competitive and cultural advantage compared to the UK, with music creators able to access a more comprehensive set of support for international working.

PRS Foundation has worked hard to retain EU connections and to ensure UK creators gain exposure and connections in the EU and beyond. For example, PRS Foundation and some ISF partners contribute to the ESNS Exchange programme to ensure European festivals are incentivised to book UK acts, and the Foundation is a member of the European Music Exports Exchange Programme. PRS Foundation is a co-founding partner of Keychange, which campaigns for and supports gender equity and inclusivity in the music industry. In this context, the PRS Foundation is working to unlock EU connections with the UK as a third country. However, without full access to Creative Europe, the UK is operating from a position of constraint and deficit with UK music talent unable to access the trade, exchange and cultural value of expansive European programmes.

The international landscape for UK music creators is both more competitive and diverse. This will require UK partners to build more integrated and coordinated strategies which couple the development opportunities of individual music creators with wider profile-raising and relationship building that boosts the UK's cultural and music credentials as a whole.

"Without the help of PRS Foundation, I would not have been as far along our musical career journey as I am now. It's imperative these funds are available in the current climate to enable music to keep developing and keep music interesting. For me a lot of the best music comes from unlikely and even disadvantaged places, so funding is vital for that to continue." Minas



WHAT NEXT FOR ISF AND INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASING?



ISF plays a vital role in the international development of UK music, supporting music creator development, trade and cultural exchange. This is in an increasingly challenging and fast-changing environment, especially for emerging creators and independent teams. The success of the ISF lies in its simplicity and clear mission to build international readiness for UK music. But in such a challenging environment, the ISF continues to adapt and will require constant renewal. It will also benefit from renewal and development of the wider strategic support landscape for UK music export and exchange, in an ever-more competitive global market. Grantees, managers, labels and partners to the ISF have identified ways ISF can adapt to ensure its continued relevance and impact. Headline recommendations range from practical considerations to more strategic and holistic solutions:

✓ **Additional targeted funding to boost ISF Impact:**

While ISF funding has a direct impact on the ability of a music creator to showcase internationally, additional funding to support preparation, complex needs and as a bridge between different showcase activities and international touring would be welcome and effective. Additional funding would enable PRS Foundation to explore and implement new elements which could include:

- Additional funding to support the development of promotional materials.
- Funding to travel with merchandise.
- Advice and additional funding for grantees travelling with families (as per best practice developed through PRS Foundation's Keychange initiative)

- 'Bridge' funding to support touring catalysed by ISF funding
- Follow-up meetings and events as a 'wrap around' for ISF funding
- Additional support for team members.

Put simply, larger individual investments are envisaged as more likely to support export and sustainable exchange. This might entail fewer individual grants with a larger grant amount; or preferably, a larger overall ISF investment fund which would be 'spread less thinly'.

✓ **Building a community of grantees to facilitate knowledge exchange and boost confidence:**

A peer-to-peer support group is a recurring suggestion to bolster a sense of community and make first steps to international showcase less overwhelming. Grantees are supportive of post-grant experience sharing sessions to build a community of veteran grantees and pass on takeaways. In addition, grantees and, where relevant, their managers would value a greater level of post-grant engagement to ensure a more lasting (and less transactional) relationship. This does often happen on an informal level, but grantees would welcome a more sustained relationship to learn and build from the showcase.

✓ **Boosting export readiness through ISF:**

ISF does have a direct effect on the export readiness of many grantees, but for some funded music creators, the impact is more focused on giving them a platform from which they can build relations and exposure as an early step toward export readiness. This also varies by genre, type of artist, and where they are based, with some music creators lacking the professional structure and team to immediately bounce into export readiness. In turn, this influences the type of showcase where an artist can leverage their 'export readiness'. For example, at a major event such as SXSW, they will need a team and strategy to maximise exposure and facilitate connections – at the event, beforehand, and as a follow-up. For smaller or more 'boutique' events, export readiness requires less structure, capacity and investment, often suiting more emergent music creators or specific genres.

In addition, the nature of export readiness is shifting. For example, many music creators already have an international profile through streaming, with participation at showcase events a way to consolidate and grow their profile. Plus, for some music creators, export readiness means they are ready to tour, for some it means ready to sell (records, merchandise and downloads), and for some it means ready to provide services (e.g. as a songwriter or producer). As the music industry continues to change, ISF will need to respond to this diverse nature of export readiness. Indeed, the ways ISF facilitates cultural exchange and collaboration, generates new knowledge and supports a wider music ecosystem to develop, meaning that its impact goes beyond export to sector development.

The Bigger Picture

This report has demonstrated the ongoing impact of the ISF for music creators from across the UK. ISF has made a real difference to their exposure, confidence, connections and export readiness. However, it is a small intervention in increasingly harsh conditions for UK international relations and trade. To maximise its impact and more importantly to support UK music talent to flourish across the world, a set of structural, regulatory and policy barriers need attention. For example:

A Level Playing Field?

Without full access to Creative Europe, UK music creators are at a structural disadvantage to their peers and competitors across Europe. Opportunities for facilitated and appropriately funded exchange and showcasing with international peers and competitors are not as extensive for UK music creators. We too often stand to the sidelines or have to ask and pay to be involved. We are also missing wider EU programmes which reaffirm the importance of the status of the artist – such as in fair pay, working conditions, mobility and ethics. *Rejoining Creative Europe or at a minimum contributing to co-funded Creative Europe programmes will help ameliorate some of the more damaging effects of Brexit.*

Red Tape

Visa application costs and administration for the two biggest markets for UK music export are hefty and cumbersome. For the US, it is extremely expensive and not sustainable as an early career artist to obtain visas. Music creators can showcase on an ESTA at only a small number of events and in very specific circumstances. For the European Union post-Brexit means music creators and their team need to navigate separate mobility and tax systems for each country they intend to perform in and often have merchandise stuck at the border due to customs barriers. An additional cost is the burden of withholding tax on tours – e.g. 20% for Germany – which limits any hope of profit for some music creators. *A European wide cultural touring agreement would ease the burden on UK music creators and facilitate stronger trade and collaboration across the UK's Creative Industries.*

A UK Music Export Office?

Unlike competitor countries, the lack of a UK-wide export office for music means opportunities for coordination and consolidation are missed. Individual cities, devolved nations and some combined authorities in England are, as a response, considering ways to 'go it alone' with dedicated music export programmes. But, as welcome as these developments are, they will lack the scale and profile of a UK-wide approach. In its Manifesto⁵, UK Music is calling for the development of a well-resourced, independent music export office. *This can be the driving force in promoting UK music*

internationally, connecting and adding value to initiatives such as ISF and the Music Export Growth Scheme (MEGS), and catalysing new activities which boost exchange, collaboration and trade, as well as attract inward investment and generate spillover effects across the UK Creative Industries.

Environmental Responsibility

The ISF brings people together in a live, face-to-face context. This is so vital for exchange, collaboration and trade. Without such opportunities, many music creators would be creatively and commercially constrained. However, while travel will remain an important part of a sustainable career for many music creators, the ISF and other international-facing programmes, can help build a more environmentally responsible approach. This can include bridging funding to support tours to take place as part of the same trip as a showcase, thus reducing the need for back-and-forth travel between the UK and key markets. It can include support for carbon off-setting of international travel, responsible touring models with a radically reduced carbon footprint, and a stronger digital dimension to allow for online exchange and showcasing as part of a wider programme inclusive of in-person. Plus, music creators and their teams are in need of a constant process of environmental education and support so that the UK music sector is a leader in environmental responsibility and climate action.

Improving Coordination at home and abroad

While demonstrably supporting diverse music development across the UK's nations and regions, devolved approaches to music development and funding do face challenges of coordination, especially where priorities differ. ISF is a good example of coordinated pan-UK support for music, with different funders showing shared purpose and focus. However, this can always be improved, especially in an increasingly complex and competitive international environment. *With 33% of ISF grantees (46% of England based grantees) still based in London more industry wide support also needs to be in place to ensure that creators in English regions have sustainable pathways to international markets.*

⁵ <https://www.ukmusic.org/research-reports/a-manifesto-for-music/>



Simeon Hammond Dallas

AWARDS



John Smith

Adjua - Welsh Music Prize Triskel Award 2024

Adwaith - Welsh Music Prize 2022

Ashley Henry - Jazz Japan Album of the Year 2020

Balimaya Project - Songlines Newcomer Award 2022

Beabadoobee - NME Radar award 2020

Becca Starr - Best Hip Hop - Scottish Alternative Music Awards 2022

BEMZ - Scottish Alternative Music Awards 2019, BBC Introducing Scottish Act of the Year 2022, DJ Mags Best of British Breakthrough MC/ Vocalist 2022

Bethan Lloyd - God is in the TV Neutron Prize 2023

Big Joanie - Loud Women Mercury Prize 2023

Black Country, New Road - Libera Award 2023

Brighde Chaimbeul - BBC Radio 2 Horizon Award 2019

Brooke Combe - Breakthrough Female Scottish Music Awards 2021

Brown Penny - Led by Ivors Award Winner Cassie Kinoshi

Cara Dillon - BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards 6+ times

Cara Hammond - Best Songwriter NYC Independent Music Awards 2019

Chalk - Live act of the year NI Music Prize 2023

CHERYM - Oh Yeah Contender Award NI Music Prize 2019

Curse Of Lono - Bob Harris Emerging Artist Award, UK Americana Awards 2019

Daniel Casimir - Jazz FM Awards Instrumentalist of the Year 2021, Parliamentary Jazz Awards, Jazz Album of the Year 2022, Arts Foundation Jazz Composition award winner

Dea Matrona - Best Song Northern Ireland Music Prize 2021, ATL Contender Northern Ireland Music Prize 2021

Dead Pony - Live Spotlight Award, Scottish Music Awards 2023

Dean Owens - UK Song of the Year Award, Americana Awards 2019

Demi Marriner - Bob Harris Emerging Artist Award, Americana Awards 2021

Desta French - Latin UK Awards Best Alternative Act 2019

DoomCannon - Jazz FM awards with Steam Down

Dry Cleaning - Grammy Award, Best recording package 2024

Ego Ella May - Jazz FM Awards, Vocalist of the Year 2021, Best Jazz Act MOBO Awards 2020

Elephant Sessions - BBC Scots Trad Music Award, Album of the year 2022,

Elles Bailey - UK Americana Awards Live artist of the year 2022, Artist of the Year 2023. UKBlues Awards Artist of the Year, Vocalist of the Year and Album of the Year 2023

Elma Orkestra and Ryan Vail - Northern Ireland Music Prize 2019

Emily Mae Winters - Laurel Canyon Music Awards Best EP

Emma-Jean Thackray - Album of the Year, Jazz FM Awards 2022

Fergus McCreadie - Scottish Album of the Year Award 2022, Scottish Jazz Award for Best Album 2022

Ferris & Sylvester - UK Americana Awards Emerging Artist Award 2020 and Best Album 2022\

Gallus - Best Rock/ Alternative, Scottish Alternative Music Awards 2022

Georgia Cécile - Jazz Act Of The Year and Vocalist of The Year, JazzFM UK 2022 Awards

Georgia Ruth - Welsh Music Prize 2013

Heidi Talbot - Composers of the Year, Scots Trad Music Awards 2023

Iona Fyfe - Young Scots Speaker of the Year, Scots Language Awards 2019. Scots Performer of the Year, Scots Language Awards 2020

Jaz Karis - Best Female Act Award, Urban Music Awards 2022

Jeshi - Best Independent Video, AIM Awards 2022

Jo Harrop - Jazz Album of the Year, Parliamentary Jazz Awards 2023

Joeseff - Best Breakthrough Artist at the Scottish Music Awards 2019

John Smith - Hands up for Trad, Services to Gaelic Awards 2020

Jonny Morgan - Bob Harris Emerging Artist Award, Americana Awards 2024

Katherine Priddy - Cambridge Folk Festival, Christian Raphael Prize 2019

Knucks - Best Album MOBO Awards 2022

Kokoroko - Best Group Urban Music Awards 2020. Parliamentary Jazz Award 2021

Lady Nade - Song of the Year, UK Americana Awards 2022

lau.ra - Self Producing Artist, Music Producer's Guild Award 2022

Lauren Housley - Song of the Year, UK Americana Awards 2024

Mace The Great - Triskel Award, Welsh Music Prize 2020

Mica Millar - Soul Act of The Year, Jazz FM Awards 2022

Michele Stodart - Album of the Year, UK Americana Awards 2024. Artist of the Year, UK Americana Awards 2024

New Pagans - Best Live Act, Northern Ireland Music Prize 2020

Nova Twins - Best U.K. Breakthrough, Heavy Music Awards 2020, Best Independent Track, AIM Awards 2022, Band of the Year, Kerrang! Magazine in 2022

PEDAIR - Welsh Language Album of the Year 2023

Poppy Ajudha - Soul Act of The Year, Jazz FM Awards 2019

Pyra - Best Solo Act From Asia Award, BandLab NME Awards 2022

Remember Monday - Best Group, British Country Music Awards 2019

Robert Vincent - UK Artist of the Year, UK Americana Awards 2021

Robocobra Quartet - Best Album, Northern Ireland Music Prize 2022

Rosehip Teahouse - Triskel Award, Welsh Music Prize 2019

Ruth Lyon - Danny Award, Daniel's Music Foundation 2024

Siobhan Miller - Singer of the Year, BBC Alba Scots Trad Music Awards 2020

Sixth Wonder - Best Metal, Scottish Alternative Music Awards 2024

Tamzene - Rising Star Award, Scottish Music Awards 2022

The Hanging Stars - Bob Harris Emerging Artists Award, Americana Music Awards 2023

The Howl & The Hum - Best - Independent Video, AIM Awards 2020

The Trials of Cato - Best Album, BBC Radio 2 Folk Award 2019

Theon Cross - Downbeat 67th Critics' Poll "Rising Star" Award 2019

VRi - Best Album, Wales Folk Awards 2019 and 2023

Working Mens Club - Best Creative Packaging, AIM Awards 2021

Yard Act - ANCHOR Award, Reeperbahn 2021. Grulke Prize SXSW 2022

Yazz Ahmed Quartet - Jazz Act of the Year and Jazz Album of the Year, Jazz FM 2020. Innovation in Composition, Ivor Novello Award 2020

Zoe Graham - Best Acoustic, Scottish Alternative Music Awards 2019

2019-2024 ISF GRANTEES



404 Guild
9Bach
A B
Actress + Young Paint
(Live AI/AV)
Adjua
Adwaith
Afro Cluster
Afronaut Zu
Ailsa Tully
AJIMAL
ALASKALASKA
Aleighcia Scott
Alfie Templeman
Angela Elizabeth Slater
Anna B Savage
Ashley Henry
Baba Ali
Babeheaven
Baby Brave
Balimaya Project
Bang Bang Romeo
bar italia
Barney Artist
Beabadoobee
Beauty Sleep
Becca Starr
BEL COBAIN
Bellah
Bemz
Benji Wild

Bess Atwell
Bethan Lloyd
Big Joanie
Big Zeeks
Black Country, New Road
Black Lives in Music
Ayanna Witter Johnson
and Jason Yarde
Blair Dunlop
Bo Ningen
Boy Azooga
Brighde Chaimbeul
Broadside Hacks
Broken Fires
Brooke Combe
Brooke Law
Brown Penny
Buzzard Buzzard Buzzard
Camilla George
Camilla George band
Campfire Social
Cara Dillon
Cara Hammond
caroline
Chalk
Chartreuse
Cherise
Cherym
Chiedu Oraka
Chloe Foy
Ciaran Lavery

CIEL
Clarissa Woods
Coach Party
Colectiva
Conchúr White
Connie Constance
Constant Follower
Cortney Dixon
Cosmo Pyke
Curse Of Lono
Cynefin
Dani Larkin
Daniel Casimir
Danni Nicholls
Dark Tropics
Dea Matrona
Dead Pony
Dean Owens
deathcrash
Demi Marriner
Dena Anuk\$a
Desta French
Dirty Freud
Divorce
Don't Make This Weird
DoomCannon
Drew Thomas
Dry Cleaning
Ebi Soda
Eckoes
Edie Bens

Ego Ella May
Eleni Drake
Elephant Sessions
Elles Bailey
Elma Orkestra and Ryan
Vail
Emily Mae Winters
Emma-Jean Thackray
ERRATICA, featuring
EXAUDI
Eve Goodman
Eyesore & The Jinx
Eyve
Fabiana Palladino
Faith Vernon
Fara
Fat Dog
Fergus McCreadie
Fiona O'Kane
Fofoulah
Free Love
Fur
Gaika
Gallus
Gemma Bradley
Gengahr
George Riley
Georgia Cécile
Georgia Ruth
Gillie
Giya
Halina Rice
Hamish Hawk
Harleighblu
Heidi Talbot
Helen Ganya
Hinako Omori
HMD
HMLTD
HMS Morris
Holloway Road
HONESTY
Honeyglaze
Hotel Lux
HotWax
Humour
Ider
Immi Dash

Iona Fyfe
Iona Zajac
Ishmael Ensemble
Islet
Issermann
J Wax
Jack Found
Jada
Jadu Heart
Jas and Chums
Jaz Karis
Jbee
Jealous of the Birds
Jeshi
Jessica Winter
Jo Harrop
Jockstrap
Joesef
John Smith
Jonathan Luke Elgie
Jonathan Pitkin
Jonny Morgan
Jordan Adetunji
Jordan Mackampa
Joshua Burnside
JusHarry
K-1
Kadeem Tyrell
Kapil Seshasayee
Katherine Priddy
Katy J Pearson
Keez
Keeley Forsyth
Keyah/Blu
Killowen
King Hannah
King Nun
Kitty Macfarlane
Kizzy Crawford
Knucks
Kokoroko
Kris Drever
Kryptik
Kymara
L E M F R E C K
Lady Nade
Lambrini Girls
lau.ra

Laura Oakes
Lauren Housley
Laytha
Lemonade Shoelace
Levina
Life
Lilla Vargen
Lime Garden
Lioness
Liz Lawrence
Liza Bec
Lizzy Hardingham
Los Bitchos
Louis Berry
Low Island
Lucinda Chua
Lula.XYZ
Lunatraktors
Mace The Great
MADMADMAD
Mama Terra
Markie Thompson
Marsicans
Master Peace
Matt Carmichael
Max Cooper
Megatronic
MEMES
Memorial
Mica Millar
Michele Stodart
Midnight Ambulance
Minas
Minor 7th band
MishMash Ensemble
Miss La Familia
Misty River
Ms Maurice
Namesbliss x Vagrant
Real Estate
Namvula
Natalie Shay
Nayana Iz
NEONE The Wonderer
New Pagans
N'famady Kouyaté
Nicholas Morrish
No Guidnce

NoGood Boyo
 Nova Twins
 Noya Rao
 Nuha Ruby Ra
 O.
 Onipa
 Oranj Son
 Oscar Jerome
 Otto Aday
 Owen Spafford & Louis
 Campbell
 Panic Shack
 Pat Dam Smyth
 Pedair
 Penelope Isles
 PHIA
 PHOBOPHOBES
 Phoebe Green
 Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs Pigs
 Pigs Pigs
 Pinty
 POISON ANNA
 Poppy Ajudha
 Porij
 Post Coal Prom Queen
 Poster Paints
 Prima Queen
 psweatpants
 PVA
 Queen Millz
 Rachel Foxx
 Rafiki Jazz
 Red Rum Club
 Reevah
 Remember Monday
 Richard Carter
 Richard Spaven
 Rita Kamale
 Robert Vincent
 Robocobra Quartet
 ROE
 Roku145
 Rosehip Teahouse
 Rosie Lowe
 Ruth Lyon
 Ryan McMullan
 Ryan Young with Jenn
 Butterworth

Saloon Dion
 Sam Ray
 Sara Wolff
 SCALPING
 SEAZOO
 Secret Night Gang
 Sega Bodega
 Shovel Dance Collective
 Shunaji
 Shygirl
 Simeon Hammond Dallas
 Sinead O'Brien
 Single By Sunday
 Siobhan Miller
 Siobhan Wilson
 SIPHO.
 Sixth Wonder
 Skinny Pelembe
 Songer
 Sorry
 Spyres
 Squid
 St Catherine's Child
 St. Lundi
 Stealing Sheep
 Sue McKenzie
 (Multifarious)
 Supermann on da beat
 Taff Rapids Stringband
 Talisk
 Talk Like Tigers
 Tamera
 Tamzene
 tAngerineAt
 Tara Bandito
 Taupe
 Teddy Hunter
 The Ayoub Sisters
 The Big Day
 The Black Feathers
 The Bookshop Band
 The Cool Greenhouse
 The Dunts
 THE GOA EXPRESS
 The Golden Dregs
 The Hanging Stars
 The Hara
 The Heavy Heavy

The Howl & The Hum
 The Japanese House
 The Jellyman's Daughter
 The Langan Band
 The Lounge Society
 The Magpies
 The Manatees
 The Mysterines
 The Night Café
 The Pale White
 The People Versus
 The Royston Club
 The School
 The Tea Street Band
 The Third Orchestra
 The Trials of Cato
 The Wandering Hearts
 The Wood Burning
 Savages
 Theon Cross
 Thomas Rees
 Tomi Agape
 Too Many T's
 TrueMendous
 Vic Santoro
 VITAL
 VLURE
 Voka Gentle
 VRi
 Vula Viel
 W.H. Lung
 Walt Disco
 Weird Milk
 Winnie Ama
 WOOZE
 Working Mens Club
 Worldcub
 Wu-Lu
 Wynona Bleach
 Yard Act
 Yazmin Lacey
 Yazz Ahmed Quartet
 Yung Fume
 Zoe Graham

2019-2024 LABELS SUPPORTED INDIRECTLY

Labels with more than one ISF-supported music creator

4AD
 Acid Jazz Records
 Alcopop Records
 ATO records
 Fierce Panda Records
 Glitterbeat Records
 Houndstooth
 XL recordings
 Marathon Artists
 Marshall Records
 Melodic Records
 Ninja Tune
 PIAS
 First Original Music
 Quiet Arch
 Rhythm Section
 Rocket Recordings
 Rough Trade
 Run On Records
 Speedy Wunderground
 Strut Records
 Submarine Cat
 Suffering Fools

Thirty Tigers
 Warp Records
 Bella Union
 Bubblewrap
 Communion Music
 Edition Records
 Jazz fe:refreshed
 Modern Sky
 Kartel
 So Young Records
 Big Indie Records
 Brace Yourself Records
 Brownswood
 Chess Club Records
 City Slang Records
 Dirty Hit
 Domino Records
 Just Isn't Music
 Libertino Records
 Lucky Number
 AWAL
 Heavenly Recordings



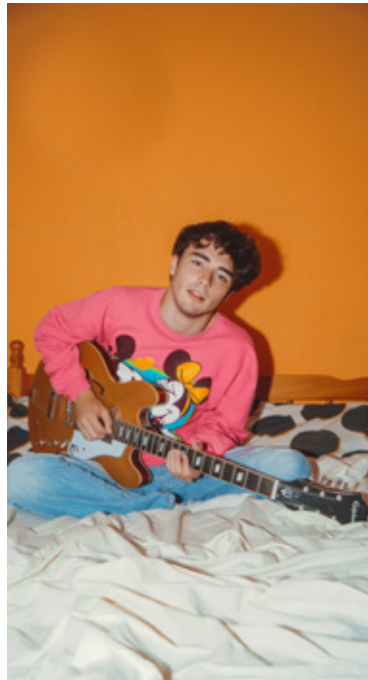
CASE STUDIES

ALFIE TEMPLEMAN

Alfie Templeman is a gifted musician, producer and songwriter from Bedfordshire, England. As a self-taught polymath, he was only 16 when receiving ISF to showcase at Eurosonic 2020.

Alfie was very young when he started his music career but he soon gained an audience. For Alfie and his manager Peter McGaughrin it was important to get the most influential people to see him play live in an international context to help expand the international following he had started to attract. When the Eurosonic opportunity arose, Alfie was not signed to a record company, so finance was limited. As a solo artist, Alfie needed to hire musicians to join him on stage. He needed a team that could help him tour and sound right for the shows.

As his manager Peter McGaughrin explains "It is very difficult to make shows pay for themselves and it is particularly hard at that early stage ... There was no way we'd have been able to afford to do an international showcase at the beginning of his career. It is also very competitive to get a spot on Eurosonic, so ISF became the route that made this a reality."



Business impact

"The main aim was to get Alfie in front of European promoters who wouldn't necessarily be in London or Manchester or Glasgow to see his shows. We wanted to be on their home turf, so that they could see him and book him for festivals in Europe."

- Network expansion: Alfie was able to perform in front of European promoters and festival bookers which he would not have been able to do without going to Eurosonic. Despite the pandemic not leading to immediate follow-up opportunities, Peter believes that ISF still helped in terms of getting key European industry players aware and onboard with Alfie as an

artist. The slow burn still saw results for Alfie through increased touring post-pandemic.

- Growing audiences: With streaming and online, now such a significant route to getting heard, live performances and in person interaction is still key to securing long-term fan loyalty and really growing an audience. Performing on the international stage at Eurosonic gave Alfie profile and bookings that have enabled him to grow a loyal fan base which ultimately will help ensure career longevity.
- Entering into business relationships: Many record labels and publishers attend Eurosonic. Alfie ended up partnering with one such label for his global recorded music business, so that was another benefit of the ISF funding.
- Creative, collaborative and audience impact

"It makes a big difference for a young artist, at the start of their career, to travel and experience playing outside their country, export the music they are making, have people see it in the flesh. This personal development means growing the skills for different audiences, developing different styles, coping with different challenges – all very important for the artists to be able to become resilient, experienced and a 'tourable' international artists."

- Artistic development: Touring performances in front of live audiences help an artist develop his/her personality and performance techniques. This was certainly the case for Alfie. The associated promotion and experience with international media and festival teams, built resilience and dexterity to work in international contexts, work with different promoters while surrounded by unfamiliar languages and audiences.
- Confidence and energy boost: After the live performances at Eurosonic, Alfie was energised and motivated thanks to the confidence boost from overseas reception.

"If you don't have an international career, it's very difficult to make any career in music work – particularly as an emerging artist. If you can't afford to travel to those countries, the streaming tends to be quite passive, they are often less invested in you as an artist. One particular song might feel like it is really traveling, and people are liking it worldwide, but because people haven't seen you as an artist – they haven't met you at the merch table, haven't heard you live, haven't got to know your personality. If you can't tour, you're more of a faceless entity. The ability to showcase, tour and get in front of people and talk to them and sign records and merch and talk to local journalists and meet fans in the flesh, means that your career can have real meaning and have longevity."



BELLAH

Bellah is an R&B music creator from London and Essex, renowned for her vulnerable and relatable songwriting. In addition to ISF Bellah has also received the PPL Momentum Fund. ISF enabled Bellah to showcase at SXSW 2023 and crucially to bring her team too (engineer, band and manager).

ISF has been instrumental in Bellah's growth, providing vital funding for international exposure, creative collaborations and industry networking. Kenny Barber and Christian Odamtten, co-managers of Bellah, both argue this support enabled her to showcase her talent on an international stage, which has been pivotal to 'turbocharging' her career trajectory.

Business impact

"The showcases and the subsequent performing opportunities really boosted Bellah's international recognition. We were able to network with a lot of people across the industry. Many of these people in America we had been speaking to for a number of years. We were able to meet them, in person, for the first time. We really expanded the network and were really able to make it count. Attending other showcases and seeing other artists and meeting other management teams was really valuable."

- International exposure: Bellah's participation in SXSW boosted her visibility across the US, where she performed on two stages, including the British Embassy showcase and specialist R&B stages. As a result of her appearances, she gained traction in major publications like NME, which named her an artist to watch. This significantly raised her UK and international profile.
- Performance opportunities: The funding also enabled her to perform additional shows in the US and participate in a writing camp. This expanded her network further with industry professionals, songwriters, and record label representatives.
- Networking and industry connections: By being able to meet in person, Bellah was able to strengthen relationships with key industry players in the US that she had been in talks with for a number of years. Additionally, her ongoing relationships with UK radio personalities like, DJ Ace led to further airplay on BBC 1Xtra and Kiss FM, helping to sustain her presence on both sides of the Atlantic.

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

- Collaborative projects: The writing camp Bellah attended at SXSW led to her working with new producers and fellow UK artists who she previously had not worked with in a studio setting - a collaboration that emerged directly from the writing camp experience.
- Creative expansion: The showcase provided Bellah with the opportunity to experiment creatively by engaging with new songwriters and artists, further diversifying her sound and artistic network.
- Audience growth: Since March 2022, Bellah's monthly listeners on Spotify have grown from 351,000 to a peak of 1.5 million post SXSW, with a strong US-based audience, with cities like Los Angeles, New York and Chicago becoming major sources of her streams.

"PRS Foundation do well leveraging their partnerships to highlight and spotlight the talent. The SXSW playlist is quite cool because that gives listeners, fans and supporters a nice reference point for all of the people that receive funding and to think 'these are the ones that are going and I should check them out.'"

AYANNA WITTER-JOHNSON AND JASON YARDE – SUPPORTED BY BLACK LIVES IN MUSIC

Cellist, singer, composer and broadcaster Ayanna Witter-Johnson and saxophonist, composer and producer, Jason Yarde were supported through ISF to present their works commissioned by Black Lives in Music (BLiM) at the 2021 Classical:NEXT in Hanover. BLiM was founded in 2020 to address inequality of opportunity for Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse people aspiring to be artists or professionals in the Jazz and Classical music industry. Taking musicians and creators to Classical:NEXT was a new experience for them too in 2021, as a new organisation.



The works showcased at Classical:NEXT, by Ayanna and Jason, were commissioned by Arts Council England. Without ISF, which paid for the travel, accommodation and sustenance for the artists and the team, it is unlikely the works would have been presented internationally.

For Roger Wilson, Director of Operations and Co-Founder of BLiM:

"None of this would have happened without the support of ISF. It was influential not only short-term – i.e. being able to attend and be a part of the event, but also in terms of how we look into the future for the artists and ourselves as an organisation supporting them. The many active conversations that we continue to develop post-event are helping us realise the aspiration we now have."

Business impact

"For the artists, certainly Ayanna has increased her international profile. The ISF fund helped to place her in front of key stakeholders which has led to a new commission and gave her a bigger platform from which to release her 2023 album Ocean Floor. The same for Jason Yarde. There has been talk about a major touring project as a result of the showcase. So, it's really given a higher level of visibility to the artists and us as an organisation doing the work that we're doing."

- Increased visibility for a new organisation: The showcase at Classical:NEXT, significantly elevated Ayanna, Jason and BLiM's profile. This led to multiple follow-up opportunities including invitations to future events, such as the same expo in 2022 and 2024, and new opportunities in Sweden, Germany, and Switzerland.
- Increased partnerships: Ayanna, Jason and BLiM were able to foster lasting partnerships with European organisations and musicians, creating a platform for ongoing cross-border collaboration as an outcome of the showcase.
- Strategic growth: The success of this project has positioned, not only the music creators but BLiM on a trajectory for growth and garnered more domestic interest around their work.

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

"A lot of the interest has been generated from the visibility of the artists performing at the event. Our musicians actually worked with German-based musicians as a result, and we're now talking about a potential touring project, involving these (Ayanna and Jason) and other musicians as well. So there's been a kind of cross-cultural positive aspect as well."

- Critical reception: The original works commissioned and performed during the opening gala of the event received considerable attention, helping to raise the artistic profiles of Ayanna and Jason.
- Commission opportunities: The critically well-received performance of Ayanna Witter-Johnson resulted in a new commission on the back of this showcase. Following Jason Yarde's showcase discussions got underway about potential tours for him.
- Cross-cultural collaborations: This collaboration between German and UK artists, at the Classical:NEXT showcase, laid the groundwork for a tour involving the musicians from both countries.

"It's a game changer. There are young musicians who will absolutely benefit from the same ISF support. This is a pivotal vehicle for creators on an international platform that simply doesn't exist elsewhere. The knock-on effect of support for musicians is it supports organisations like BLiM to do more for the careers of the musicians we work with." gave Ayanna a bigger platform to build on her initial international profile to release her 2023 album Ocean Floor



BRÌGHDE CHAIMBEUL

Brighde Chaimbeul grew up on the Isle of Skye, Scotland and now splits her time between Scotland and Northern Ireland. A native Gaelic speaker, Brighde roots her music in her language and culture. She has developed an innovative style on the Scottish smallpipes, a bellows-blown, mellower cousin to the famous Highland bagpipes. Having played the pipes from a young age Brighde has devised a unique way of arranging for pipe music that emphasises the rich textural drones of the instrument. While still at school, Brighde won the BBC Radio 2 young folk award and went on to play three major folk festivals in the UK. Brighde draws inspiration from the world of interconnected piping traditions, but her most recent album brings in influence from ambient, avant-garde and electronic music.

ISF has supported Brighde to showcase at two major events: WOMEX in 2021 and SXSW in 2022.

“At Womex, I met the label that I then signed to... they’re involved in the European kind of folky experimental music market, which is where I fit in. I recorded an album with them and am making another album with them next year as well. So that’s a really, really positive thing that came out of Womex ... I really enjoy working with them ... A lot of promoters go to WOMEX, and the last two years I’ve been really busy performing at festivals across Europe too.”

Business impact

- Signed to a label: Brighde met her label, Glitterbeat, at WOMEX and recorded her second album, *Carry Them With US*, with them. She will be recording her third album with Glitterbeat next year.
- Raised profile: Being part of any showcase raises a creator’s profile and is something to ‘add to the CV’. Just being invited and attending means industry professionals feel an artist’s music should be heard, which grabs the attention of other professionals and audiences.

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

- Festival bookings: Brighde has also been busy performing at festivals across Europe, largely on the back of the promoters who saw her perform and who she met at WOMEX. Through this she has brought her music to new audiences.
- US tour and festival booking coming up: Following the SXSW showcase Brighde has been booked for the boundary crossing Big Ears festival in Knoxville, Tennessee in 2025. This will take her music to a wider US audience, along with the subsequent US tour.

“At SXSW you’re breaking into a completely different world. To have your name even just being said or being shown to have played at SXSW, sort of grabs different people’s attention ... it’s completely outside of the Folk world, so I think being able to perform to a completely different audience at SXSW was the main thing.”

The quick turnaround on the grant as invites to showcases often arrive quite late, and the support on the ground from PRS Foundation at the events, are two things Brighde also feels are really valuable.



CHIEDU ORAKA

Chiedu is a leading figure of the Northern Rap and Grime scene. His work reflects his experience growing up on the North Hull Estate, East Yorkshire. He has a long relationship with PRS Foundation and has received three grants, including Accelerator, PPL Momentum and the ISF. Chiedu spoke highly of the relationship he has built with the PRS Foundation team and support he has received: “PRS Foundation definitely helped me develop my career – supporting a trajectory that has helped me continue to build to the next level.”

Chiedu’s ISF grant enabled him and his crew to showcase at SXSW 2024, something they would not have been able to fund themselves. For Chiedu, the support is particularly significant due to the ongoing reality of the precariousness of livelihoods in the music industry, now further exacerbated by the cost of living crisis.

Chiedu’s experience with ISF is really positive. He felt supported throughout the grant process which made him feel well prepared before going to SXSW. In particular, the grant announcement event served as really good induction, and the WhatsApp group during SXSW showcase period and the PRSF team stationed at the British Embassy, all helped him and his crew navigate the event. The experience has had a significant impact for Chiedu:

“Big thumbs up. What PRS Foundation and partners need to know is they really changed my life. They gave me and my team the experience of a lifetime. Seriously, as a working class boy from a city

like Hull, I never thought that I would be going to America to perform my music. It was, honestly, a dream come true. I’m really in debt to the opportunity and we have definitely gone on to do amazing things this year, like playing Glastonbury. ISF has been a really good catapult.”

Business impact

- Market testing: Through showcasing at SXSW, Chiedu and team gained real confidence that the US was a market for his music and there was real possibility to move into other territories too.
- Visibility and exposure: Performing at SXSW substantially increased Chiedu’s profile and he gained new followers on social media as well as name recognition among global industry professionals.
- Professional network expansion: Chiedu gained access to booking agents, radio DJs, radio pluggers from across the world, which led to an increase in radio plays and streams. This outcome would not have been possible had he and his crew not showcased at SXSW.
- Increased business opportunities: Being part of SXSW and gaining an increased international profile in turn opened doors which led to his Glastonbury show.

“ISF and SXSW showed me as an artist there’s definitely a market for me out there. We got really great feedback; my followers grew a lot. I now am set to dream bigger. I now understand my dream before SXSW was not big enough.”

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

- Performance opportunities: Chiedu did four shows at SXSW in front of a much bigger audience than he had performed in front of before.
- Expanded creative ambitions: With the confidence boost, Chiedu is now aiming to perform at other international events such as the Reeperbahn Festival.
- Artistic collaboration: Chiedu also met other artists from the African continent with conversations ongoing about possible collaborations. He is particularly connected with artists from Nigeria – Chiedu is of Nigerian descent – and is keen to open the door to the vast Afropop market.

“There’s no way that I would have been able to go to America and perform four shows out there without the ISF. For someone like me from a small place like Hull, which has no industry support or infrastructure, it’s been incredible. It is also important for an artist like me, in an underrepresented genre to do that.”



DEA MATRONA

Dea Matrona is a Belfast-based Irish band formed by two best friends Orláith Forsythe and Mollie McGinn in 2018. As an independent band, they write and produce all their music. The band's career has benefited from the continuous support of the PRS Foundation. The International Showcase Fund, in particular, has been pivotal to advancing their career to the next level.

Dea Matrona was able to showcase at Eurosonic 2023 and SXSW 2023 thanks to the ISF. The opportunities substantially raised their profile among international festival bookers and led to a significantly increased social media following.

"We are seeing a lot of independent artists coming through in recent years. This makes ISF ever more important to the career progression and talent development of the independent scene. Showcase festivals in the right market, to be put in front of the right people, it's just so important."

With their debut album *For Your Sins* under their belt, Dea Matrona has completed a headline tour of UK and Ireland and are now actively looking for touring opportunities in Europe to build on their market knowledge and profile since their Eurosonic showcase.

Business impact

- **Media exposure:** At Eurosonic a German TV platform WDR Rockpalast recorded Dea Matrona's full live performance (close to 40-min) and put it on YouTube. This live piece has been vital. The band has used it to promote themselves and their music on social media and when approaching festival bookers, to give a taste of what their gig looks like as a full-length showcase.
- **Increased visibility:** Two of their live performances were also broadcast on the BBC, another important outcome of Eurosonic showcases.
- **Network expansion:** Eurosonic, has increased the band's connections with European festival bookers and promoters. They have gone on to perform at Azkena Rock Festival in Spain and now have good contacts at Live Nation Poland, Live Nation Sweden and with different bookers from Finland. The band is looking to tour in Europe (in Spain, France, Netherland and German) on the back of their new album.

"The ISF grant has opened doors to enable us to do a lot more touring in recent years and it will hopefully help us get more opportunities. The opportunities have been very important for pushing us in the right direction. Having that support to play at Eurosonic and getting the coverage and ability to meet lots of different bookers, are all critical."

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

- **New materials in front of a live audience:** They performed 2 shows at crowd capacity at Eurosonic. The reception provided a boost in confidence, especially having not played for a while following Covid lockdowns and they were able to get response to new material.
- **Live performance technique:** Being in a lineup of international top bands at Eurosonic and SXSW, really pushed the band. They were able to reflect on and refine their performance watching the recording by broadcasters, an opportunity not usually available for live performances.

"Being able to play a live showcase performance in front of a big audience was very important to us. It was one of our first gigs out of the pandemic and we hadn't played in a while. Seeing the gig going down very well was encouraging. We were also able to play a lot of new songs. We were surrounded by a lot of fantastic bands, so this pushed us to want to improve ourselves. The ability to watch and listen back on the performance with all the broadcast was also very helpful to us."



LADY NADE

Recognised as one of Bristol's most influential women (2022), Lady Nade is a Singer-Songwriter who continues her rise as a multi award winning, folk, roots and americana artist. Her practice is anchored in her experience as a woman of colour and her advocacy for diversity and inclusion.

During the pandemic years, Lady Nade received ISF support to make a 30-min high quality live video at a professional production studio. This has become an important resource for her in making future applications to secure international showcase opportunities and live performances. ISF also supported her to travel to AmericanaFest 2022 in Nashville.

"Overall, with ISF support, professionally I am now more recognised within the industry. This has led to commissions, features in publications, radio play, awards, and nominations and further showcases at Folk Alliance 2023 and Your Roots Are Showing 2024."

Business impact

- Expanded business network: AmericanaFest gave Lady Nade an effective platform where key industry people saw her performance, including David Macias from Thirty Tigers Record Label, Jed Hilly, Executive Director of the Americana Music Association and Downtown Music Publishing Canada – among others. This led to an invitation to speak at the 2024 AMAUK Fest, discussing inclusivity, diversity in the industry, as well as a session hosting a panel at the same festival.
- Increased performance opportunities and domestic profile: Lady Nade has been invited to multiple showcases on the back of the connections she made in Nashville. Her increased international profile and visibility also boosted her profile back in the UK.
- International market knowledge: The experience and network at AmericanaFest provided the vocabulary and knowledge for Lady Nade as a woman of colour to self-position in the international market and gave her access to critical industry networks for her ongoing work in inclusivity and diversity.

"These expanded connections significantly enhanced my visibility and opportunities within the UK and USA Americana sectors, leading to my nomination for Artist of the Year at the AMAUK Awards. I am now returning as part of the AMAUK-sponsored Sweet Home Alabama documentary. The impact of the funding has truly been career-changing."

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

"Creatively – I've collaborated with key industry artists, expanded my solo shows, and enhanced my stagecraft as a solo performer."

- Enhanced stagecraft: Lady Nade learned to shape her delivery style for different audiences – public and professional – as a result of the experience she had performing and networking at the AmericanaFest 2022.
- Increased collaborations: Lady Nade also met Allison Russell, AMA Artist Board Member and Grammy Award winner, whom she has since supported on UK tours in August 2022 and January 2023. Lady Nade also performed with Allison Russell at the AMAUK Awards in January 2023, where she was nominated for Artist of the Year.

"To get opportunity, you first need opportunity. It becomes a chicken and an egg situation. I'd like to see more funding go to artists with zero infrastructure who need that support to build their ladder."



MACE THE GREAT

Mace The Great is a Grime and Hip-Hop music creator born and based in Cardiff. He continues to carry Cardiff on his shoulders with pride, and this evident love he holds for his city is reciprocated tenfold by his local community.

He was selected as the first Welsh MOBO (Music of Black Origin) artist to perform and showcase at SXSW 2022, which ISF supported. Mace has also received ISF funding to showcase at New Skool Rules (Rotterdam) in 2022, M for Montreal and Africa Rising Music Conference (Johannesburg) in 2024.

“PRS Foundation and ISF has been critical to Mace’s success over the years. SXSW was one of our first proper experiences performing abroad. We simply wouldn’t have been able to do so many shows abroad without ISF.” Artist manager Perrie Wilson.

Business impact

“SXSW’s overwhelming scale is a lot to take in. Despite this there were good networks we got into – good artists, producers and important business infrastructure.”

- Strategic engagement: Mace and his team worked hard to make the most of the ISF showcases. This included at least 4-6 weeks of lead up before each showcase happened to research the right delegates and engage in initial outreach, as well as weeks of post-festival follow-ups to make the most of the funded opportunities. This strategy successfully expanded their professional network and know-how in maximising presence around international showcases.

- Increased professional network: At SXSW, Mace and his team made some valuable contacts including with a videographer and good media team – ready for when the artist is ready to return to the US. The team is also currently in talks with a Berlin-based music label, a contact they made at Africa Rising.
- New opportunities: Performing at these events leads to tangible opportunities. For example, Mace’s performance at Reeperbahn Festival led to his booking for the Africa Rising Music Conference in Johannesburg.
- Direct contribution to streaming demographics: Mace’s streaming in the particular territory and city also rises after each showcase performance. This is particularly noticeable with surges in places like Austin, Texas, after his SXSW performance.
- Building on the momentum of showcasing overseas: Mace’s manager Perrie feels that one off showcases overseas, at critical tipping point moments of an artist’s career might be useful, but it will not be as career-making as building on a succession of back-to-back showcases abroad. Business opportunities start snowballing after a few international showcases. This has been the case for Mace – which has been made possible by the continued support by ISF.

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

“I think it’s definitely eye-opening. It really motivates and encourages the artists because they get a sense and a feel of ‘I can really do this’. I’m just a guy from Wales and I’m now in the States, in Canada and Johannesburg. I am here because of my music. I deserve to be here to perform and represent my country. That definitely gives a positive knock-on effect, and really drives the artist to work a lot harder and to try and get as many of these opportunities as they can.”

- Creative inspiration: The confidence boost of representing their home country in foreign territories pushes the artist to bring out their best work and performance. Participating at international showcase events provided Mace with a sense of validation and pride, motivating him to work harder, knowing his music could resonate globally.
- Enhanced pride in cultural origin: Representing his country overseas consolidated personal identity towards the artist’s cultural origin and upbringing.
- Cost efficiency and financial sustainability: The ISF funding covered significant travel and accommodation costs, which allowed Mace to pursue international showcases without draining his budget for music production. This kept his creative output consistent and high-quality.

Image Source: PRSF ISF grantee page



PORIJ

Porij is a four-piece Manchester based electro-pop band formed in 2019. Their debut mixtape *Breakfast* was released in 2020 on their own Oat Gang Records. The band rose quickly from almost a dare by four students at Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music to becoming an influential force lauded by NME and the Guardian, playlisted by 6 Music as well as being invited on tour by Metronomy.

ISF has supported two SXSW showcases for Porij – one during the pandemic as a recorded event in a warehouse in the UK, another to the 2024, with their SXSW appearance part of a US tour.

"Without the PRS [Foundation] ISF funding, we wouldn't have been able to do their first US trip, which included SXSW. This was part of a wider tour where they visited key towns across the States. And as part of that, the label were also able to add promotional activity on top of their presence in the US, which also helped them promote the band and their music to the territory," Manager, Chris Bellam.

Business impact

"Off the back of seeing Porij perform, they got a direct booking in Europe for one of the biggest festivals in Belgium. We were also able to get lots of media attention, radio plays and make head way with critical industry contacts."

- Contributing to follow-up performance opportunities: ISF enabled Porij to participate in SXSW and tour key US cities. These performances have helped them build an international profile, establish relationships with US-based promoters and media and increase their streaming numbers and audience base. The band was able to perform in front of the main booker from Pukkelpop – the biggest festival in Belgium. This led to a direct booking off the back of that performance.

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

"We are seeing a lot of heritage band reunions playing big stadiums but smaller bands, more intimate venues and the club culture is dying so it becomes really hard for new young artists to breakthrough. Lots of people are absorbing music online or on their phone, the experience is not the same as a 'present' live event which really builds a connection with audiences. ISF made it possible to get young talent over to a territory that they wouldn't have been able to get to and actually do it for real. And continuing to build on these is crucial in converting fans to follow and pay for tickets in the long run."

- Expanded visibility and audience: On top of SXSW showcases the band's team was able to organise a US tour and additional promotional activities in major towns across the territory. This led to increased visibility in this important international market through extensive media coverage which substantially grew the band's audience. Creative inspiration: Being on the road, whilst uncomfortable, gave the band a memorable experience which infused new life into their gigs. Performing in new environments and seeing international fans engage with their music proved to be creatively inspiring for the band.
- Extended collaboration network: Porij met other bands on the road which opened new windows for collaboration and support tours.



Ruth Lyon

RUTH LYON

Ruth Lyon is a singer-songwriter and activist from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. She is a strong advocate for disabled artists, actively involved in ambassadorships and activism aimed at improving representation and inclusion in the music industry. In addition to ISF, Ruth has also received Women Make Music and the Open Fund grants from PRS Foundation who through their support have been central to the development of their music and career. Through the ISF alongside support from the Department for International Trade, Ruth showcased at SXSW 2022.

While ISF covered travel and accommodation for Ruth and her band, it also enabled them to hire a drum kit and keyboard, that they were unable to take over from the UK.

Ruth Lyon's participation in SXSW, had far-reaching impacts for her both creatively and professionally. The connections she made have led to international collaborations and increased visibility and audiences both in the UK and abroad. Thanks to contacts made at SXSW and the collaborations that have since flourished, Ruth has been nominated for a Danny Award, honouring musicians with disabilities from around the world. Ruth is performing at the award ceremony in New York in October 2024, hosted by the Daniel's Music Foundation.

Business impact

"I met quite a few different people while I was there (at SXSW) who came to the show. It wasn't like I met someone and then we started working together. It was more like I met someone and then they really liked the show and then passed that information on. That name recognition in a way definitely is not just from a one-off performance, but everything builds on each other in a way."

- **Maximised presence in a foreign market:** The funding allowed Ruth to stay for the entire festival, perform in two showcases, and deliver a talk as part of the conference focusing on disability and music accessibility, maximising her presence and reach to different audiences.
- **Expanded professional network:** At SXSW, she made multiple new connections with key industry people, such as working entertainment and music law specialist firm, Russells Solicitors and an American plugger who offered ongoing industry advice and introductions.
- **Increased visibility and plays:** The international reach helped her boost her domestic profile. This resulted in significant media coverage, including on Radio1 and 6 Music.
- **Increased touring opportunities:** These connections directly contributed to her subsequent work, including a London showcase, festival performances, including The Great Escape and Glastonbury. All made possible, at least in part, through contacts made at SXSW.
- **Increased business acumen:** At SXSW, Ruth participated in business workshops and one-on-one mentorship which fed into a revamped social media and content strategy.

Creative, collaborative and audience impact

- **Expanded creative collaboration with a band:** The funding allowed her to bring her full band with her at a critical time when she was experimenting with working with a band and in live shows.
- **Snowballing opportunities built on creative collaboration and activism:** At SXSW, Ruth performed alongside Eliza Hull (Australia) and Lachi (USA), both of whom are disabled artists. This collaboration blossomed into a tour with Eliza Hull in the UK, along with creative workshops, song co-writing, and a cultural exchange with the Sydney Opera House. Ruth also worked with RAMPD (Recording Artists and Music Professionals with Disabilities), an organisation founded by Lachi that promotes equitable inclusion, and advocate for inclusive and accessible spaces in the music and live entertainment industries. This led to work with Spotify and Netflix and earned Ruth sync opportunities in both the UK and the US.

"I do a lot of activism work and ambassadorship for different charities to create better representation for disabled artists. As a direct result of SXSW I started working with Lachi, who has a lot of affiliation with the Grammy's through her charity Ramped, which records artists with disability. We have since worked with Spotify, Netflix, done quite a lot of work within the industry in America to improve inclusion and awareness of disabled artists. I was able to get quite a lot of sync work in the UK and in America, and through that, I got nominated for a Danny Award in New York."

INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASE FUND PARTNERS



PRIS Foundation

PRIS Foundation is the UK's leading charitable funder of new music and talent development. Since 2000 PRIS Foundation has given more than £49 million to over 9,100 new music initiatives by awarding grants and leading partnership programmes that support music sector development. Widely respected as an adventurous and proactive funding body, PRIS Foundation supports an exceptional range of new music activity – from composer residencies and commissions to a network of talent development partners and showcases in the UK and overseas.

www.prisfoundation.com



Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. We have set out our strategic vision in Let's Create that by 2030 we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. From 2023 to 2026 we will invest over £467 million of public money from Government and an estimated £250 million from The National Lottery each year to help support the sector and to deliver this vision. This year the National Lottery will celebrate 30 years of supporting good causes in the United Kingdom through raising £49 billion and awarding over 690,000 individual grants since the first draw was held in 1994.

www.artscouncil.org.uk



Arts Council of Northern Ireland

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the lead funding and development agency for the Arts providing support to arts projects throughout the region, through its Treasury and National Lottery funds. The funding enables artists and arts organisations to increase access to the arts across society and deliver great art that is within everyone's reach.

www.artscouncil-ni.org



British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government.

www.britishcouncil.org



British Underground

British Underground is an arts development agency supporting international showcasing of UK talent in music, technology and culture. The company is an Arts Council England NPO and is a PRIS Foundation Talent Development Network Member.

www.britishunderground.net



Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. They enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. They distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery.

www.creativescotland.com



The Department for Business and Trade (DBT)

The Department for Business and Trade is the Government department for economic growth, supporting businesses to invest, grow and export, creating jobs and opportunities across the country.

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-and-trade



The Musicians' Union

The Musicians' Union (MU) is a globally-respected organisation which represents over 35,000 musicians working in all sectors of the music business. As well as negotiating on behalf of musicians with all the major employers in the industry, the MU offers a range of services tailored for the self-employed by providing assistance for professional and student musicians of all ages.

www.themu.org



PPL

PPL licenses recorded music in the UK when it is played in public or broadcast and ensures that revenue flows back to our members. These include independent and major record companies, together with performers ranging from emerging musicians to globally renowned artists. In 2023, PPL paid out a record £279.6 million to more than 165,000 performers and recording rightsholders, the highest in the organisation's 90-year history.

www.ppluk.com



Wales Arts International/ Arts Council of Wales

The Arts Council of Wales is the country's official public body for funding and developing the arts. Every day, people across Wales are enjoying and taking part in the arts. We help to support and grow this activity. We do this by using public funds from the Welsh Government and by sharing the money we receive as a good cause from the National Lottery. By managing and investing these funds, the Arts Council contributes to people's quality of life and to the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of Wales. More information about us and the work we do may be found on our website:

www.arts.wales

Wales Arts International is the in-house international agency of the Arts Council of Wales, the public body responsible for funding and developing the arts in Wales. They provide advice and support to artists and arts organisations from Wales who work internationally and are a contact point for international artists organisations and agencies working in or connecting with Wales.

www.wai.org.uk

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru/ Celfyddydau Rhyngwladol Cymru

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru yw'r corff ariannu swyddogol ar gyfer ariannu a datblygu'r celfyddydau. Bob dydd, mae pobl ledled Cymru'n mwynhau a chymryd rhan yn y celfyddydau: rydym ni'n helpu i gefnogi a thyfu'r gweithgaredd hwn. Gwnawn hynny drwy ddefnyddio arian cyhoeddus sydd ar gael i ni gan Lywodraeth Cymru a thrwy ddsbarthu'r arian a dderbyniwn fel achos da gan y Loteri Genedlaethol. Drwy reoli a buddsoddi'r arian hwn mewn gweithgareddau creadigol, mae Cyngor y Celfyddydau'n cyfrannu at ansawdd bywyd pobl ac at lesiant diwylliannol, cymdeithasol ac economaidd Cymru. Am ragor o wybodaeth, ewch i <https://celf.cymru/>

Celfyddydau Rhyngwladol Cymru yw asiantaeth ryngwladol fewnol Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru, sef y corff cyhoeddus sy'n gyfrifol am ariannu a datblygu'r celfyddydau yng Nghymru. Mae'n rhoi cyngor a chymorth i artistiaid a sefydliadau celfyddydol yng Nghymru sy'n gweithio yn rhyngwladol, ac mae'n bwynt cyswllt i artistiaid, sefydliadau ac asiantaethau rhyngwladol sy'n gweithio yng Nghymru neu sy'n creu cysylltiadau â Chymru.

<https://wai.org.uk/cy/>



King Hannah

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