

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	28th March 2013
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Mary Garden Fund 2013/14
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/13/023

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report brings to the attention of the Committee a proposal from the Aberdeen International Youth Festival (AIYF) in relation to the Mary Garden Fund, which is already agreed within the Common Good Fund budget. Up to five fully funded placements will be funded from the Mary Garden fund to local young singers, subject to application and audition.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee agrees the AIYF proposal to use the Mary Garden Fund to support up to five young promising singers from Aberdeen to attend an opera residency.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The allocation towards the Mary Garden Fund within the Common Good fund is £1,500. There are no other financial implications.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, environmental or health and safety implications arising from this report at this time.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Within the Common Good fund, £1,500 is allocated to the 'Mary Garden Opera Fund'. In 2009, following Resources Management approval, the fund was utilised by AIYF for the first time in a number of years. Previously, and more traditionally, it was used as a cash award and for a

silver medallion which was presented to outstanding opera singers at AIYF.

5.1 The AIYF and Mary Garden Opera Fund partnership aims to:

- Provide the young students with a range of artistically challenging and creatively rewarding opportunities.
- Explore ways of making opera more accessible and to produce high quality performance opportunities for a range of audiences.
- Provide vocal and technical workshops for both student participants, the general public and local young singers.

5.2 Report back on 2012 Activity

In 2012, with the support of the Mary Garden fund, AIYF were able to accommodate 5 full placements to local students. This included expert tuition from senior Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) musicians and directors and with local and internationally acclaimed opera singer Lisa Milne, including bespoke sessions for this particular group. Participants took part in a lunchtime concert as part of the “Up Close and Musical” programme at the Cowdray Hall, an Opera and Song evening event at the University of Aberdeen and a family and young children concert at the Lemon Tree. All the singers received a certification of award for their participation.

The placement student element has now become an important part of the project for a number of reasons that go beyond just enabling young singers to experience the opportunity of working in this intense way.

- It challenges the young singers from RSAMD
- It keeps the project fresh and outward looking and more than a change of scenery for the RSAMD performers and staff
- It allows more variety in the programming and broader audience experience.
- It offers more contact for AIYF to the local education and music sectors

It builds another key relationship with the University of Aberdeen Music department through the Opera society

5.3 2013 Proposal

For 2013 AIYF propose to continue the work they have developed to date and the Mary Garden fund will support

- 5 Subsidised placements to local singers, subject to application and audition.
- Expert tuition for the placement singers from the senior Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.
- Opportunities to be part of productions, including the AIYF community opera project as part of the residency programme.

- A certificate and award memento in recognition of their participation
- Masterclass with Lisa Milne (awaiting final confirmation)
- Opportunities to see other festival shows
- Subsistence for the period of the residency

5.4 Promotion of the residencies

The Opera and Song residency will be promoted through a number of formal and informal sectors including:

- The University of Aberdeen Music department including the Opera Society
- North East Scotland Music School
- Aberdeen City Music School
- The Instrumental Music service manager, and through the school music service
- Private schools and singing teachers
- Creative cultures and Aberdeen City websites
- AIYF website
- General press release.

6. IMPACT

This report relates to 'Aberdeen – the Smarter City':

- We will improve access to and increase participation in arts and culture by providing opportunities for citizens and visitors to experience a broad range of high quality arts and cultural activities.
- We aspire to be recognized as a City of Culture, a place of excellence for culture and arts by promoting Aberdeen as a cultural centre hosting high quality and diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.
- We will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience.

The Mary Garden Opera Fund partnership meet the key objectives of 'Vibrant Aberdeen' the City's Cultural Strategy through the three main themes 'Access', 'Aspire' and 'Support'.

'Vibrant Aberdeen' has five objectives:

- Establish a cohesive cultural sector.
- Increase community engagement in cultural activity.

- Improve the city's cultural profile.
- Increase investment in culture.
- Effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of culture.

The programme proposed directly relate to strands of the following Local Outcomes:

Local outcomes for National Outcome 4, 'Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens'.

Outcome 7. 'Improve the quality of life in our most deprived areas.'

Outcome 12, 'Aberdeen is widely recognised as a City with high quality natural assets, biodiversity, architecture and heritage which instill civic pride in its citizens.'

Outcome 13 'We take pride in a strong and inclusive national identity'.

Outcome 15, 'Our public services are consistently high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.' Guidance for Community Planning partnerships, from the Scottish Government entitled 'Culture Delivers' states: 'Cultural provision and infrastructure is part of the drive for best value. High quality should be promoted, continually seeking to improve its impact on communities and taking account of local aspirations and needs. Cultural activity can also help other sectors and services deliver in ways more closely matched to peoples wishes, and can assist in engaging citizens with civic life'.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Mary Garden Opera Fund: Resources Management Committee 5 May 2009

Mary Garden Opera Fund: Finance and Resources Committee 6 May 2010

Mary Garden Opera Fund: Education, Culture and Sport Committee 24 March 2011

Mary Garden Opera Fund: Education, Culture and Sport Committee 7 June 2012

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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