

RED NOTE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024



Red Note Ensemble

Annual Report

April 2023 – March 2024

Welcome



I'm delighted to present Red Note's Annual Report for the financial year April 2023 - March 2024.

In common with many other organisations, we spent a great deal of time during the Pandemic thinking deeply about what it is that we do, and why, and what we're seeking to achieve.

As a result in 2023-24, the first full year without Covid interruptions, we have been able to develop all three strands of our activities - **Performance and Commissioning, Developing Talent and Working with Communities** - and we are very proud to share the results with you in this report. There's a bit more detail and explanation as a consequence, but we hope you enjoy what you read!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank my endlessly-patient and highly-resourceful colleagues at Red Note, our wonderful musicians, our highly-engaged Board Members, and all of our funders and partner organisations for making this such an excellent year.

John Harris, CEO

Introduction

At Red Note, we believe that new music enriches the lives of the people of Scotland – and that **creating it, developing it and performing it contributes directly to the growth and development of a diverse, dynamic, innovative and inclusive Scottish culture.**

This has been Red Note's **core belief** since its formation in 2009, and fulfilling this mission has seen us develop over the years into Scotland's - and one of Europe's - premier contemporary music ensembles, with an award-winning national and international reputation to match.

At the heart of Red Note is our performing ensemble – a core group of professional freelance instrumentalists, each of whom successfully pursues their own international solo or orchestral career when not engaged by Red Note.

The members of the ensemble work across our three programme strands:

1. **Performance and Commissioning**
2. **Developing Talent**
3. **Working with Communities**

These strands are inseparable from one another: for instance, as part of our [Performance and Commissioning](#) programme, we commission composers to make work within communities, and we perform the work with the people of those communities; similarly within [Developing Talent](#), we develop new music creators with a view to commissioning them and performing their work, including with and within communities; and within [Working with Communities](#), we develop talent within these communities, and commission and perform works with them.



“Red Note Ensemble is a Scottish success story.”
Anna Picard, The Times



Music is a social art form, and this means that **Red Note's mission is both social and artistic**. We are very aware of longstanding barriers to engagement and participation in the arts for people in Scotland, in particular for people and communities experiencing discrimination and lack of opportunity, and our work is planned and developed to reduce barriers to participation and engagement for all, and in particular for people with the following protected characteristics:

Age (younger than 25, and older than 65, with a special focus on people affected by dementia)

Socio-economic deprivation

Disability (with a particular focus on people with multiple disabilities)

Gender

Race/ethnicity

Through this approach we aim to **increase the diversity and number of people participating and engaging meaningfully** with the work of Red Note, and **grow and develop the diversity and inclusivity of our dynamic and innovative Scottish culture**.

Environmental Sustainability

Red Note is fully aware of the climate emergency, of the role we play in reducing our own impact upon climate change, and of the opportunities we have for highlighting and developing new ways of doing so both artistically and operationally. We are a founding member of the Scottish Classical Sustainability Group, and Red Note has **committed to Net Zero across all of its operations, including internationally, by 2030**.

Red Note Ensemble

Programme of work 2023/24

Performance & Commissioning



Performance & Commissioning

Red Note distinguishes itself in the **innovative commissioning, development and performance of international-quality new music within Scotland**, and we have an extensive, successful and progressive track record within this field.

Red Note has commissioned and premiered hundreds of works by emerging, Scottish and internationally-renowned composers since 2009, and has performed to thousands of people across Scotland from the Outer Hebrides to the Borders – in concert halls, bothies, schools, community centres, pubs, clubs, shopping centres and aircraft hangars.

Our approach to performance is based on our extensive research into current and potential audiences for new music, from which a key insight is that barriers to attendance are primarily social and physical – not artistic. As a result our work takes place in both traditional and non-traditional spaces across Scotland.

We have appeared to great acclaim abroad, including Norway, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Australia. This success has led to awards and enhanced credibility at home: in the current year 2023/24, our recording of James Dillon's *Emblemata: Carnival* was shortlisted for a Gramophone Award for best contemporary recording.

The intense competition we experience at international level is the driving force for all of our work, both within and outwith Scotland: international working is a two-way street for us. This is of huge importance as it ensures the quality and value of our work wherever we are, whether in Oakwood Primary School in Easterhouse, or on the stage of the Bruges Concertgebouw.



Performance & Commissioning

The Performance and Commissioning activities we undertook in 2023/24 include:

• AI interaction research with Glasgow University

Three Red Note performers worked with Dr Nick Fells at the University of Glasgow in June 2023 to research interactions between live performers, and AI sound-generative and responsive systems, with a view towards creating a new performance work in the future.

• McEwen Concert at The University Of Glasgow

Red Note premiered McEwen commission recipient composer Colin Broom's new work *The Big Freeze* on 8 June 2023, alongside an all-Glasgow programme of music by living composers: Jane Stanley, Bill Sweeney, Eddie McGuire and Kevin Leomo.

• CD Release: James Dillon 'Tanz/Haus' & 'Emblemata: Carnival'

Two major works commissioned by Red Note, premiered at HCMF and broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in previous years, recorded in Perth Concert Hall in 2021, were released on Delphian Records in summer 2023. *Emblemata: Carnival* was then shortlisted for a 2023 Gramophone Classical Music Award in October.

• CD Recording Sessions with Jane Stanley

We were back in the studio in September 2023 for our next CD release on Delphian Records, Jane Stanley's *Cerulean Orbits* featuring four works performed by Red Note.

• Northern Connection Workshop

As part of the [Northern Connection collaboration](#) between ensembles, festivals and music centres in Finland, Scotland and Norway, we welcomed Norwegian composer Tine Surel Lange to Scotland in September for a development workshop of a new work commissioned by Red Note Ensemble and Sound, ahead of the premiere at **soundfestival**.

• Northern Connection Performance, Aberdeen

For the opening day of **soundfestival** in October 2023, Red Note premiered [Flaskepost](#), a new work by Norwegian composer and interdisciplinary artist Tine Surel Lange. This new work is part of Northern Connection, a new and innovative project that aims to connect Nordic countries and Scotland by establishing and strengthening liaisons between composers, ensembles and festivals in contemporary music. We also performed [Light and Matter](#), a homage to composer Kaija Saariaho, who sadly passed away earlier this year, and [metamold](#) by Canadian composer (and Scottish resident) Bekah Simms. The concert was recorded and broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

• FLOCK Premiere

Kathy Hinde's interactive new work [FLOCK](#), co-commissioned with sound and co-developed by Red Note, the children of Oakwood Primary School in Easterhouse and dramaturg Matt Addicott (Platform, Easterhouse), received its premiere at **soundfestival** over four performances before embarking on an autumn tour of Scottish communities.



• *Red Note At RCS: Ligeti Piano Concerto*

Following Ligeti's centenary year in 2023, in January 2024 we performed the composer's extraordinary Piano Concerto with RCS Doctor of Performing Arts student, Marianna Abrahamyan as soloist. We also performed works by RCS students Kassia Bailey, Kate Sagovsky and Kaiwen Liu.

• *An Easterhouse Children's Manifesto at the Belfast Children's Festival*

Co-created by composer Brian Irvine, production company Dumbworld, Red Note, and the children of Oakwood Primary School in Easterhouse, the film/poster version of [An Easterhouse Children's Manifesto](#) (re-titled in the UK to *A Children's Guide to Anarchy*) received its international premiere at the Belfast Children's Festival in February 2024 before returning to Easterhouse in March.

• *An Easterhouse Children's Manifesto at The Library At The Bridge*

The film/poster version (on seven screens) returned to its origins in Easterhouse, being displayed in Platform throughout the Easter holidays in 2024. This attracted high visitor numbers, and brought attention in the form of a motion of congratulations at the Scottish Parliament!

• *New commissions*

Alongside the commissions premiered above, Red Note also received the final score for Ruth Morley's commission *Reef*, to be premiered at **soundfestival** in 2025. We also formally commissioned Laura Bowler for a [new work to be premiered at soundfestival in 2024](#).

Developing Talent



Developing Talent

We know from our own research that the diversity of Scotland is not yet reflected in those who work with us, and that there are significant systemic barriers to accessing the profession. Our **EDI-focused Developing Talent programme strand directly addresses inequalities of access and representation in new music within Scotland**, and is also closely linked to both our Performance and Commissioning and Working with Communities programmes.

[Developing Talent](#) aims to address these issues of access and representation through our long-standing "development pipeline" for new music creators and performers, working with creators and performers from their first contact with new music (often at school, or in a community setting), through secondary and tertiary education, through our Open Call and Open Access emerging- professional opportunities, and commissioning, national and international touring, and recording. Undertaken in partnership with schools, colleges, conservatoires and other organisations, we have many examples of musicians who have been part this programme since they were at school going on to flourishing international careers.

Alongside our own monitoring and evaluation, from 2023 we have also participated in research supported by the Classical EDI Development Fund, which seeks to better understand the entrenched practice of engaging artists based on existing relationships or word-of-mouth recommendations.

We are currently revising our recruitment policies and plans to ensure we sustainably develop a talent pool of the greatest diversity and highest quality, including working alongside other Scottish freelance ensembles to develop a collective EDI-informed auditioning process.

The Developing Talent activities we undertook in 2023/24 include:

• *RCS PLUG 2023 with Nicholas McCarthy*

PLUG is the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS)'s festival of contemporary music, all about showcasing original compositions by the students.

As Contemporary Ensemble-in-Residence, Red Note played works in April 2023 by five student composers (Ben Lunn, Jamie Westoby, Rebecca Edwards, Amy Stewart and Junqi Wan) with guest pianist Nicholas McCarthy.

• *Noisy Nights At Glad Cafe Glasgow*

[Noisy Nights](#) is our long-running open mic night for composers, premiering works by 10 composers who are selected by a specially-convened panel from an open call, following a "Make Your Own" session earlier in the year. For the first time we also held Development Workshops for eight composers whose pieces were not selected.

• *Go Compose! Course 2023*

Our long-running three-day composition course in October for young composers age 11-18 and in secondary education, in association with sound. This year's lead composers were Bekah Simms and Elise Haller-Shannon, and the finished pieces were performed at a special concert during **soundfestival**.

Developing Talent

• Soundfestival 2023 – Spotlight Gig

Five Scottish-based composers (Mingdu Li, Reese Carly Manglicmot, Kate Sagovsky, Max Syedtollan, Stephen Chase) were selected in June by Red Note and Sound to participate in a development opportunity with Red Note players (Mark O'Keeffe (trumpet) and Sasha Savaloni (guitar) and Karen Power as composer mentor. Their new works were showcased in October at **soundfestival** 2023.

• RCS Solos

The first workshops took place in a new initiative with the RCS composition department, to develop student composers' in-depth understanding and knowledge of particular instruments by writing solos in collaboration with a Red Note performer. Trumpeter Mark O'Keeffe hosted the first demonstration workshops in February 2024. This will be followed by workshops, rehearsals, recordings and a performance of the five selected composers' works later in the year.

• Video recordings for new online composition course

We recorded a series of videos for a University of Glasgow online course (hosted on Coursera), devised by collaborating composer Jane Stanley. The course will be subscription based and takes participants around 3-4 weeks to complete. It is aimed at intermediate composers and is ideal for upskilling, taking the participant through the journey of beginning a piece, developing a piece, and finishing a piece. The target audience is anyone wanting to develop their skills (especially school teachers), and showcases University of Glasgow composers alongside other pieces. The course will be launched in early 2025.

Working with Communities



Working with Communities

At the heart of our mission to create equality for all to engage with new music is our ground-breaking, EDI-focused **Working with Communities programme**. This comprises long-term place-based projects focused upon developing innovative new ways for community members to access and participate in new music-making in the places where they live.

The aims of [Working with Communities](#) projects are:

- 1. To reduce inequalities of access by offering community members the opportunity to participate through Red Note with cultural and community activities;*
- 2. To raise aspiration and possibility within these communities, through supporting high-quality creative engagement with music;*
- 3. To reduce social isolation and aid social cohesion.*

The work made in this programme is developed over many years in partnership with multiple organisations, community participants and highly-experienced composers and facilitators. The final results regularly go on to **be performed and presented on national and international stages by and with the community members**: see for example, the touring productions [FLOCK](#) and [An Easterhouse Children's Manifesto](#), which were both developed in 2023/24.

We also undertake regular touring of performances by the ensemble to community spaces, and, as described in Performance and Commissioning, also develop audience-specific work for touring and performance in collaboration with these communities, addressing specific EDI focuses.

The Working with Communities activities we undertook in 2023/24 include:

• [“A Children’s Guide To Anarchy”: live premiere](#)

Created with the children of Oakwood primary alongside community groups from Easterhouse, with Red Note Ensemble and Dumbworld, [“A Children’s Guide to Anarchy”](#), is a child-led, musical guide to living in the 21st century! We presented the finished product to the Oakwood Primary Schools families in June 2023 at Platform in Easterhouse. The seven songs in the form of animated posters were showcased, featuring every child in the school, along with a performance of other new songs by the Oakwood Primary School pupils and Red Note Ensemble.

• [Community Summer Tour](#)

Our regular June tour bringing new music to venues and destinations in the communities we work with, including Aultmore Park Primary School, Newhill and Lochend High Schools, Levenmouth Academy and Methil Primary School, and Eliburn Day Centre (with Artlink).

• [FLOCK - Project Development](#)

Final development sessions in August, following extensive development in 2022/23, with the children of Oakwood Primary School in Platform Easterhouse, Red Note players, dramaturg Matt Addicott, and composer Kathy Hinde. The show premiered at **soundfestival** in October and then embarked on a tour of communities in Scotland.

Working with Communities

• Artlink Cherry Road

Artlink works across Edinburgh and the Lothians to increase opportunities to take part in the arts for those who experience disadvantage or disability, and to help encourage positive change. Red Note has partnered with Artlink for a number of years, providing one-to-one responsive performances and immersive live music experiences at Cherry Road Adult Resource Centre, and now also at Eliburn Day Centre.

• FLOCK tour

In October, November and December 2023, following a highly successful premiere at **soundfestival** in Aberdeen, **FLOCK** toured to Bramble Brae Primary School (Aberdeen), Westpark Primary School (Aberdeen), Methilhill Primary School, Methilhaven Home & Nursery and Levenmouth Academy (Methil), Wellesley Parish Church Centre (Methil), Hillwood Primary School, Ratho Station (Edinburgh), Glencoats Primary School, Ferguslie Park (Paisley), St. Margaret's RC Primary School (South Queensferry), St. Benedict's Primary School (Easterhouse), Aultmore Park Primary School (Easterhouse), and finally to the home of our co-collaborators on the project, Oakwood Primary School (Easterhouse).

Either two or three performances were given in each, to different class groups and audiences, resulting in a total of 29 performances involving 691 people.



Other Activities



Research & Evaluation

Red Note is not only interested in creating new music, but also in **understanding the impact of new music on the people we make it with**, and the challenges and opportunities that exist. To do this, we undertake a great deal of research, in partnership with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Research Department.

Research projects reporting in 2023/24 included:

- *Emerging Composer Research* (in partnership with New Music Scotland)
Dr. Jill Morgan, "Exploring the potential barriers for emerging composers to constructing and maintaining a career in the field of composition in Scotland", presented at the 2023 New Music Scotland Conference.
- *The impact of Red Note's work in Methil* Funded by the People's Postcode Trust, conducted by Dr. Benjamin Redman (RCS).

The following reports were commissioned in 2023/24, to report after the year end:

- *The impact of New Music Makers* Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, conducted by Dr. Jill Morgan (RCS).
- *The impact of An Easterhouse Children's Manifesto* Conducted by Dr. Jill Morgan (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland).

More information on our research and reports can be found on the [Red Note website](#).

We are also **collaborating with other freelance ensembles in Scotland** on research supported by the Classical EDI Development Fund, which is managed by Chamber Music Scotland in partnership with Creative Scotland.

The research seeks to better understand the entrenched practice of engaging artists based on existing relationships or word-of-mouth recommendations which, in turn, prevents a diversification of the pool of freelance musicians working in Scotland across all protected characteristics. This collaboration between several of Scotland's key freelance ensembles sets out to create a 'Best Practice Guide' to help address this pressing and historic issue in our own work, as well as sharing freely with our colleagues across the sector. We are also developing an EDI-informed collective approach to commission, to be commenced in 2025.

Red Note is an **active member of the Scottish Classical Sustainability Group**, which recently launched its report "*Classical Music and Train Travel in Scotland 2022-23*", which highlights the issues, challenges and benefits of travelling by train to increase the sustainability of the sector.

Board

Following a recruitment process which attracted a significant number of applicants, we were delighted to **welcome five new Board Members** in March 2024: Isla McLeod, David Sinclair, Lynn Sweeney, Daniel Lewis, and our first Trustee-in-Training, Mareike Ohl.





ADMINISTRATION TEAM 2023/24

John Harris: *Chief Executive*
Louise Martin: *Director of Working with Communities*
Sarah Mills: *General Manager*
Flore Ducasse: *Marketing and Administration Co-ordinator*
Natalie Dobbs: *Community Co-ordinator (Easterhouse)*

Red Note Ensemble Ltd is a Living Wage Employer



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ian Smith (*Chair*)
Lindsey Shields (*Company Secretary*)
Stefaan Coninx
Isla McLeod
David Sinclair
Lynn Sweeney
Daniel Lewis
Mareike Ohl (*Trustee in Training*)
John Harris

SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
TOTAL INCOME	£320,349	£278,144	£387,492	£300,250	£319,886
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£269,226	£227,814	£421,805	£363,687	£355,391

Published accounts for all years can be found on the website of Companies House

Registered Company Number: SC355726
Registered Charity Number: SC045030
Registered Office and Principal Operating Address: Room 136, Artist Block, Summerhall,
1 Summerhall Place, Edinburgh EH9 1PL

Our Team & Financials

Our Funders



THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR GENEROUS FUNDERS IN 2023/24:



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