

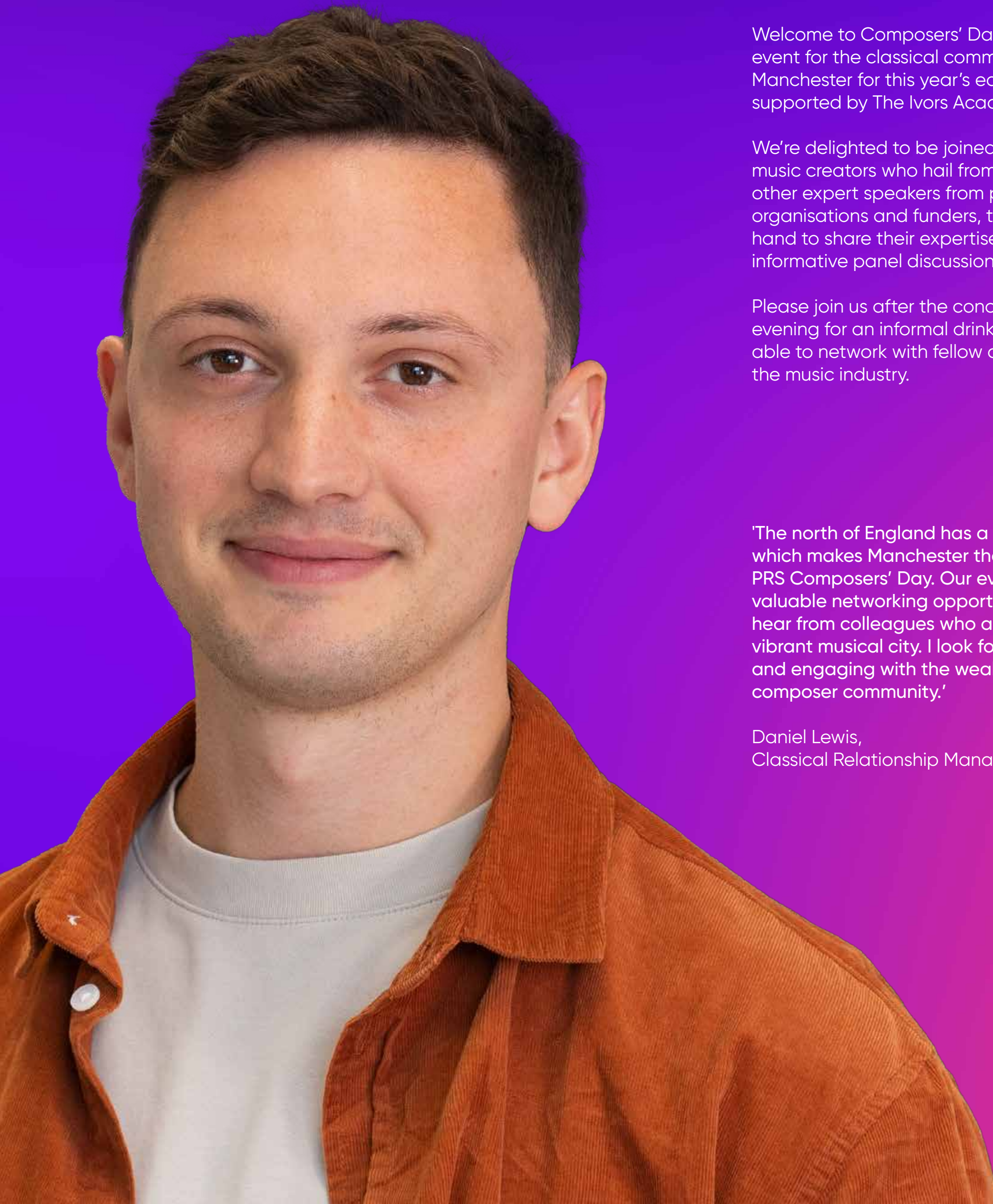


Composers' Day Manchester





Composers' Day Manchester



Welcome to Composers' Day, PRS for Music's annual event for the classical community. We're proud to be in Manchester for this year's edition, which is kindly supported by The Ivors Academy and Musicians' Union.

We're delighted to be joined today by colleagues and music creators who hail from the local area. Alongside other expert speakers from publishers, trade organisations and funders, these music creators will be on hand to share their expertise throughout today's three informative panel discussions.

Please join us after the conclusion of our final panel this evening for an informal drinks reception, where you'll be able to network with fellow composers and members of the music industry.

'The north of England has a rich classical music scene, which makes Manchester the perfect home for this year's PRS Composers' Day. Our event will provide composers valuable networking opportunities and the chance to hear from colleagues who all help to make Manchester a vibrant musical city. I look forward to meeting members and engaging with the wealth of talent within the PRS composer community.'

Daniel Lewis,
Classical Relationship Manager, PRS for Music



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About the day

14:00 – 14:30 – Arrival

14:30 – 15:30 – Orchestra and ensemble programming

Hear from senior music industry figures about how artistic decisions are made, commissioning, and how composers can build relationships with orchestras and ensembles.

Speakers:

Aaron Holloway-Nahum

(CEO & Co-Artistic Director, Riot Ensemble)

Anna Hirst

(Director of Artistic Planning, Hallé Orchestra)

Emily Howard

(Composer and Board Director, Ivors Academy)

Clara Marshall Cawley

(Head of Artistic Planning, Manchester Camerata)

15:30 – 16:15 – Making Music Locally

Local networks are incredibly important when building a career as a composer. This session will explore how to build from the ground up, and the funding support available for composers.

Aaron Holloway-Nahum

(CEO & Co-Artistic Director, Riot Ensemble)

Jeanette Szeto

(Violist and Creative Director, Valette Ensemble)

Elizabeth Sills

(Grants and Programmes Manager, PRS Foundation)

16:15 – 16:30 – Break (15 minutes)

16:30 – 17:30 – Knowing your rights

Rights form the basis of many income streams for composers, from hire fees to live performance royalties. Hear from the experts about how to make the most of your rights, and best practice for negotiation when working with commissioners.

Speakers:

Daniel Lewis

(Classical Relationship Manager, PRS for Music)

Kelly Wood

(National Organiser for Live, Theatre & Music Writers, Musicians' Union)

Julia Snowden

(Promotion Manager, Wise Music Group)

Carmel Smickersgill

(Composer and Performer)

17:30 – 19:00 – Informal drinks reception supported by the Musicians' Union

Speaker bios



Aaron Holloway-Nahum

Aaron Holloway-Nahum is a composer, conductor, and creative instigator whose music fuses the experimental with the emotional. An expert in spatial audio, with performances from Wigmore Hall to underground clubs, his works blend electronics, live visuals, and storytelling into immersive experiences. As co-artistic director of Riot Ensemble, he champions bold, boundary-smashing work from colleagues across the globe. His recordings have appeared on labels such as NMC, Coviello, and HCR, and he has worked with artists from Ensemble Intercontemporain to the Arditti Quartet in studios from Abbey Road (London) to Silent Zoo (LA). A frequent collaborator and sonic explorer, Aaron builds his own modular synths, and believes music should surprise, challenge, and move you.



Anna Hirst

Director of Artistic Planning, Hallé Orchestra

Anna has been Artistic Planning Director of the Hallé since September 2020 in which time she has introduced several new concert series and commissioned new works by Hannah Kendall, Nitin Sawhney, Huw Watkins, Sir James MacMillan, John Adams, Unsuk Chin, Thomas Adès to name just a few. Anna has also secured international touring for the orchestra and helped the Hallé record a number of prominent discs.

Prior to joining the Hallé, Anna spent more than 10 years as an active member of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's artistic planning team. Highlights included the 50th anniversary performance of Britten War Requiem in Coventry Cathedral, touring the orchestra to venues around the UK and delivering the CBSO's centenary celebration concert, which was viewed more than 150,000 times, worldwide.

Over the years, Anna has enjoyed working with numerous fantastic conductors including Andris Nelsons, Sir Simon Rattle, Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Kazuki Yamada, Thomas Adès, Sir Mark Elder and the Hallé's exciting new Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Kahchun Wong.

Speaker bios



Emily Howard

Emily Howard is one of the UK 's most exciting and strikingly individual composers, writing music that is notable for its expansive orchestral textures, imaginative use of instrumental colour, and powerful use of text. Her works often take their inspiration from the shapes, structures, and phenomena of the natural world, as well as from literature, politics, and the visual arts.

Emily Howard is Professor in Composition and Head of Artistic Research at the Royal Northern College of Music, and is a founder-director of PRISM, the Royal Northern College of Music's Centre for Practice & Research in Science & Music. She has received two BASCA British Composer Awards, and in 2023 was elected as an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Arts.

In 2025, she was appointed to The Ivors Academy Board as a Director.



Clara Marshall Cawley

Clara is Head of Artistic Planning for Manchester Camerata where she leads on the orchestra's UK and international programming. Recent highlights include establishing a new festival 'Here We Are' which celebrates all aspects of the orchestra's identity and involves pop-up orchestral performances across Greater Manchester.

She has previously held posts at the Royal Northern College of Music, Opera North and Liverpool Philharmonic. She read Music at the University of Manchester where she founded 'Musica', a week-long festival celebrating female music making which continues annually with increasing success.

Speaker bios



Jeanette Szeto

Jeanette Szeto is a violist, composer, and creative based in London and Manchester, currently in her final year at the Royal Northern College of Music. She performs regularly with leading UK ensembles such as the Royal Northern Sinfonia, Chineke! Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, and Manchester Camerata, was awarded first place for the RNCM Viola Prize in her third year and was a finalist in the RNCM Gold Medal 2025. Jeanette is co-founder, creative director, and core performer of Valette Ensemble, known for its imaginative, genre-blurring performances, most recently featuring her original music in a retelling of Scheherazade. She also hosts Art Wall, a podcast where she speaks with musicians about their music, inspirations, and life beyond the stage.



Elizabeth Sills

Grants and Programmes Manager, PRS Foundation

Elizabeth is a champion for new music, talent development and gender equality. She joined PRS Foundation in 2016 and became their Grants and Programmes Manager in 2019, here she manages gender focused scheme Women Make Music where she works across all genres and leads strategic reporting, which is used widely across the industry. Elizabeth has spoken about this programme in panels around the UK, in Brussels as well as taking the main stage at Abbey Road Studios in an event that she curated to celebrate the work of this fund.

Elizabeth has led on strategic mid-career opportunities, including next level funding opportunities through The Composer Fund and PPL Momentum Music Fund. Elizabeth has a broad range of experience across Talent Development platforms, including previously working across partnerships with the British Council for Musician in Residence opportunities and international conferences such as Classical Next for Composer Fellowship programmes.

Speaker bios



Daniel Lewis

Daniel Lewis is the Classical Relationship Manager at PRS for Music, the UK's leading royalty collection society. In his role, he supports classical composers and publishers to grow their royalty income and reach new audiences. He is passionate about new music and previously worked as a music editor with composers including James Dillon, Errollyn Wallen and Rebecca Saunders. He serves on the boards of Riot Ensemble and Red Note Ensemble.



Kelly Wood

National Organiser for Live, Theatre & Music Writers, Musicians' Union

Kelly oversees the MU's work around songwriting and composition, which involves supporting, representing and advising members in relation to their work and careers across all sectors in the music industry. In addition to reviewing contracts for songwriters and composers, the MU also provides minimum rates, co-writing and songshare agreements, and legal advice and assistance.

Speaker bios



Julia Snowden

U.S.-born Julia Snowden studied Vocal Performance at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where she earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in music. She performed with opera companies across America, including Boston Lyric Opera and New York City Opera, before shifting to a career in music publishing in 2018. After four years in Wise Music Classical's New York office, she took on a Promotion Manager role in the London office in early 2023, and looks after a number of important living composers, including Helen Grime, Anna Thorvaldsdottir and Thea Musgrave.



Carmel Smickersgill

Carmel Smickersgill is an Ivor Novello nominated and Rushworth Composition Prize winning composer based in Manchester. She has repeatedly written for Manchester Camerata and Liverpool Philharmonic, other previous commissioners include: Laura Bowler, Buxton International Festival and MIF. She releases electronic music with the label PRAH and often writes for theatre productions, most recently creating the score for a show at Junges Ensemble Stuttgart in collaboration with this egg.

Carmel studied at the RNCM with Gary Carpenter and has been mentored by Anna Meredith in more recent years. She is also one half of Bothy, a Manchester based organisation helping to facilitate rehearsal space and performance opportunities for ensembles or performers living or touring in Manchester.

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