MAHOGANY OPERA

SNAPPY OPERAS

FESTIVAL 2026

SEND Delivery Artist Recruitment Pack

INTRODUCTION

Mahogany Opera's award-winning schools' opera programme, **SNAPPY OPERAS**, returns in 2026 with our latest **SNAPPY OPERAS FESTIVAL.** We're looking to recruit a team of delivery artists and want to hear from dynamic and talented individuals, with experience of, or a strong interest in, working with children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our inclusive Snappy Operas Festival will bring together schools and communities across the UK and beyond to celebrate the joy of opera. We will be working with three specialist schools to provide their children with the opportunity to engage with opera, co-creating and staging their own performances of our specially designed Snappy Opera – **Roll Up!**

We are seeking expressions of interest from artists experienced in creating co-devised work – **Composers/Music Directors/Music Facilitators** and **Directors/Drama Facilitators/Theatre Makers** - to form lead artist teams in specific regions of the UK – **West Cumbria, Durham**, and **East Lincolnshire**. Previous experience of high-quality delivery of work with children & young people is a must, with experience of working in SEND settings desirable. Priority will be given to artists based in/around the regions listed above, however we are happy to accept applications from artists across the UK. We would love to hear from both those experienced in opera and practitioners from other disciplines who have a keen interest in working in this genre.

Details about Snappy Operas, the roles and how to apply are all contained within this pack.



ABOUT MAHOGANY OPERA

Mahogany Opera is a leading commissioner and producer of contemporary opera and music theatre. We believe that music and theatre can create a space where everyone is equal, where everyone is free to express themselves and to dream. The communal experience of performance is at the heart of what we do; bringing people together to spark a shared imagination.

www.mahoganyopera.co.uk

ABOUT SNAPPY OPERAS

Snappy Operas is our award-winning participatory schools programme, making and performing new mini-operas with young people. A Snappy Opera is a short opera created for and by children with some of the UK's top composers & writers, which introduces all the essential elements of opera in fun, colourful and bite-sized chunks. We have created 14 original Snappy Operas and run Snappy Opera projects in over 100 schools with around 5,000 young people.

Opera is a space where many artforms collide, and when they blend together the results can be magic. Through the development of Snappy Operas, we have discovered the best way to create authentic, fun, fully realised performances (in a short time frame) is to adopt an interdisciplinary and discovery led approach to teaching and learning – what we call The Snappy Opera Approach.

This holistic approach combines music, acting, movement and design on an equal footing, with each informing the other. How does music inform character? How do design and costume inform movement? How do we tell a story with creative expression using body and voice? These are just some of the questions a Snappy Opera Company explores, with artists, teachers and young people exploring and learning these things together in a collaborative environment.

Vital to this process is a play-centered methodology. Through the use of fun, games and exploration we create an open, inclusive atmosphere where those involved are able to unleash their creativity and learn in a different way. This approach goes beyond the direct project experience, informing both educators and students about different ways to teach and learn, and providing a purposeful and useful skills bank that can be used in a classroom setting beyond the life of the project.

ABOUT ROLL UP!

Roll Up! is a Snappy Opera created by Jack McNeill, Claire Willoughby and Annie Ruscillo with and for Sandgate School, an SLD school in Kendal. It is inspired by contemporary circus, natural elements and ancient traditions of entertainment where Tumblers, Fortune Tellers, Magicians, Flyers, and Daredevils reveal the magic in the everyday.

Roll Up! is an immersive, sensory experience. Although the original score could be condensed down into approximately 12 minutes of original music, the premiere performance took place across 2 days in Sandgate School. We took core musical ideas and expanded them - using improvisation, intensive interaction, variation and repetition with each "act" set in a different class, in response to the pupils themselves and the musical ideas they helped us create.

Based on our work at Sandgate School and Hadrian School in Newcastle in 2024, we've devised a project based on the structure of Roll Up! which gives young people the opportunity to co-create their own music, words and movement to stage their very own opera.

This new project has been developed so that Roll Up! can be re-created and performed collaboratively by young people, school staff and professional musicians. It has five Acts designed for classes with different abilities and sensory profiles. There is a Prologue and Epilogue at the beginning and end. Between these sections, the remaining Acts could be performed in any order – the narrative is not linear; they exist like stars in a constellation.

PROJECT DETAILS

In 2026 we will be working with three specialist schools in England, engaging the entire school populations in the project. We plan to deliver workshops in school across two separate weeks in the spring and summer terms 2026, with resources and support for staff to develop and deliver their own activities between these two periods, leading up to a planned sharing/performance for parents and carers in school at the end of the second week. Sessions in the first week will be facilitated by two lead artists - a Music Lead and a Drama Lead – with an additional Support Artist, who will use the Roll Up! structure to co-devise new material. In the second week, the team will be joined by two professional musicians to prepare for a special in-school sharing.

The project activity will include:

- **Artist Training** – compulsory for all Snappy Opera SEND Delivery Artists, this day will take place in a specialist school, led by an Access & Inclusion Consultant with experience of working with children with complex needs.
- **Schools Training** – to help prepare teachers and the school community for the project, what to expect and how to incorporate the creative activities into the schools' wider scheme of learning and development.
- 2 x **Week-Long Intensive Residencies** for each school, led by the SEND Delivery Artist teams, with support from our Access & Inclusion Consultant and the Mahogany Opera team
- **Learning Resources** – specially developed to support the project and enable the schools to continue creative work between the week-long intensive residencies.
- A **Performance Day** for each school, to share their opera with family, friends, guests and the wider school community. to come together to perform their Snappy Operas

PROVISIONAL PROJECT DELIVERY DATES

Artist Training (1 day)	January 2026	KENDAL
Schools Training (½ day)	January 2026	In School in each region
Intensive Residency Week 1	January-March 2026	In School in each region
Intensive Residency Week 2	April-July 2026	In School in each region

All project dates are to be confirmed. These dates represent activity across all regions. Specific dates will be discussed and agreed with artists prior to engagement. You will be asked to detail your current availability when applying.

PLEASE NOTE – even if you are not available for these project dates, we would love to hear from you for possible future activity, but please do include details of your availability for all of these dates in your application.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

ALL ROLES

- We are looking for established artists who value and understand the nature of **inclusive arts practice**, who are able to adapt their approaches for children of all abilities and able to transform the children's ideas into a meaningful, multi-sensory participatory opera work.
- We are particularly keen to hear from practitioners based in or near to our 2026 project regions - West Cumbria, Durham and East Lincolnshire - but we will consider applicants from across the UK who are willing to travel as required.
- Mahogany Opera works with a range of communities across the UK and applications are actively encouraged from artists that reflect the diversity of our participants and audiences.
- We are looking for practitioners who are committed to thoughtful, high-quality ways of working—where care, collaboration and reflection are central. We value how you approach your practice, not just where you've worked or who you've worked with.
- We would love to hear from suitable practitioners working in any artform, that can bring unique skills and experiences, and a fun, play-based approach to our teams.
- We would love to hear from individuals who acknowledge and embrace their own backgrounds and can use this to engage and inspire our project participants.
- We welcome applications from practitioners who consider themselves to be disabled, and we will make any reasonable adjustments required for any part of the recruitment process, and to support you in your role.

MUSIC LEAD – *COMPOSERS, MUSIC DIRECTORS, MUSIC FACILITATORS*

The Music Lead will work with the Drama Lead to deliver the Roll Up! project as part of the Snappy Operas Festival 2026. As part of the delivery team, the Music Lead will participate in and contribute to artist and teacher training sessions, lead on music devising, deliver in-school workshops and rehearsals with the children, and lead performances, including a small band, in school. The Music Lead will enthuse all participants – children and teachers/school staff - to engage with opera and creative activities. The Music Lead will work with the school, Regional Coordinator and Mahogany Opera team to coordinate music/sound related logistics and technical requirements for rehearsal and performances as required.

Essential:

- Demonstrable experience as a musical director/conductor/music workshop leader
- Experience of working with children and/or young people
- Experience of co-devising with young people
- Strong instrumental performance skills, and a willingness to perform alongside the children and professional musicians as part of the project performance
- Willingness to work collaboratively with a wider delivery team
- Proactive, flexible and resourceful
- Enhanced DBS, or willingness to obtain one upon appointment.

Desirable:

- Experience of working within opera/musical theatre
- Experience working in a school or educational setting
- Experience of working with children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Experience of delivering arts training and development activities for teachers

DRAMA LEAD – *STAGE DIRECTORS, DRAMA FACILITATORS, THEATRE MAKERS*
The Drama Lead will collaborate with the Music Lead to deliver the Roll Up! project as part of the Snappy Operas Festival 2026. As part of the delivery team, the Drama Lead will participate in and contribute to artist and teacher training sessions, lead on the devising of words and movement, deliver in-school workshops and rehearsals with the children and direct performances in school. The Drama Lead will enthuse all participants – children and teachers/school staff - to engage with opera and creative activities. The Drama Lead will work with the school, Regional Coordinator and Mahogany Opera team to coordinate staging, design, props and other related technical requirements for rehearsal and performances as required.

Essential:

- Demonstrable experience as a director or drama facilitator in the performing arts
- Experience of working with children and/or young people
- Experience of co-creating work with young people
- Willingness to work collaboratively with a wider delivery team
- Proactive, flexible and resourceful
- Enhanced DBS, or willingness to obtain one upon appointment.

Desirable:

- Able to read notated music
- Experience of working within opera/musical theatre
- Experience working in a school or educational setting
- Experience of working with children with special educational needs and disabilities
- Experience of delivering arts training and development activities for teachers



TERMS

Responsible to: Mahogany Opera's Executive Director & Project Producer/s

Responsible for: These roles hold no direct subordinates. The Music Lead, Drama Lead, Support Artist and Access & Inclusion Consultant shall work collaboratively throughout the project.

Fee & payments: **Music Lead** and **Drama Lead** will receive a flat fee of £3,740 to cover:

- Attendance at Artist Training Day (1 day)
- Planning and Preparation
- Delivery of In-School Workshops & Performances (10 days)
- Completion of evaluation materials as required.

At the time of advertising, the project is still in the early stages of planning, so the exact number of deliverable days may differ. Where the number of days of deliverable activity or planning differs, a new final fee shall be calculated based on the above daily rates and agreed at contract stage.

All delivery artists are engaged on a freelance basis.
Where appropriate, Mahogany Opera will cover the cost of travel to project locations, accommodation, and/or per diems, in addition to the outlined fee.
Additional expenses relating to the delivery of the project will be paid if agreed with Mahogany Opera in advance.

Hours: As required by the project.
Most deliverable activity will take place during school hours, but some work and travel may be required during evenings and weekends.

Location: Delivery will take place in various locations across the UK.

Equal Opportunities: Mahogany Opera will provide equal opportunities to any employee or applicant and will not discriminate either directly or indirectly because of ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, age, disability, or pregnancy and maternity/paternity.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please provide the following information by **Monday 29 September 2025** at **midday**:

- Cover letter (max 1 side of A4), video recording or sound file (max 3 minutes of recording) detailing:
    - Your interest in working with Mahogany Opera/Snappy Operas
    - Details of relevant experience
    - Your availability for project dates as detailed in this application pack

- Current CV, including:
    - Where you are based/your home address
    - Links to two projects or pieces of work you have been part of that help evidence your relevant experience for the project
    - Details of two professional referees.

- An access rider, or details of any access requirements, if applicable.

- Company Diversity Monitoring Form - this can be completed online here: **Diversity Monitoring Form**

If you require any additional support in submitting a proposal, such as receiving the call-out information in an alternative format, or if you have any questions, please contact Associate Producer, Marc Dunleavy – marc@mahoganyopera.co.uk

Email applications to bridget@mahoganyopera.co.uk
Please include your name and the role/s you are interested in in the email subject line, and any attached files/documents.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE DEADLINE?

We will accept applications until Monday 29 September 2025 at midday. Any submissions received after this time will not be considered.

Applications will be reviewed and discussed by members of the Mahogany Opera team and a shortlist of applicants will be invited to interview. All applicants will be notified on or before *Thursday 9th October 2025 if they have been shortlisted.

Interviews will take place during week commencing *13 October 2025. All interviews will be held remotely using an appropriate online platform. We will accommodate applicant availability as much as possible. If you are not available for interview during this week, please mention this in your application.

Supporting Documents:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Diversity Monitoring Form

*We are also recruiting for **Delivery Artists for mainstream schools activity.***
Artists are welcome to apply for both strands of work, but separate expressions of interest are required.

**Dates amended from originally issued version.*