

£1m Arts Funding Boost for APA and Aberdeen

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An Aberdeen arts organisation has been given national backing for its vision for arts and culture in the city.

In the first round of its new Regular Funding programme announced today, Creative Scotland has granted Aberdeen Performing Arts (APA) £1m over three years as an organisation which makes an important contribution to the development of the arts and creative industries.

The funding is to enable APA to plan and deliver activities over a three year period from April 2015 and is the first time the company have been given a longer-term commitment from the national body.

Out of 264 applicants, APA is one of 119 to be successfully granted Regular Funding by Creative Scotland.

"This is fantastic news and a very exciting development for Aberdeen Performing Arts," said APA Chief Executive Jane Spiers.

"It's a vote of confidence in our company, our programme, our people and our plans for the future.

"But it is also great news for the city and the North-east - a city that's invested in its artistic community is more interesting, more vibrant, more confident and more creative.

"This is step change for Aberdeen and supports our ambitions to put arts and culture at the heart of city life."

The funding will make APA more sustainable, able to plan ahead with more certainty and the capacity to be more ambitious. It brings new partners to the table and connections to a network of Regular Funded arts organisations across Scotland

Specifically, the three-year funding means APA can:

Introduce an associate artists' programme to bring more artists and performers to live and work in the city;

Support local talent and help keep artists in the city and North-east;

Produce and commission more work in the North-east;

Develop The Lemon Tree as a production hub for theatre and new writing and

Develop APA's role and venues as a festivals hub for the region.

In addition, Regular Funding is another step towards achieving the company's ambitious £7m regeneration project for the city's historic Music Hall.

"We will also be able to look at more international programmes and exchanges," said Jane. "We're especially keen to explore our connections and links with the Northern Arc countries – Scandinavia, the Baltic and Canada.

"This is also an investment in youth arts and young people in Aberdeen and will be a tremendous boost to our youth theatre and our youth music programmes.

"It gives us scope to reach new audiences and develop our digital capacity."

Creative Scotland's Regular Funding programme aims ensure the country has a wide range of arts and creative organisations through which artists and creative people can deepen and deliver their work, their engagement with the public, and their professional networks.

Of the 119 organisations demonstrating creative excellence, potential and ambition, 20 are entirely new to long-term funding said the national body.

In response to the large number of high quality applications received for Regular Funding, Creative Scotland announced that it has increased the available budget to £100m from the £90m originally published, within their existing budget.

Creative Scotland Chief Executive Janet Archer said: "I am delighted to announce such a creatively rich

and diverse portfolio of regularly funded organisations. It represents some of Scotland's most important, innovative and exciting cultural organisations, producing and presenting great work across craft, dance, film, literature, music, theatre and visual art.

"Importantly, these organisations will also provide significant support for thousands of individual artists and the broader workforce across Scotland's creative sector.

"Following a clear and robust decision making process, the final portfolio includes a mix of organisational scale as well as reflecting Scotland's social and geographical diversity.

"I'm delighted that the portfolio includes 20 organisations that are new to regular funding alongside more established organisations that continue to be critical to cultural provision.

"I'm particularly pleased that this portfolio has a greater geographical spread than in previous years with organisations based in 21 local authority areas and more than three quarters of them operating beyond their base location, reaching audiences across the country.

"In direct response to the high number of fundable applications that we received, and by re-profiling our budgets over the next three years, we have been able to increase the overall budget for this round of regular funding from £90m to £100m. This enables us to provide better levels of support for more organisations in the portfolio to produce high quality work, strengthen audience bases and be operationally resilient.

"We received 264 applications for Regular Funding of which a significant number could have been supported through this funding route if more resources were available.

"I'd like to personally thank all the organisations that applied for the hard work that went into their submissions.

"While this is a clear illustration of the scale of creative potential and ambition that exists across Scotland, it also means that many of these organisations will be disappointed by the outcome this time round.

"While we will be able to fund some organisations through Open Project and Targeted Funding, this underlines the importance of Creative Scotland's role in making the case for culture at every given opportunity in order to increase levels of support available in the future.

"Arts and creativity can create a sense of wellbeing and transform the quality of life for everyone. Evidence shows they can play an important part in all of our lives offering meaning and connection in a wealth of different ways. The organisations in this portfolio will make a significant contribution to this in Scotland."

(ENDS)

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