



Trustee Recruitment Pack

STREETWISE OPERAAA



Photos: Rey Trombetta

About Streetwise Opera

Streetwise Opera is an opera company that enables people who've experienced homelessness to find inspiration and empowerment while they rebuild their lives and identities. We support participants to develop as creative people and, as we amplify their voices, change how society views homelessness.

We engage world-class artists, both established and emerging, to co-create bold new work and reimagine traditional repertoire. We create opera that is for everyone and, by bringing together diverse voices, change how society views opera.

We run weekly creative workshops in arts venues in London, Manchester and Nottingham for people who are recovering from homelessness, alongside projects and taster sessions in frontline homelessness settings. We work with our participants to stage public performances in high profile venues.

Previous productions have included **The Passion** (2016), an immersive staging of Bach's St Matthew Passion in the historical surroundings of Manchester's Campfield Market; **Re:sound** (2023), a year-long festival culminating in a performance of nine co-created micro-operas at the Queen Elizabeth Hall backed by the BBC Concert Orchestra; and **Re:Discover** (2024), a celebration of African and Caribbean heritage through the voices of people who have experienced homelessness.

We were selected as one of the top 100 Changemakers by the Big Issue in 2020, shortlisted for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's Award for Civic Arts Organisations in 2022, nominated for an RPS Award in both 2024 and 2025, and shortlisted for an International Opera Award in 2024.

This is an exciting time for Streetwise Opera. Following a major fundraising campaign in 2024, we are ready to enter 2025 on firm footing, with performances in March 2025 of our current project, **Nature**, launching our next project later in the year and building towards our 25th anniversary in 2027. We have ambitious plans in train for the coming years, all of which see us embedding co-creation into all aspects of the work that we do and working with world-leading artists and partners to challenge perceptions of both homelessness and opera.

We are looking for trustees who can bring fresh perspectives and insight through their lived and professional experiences. We want our Board to be a group of people who reflect and represent the nature of our work, our performers and our audiences. Our trustees are vital to us, helping us to be clear about how and why we do things, and offering insights that help us to ask and answer questions.



Being a trustee is not just about what you can give to Streetwise Opera, but also what you will gain from the experience: an insight into different sectors and ways of working; a chance to grow personally and professionally; and being part of a talented and successful leadership team.

Our organisation

Streetwise Opera is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The management is overseen by a Board of trustees, chaired by Linden Ife.

Our staff team comprises:

- Chief Executive
- Artistic Director
- Head of Fundraising
- Head of Marketing
- Head of Producing & Participation
- Head of Finance & Operations
- Trusts & Foundations Manager
- Individual Giving & Events Officer
- London Regional Producer
- Manchester Regional Producer
- Nottingham Regional Producer
- Arts Administrator

We also work with freelance workshop leaders and support workers within London, Manchester and Nottingham.

Our current board of trustees comprises:

- Phillipa Anders
- Olivia Brown
- Paul Emery
- Rachel Engel (Vice-Chair - outgoing)
- Christine Evers
- Linden Ife (Chair)
- David Johnson
- Colin Jones (Treasurer – outgoing)
- Chandrika Joshi (Treasurer – incoming)
- Alexis Paterson
- Julia Strong

Our current trustees have a range of backgrounds and experience: music, public relations, tutoring, mentoring, legal, finance, arts in criminal justice, health and wellbeing, fundraising, the homelessness sector, and lived experience of homelessness.

Streetwise Opera's patrons are:

- Dame Sarah Connolly DBE
- Jennifer Johnston
- Paterson Joseph
- Simon Callow CBE
- Elizabeth Watts
- Roderick Williams OBE



What we're looking for

We are currently looking for people to join our Board with one or more of the following skills and experience:

- Lived experience of homelessness
- Extensive experience, understanding of, and contacts within, the classical music sector
- Previous governance experience and capacity to take on the role of Vice Chair

With the exception of those interested in the position of Vice-Chair, it is not necessary to have had previous experience of sitting on a Board. You don't need to have a university degree to be a trustee, or to have reached any particular stage in your career. Of more importance is a keen interest in the arts and/or empowering people who have experienced homelessness alongside a willingness to contribute time, imagination and commitment to the role, to our thinking and to our future success and resilience.

We would particularly welcome applications from people who are currently under-represented on our Board:

- with lived experience of homelessness
- who identify as Global Majority ¹
- who are aged 18 - 35
- who identify as disabled or neurodiverse

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you're not sure because of, for example, your working hours, employment status, caring responsibilities, level of experience, socio-economic or cultural background or access needs. We would still love to hear from you so we can talk about any concerns.

Any questions?

We will be releasing a recorded webinar about the positions in February with our Chair of trustees (Linden Ife), CEO (Rachael Williams) and another trustee, where you will be able to find out more about our work and the role our Board plays. If you have any questions that you would like answered as part of this webinar, please email them to info@streetwiseopera.org by Monday 17 February. The webinar will be released via our social media accounts.

¹ Global Majority refers to people who are Black, African, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and/or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'. Source: **Global Majority: we need to talk about labels such as 'BAME'**.



STREETWISEOPERAAA

What we ask of you

For all trustees:

- To develop a clear understanding of the responsibilities of being a trustee (more information can be found here: [For aspiring trustees | Getting on Board](#))
- To serve an initial term of 3 years, with the possibility of re-appointment until 9 consecutive years' service has been reached.
- To attend, either virtually or in person, 4 x 2-hour board meetings and one strategy session per year, and any relevant sub-committee meetings (Finance, HR, Nominations, and Fundraising – held virtually) as required (trustees usually sit on no more than one subcommittee). Travel expenses for in-person meetings are offered. Board meetings currently take place between 6-8pm, but, if this does not fit in with other responsibilities, we would be happy to discuss.
- To attend performance events and other engagements whenever possible.
- To advocate and champion Streetwise Opera's work, values, ambition, and strategic direction.

In addition, for those interested in becoming Vice-Chair:

- To support the Chair in ensuring the Board fulfils its governance responsibilities;
- To deputise for the Chair when necessary;
- Alongside the Chair, to provide guidance and support for Board members and senior staff.

Trustee roles are voluntary and unpaid; however, reasonable out of pocket expenses can be covered.

What you can expect from us

- A thorough induction process to introduce you to Streetwise Opera's work and the responsibilities of being a trustee;
- Opportunities to attend workshops and events and to speak to Streetwise Opera performers, artists and staff;
- Timely notifications of Board meeting dates and Board papers usually distributed a week in advance;
- A warm and welcoming meeting environment where debate and challenge are encouraged and all trustees are supported to express their views;
- Additional support and/or training on any aspects of the role that are new or need further development.



How to apply

Please **submit an application form** via our website. You can send your response to the questions below in written format (max 300 words per question), as a video file (no more than 5 minutes) or as an audio file (no more than 5 minutes).

All applications will be considered anonymously using only the answers to the questions that you have provided. We will request your CV if you are invited to interview.

The questions we would like you to respond to you are:

1. Why are you interested in getting involved with Streetwise Opera?
2. Why are you interested in becoming a Trustee at this particular time?
3. What skills and experiences do you think you could bring to our Board?
4. For those interested in becoming Vice-Chair: what previous governance experience would you be able to bring to the Streetwise Board?

We will guarantee first round interviews to candidates who have lived experience of homelessness. If you regard yourself as someone who has this lived experience, please inform us of this on the application form where indicated. Please state if you require any reasonable adjustments to be made with regards to an interview on the application form where indicated.

Closing date for applications: 10:00 on Monday 10 March 2025.

Interviews: Monday 17 March (in person - London).

If you would like an informal conversation to discuss this role further and find out more about our future plans, please contact us on info@streetwiseopera.org. These conversations will not form part of our selection process.

Equal opportunities statement

As an equal opportunity employer, we are committed to ensuring within the framework of the law that our workplaces are free from unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender (including gender reassignment), sexuality, religion or beliefs, marital status, disability, age, pregnancy or trade union membership, or the fact that someone is a part-time worker or a fixed-term employee. We aim to ensure that our employees achieve their full potential and that all employment decisions are taken without reference to irrelevant or discriminatory criteria.

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