



ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES  
NEW PLACE-BASED FUNDING PROGRAMME  
TO SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURE IN BIRMINGHAM



**30<sup>th</sup> October 2025** - Today, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, founded by the composer to support the arts, culture and heritage for the public benefit, announces a new programme of place-based funding, specifically targeted to support arts projects in the city of Birmingham and the surrounding area.

Over the coming years, this new programme will commit over £500,000 to the West Midlands area across 11 key projects. The programme works in close partnership with the recipient organisations to raise awareness, widen access and encourage participation in talent development initiatives for young people across the area.

This is a new venture for the Foundation which, since 2010, has donated over £25million in grants, and nearly 400 performing arts scholarships to talented students in financial need. This

includes the Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST), established with funding from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. In academic year September 2025 - 2026, 14,885 children will receive free musical tuition and instruments as part of MiSST's Andrew Lloyd Webber Programme. The Foundation also continues to fund *Get Into Theatre*, a platform seeking to break down barriers and broaden access to careers in theatre.

**Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation's Birmingham and West Midlands programme will fund:**

- **The Birmingham Rep** to support backstage apprenticeships targeted at young people from diverse backgrounds traditionally under-represented in the theatre industry.
- **Birmingham Hippodrome** to support youth theatre bursaries for four strands of a comprehensive youth theatre provision.
- **B Music** (Birmingham Town Hall and Symphony Hall) to drive talent development for young people from a range of musical and educational backgrounds, broadening access and opportunity.
- **The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** to provide Talent Development Bursaries for Youth Orchestra (ages 13-21) performing at the highest level.
- **Birmingham Royal Ballet** for Dance Track, free ballet training to young children in 40 – 50 state schools across deprived areas in Birmingham.
- **Emma Rice Company** to support a Midlands-based training programme in technical theatre, alongside the development and performance of a new work in the region.
- **Stage One** to support producer bursaries for emerging producers in the Midlands, offering support for emerging entrepreneurs plus hands-on training at professional workshops and within established producing companies or regional venues.
- **NT Connections** to support young people across the Midlands to participate in the annual nationwide youth theatre festival, including bursaries for young companies, and travel for participants to events such as the Directors' Weekend and the NT Connections Festival. Venues include, Crewe Lyceum, Derby Theatre and Nottingham Playhouse.
- **Royal Shakespeare Company** to support 'Next Generation' Act, Backstage and Direct, a talent development programme empowering young people facing social challenges and disadvantages to explore theatre careers working alongside RSC practitioners.

In addition, a single donation will be made to **The King's Foundation** to support The Live Build Project (2025-26) at Dumfries House, part of the Building Craft Programme.

In line with other ongoing scholarship funding, 2 new performing arts scholarships have been funded in Birmingham in the academic year 2025/26 with **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire** (1-year Postgraduate Master of Music course) and **School of Theatre Excellence, Birmingham** (Foundation in Dance and Musical Theatre 1 year course, validated by Rose Bruford College).

**Simon Thurley, Chair, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, said:** *"For decades, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation has sought to give money in impactful ways, reaching into the heart of communities up and down the country. As the public funding situation in cities like Birmingham*

becomes increasingly difficult, we felt compelled to support critically important, and now endangered, arts organisations and projects in the city. Strong arts organisations bring unquantifiable benefit to the wider community and we hope this programme will see our grants make a larger collective impact on a very local level in Birmingham. However, we are offering just a small part of the solution to a much larger problem. We very much hope that others may see the impact of this programme and be inspired to join us in Birmingham and other great UK cities in the coming years."

## ADDITIONAL QUOTES

- **Rachael Thomas, CEO, Birmingham Rep:** *"We're delighted that Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation has chosen to fund our apprenticeships programme, which will fund 2 apprentices in backstage roles over 2 years. With full production facilities on site here in Birmingham we're hugely proud of the production and technical craft skills that are nurtured in this building. We're also committed to opening up careers in theatre to young people from a wider range of backgrounds. As the only producing theatre in one of the youngest and most diverse cities in the UK this is therefore a great opportunity to marry our aims of developing the production arts and building a more diverse workforce. We look forward to discovering new talent in our city and region and the opportunities that will bring for both the apprentices and The Rep. Without Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation's support, it would not be possible."*
- **Jon Gilchrist, Artistic Director and CEO, Birmingham Hippodrome**  
*"We are incredibly grateful to Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation for their generous support, which will enable us to offer half of the places in all four of our youth theatre groups as fully-funded bursaries: removing barriers for young people who might otherwise be unable to access excellent performing arts training. This aligns powerfully with our strategic aim to unlock all the Hippodrome has for the people of the UK's youngest, most diverse city: building creativity, confidence, connections and skills to support their ambitions. We are excited to embark on this new two-year partnership with Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, and we look forward to seeing the real and lasting difference it will make in the lives of the young people we work with."*
- **Rachel Cranny, Head of Development and Impact, B: Music:** *"We are so grateful for the support of the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, and it will make such a difference to our participants. Our B:Aspirational talent development programme aims to help to grow the West Midlands' creative workforce through work experience, training, mentoring and talent development. It provides life-changing opportunities and progression routes into various areas the industry, such sound engineering and community music provision. This funding will help us break down barriers and empower more young people to follow their passions."*

- **Emma Stenning, CEO, The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra:** *"We are extremely grateful to Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation for its support of the CBSO Youth Orchestra bursaries. The grant will enable us to continue to offer music opportunities of the highest quality to some of the most talented young players in the West Midlands and beyond. "*
- **Paul Reeve –Director of Engagement & Impact, Birmingham Royal Ballet:** *"The fact that an increasing number of schools, from the most disadvantaged areas - not just of Birmingham but the entire region - are engaging with Dance Track is testament to the positive impact they see it achieving for their children. And the record number of participants successfully auditioning for programmes and places at the UK's foremost ballet schools is clear evidence of Dance Track's effectiveness at nurturing young talent. Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation's grant will be invaluable in enabling us to continue offering these opportunities - entirely free of charge - to children who might not otherwise receive or be able to afford them. Most importantly, it will enable those children to realise their potential in dance, and to develop a range of other vital life skills."*
- **Poppy Keeling, Executive Director, Emma Rice Company:** *"We are thrilled to have been awarded funding by Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. The Foundation's ambition to broaden access to the arts in order to ensure a thriving sector speaks directly to why we established our Training Programme. The generous grant we have received will see us expand the reach of this Programme, doing more for more people, and developing a new strand of work specifically focused on technical theatre – an area which has been neglected for too long."*
- **Joseph Smith, CEO, Stage One:** *"For nearly 50 years, Stage One has educated, trained and supported emerging and early career theatre producers nationwide, with a strong focus on entrepreneurship and those who have been traditionally underrepresented in the industry. We are so grateful for the support from Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation which will unlock specific opportunities for emerging producers in the Birmingham area. Regionally- focused bursaries will help new producers in the early years of their careers to get projects off the ground and establish themselves. Our Commercial Regional workshop, to be staged in Birmingham in 2025, will inspire producers to expand their practice across the country."*
- **Kirsten Adam, Head of Participation, National Theatre:** *"With the help of Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, we are delighted to be delivering National Theatre Connections with theatres across the UK this year, including five theatres in the Midlands. Whether this is the first rung on the ladder to a glittering career on the stage, or the mechanism that builds confidence in a young person to go on and embrace challenges later in life, youth theatre is the foundation that allows young people to flourish and develop. We*

*are so excited to witness the talent and creativity that these groups will bring both on and off stage to their Connections Festivals this year."*

- **Georgia White, Deputy Director of Creative Learning and Engagement, Royal Shakespeare Company:** *"Over the next two years, Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation's vital funding will ensure that we can continue to seek out and support aspiring young theatre makers from backgrounds currently underrepresented in the performing arts – empowering them to develop their talents through a robust programme of workshops, residencies, and ongoing mentoring and support. We are very proud that several Next Gen graduates have gone on to study drama at prestigious drama schools across the country, with some already returning to work with the RSC in a professional capacity."*

**ENDS**

### **Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation**

Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation was set up by Andrew in 1992 to promote the arts, culture and heritage for the public benefit; since inception Andrew has been the principal provider of funding for all its charitable activities.

The Foundation's grant giving programme has now awarded grants of £25 million to support high quality training and personal development as well as other projects that make a real difference to enrich the quality of life both for individuals and within local communities.

Significant grants include:

- £3.5m to Arts Educational Schools, London to create a state-of-the-art professional theatre;
- £4.6m to the Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST);
- £1m to The Architectural Heritage Fund;
- \$1.3m to the American Theatre Wing
- Over £350,000 annually to support 30 performing arts scholarships for talented students in financial need.
- The Foundation is also a founding supporter of the Get Into Theatre careers website [www.getintothetheatre.org](http://www.getintothetheatre.org)

<https://andrewlloydwebberfoundation.com/>