



Photo credit Carlotta Luke

Andrew Comben appointed new Chief Executive Officer of Britten Pears Arts

Britten Pears Arts today (5 April 2024) announces **Andrew Comben** as its new Chief Executive Officer, and he will start the role in September 2024.

Andrew joins Britten Pears Arts from Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival where he has been Chief Executive since 2008. Originally from Australia, he has worked in the arts in the UK since 1993, and in senior leadership roles at Wigmore Hall (Head of Artistic Planning) and Britten Pears Arts (Director, Britten Pears Young Artist Programme). At Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival he has established the annual Guest Director model for Brighton Festival, with artists such as Anish Kapoor, Laurie Anderson, Kae Tempest, Lemn Sissay and Frank Cottrell-Boyce. He has also overseen the expansion of the organisation's work with communities and young people, including the operation of music education hub Create Music across Brighton & Hove and East Sussex, and the restoration and redevelopment of the Corn Exchange and Studio Theatre into world class spaces for the performing arts.

Andrew Comben commented, 'The legacy of Britten and Pears, and the work of the organisation that has grown from their vision, is a beacon for artists and audiences and for anyone passionate about the role music and the arts can play in society. I am honoured to become the next Chief Executive of Britten Pears Arts, and I look forward to working with its brilliant staff team and Board to develop its next chapter together. I want to pay tribute to my predecessors, particularly Roger Wright, for their dedication to establishing the conditions for artists to do their best work and I look forward to building on their achievements.'

Sir Simon Robey, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Britten Pears Arts commented, 'Our appointment of Andrew brings back to Britten Pears Arts someone we know well. After he left us in 2003, he enjoyed success at the Wigmore Hall and, in particular, has led Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival with distinction for the last 16 years. He has built loyal audiences in Brighton, has a great love for and commitment to the arts, and is passionate about working in the community and with young people – all things that are central to Britten Pears Arts' work. There will be other occasions to mark Roger's truly exceptional contribution to Britten Pears Arts; today is a day to celebrate the appointment of such a wonderful successor. The whole board joins me in welcoming him.'

The appointment has been made following an extensive search process led by Saxton Bampfylde. Andrew succeeds Roger Wright CBE who leaves Britten Pears Arts after 10 years at the helm.

Image can be downloaded [here](#).

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Notes to Editors

About Andrew Comben

Born in Australia, Andrew Comben began his career at Wigmore Hall in 1994, moving to artist manager for Young Concert Artists Trust and Music International. He then became Director of the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, returning to Wigmore Hall as Head of Artistic Planning in 2003.

Andrew joined Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival as Chief Executive in 2008, establishing the Guest Director model for Brighton Festival – England's largest curated multi-arts festival - with artists such as Anish Kapoor, Laurie Anderson, Kae Tempest, Lemn Sissay and Frank Cottrell-Boyce. Alongside commissioning works for the Festival with national and international partners, he has developed a vision for the organisation as a year-round centre of artistic activity, involving all areas of the community.

Over the last six years BDBF has taken over the management and operation of Brighton & Hove Music and Arts and East Sussex Music Service, engaging around 20,000 children and young people each week in music making across 270 schools under a new organisational banner 'Create Music'.

The range of strategic partnerships Brighton Dome & Brighton Festival enjoys has expanded under Andrew's leadership, encompassing national and regional Digital, Heritage, Health and Volunteering organisations. BDBF reaches a combined annual audience of more than 650,000 and the recent £38m redevelopment of Brighton Dome's Corn Exchange and Studio Theatre helped cement its reputation, and the Royal Pavilion Estate, as a significant cultural destination in the UK.

About Britten Pears Arts

Britten Pears Arts is a pioneering music, arts and heritage charity based on the Suffolk coast at two popular, historic visitor destinations: The Red House and Snape Maltings. Britten Pears Arts emerged from the creative partnership of Benjamin Britten, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, and his professional and personal partner, singer Peter Pears. Britten and Pears shared a progressive vision for music and the arts to be useful, helping people enhance and bring joy into their lives. Britten and Pears' vision inspires all our activity, from work with the local communities to our national leadership roles in the fields of talent development and music, health and wellbeing.

www.brittenpearsarts.org