



Celebrating Sanctuary Birmingham
Registered Charity No. 1099536

Registered Address:
79 Witherford Way, Selly Oak, B29 4AN

Celebrating Sanctuary 2024-25 Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025 - Programme Details

We ran a varied and diverse series of events and projects, including:

Evolving Traditions ACE funded Programme – ended August 2024

Partnership events 2024-25

We have been very successful with our partnership programme, increasing activity with existing and new partners, reaching new audiences. Including: Lunchtime Concerts with B:Music, Free Jazz Friday and a partnership School's Project, Refugee Week, and new partnerships such as Aston University Centre for Migration and Forced Displacement, and Birmingham University.

B:Music - Lunchtime Concerts at Symphony Hall (April 2024 – March 2025):

- 18 April – TwoManTing (Sierra Leone / UK)
- 16 May – Iryna Muha & Volodymyr Vasylenko (Ukraine)
- **22 June – Refugee Week takeover Event**
- 18 July – July 18th – Silk Breeze - Cheng Yu & Dennis Kwong Thye Lee (China)
- 19th September - Zirak Hamad Trio (Kurdistan)
- 17th October - Sefo Kanuteh & Julla kanuteh (Gambia)
- 21st November - Niwel Tsumbu (DR Congo)
- **2024 season finale - 12th December:** Sacred Funk Quartet – Tales of Orisa (Nigeria / UK), Support Babak Aria (Iran)
- 17th January - Free Jazz Friday - Germa Adan & Jonno Gaze plus Guests (Haiti / UK)
- 16th January – Ben Okafore (Nigeria)
- 13th February – Julianne Mwanza with Joel Ogoe (Togo / DR Congo)
- 13th March – The River Speaks with Ilias Lintzos (Greece)

Refugee Week Festival 2024 - 15th - 22nd June

Refugee Week Takeover at Mac

- **Hexagon Theatre** – Refugee Week Launch: presentations, spoken word by Ahmed Magare, Writers Without Borders, Short Film “Women”, music by In Her Shoes
- **Main Theatre** - live music from Kausary (Peru), Mohammed Osman (Sudan), Ukrainian School band, Zirak Hamad & Daholl Kurdish Band, Queen Lilas (France / Congo). Plus information stalls, arts and crafts and workshops

Late Night Exchange: World Refugee Day at Birmingham Exchange - Didier Kisala (DR Congo)

B:Music Schools event and workshops - Millicent Chapanda, Zirak Hamad, Nifeco Costa (Zimbabwe, Kurdistan, Guinea Bissau)

Erdington Evening of Creativity at Oikos Cafe (partnership event) - Performances including:

Karolina Wegrzyn & Baback Aria (Poland / Iran), Stories of Hope and Home

Refugee Week Takeover at Symphony Hall

- Ava (Anglo-Persian duo)
- Birmingham Passage Trio - Germa Adam, Xhosa Cole & Azizi Cole (Haiti / UK)
- Black Umfolosi – Visiting artists from Zimbabwe

Plus information stalls, arts and crafts

Evolving Traditions - Main Event Programme

- **Mama Afrika at Mac (May 2024)** – Anna Mudeka (Zimbabwe); One woman theatre show charting the life and music of South African music legend Miriam Makeba.
- **Niwel Tsumbu & Ling Peng at Mac (July 2024)** (DR Congo / China); A creative collaboration between artists from very different musical and cultural backgrounds.
- **Madalitso at Moseley Hive (August 2024)** (visiting artists from Malawi) Bringing the street music of Malawi to Moseley with a dynamic duo performance.

Audience Feedback

Through audience surveys at events we've learnt what works at different venues & what type of events our audiences appreciate. Through surveys completed we recorded around 50% of audiences being new to our events, less so at Symphony Hall where we have been building a regular audience, but still around 30% at most events.

Sample of Feedback from audiences:

Refugee Week Events

- Great electric afternoon and electric sounds big clap for getting Black Umfolosi
- Good to hear different styles of music from around the world
- Great to see Brum hosting such an event of welcoming cultural arts
- Its great to be with so many people from different cultures
- A wonderful and unique opportunity to experience music beyond our narrow understanding
- Great coming together event wonderful live music, such a unique and precious experience
- CSB has a great and welcoming team
- Very good for mental health. I'm not depressed when I come to these events – I feel hopeful
- Beautiful music and beautiful people sitting
- Great atmosphere, great musicians – such a wonderful event, please continue

Lunchtime Concerts

- Brilliant - first time seeing hurdy gurdy and this type of accordion
- Always wonderful music that takes you to another place
- I have been to every one of the Celebrating Sanctuary events and its great to see so many diverse sounds
- Lovely- really appreciate hearing music from a different culture Fantastic! More please xxx
- Wonderful performance. Nice to hear about the history and stories of the instruments and songs
- Really lovely to get the opportunity to experience another cultures music

Mac events

(Niwel Tsumbu & Ling Peng)

- Fantastic event, loved that it was improvised – very talented artists
- Really lovely collaborations

(Mama Afrika)

- Brilliant as always – thank you CSB . Anna Mudeka's exceptionally brilliant
- Fantastic performance – such powerful singer/actor. Beautifully paced & funny too!
- Brilliant. Thank you for always putting on brilliant educational & cultural events
- This is the kind of show I can relate to as a black woman, love history and culture

Moseley Hive (Madalitso)

- Fantastic brought my 13year old daughter who loved it also
- Lovely upbeat music, family friendly and joyful environment
- Love the events CSB puts on. Enjoying this evening at the Hive it is much needed in Moseley
- Great music, lovely vibes. I hope the Hive is used again, nice size and space. You always put on great gigs
- Brilliant as usual, love this act!! - Beautiful event, well organised great energy

Community Engagement

We have created opportunities to engage with refugees, asylum seekers and migrant communities through arts and music.

Birmingham Refugee Week Network

We held meetings with the network, which involves people from Arts & Culture, Faith & Community and Refugee Support sectors to plan Refugee Week activities and increase access for refugees and asylum seekers at the festival and throughout the year.

Refugee Week Festival – A platform for refugees to share their music, arts and stories.

Opportunities for refugee groups and emerging artists to perform alongside professional artists. Workshops, stalls and activities to raise awareness.

Performances by Stories of Hope and Home at a number of events through Refugee Week. A group with lived experience of seeking asylum in the UK. Raising awareness of the stories and experiences of people experiencing migration and seeking asylum.

Performances by In Her Shoes – a women's collective working with refugee women and girls to write and perform songs.

Community Cohesion Project – Belonging

We were successful in securing a grant from BCC for a Community Cohesion project, due to run between March and August 2025. The project aims are to bring together different communities, migrant and non-migrant, to take part in activities together, share a community lunch and explore what community means. The initial set up and outreach stage of the project happened in March.

Education & Youth

- Partnership with Aston University to: host a PhD placement in 2025, with supervision starting in 2024; to develop a short creative research project “My Birmingham Sound” with artist Germa Adan and workshops with refugee group Stories of Hope and Home due to start in May 2025.
- 2024 Schools Project with B:Music - introducing children from inner city schools to music from different cultures, coming together for workshops and a performance at Symphony Hall.
- Planning and set up for 2025 Schools Project “Generation Birmingham”, broadening to include workshops in 8 schools across Birmingham, starting in April and 2 workshop and event days at Symphony Hall during Refugee Week in June.

Artist Development

We have supported a number of artists at varying stages of their development, in different ways:

- Babak Aria – support for newly arrived Iranian musician, creative collaboration and performance opportunity.
- Zirak Hamad (Muzikstan support) advice, networks, artist contacts, support with the festival, also performance & presentation opportunities for Zirak as an artist.
- One to one meetings to discuss future projects and development needs: Jethro Mogratana, Nifeco Costa, Didier Kissala - ongoing support
- Expanding skills through school's project and event – Millicent Chapanda, Nifeco Costa, Zirak Hamad

Emerging Artists Development & Opportunities

Mentoring, shadowing, work on new projects, opportunities to perform:

- Fifi Bozeme – mentoring and shadowing opportunity for Congolese textile artist, also opportunity for her to display and sell her work at Refugee Week events.
- Spoken word from Writers Without Borders: a Birmingham-based group from different cultural backgrounds, involving new and emerging writers.
- Czech & Slovak artists to perform at different events, increasing their profile and networks.
- Ukrainian School Band – opportunity to perform at Refugee Week festival for young emerging Ukrainian musicians.

Artist Commissions

We commissioned screenings of short films and spoken word by refugee and migrant artists as part of our Refugee Week programme.

- “Women” - A short film by Lora Arkhypenko (Ukraine)
- “To Home We Begin” - Spoken Word commission, recording and artwork by Ahmed Magare (Somalia)

New Collaborations and creative partnerships

We encouraged and supported artists to develop new artistic collaborations and experience new creative partnerships, including:

- Karolina Wegrzyn & Babak Aria – creative collaboration
- Niwel Tsumbu & Ling Peng – creative collaboration at Mac
- Germa Adan, Xhosa Cole & Azizi Cole – rework of “Birmingham Passage” commission

Networks and Public engagement

Through our ongoing partnership with B:Music and new partnership with Aston University Centre for Migration and Forced Displacement, we are raising awareness about CSB and the work that we do. Also elevating ourselves with important ongoing partnerships.

Midlands World Music Consortium (MWMC) & WOMEX

We are active members of the consortium and through 2024, with funding from ACE, we were involved in the planning and delivery of a regional networking event and trade fair in Nottingham called “Plug Into World Music” in September 24. This was a great opportunity to bring together music professionals across the region and with the added benefit of being in Nottingham we were able to attract groups we don't usually connect with.

We also attended WOMEX conference and expo in Manchester as part of their delegation in October 24. We had a stall in the main exhibition area which was a great opportunity to connect and network with different companies, promoters and artists from across the UK and around the world. Also to raise awareness of the work that we do in Birmingham.

Both of these events have been an opportunity to represent CSB on regional, national & international platforms. Also to promote the artists we work with. Our continued involvement enables us to access and develop regional & national networks.

Marketing & Comms

We increased our marketing and comms, and tried some different approaches, such as:

- Co-promotion: “Festival Ye Mboka”, African music event; B:Music channels, Mac channels, exit flyering at events and display on screens in foyer
- We also launched our “Brand Refresh” over the summer with a new look and logo. This was a process of consultation and development of ideas over the last 2 years.
- During Refugee Week - Appearance in Kurdish press and interviews, Radio WM interview and wide exposure through partner's social media channels.
- We produced a general flyer about CSB to take to networking events and circulate at our events through the year.

Through online content: marketing, sharing event highlights and artists work, brand building and raising profile, we have maintained regular engagement and reached:

- **Facebook** - 2829 followers
- **Instagram** – 1105 followers
- **Youtube** - 363 subscribers

A reduction in activity and online presence as a result of funding during 2025 has slowed down this engagement.

Outputs & Achievements

- Our programme involved 21 events in different locations.
- We have featured 81 artists in our programme, 56 of who were refugee or migrant artists (65 local)
- We have featured International, 8 visiting artists: Niwel Tsumbu, Black Umfolosi and Madalitso
- We created development opportunities for 26 artists (12 emerging) and opportunities to perform or present work
- We engaged with refugees and migrant communities through Refugee Week, but numbers for the year were lower than expected due to unsuccessful funding for a Community Project in 2024. We will increase this engagement through our Belonging Project in 2025.
- We reached live audiences of around 5,000, which were lower than anticipated due to less event delivery in 2025.

Through this year we have started to focus on new areas of work with Aston University, B:Music Schools partnership, and Community Cohesion work, all of which we will take forward into 2025-26 and beyond. This work opened up new income streams which gave us some project based security.

Challenges and Opportunities

We set out to deliver an adventurous programme, some of which had to change as a result of less funding. We were still able to run a successful programme regardless of the funding issues we faced.

Challenges for us for have been:

2024-25 has been a very challenging time with regards to securing funds. Our Arts Council (ACE) funding ended in August 2024. Following this we applied for a number of grants, including ACE, Birmingham City Council (BCC) and some new areas funding, which were unsuccessful. We were able to secure a grant from Postcode Lottery for £25000 towards core costs in August 2024, which enabled us to keep our delivery going even without Arts Council funding. This did restrict the level of activity we could provide beyond August 2024 outside of our core costs, partnerships events and projects, until we were able to secure funding from BCC for a Community Cohesion Project starting in March 2025.

We have seen consistently good audiences at our events at Symphony Hall and through Refugee Week, and reached a lot of new people through our promotion and partnerships. We saw some new audience members and many new sign ups to our mailing list. Our 2024 events at Mac for Mama Afrika & Madalitso at Moseley Hive were full capacity, we were able to keep tickets prices low at Moseley Hive & targetted a local audience. Due to a reduced budget and marketing our event with Niwel Tsumbu & Ling Peng was not as well attended, but those who did attend really enjoyed it and several were new to our work. We also made links with the Chinese Community Centre and some members attended the event.

We had hoped to run other events through the year but with limited funds we had to rethink this and rely on partnership events beyond August 2024.

These combined factors throughout the programme left us with a lot of uncertainty regarding our budget and as a result we had to postpone and reduce some aspects of the programme and core costs. The grant from Postcode Lottery alleviated some of this uncertainty for a short time but unsuccessful applications to ACE have meant that the end of 2024 and beginning of 2025 were still precarious. The B:Music School Project, Aston University partnership "My Birmingham Sound" project and the Community Cohesion project have secured project work from April – August 2025. Also partnerships with B:Music and Mac have secured a scaled down Refugee Week festival in June.

Donations and Memberships

We've seen an increase in donations over the last year, with a few regular donors. Creating a general flyer that we could have at all events has helped to promote this.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name
CELEBRATING SANCTUARY

On accounts for the year
ended

31ST MARCH 2025

Charity no
(if any) 1099536

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2025.

Responsibilities and
basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent
examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date: 20/01/2026

Name:

ANITA NICHOLLS

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):

Address:

29 School Road

Evesham

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.