

Simply IC Marketing Growth Award

Growing participation. Reaching new audiences. Strengthening communities.

About the Award

At Simply IC, we believe every arts and cultural organisation deserves access to high-quality marketing support, whatever its size or budget. Across Greater London, choirs, orchestras, churches, ensembles and music charities are doing extraordinary things, but even the best music needs help finding its audience.

The **Simply IC Marketing Growth Award** was created to give ambitious, not-for-profit organisations the marketing expertise and support they need to raise their profile, reach new audiences and build lasting connections.

With **up to £3,000 of marketing support available**, the Award may benefit one organisation or be shared across several deserving projects.

We're looking for organisations with excellent musical activity, a clear ambition to grow and a genuine desire to connect with more people. Music doesn't need to be your organisation's sole focus, but it should be a meaningful part of what you do.

Successful projects should demonstrate how the funding will help an organisation:

- reach new audiences
- attract new participants
- widen access to music
- strengthen engagement with its community, or
- build the marketing capacity needed to create sustainable future growth

Award-funded activity must take place between **July 2027 and July 2028.**

Our ambition is simple: to help excellent musical activity reach more people, especially those in traditionally underserved communities or with fewer opportunities

to experience live music, and, in doing so, create stronger and more connected communities

Who Can Apply?

The Award is open to eligible not-for-profit organisations delivering or supporting musical activity within Greater London.

This could include:

- Choirs and choral societies
- Orchestras
- Chamber groups and ensembles
- Churches, cathedrals and other places of worship with established musical activity
- Music charities and charitable trusts
- Community music organisations
- Opera companies
- Youth music organisations and ensembles
- Music education charities
- Educational charities delivering musical activity
- Not-for-profit music festivals
- Amateur music societies
- Not-for-profit venues delivering their own musical or participation programmes
- Community or heritage organisations where music forms a meaningful part of their work
- Other recognised not-for-profit organisations delivering musical activity.

What We Fund

The **Simply IC Marketing Growth Award** funds marketing, communications and audience-development activity designed to increase participation in music.

Funding could be used for:

- Audience-development campaigns
- Choir, orchestra or ensemble recruitment campaigns
- Marketing for Come & Sing events or open rehearsals
- Campaigns designed to attract first-time concertgoers
- Marketing activity to reach families, young people or underrepresented audiences
- Funding chorister places to enable more people to participate in church and cathedral music

- Community engagement and outreach campaigns
- School and education engagement campaigns
- Digital advertising
- Social media campaigns
- Email marketing
- Printed publicity and direct mail
- Local press and PR activity
- Photography, video or creative content required for a campaign
- Website or landing-page development directly connected to an audience-growth campaign
- Audience research and consultation
- Data collection and audience insight
- Developing relationships with community partners
- Professional marketing, communications or audience-development support
- Freelance or agency support to plan and deliver a marketing campaign
- Strategic marketing planning connected to growing musical participation
- Other marketing-led activity that can clearly demonstrate how it will help more people engage with music.

This list is not exhaustive, and we welcome other marketing-led activities that can demonstrate how they will help more people engage with music.

Building Capacity and Securing Future Growth

We recognise that effective marketing is about much more than advertising. Marketing is about understanding people, communicating purpose, building relationships, reaching communities and creating the conditions that allow an organisation to grow. For this reason, the Award may also support professional grant-writing or fundraising support where it forms part of a clear strategy to grow musical participation.

For example, a community choir may have developed plans for a substantial three-year schools and community singing programme but lack the internal expertise to make a strong application to a major funder. The Simply IC Marketing Growth Award could contribute towards employing an experienced grant writer or fundraising professional to help develop that application.

The applicant would need to demonstrate:

- what larger project it is seeking funding for
- how that project would increase musical participation or widen access
- which funding opportunity it intends to pursue
- why professional support is required

- how securing the larger grant could create meaningful and sustainable community impact

We consider this part of the wider marketing and communications process: understanding an audience, articulating a compelling proposition, communicating impact and securing the resources required to reach more people.

What We Do Not Fund

The Award is a marketing and audience-growth grant, rather than a general music project fund.

We would therefore not normally fund:

- General running costs
- Activity that has no clear marketing or audience-development purpose
- Musical activity with no strategy for increasing participation or engagement
- Instruments or equipment as a standalone purchase
- General venue hire
- Performer fees unrelated to an audience-growth initiative (However, where engaging a musician is a core part of an access or audience development scheme, those performer fees would be eligible).
- Projects outside Greater London
- Activity taking place outside the eligible funding period.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a registered charity, church, educational charity or recognised not-for-profit organisation.
- Deliver or support musical activity within Greater London.
- Demonstrate that music forms a meaningful part of the activity for which funding is requested.
- Demonstrate how the proposed activity will increase participation, widen access, develop audiences or strengthen community engagement through music.
- Undertake the funded activity between July 2027 and July 2028.
- Have appropriate financial management arrangements.
- Have the organisational capacity to deliver the proposed activity.
- Identify a named person responsible for the project.
- Agree to measure and share project outcomes with Simply IC if successful.

Existing Simply IC clients

Existing clients of Simply IC are not eligible to apply for the Simply IC Music Growth Award. This ensures that applications are assessed independently of any existing commercial relationship with Simply IC.

Judging Panel

Applications will be assessed by a panel of leading figures from the music sector.

Chloé van Soeterstède
Principal Guest Conductor with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
Conductor and Founder, Arch Sinfonia

Jonathan Darbourne
Artistic Director & Co-Founder, Vache Baroque

Thomas Allery
Director of Music, Temple Church
Harpsichordist, Ensemble Hesperi

The panel will assess eligible applications against the published criteria and identify the project or projects that demonstrate the strongest potential to use marketing to grow musical participation and create meaningful community impact.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed equally against four criteria.

Participation

Will the project help more people engage with music?

Judges will consider the number of new people the organisation expects to reach and whether the proposed activity has the potential to widen participation.

Community Impact

Will reaching these people make a meaningful difference?

Judges will consider who will benefit, whether the project addresses a genuine barrier to participation and how it could strengthen connections within the community.

Deliverability

Is there a credible plan for reaching the intended audience?

Judges will consider the organisation's capacity, marketing approach, leadership, budget and ability to successfully deliver and measure the proposed activity.

Legacy

Will the benefits continue beyond the Award period?

Judges will consider whether the project could create lasting audience relationships, improved marketing capability, stronger partnerships, useful audience knowledge or sustainable opportunities for future participation.

Key Dates

1 December 2026
Applications open.

1 February 2027 at 5.00pm
Applications close.

February 2027
Applications are reviewed by the Simply IC Marketing Growth Award judging panel and successful organisations are notified.

March 2027
Awards are announced and funding released.

July 2027 – July 2028
Award-funded activity takes place.

During the project
Recipients share progress and outcomes with Simply IC.

Within three months of completion
Recipients submit a short impact report including results, audience data, photographs and reflections.

About Simply IC

Simply IC is a specialist marketing consultancy working with organisations across music, the arts and cultural heritage. We believe that every arts and cultural

organisation deserves access to high-quality marketing support, regardless of its size or budget.

From established ensembles and concert series to emerging organisations, choirs and churches, we help our clients tell their stories, reach the right audiences and build lasting connections with the people who matter to them.

Our approach combines strategic thinking with creativity, practical experience and a genuine understanding of the arts. Whether developing a marketing strategy, promoting a performance, strengthening an organisation's identity or finding new ways to engage audiences, we believe good marketing should be thoughtful, effective and true to the organisation behind it.

The Simply IC Marketing Growth Award is an extension of that belief. By offering dedicated marketing support to a deserving musical organisation, we hope to help excellent music reach more people and give ambitious organisations the opportunity to grow.

For more information, please visit: www.simply-ic.co.uk/marketing-growth-award

If you would like to discuss an application, please contact:

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