



Sinfonia Smith Square Hall awarded National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to transform into a world-class cultural venue

*Doors Open: Transforming lives through music at
Sinfonia Smith Square Hall*

Today, Smith Square Hall is delighted to announce that it has been awarded a £452,035 grant by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to transform Smith Square Hall into a world-class cultural venue, with emerging talent at its heart. The grant marks a significant milestone in the venue's history, following a rebrand earlier in 2024, and will help transform the 18th-century building into a dynamic centre for culture and classical music.

Made possible by National Lottery players, the project will enable Sinfonia Smith Square to continue its mission to create world-class performances and serve its communities within a flexible, accessible 21st Century performance space. The project aims to repair the historic fabric of the building, improve accessibility, expand the facilities for players and guest artists, and create outstanding experiences for audiences and visitors through upgraded lighting, sound, heating, and ventilation systems. In line with Sinfonia Smith Square's ambition to become carbon neutral, the project will install renewable energy technologies throughout the building.

Capturing reminiscences of people who have lived and worked in the local area or taken part in performances in the Hall, forms a key part of the engagement activities. The project is keen to hear from anyone who has a story to share, or who would like to volunteer to help record these stories and use them to better understand the building's history and significance.

The initial investment has been awarded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to support Smith Square Hall in progressing its plans to apply for a full National Lottery grant at a later date.

Commenting on the award, Chief Executive Rosie Fraser, said *We're delighted to have received this support thanks to National Lottery players. This is a huge step forward for the organisation, and we are working towards making the building fit for purpose for our players, audiences, and visitors. We wish to embed the building and our music programmes in the local community, working with local schools and community groups to create a vibrant cultural venue, while providing meaningful training and volunteering opportunities.*

Stuart McLeod, Director England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said, *We are delighted to give our initial support to transform Sinfonia Smith Square Hall into a dynamic cultural hub for the community. This Grade I listed building has seen many uses over its long history, most recently as a concert hall and new home of Southbank Sinfonia. As the UK's largest funder of heritage, we need to support these historic buildings in adapting and regenerating and this project is a great example of this. We look forward to working with the team to progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.*

A masterpiece of Baroque architecture, Smith Square Hall, formerly St John's Smith Square, is a renowned central London venue for classical music, welcoming 50,000 people a year to some 240 concerts and events. Having recently rebranded to Sinfonia Smith Square, the building became home to Southbank Sinfonia, an orchestral development programme for young professional musicians, in April 2021. Its vision is to improve the building, making it a world-class cultural venue in London, while nurturing young professional musicians through an annual orchestral development programme. Initiatives also include a learning and participation programme and the establishment of a new emerging talent pathway programme.

The building, dating from 1728, is Grade I listed and now requires urgent repairs. It was bombed during the Blitz and rebuilt to its original design in the late 1960s. Work on the building is expected to commence in early 2027 and take around 18 months to complete. As part of the project, new

partnerships are emerging to embed the building within its local community and provide meaningful engagement opportunities for young people through training and volunteering placements. For anyone interested in volunteering to help the project deliver a series of pilot activities in 2025, more information can be found on the Sinfonia Smith Square website or via email engagement@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk.

A full consultant team has now been appointed, including Burrell Foley Fischer architects, Burke Hunter Adams as quantity surveyors, and ORM Developments as Project Manager.

Notes to Editors

Venue Sinfonia Smith Square

Address Sinfonia Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HA

Website <https://www.sinfoniasmithsq.org.uk/>
www.heritagefund.org.uk

Social Media X - @sinfoniasmithsq
Instagram - @sinfoniasmithsq
Facebook - Sinfonia Smith Square

@HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund

About Sinfonia Smith Square

A beacon for the future of classical music, Sinfonia Smith Square is the coming together of two much-loved organisations: Southbank Sinfonia and St John's Smith Square.

Every year, Sinfonia Smith Square's Fellowship programme welcomes 34 talented graduate musicians to form an orchestra. Through world-class collaborations, bold programming, and educational leadership projects, the programme intensifies their professional development and advances their musical careers. Since its formation in 2002, it now has over 650 alumni, who have gone on to become leaders in the classical music world.

Smith Square Hall has been welcoming musicians and music lovers to its renowned acoustics since 1969. A Grade I listed Baroque masterpiece in the heart of Westminster, it champions emerging musicians, attracts world-class artists, and embeds the Fellowship programme at its heart. From lunchtime recitals, Baroque festivals, late night jazz, to activities for families, this orchestra-led venue brings the joy of music to ever-wider audiences.

Over the next few years, the organisation will be undertaking a restoration that will create and improve welcoming and accessible spaces for audiences, world-class artists, performers, and its Fellowship orchestra.

About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

National Lottery Heritage Fund grant applications over £250,000 are assessed in two rounds. Southbank Sinfonia at St John's Smith Square has initially been granted round one development funding of £452,035 by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, allowing it to progress with its plans. Detailed proposals are then considered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund at second round, where a final decision is made on the full funding award of £3.7m.

As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, The National Lottery Heritage Fund's vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033. Over the next ten years, the Heritage Fund aims to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to bring about benefits for people, places and the natural environment.

The Heritage Fund helps protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are. The Heritage Fund is passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people's lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

For all enquiries, images and further information:

Emma Wall, Chloé Nelkin Consulting
E: e.wall@chloenelkinconsulting.com, T: 020 3627 2960
W: www.chloenelkinconsulting.com