

Opera for All

Partner Evaluation



Screening of Semele, Ramsgate 2017

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Introduction

Garsington Opera for All was a three year partnership project, 2015 to 2017, between Garsington Opera, the charitable trust Magna Vitae and the Coastal Communities Alliance, and is supported by Arts Council England's Strategic Touring Fund.

The project covers Thanet (Kent), Grimsby, Skegness and Somerset. In these partnership areas the programme delivered free public screenings of live performances from Garsington Opera, alongside a wider programme of participatory learning sessions for schools and adult groups aiming to promote, develop and sustain cultural opportunity in each area.

This report focuses on the partnership between the locations and Opera for All for the free public screenings and looks ahead to the legacy of the project. A companion report details the findings of the audience monitoring delivered at each location.

Partner Evaluation Aims

The following areas are covered in this report with feedback from the interviewees:

- Joining the partnership
- Outcomes
 - For audiences
 - For programming
 - For the organisation
- Impacts for partnership development
- Legacy of involvement

Interviewees

- Paul Gist, Producer, Garsington Opera, Opera for All
- Matthew Archer, Magna Vitae, East Lindsey Council for SO Festival
- Suzy Humphries, Volunteer Fundraiser, Ramsgate Arts/Ramsgate Festival
- Vicky Banham, Tourism Officer, Sedgemoor District Council for Bridgwater Festival
- Sue Baker, Head of Music and Performing Arts Service, NE Lincolnshire Council
Grimsby

Screenings

The screenings took place on:

- Saturday 1 July 2017, SO Festival, Skegness
- Saturday 22 July 2017, Ramsgate Festival
- Saturday 29 July 2017, Bridgwater Quayside Festival
- Sunday 15 October 2017, Whitgift Film Theatre, Grimsby*

A partnership approach

The Opera for All programme is delivered by a partnership between Magna Vitae and Garsington Opera with funding from Arts Council England's Strategic Touring Fund. Magna Vitae and SO Festival, Skegness (produced by Magna Vitae), and Garsington Opera have had a long-standing relationship, and Opera for All is the result of discussions about ways of developing this partnership.

SO Festival were making a high investment in the opera screening from Garsington Opera and each year the opera was only airing once there. So they were looking for ways of reducing costs for themselves, making economies of scale and maximising impact.

The resulting project `toured` opera (engagement programme and screenings) to areas of low cultural engagement and, because of obvious synergies, to coastal communities. Lincolnshire is the national lead for the Coastal Communities Alliance (CCA), so in partnership with the CCA, the Coastal Culture Network was also developed out of the project.

The outcomes of the project for each location were expected to be at a strategic level in relation to partnership working and network development inspired by the delivery of the programme overall.

The focus of the partnership working in this report is:

- The partnership between each participating location and Garsington Opera including the additional expertise and support it brought to stage the screenings.
- The local partnerships which delivered Opera for All screenings as part of festivals or events.
- The nascent Coastal Culture Network (CCN) - as a specific focus for the Cultural Communities Alliance (CCA) which has a wider remit, to further the development and impact of cultural activity in coastal locations*.

The project did not integrate exchange or developing direct connections between each of the participating locations.

*Following the screenings CCN hosted a number of networking events in Bridgwater, Ramsgate and Grimsby in Autumn 2017 as a follow-up to the overall Opera for All programme.

Local delivery context

The local delivery partners for Opera for All varied from established Music Hubs which were well resourced and supported by an existing infrastructure, to volunteer run arts festivals. Within each location there were also further levels of partnership with which Opera for All had to work in order to deliver the project. The following outlines briefly the structures of these local partnerships.

Over the full Opera for All programme, the local delivery partners engaged at differing levels within any one year, with some much slower to engage with the full programme.

Skegness

- SO Festival presented the outdoor screening and is organised by Magna Vitae supported by East Lindsey Council and Arts Council England.
- Magna Vitae was also a commissioner of the Opera for All programme.
- The schools workshops for Opera for All were led by the Lincolnshire Music Education Hub.
- Garsington Opera has been working in Skegness and the surrounding area since 2012 in partnership with the charitable trust Magna Vitae and SO Festival delivering free screenings of operas open to everyone and anyone locally.
- With the development of Opera for All in 2015, the partnership continued to programme free screenings of opera from Garsington in the public spaces of Skegness, while also raising the profile of involvement in the arts through the **programme of schools' and community workshops.**
- In 2017 the opera Semele was screened as part of the festival alongside learning and participation workshops in collaboration with Lincolnshire Music Education Hub.
 - The Skegness screening of Semele took place on the seafront in an area designed especially for the festival by local young people including family-friendly games and activities based on themes from the opera.

- The screening day came at the end of two weeks of workshops in local schools; the Garsington team worked with over 250 students from 9 local schools to explore the themes and music of the opera. Students learned and staged music from Semele as well as composing their own songs in response to the piece. The workshops culminated in a Schools Showcase event at the Skegness Embassy Theatre, where the students had the opportunity to come together and share their work.

Ramsgate

- Ramsgate Festival is organised with the trustees of Ramsgate Arts, has a producer and is supported by a volunteer Project Group which provides event logistics, co-ordination of the art/craft market, do workshops, fundraising, website development and information and volunteer coordination.
- Looping the Loop partnership delivered the workshops and Ramsgate Arts the screenings.
 - The Ramsgate Festival team were working with Garsington Opera for All for a second year in 2017.
 - In 2017 the full opera outdoor screening was integrated into the Ramsgate Festival and with other free public screenings (showing extracts of the opera) and opportunities for communities to be involved in creating, learning about, and performing opera.
 - As part of Opera for All, in 2016, Looping the Loop delivered the Big Opera Takeover; Pop-Up Opera in and around Thanet, art and singing workshops and the screening on the beach. The Opera for All project also included a programme of schools workshops which culminated in a Eugene Onegin Mash-Up where over 200 students took part in a performance during Looping the Loop festival of performance in October 2016.

“Later in July we [Garsington Opera] were at the 2017 Opera Takeover. In the build-up to the day a group of local people had worked with a Director and Music Director to create a short pop-up performance based on the story of Semele. Fully mobile (thanks to a shopping trolley!) with costumes, props, sound effects and trumpet accompaniments, they performed with Garsington singers at five different locations. Many audience members found themselves participating. There were a range of opera-related workshops and activities on Ramsgate beach throughout the day illustrated with short extracts showing highlights from Semele linked by a narrator.

The evening's full screening coincided with a glorious sunset and attracted a large audience who brought deckchairs and picnics to enjoy an evening of opera on the beach.”

Opera for All website

Looping the Loop is part of the Collaborative Touring Network (funded by Arts Council England's **Strategic Touring Fund**), a partnership between nine towns and theatre promoters across the UK. It presents a combination of acclaimed productions from Battersea Arts Centre and locally produced shows. Ramsgate Arts is the lead promoter in Thanet working in collaboration with the Tom Thumb Theatre and freelance director, Ellie Jones.

Looping the Loop is a festival of live arts in the three towns of Thanet on the East Kent coast: Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. It programmes two Contemporary Performance Festivals and bespoke year round activities.

Bridgwater

- Bridgwater Quayside festival is organised by Fuseperformance on behalf of Sedgemoor District Council and the Bridgwater Town Council and had its inaugural year in 2017.
- The local Music Hub advised but was not directly involved in the delivery of the screening.
- This was a new partnership for Opera for All in 2017 as it was the first Bridgwater Quayside Festival. The Festival takes place along the quay, waterfront and in parks and public spaces, all outdoors.

“We were delighted to be part of this inaugural event taking over King Square in the heart of the town for a free open-air screening. In the morning, 40 local people worked with a team of Garsington artists to learn and stage two choruses from Semele at a workshop in Bridgwater Library, later performing their choruses to the audience in front of the big screen.

Garsington Opera artists gave the large audience an introduction to the screening and took questions during the interval. The weather was kind to us and everyone enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of opera amidst the trees of this beautiful Georgian square.”

Opera for All website

Grimsby

- The partnership delivering the screening included North East Lincolnshire (NEL) Music and Performing Arts Service and Lincs Inspire, who regularly work as a partnership.
- The new Words and Music Festival (WaM) across North East Lincolnshire was organised and hosted by the NEL Music Hub, and saw people across the borough get the chance to see, and take part in, musical performances and workshops.
- **Garsington Opera for All's 2017 residency in Grimsby formed part of WaM.**

“The WAM Festival is a massive event for North East Lincolnshire. The festival will give people across the area the chance to get involved in creating and listening to music they have never heard before.”

Susan Baker, Head of Music and Performing Arts Service, NELC

The programme for the Words and Music Festival included:

- Vocal workshop with Garsington Opera for All x 2
- Schools Semele Opera Showcase
- Pop-up Choir
- Concert performed by the Music and Performing Arts Service
- Grand Charity Concert including a performance of the Grimsby Orpheus Male Voice Choir
- Garsington Opera for All present SEMELE
- Grimsby Opera for All Big Screen 2017 at the Whitgift Cinema

Coastal Cultural Alliance (CCA) and the Coastal Culture Network (CCN)

The aim was for the Opera for All programme in 2017 to leave a legacy of opportunities for partnership working within each of the locations through the CCA and the nascent CCN.

The networking events at the end of the programme were the launch of this work, which is to be carried on through CCA. They took place:

- Bridgwater, Thursday 19 October, 4-6pm
- Ramsgate, Tuesday 14 November, 4-6pm
- Grimsby, Thursday 16 November, 2-4pm

The CCN was designed to provide an opportunity for the partners working with Opera for All and other local delivery partners to connect better locally or make national connections to help support and develop their work. Currently the CCN provides an online platform to help people make connections and the networking events were an opportunity to assess whether a more developed infrastructure would be effective.

In developing the CCN, it has to be remembered that the locations for Opera for All vary in their local arts infrastructure, from those with lots of smaller organisations who are well connected compared to others where there are fewer but larger organisations who are not as well connected.

Overall Findings

In assessing these findings there are two important things to note:

- Opera for All worked in different ways in each of the locations developing programmes which responded to the local context and infrastructures.
- **The public screenings were one element of each location's relationship with Opera for All**, and, while this report focuses on the delivery of the public screenings, the interviewees are responding in the context of their experience of the wider Opera for All programme. The level of connection between the wider programme and the public screenings differed between locations.

It should also be noted that all partners, except Bridgwater Quayside Festival, had had a longer relationship with Opera for All having worked over a number of years, and this report focuses on the final year.

Motivations for joining the partnership

As previously described, Magna Vitae and SO Festival have had a long association with Garsington Opera and initiated this project in collaboration with them.

SO Festival had **wanted to integrate into its programme work which was 'high art' or not** what people get to see every day. Their aim was to offer a high quality experience for people not engaged with the arts. Consequently, an outdoor opera has been presented at SO Festival since 2011.

For Ramsgate, Opera for All was a chance to build on previous work presenting opera at the festival. It followed on from open air opera performances during the previous two years, which were staged alongside a pop-up bar with audiences invited to pick a deck chair and bring a picnic. Opera for All then took this offer to a new level, with the integration of opera across the festival programme. The choice of opera as an artform, **and the desire to continue presenting opera, came from the objective of presenting 'high art' in an accessible way so that audiences had the opportunity to experience new** artforms in the festival context.

In addition Opera for All was an opportunity to bring together individual projects already happening in Ramsgate - chiefly the work of Ramsgate Arts and the Looping the Loop partnership, to gain the best possible outcomes for local engagement. Ramsgate Arts produce the Festival and Looping the Loop was set up to deliver new engagement with performance based work.

Opera for all was an opportunity for ***“Skills and resource to come together in a good way”***,

Suzy Humphries, Ramsgate Arts

The motivation to work on Opera for All in Somerset was to explore ways of making places centres of culture and destinations in their own right thereby connecting up the popular coastal/seaside towns with the nearby more inland urban areas - Burnham to Bridgwater, and encouraging people to work together. In the first year the screening was planned in Burnham, however high winds prevented it going ahead. In 2017 the new Bridgwater Quayside Festival therefore presented a better opportunity for a successful screening (a more sheltered location, but still potentially vulnerable to the weather nevertheless). As part of a larger event, there was also more chance of an Opera for All screening succeeding, rather than a stand alone event.

The partnership with Opera for All for Grimsby was part of a wider singing strategy for the region, particularly focused on schools. Initially NELC and Lincs Inspire had heard it was a great programme and it has now gone from strength to strength in their region as a participative programme, with 2017 being particularly successful. In the end the wider Opera for All programme is considered to be one of the strongest things they have done.

“schools loved the opera, songs were accessible, parents loved it, so it became a theme of the festival”

Sue Baker, Head of the Performing Arts and Music Service, NELC

The opera theme effectively enhanced the programme for the Words and Music Festival and the partnership with Opera for All was an inspiration to start the Festival.

Programming context

In Bridgwater, the opera screening of Semele by Handel sat well in terms of programming as there are **local connections to Handel. Handel’s benefactor came from Bridgwater and** the screening was in the old part of the town which was built by this benefactor.

Bridgwater is not known for its culture, so it was a great way to connect people with the place.

The town is also known for a strong carnival tradition which takes place in November, so the inauguration of a summer festival was designed to harness the spirit of collective community action and welcome people to the town for a different event.

“Quayside Festival was well recieved and it makes people feel good, and that the town is presenting itself well and raising quality of life”

Vicky Banham, Segmoor District Council

The nature of the programme for Ramsgate is to place as many things as possible outdoors so that it is `art that you fall over`, and so that you can witness and have the opportunity to experience it on whatever level works for you.

The situation for the screening looked fantastic, as you could see it from the cliff top and use the lift to come down. So, it attracted the curiosity passers by to come and have a look and stay (for some time at least).

For others it, ***“seemed that people heard about it and knew it was going to happen and came because opera was available in a new situation”***

Suzy Humphries, Ramsgate Arts

In Ramsgate, the opera screening and surrounding engagement proved a good way of opening the festival. The multiple layers of delivery through Opera for All enabled a bigger and richer experience so that people could engage in different ways and levels - so it was not just the live screening. The pop-up opera and workshops supported engagement with and increased understanding of the artform and Opera for All brought the resources and capacity to be able to do this effectively. The schools and community work through Looping the Loop, and its two associated festivals held within the year, in collaboration with Opera for All enabled wider work to engage people with opera leading up to and in to the work at the Ramsgate Festival.

SO Festival created an environment for the screening, so the focus was not completely on what could potentially be for some a rather challenging three and a half hours of opera in Italian. A family space was created by a group of young people working with a local artist which included activities along the themes of the opera to make the space into an attraction in itself.

“Opera for All has been linked to the engagement strategy in the last two years - so we did not want just a screening on beach, but we tried to think of different ways of presenting it, so it’s a fun attraction, family activity centre, with an opera screening in there but other things to do as well.”

In Grimsby the success of the overall Opera for All programme meant that opera became the theme of their Words and Music Festival for 2017. Using the theme of Handel it inspired performances by the community and other Hub partners, such as the Orpheus Choir as part of WaM.

“The screening was a logical thing to do to follow up from the schools work.”

Sue Baker, NELC

The screening followed on after the festival, so it was more difficult to attract cross-over audiences. There was a pop up opera performance by school children in the market on the Friday before the Sunday screening, which 100 people watched, 6 of whom attended the screening. One of the music coordinators from the schools work also came to the screening so there was some connection between the schools work and the screening. However, in previous years of the project, the full-length opera screening had proved too long for the school children.

- 70% of respondents had not previously seen an *opera performance*, so on average for 30% it was their first time. SO Festival had the highest proportion of new to opera (53%) and Bridgewater Quayside and Ramsgate Festival had the highest proportion of previous attenders of opera (84% / 74%).
- Of those that had previously attended an *opera performance*, 54% had been more than four times.

Audience Monitoring data Opera for All Screenings 2017

Audiences

In Bridgewater the opera screening showed audiences a different art form. It demonstrated that quality art and such artforms can come to you, so you do not have to travel to the big centres to see it. It effectively raised the aspirations of the local community and will hopefully act as a catalyst as Bridgewater Quayside Festival goes into its second year in 2018. Bridgewater audiences were considered to be made up of those motivated to see opera and more general festival visitors.

In Skegness and Bridgewater, there was a smaller group of audience who were focused on the screening and then a larger majority coming and going - very similar to the ebb and flow of audiences around live outdoor arts.

However, in Ramsgate the audience was more static, focused and brought picnics, with a higher audience number than expected. The outdoor performance of opera has become a regular fixture and a flagship event in the Festival programme.

Screening in an audience context

In Bridgwater, the screening sat well within the programme, was well publicised and was a success in the first year of the Quayside Festival. It had a perfect setting and a reasonable audience watched it.

For SO Festival, the screenings seem to have run their course. The audiences were not large enough, and there may be other ways in which the festival can engage non-arts attending audiences more effectively in the future. Although there is the sense that they could have maximised the use of the screen more. The events that they had used the screen for were all equally challenging for audiences and did not garner greater buy-in for different kinds of work. While this type of work is interesting for arts development, the screen is a high investment for much lower return in terms of audience engagement.

In Ramsgate audiences saw a place in a completely different context, a place that they might know and see every day but had become a place to see opera. The workshops during the day were very worth while to help people engage with opera - even if they could not come to full the screenings - and they may have seen the edited version and enjoyed the opportunity.

In retrospect in 2017, **Grimsby's focus was not on the public screening**, as their strategy in relation to Opera for All was to invest in the community through the Words and Music Festival and schools (and not a professional screening). The screening could not be presented outdoors, so the Whitgift seemed like a good option as an intimate film theatre which already does screenings of opera and ballet. However, despite promotion as part of the Words and Music festival and to the cinema members, it attracted a very small audience. This is in comparison to the success of the Words and Music Festival itself.

Delivering the screening

Most locations had the experience to deliver the screenings logistically. In Skegness the SO Festival delivered it, Somerset had experienced festival curators and Ramsgate was familiar with the format. Organisationally, the learning and skills development were related to the wider programme of workshops ie. giving new teaching techniques and passing on skills to local directors, artists or teachers.

Generally, Opera for All provided expertise in engagement with the community which **helped to make the screening's audiences more diverse**. Without the community aspect to **the Opera for All programme, the screenings would have been a harder 'sell'**, particularly for Bridgwater as a new festival.

For example, in Bridgwater, Opera for All provided the visibility for the screenings and other work through the branding, social media and marketing activity, none of which would have been possible on the small Festival marketing budget. The professionalism raised the profile of the screening hugely.

“It has inspired the festival, it’s not like a village fair, but a professional, well-marketed event that’s definitely worth attending”

Vicky Banham, Sedgmoor District Council.

Partnership development

Opera for All was set up to work at a strategic level and support partnership and network development. It was designed to be much more than delivering an opera. However, in some locations this purpose took a while to take root, as the focus had to be on delivering the programme, rather than exploring new opportunities. Although in most locations local partnerships were essential to enable it to happen in the first place.

Opera for All was effective in the earlier years in bringing together local partners in Bridgwater - namely the Macmillan Theatre and Bridgwater Carnival Collections to support the educational side of the project. Out of these partnerships built around Opera for All, the Bridgwater Festival was developed. So, Opera for All has left a clear legacy. For Bridgwater partnership projects are crucial, as nothing can happen without them. Sedgmoor District Council aim to support projects and ways of working which demonstrate what can be done if you work together (on few resources).

“Without the project [Opera for All] Bridgwater would be a much poorer place”

Vicky Banham, Sedgmoor District Council

Sedgmoor Council has to focus on setting up the environment for local arts organisations to develop partnerships and attract funding (as the Council can no longer fund them). As part of this the Council also aims to attract businesses to the area and use its time and effort (not budget) to support initiatives.

The Lincolnshire Music Hub model is to work in partnership with music providers to realise its music strategy. The wider Opera for All programme has reinforced this approach to partnership working. It was important for them to reinforce existing relationships, rather than make new ones. Perhaps the Coastal Culture Network, if they got involved, could point to new avenues of funding which would enable their music offer to be widened, in the way it has through Opera for All.

“Schools are still talking about it [Opera for All wider programme], the Words and Music Festival is there to be maintained and is working with NELC on a bid so that Opera for All can be brought back. Opera for All has started something and created another aspect to the Music Hub in East Lincs”

Sue Baker, Head of Performing Arts and Music Service, NELC

Ramsgate Arts are involved in other partnership programmes, such as Looping the Loop, and Opera for All brought its partnerships together very effectively for greater impact locally. However, Opera for All did not offer opportunities for linking up, sharing and learning across the locations. So, there was no understanding of what was going on elsewhere, which would have been a useful benefit of the programme. Although the team understood that some of the things done in Ramsgate were then tried in other places. In addition, the delivery planned by Opera for All each year changed according to the resources available, but also as a result of the learning across the project.

Coastal Culture Network

The CCN held three networking events held in partnership with Garsington Opera for All and local partners.

Over 100 people came to the events held in Bridgwater, Ramsgate and Grimsby including artists, cultural organisations, local authorities, Coastal Community Teams and others working with culture and regeneration.

A wide range of speakers presented some inspirational case studies and regional perspectives, which stimulated lots of discussion. It was very apparent that while there are common issues, challenges and opportunities in coastal areas, local context and therefore locally relevant responses are also essential as everywhere has a unique set of circumstances.

As Georgie Scott, from the Onion Collective CIC and member of Watchet CCT, said during her presentation in Bridgwater, ***“The future of our town lies with the community.”***

Across all three events, talks on culture and regeneration ended up talking about communities, supporting the assertion that regeneration starts with local communities rather than with buildings or economic theories. It is the ability of cultural activity to engage communities that make it such a good partner within regeneration.

The value of networking also came across strongly, and that sometimes an external stimulus like the CCN can be very effective in bringing people together.

“Delivering and developing arts and cultural projects within the 'culturally isolated' coastal location of North East Lincs is challenging to say the least and we found the Coastal Culture Network event hosted in Grimsby to be invaluable opportunity to connect with the coastal culture sector in a way that has previously never been possible.

We welcomed the opportunity to highlight the work of the sector here and gain insights and inspiration from artists and organisations whose work is perhaps at a more advanced stage in development than ours in North East Lincs. We were particularly pleased that a number of North East Lincolnshire Council officers were able to attend and gain an understanding through the various presentations of cultural commissioning and investment which can only serve to support sector developments and partnerships in future.”

Charlotte Bowen, Chair - Culture Works North East Lincolnshire and Director, Culture House Ltd

Another recurring theme was that **once cultural activity gets going, it's easier to show impact and value, but that it's taking that first step that's most difficult, particularly for** cash strapped local authorities with many competing priorities. An increasing amount of data and research is now available providing robust evidence of impact. This needs to be taken alongside local evidence to help make the case for investment in culture in any given place.

A local councillor attending the Ramsgate event commented on her evaluation form that **“It would be useful to have a short presentation to councillors in our area”** and this may be something the CCN can look at in the future.

The speaker presentations are available on the CCN online forum, which is free to sign up to and takes just a few minutes.

CCN Future

The CCN is coming to the end of its initial one-year of funding, however, it is making the money go as far as possible and will be able to keep the network active for the next six months while the core partners - Magna Vitae Leisure Trust, Hastings Borough Council and the Coastal Communities Alliance - continue to look for further support.

Polly Gifford, Coastal Culture Network November 2017

Opera for All has provided another layer of evidence of the impacts of cultural activity at a local level, which can support the work of the CCN into the future.

Opera for All the legacy

- 69% of respondents said that attending this festival has made them more likely to attend Opera in the future

Opera for All Audience Monitoring Surveys 2017

Each location has a different type of legacy, depending on the level and length of relationship with Opera for All and the local infrastructure which helped deliver it.

Bridgwater has the potential to carry on either under the Bridgwater Arts Centre or as part of the Festival. Although it is the last year of the funded programme Opera for All, it may be possible for Garsington Opera to supply a film and work with the partners in the location. However, some funding would be required to do this.

“Bridgwater is now taken more seriously as a place for such events”

Vicky Banham, Sedgmoor District Council

Bridgwater Quayside Festival was perhaps left with the clearest legacies, although these are shared elsewhere as well:

- Opera for All fit strategically, established relationships, built on them and left a legacy locally.
- Opera for All put Bridgwater on the map and offered local people a chance to see Bridgwater in a new light.
- The screening and associated activity demonstrated what is possible for programming, the place and audiences - providing professionalism, quality, accompanying events, marketing as well as the scale and type of event.
- Opera for All was a catalyst for development of local relationships.
- The full programme complemented and was integrated into Bridgwater Quayside Festival thereby extending its programme.
- Without such projects things would not get developed because there are no government sources of funding for this work.

Legacies are rather different for Grimsby:

- Grimsby want to build on the Opera for All participative work to support community engagement. So there is less of a place for a public screening.

For SO Skegness the public screening has run its course:

- SO Skegness is not planning on furthering its work with Opera for All currently or continuing to programme opera.

In Ramsgate, again the community programme was essential as a pre-cursor to the screening and provided a flagship event for the Festival.

- Due to financial issues, Ramsgate Festival may be curtailed in 2018, however the organisers would like to continue it in some form as it is now established after eight years. So, it may not be possible to invest in a full scale screening again, however, they are committed to presenting opera.
- Ramsgate is interested in working more with Opera for All to develop a community engagement programme (not a schools programme).
- Ramsgate Arts can also see the opportunities for the CCN if they are co-hosting and taking a lead role locally to unlock ideas and partnerships. The network just needs to define what is most useful to do, given that there were a clear set of drivers and wants at the networking session.

For Garsington Opera, the legacies of Opera for All have become integral to their work:

- The project has enabled Garsington to do a scale of partnership working which it has not done before across locations as well as with Magna Vitae.
- The screenings have helped the organisation explore the use of film and filming performances.
- The workshop process trialled as part of Opera for All is now established within **Garsington Opera's regular work** eg. Always offering CPD for teachers before workshops. Standard resources are now always produced for teachers with extracts which are designed to inspire their own workshops and pop up performances.

Conclusions

The inclusion of opera in local programming provided an opportunity for local people to experience a different kind of artform in an accessible form - transforming spaces and engaging audiences unexpectedly. The engagement and participative work leading up to and at the events was a crucial part of the mix to attract audiences to the events and increase understanding of the artform.

Even for the organisers of the partnership, it has affected the way they think about opera.

“Getting close to the artists and directors and their expertise has been brilliant - and proves again why it’s all worth it... which is why we keep trying to do these things.”

Suzy Humphries, Ramsgate Arts

Working on Opera for All has been inspirational for local infrastructures as new festivals and events have been born out of it, as partners came together and recognised the impacts of such work and developed their own initiatives incorporating Opera for All.

However, opera can be a challenging artform to build an audience for, even where community engagement is involved. It is still quite a journey for audiences from workshops or inspired participation to watching a full length three and half hour screening.

Nevertheless, the participative work and schools work was effective in breaking it down and addressing barriers and pre-conceptions, and screening extracts with narration.

The context for the screening was crucial. In Ramsgate, it was very much part of the Festival which has a tradition for these type of events. So, it was more of a straight forward sell and the festival context is familiar allowing audiences to try something new. Whereas in Bridgwater it is a new festival, so attendance is not yet a habit, so it needs more time to build trust, expectation and understanding. The question being - would the audience grow if the screenings carried on? While in Grimsby, there is perhaps less of a tradition of trying something new as there is not an established festival which programmes this type of work. So, the strategic focus here was on the engagement work.

For most locations, the screenings are less likely to form part of this legacy than the other areas of Opera for All work. Opera for All has been particularly effective in moving forward the community engagement side of the **partners’ work - demonstrating what’s possible** and the impacts that can be achieved.

In terms of a strategic partnership amongst coastal locations, Opera for All was not able to develop a community, as the focus was very much on delivery in individual places. There may be learnings from other networks such as Without Walls Associate Touring Network for outdoor work or the Looping the Loop partnership, which are set up to support learning and exchange across the members. A greater element of this for the Opera for All partners may have benefitted the partners in terms of wider learning and legacy planning.

It may also be important to consider how any legacy can go on to be funded, which may be where the CCN comes in, but again, it is a nascent network finding its legs. It will be important to find common themes amongst the network before funding can be sought.

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