



CANTERBURY FESTIVAL

APPOINTMENT OF FESTIVAL DIRECTOR
& CHIEF EXECUTIVE

May 2024



CONTENTS

3	Chair's Welcome
4	About Canterbury Festival
5	Vision - Mission - Highlights
6	Our Year-Round Programme - Community
7	Finances
8	Our Team
10	The Role
12	The Person
14	Terms of Appointment – How to Apply



CHAIR'S WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in the role of Festival Director & Chief Executive.

The Canterbury Festival is an internationally respected annual two-week extravaganza of music, performance, talks, comedy, family events, science and more. Taking place in October, the Festival showcases Canterbury as a diverse and dynamic centre of culture and welcomes both loyal and new audiences of all ages and backgrounds to be inspired and delighted in a celebration of creativity. Our Festival is amplified by a vibrant year-round programme, with creative opportunities, particularly for young people, performances, and events, all of which contribute towards making Canterbury an exciting place to live, work, learn and play.

But we are aware that we cannot stand still. As the Festival enters its fortieth year, we are looking to our next Festival Director and Chief Executive to help us define a relevant, ambitious and accessible vision, ensuring our creative activities continue to inspire and connect with audiences for the next forty years.

We are keen to hear from a broad range of individuals from a variety of backgrounds, so if you are interested in the opportunity and are not certain about whether you fit all the criteria contained in this candidate pack, we'd warmly encourage you to make contact for a confidential chat. Details are in the "How to apply" section of this pack.

Keith Mander

Chair, Board of Trustees, Canterbury Theatre & Festival Trust



ABOUT CANTERBURY FESTIVAL

Canterbury is a small city less than one hour's travel from London by a frequent high-speed train service. It has an important heritage that includes a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the oldest school in England (The King's School, Canterbury, founded in 597AD), all set in a rural environment in the heart of Kent.

The history of the Canterbury Festival can be traced back to the series of plays commissioned by the then Dean of Canterbury Cathedral in the 1920s and 1930s, the most famous of which is probably T S Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*. The Festival in its current form dates from 1984 when it grew to promote a wider range of artistic genres including classical music, visual arts, cinema, theatre, literature and more.

We are based at Festival House in the centre of Canterbury, a bright office in a building owned by the Canterbury Festival Foundation. From here, we plan our annual two-week arts festival which has always placed an emphasis on music but which, over the years, has grown and diversified. As well as outstanding classical musicians, we bring emerging artists, gospel choirs, physical theatre, talks, comedy and the surprising and spectacular in an eclectic programme that attracts and delights a wide audience.

OUR VISION

Our vision is that, through the medium of the arts, we will bring the best of the world to Canterbury and show the best of Canterbury to the world.

KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To ensure artistic excellence and relevance for a wide audience, including bringing exciting events to Canterbury that don't appear at other times of the year.

- To deepen public engagement in the arts
- To develop the organisation to continue its mission confidently into the future
- To generate income for sustainability and independence
- To promote year-round learning and participation in the community
- To enhance relationships with partners that help them flourish too

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, the Festival sold over 23,000 tickets across 72 individual ticketed events, including 65 time slots for Luxmuralis' *Shine*, an immersive sound and light installation in different areas of Canterbury Cathedral.

The 2023 programme included performances by the Tallis Scholars, the Armonico Consort, Ruby Turner, Gabrielle, Rich Hall and Seth Lakeman.

The festival also hosted 51 walks, a range of "umbrella" events including art exhibitions independently organised within Festival dates, and a number of community events such as the Dementia Café and a Schools' Poetry Competition.

We have also programmed substantial linked events, including the complete Beethoven Piano Sonatas, performed in 2020 by Joanna MacGregor, the complete Shostakovich String Quartets, performed in 2022 by the Carducci Quartet, and a linked series of Schubert recitals by Joanna MacGregor in 2023.

Visit [here](#) for an archive of previous festival programmes

OUR YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMME

The Festival's year-round public engagement programme aims to enhance creative learning, appreciation, understanding, and educational development in the arts.

We regularly work in partnership with community groups, organisations and charities to deliver free year-round workshops and projects for all ages exploring music, visual art, performance, creative writing and more. Many of the creative outputs from these activities feature as free events during the annual festival.

We work with children and young people, developing and showcasing local emerging and mid-career talent through bursary schemes, competitions and performance opportunities.

The Festival also offers training and professional development opportunities for students seeking to build on their event management skills through hands-on experience, as well as arts practitioners who are taking their first steps into teaching.

Find out more about Participate, our public engagement programme [here](#).

COMMUNITY

The population of Canterbury (58,000 people, though the wider district has 157,000) is complex in its diversity, representing the broadest range of cultural backgrounds and religious belief. It includes a significant community of (non-UK-born) Europeans.

With three universities - Canterbury Christ Church University, the University of Kent and the University for the Creative Arts - Canterbury has the highest number of higher education students per head of non-student population of any city in the UK. It is also an important tourist destination.

Festival programmes have always sought to be culturally inclusive, embracing both our European heritage and broader ethnic diversity, championing the principle that great art is important for everyone. With an aspiration to be "Kent's International Arts Festival" performers from continental Europe have been invited by the Festival to perform for the first time to Canterbury audiences.

"The Festival locates Canterbury as a celebrated centre for creativity, and provides a prestigious platform for a diverse cast of artists, both established and emerging. In 2023, this continues with a rich, inclusive programme, with new discoveries for everyone."

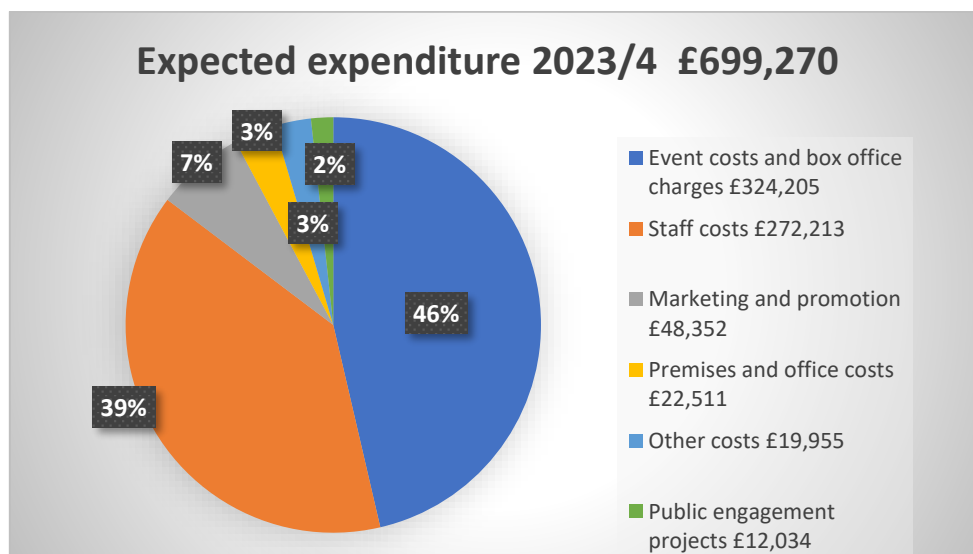
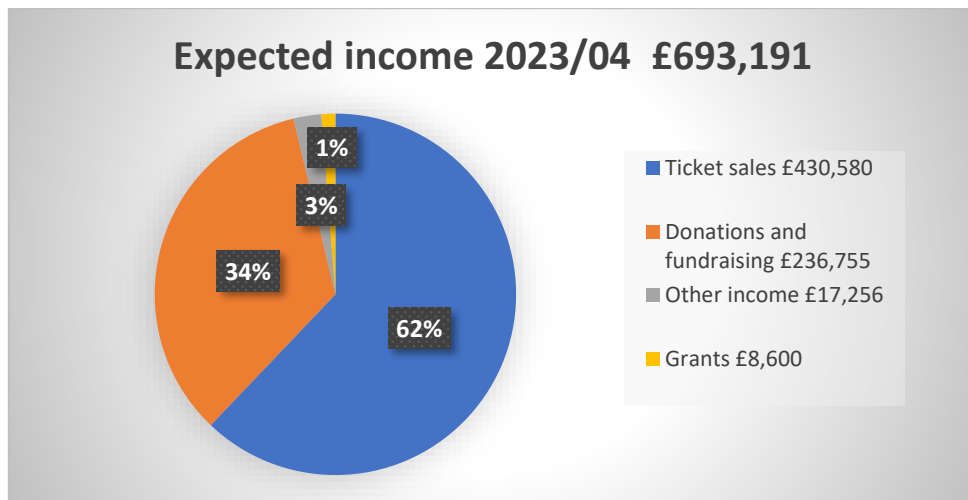
Professor Rama Thirunamachandran OBE DL

Vice-Chancellor and Principal Canterbury Christ Church University
(Partner & Principal Sponsor, 2023)

FINANCES

We expect our annual turnover for the financial year to March 2025 to be approximately £700k. Using our reserves, we have been able to sustain small deficits for the recent (pandemic) years but are planning to break even in 2024/5. We aim to use our reserves to manage our cash flow, mitigate unexpected events, and underwrite ambitious one-off artistic projects.

The Canterbury Theatre and Festival Trust is both a limited company and a registered charity (279714); it is supported by the Canterbury Festival Foundation (1097824). We enjoy financial support from local sponsors (local universities, schools, companies and individuals), and project funding from Kent County Council, and from Arts Council England. We work closely with Canterbury Cathedral, Canterbury Christ Church University, the University of Kent, Kent College and the King's School, who all provide support in a variety of ways. Nourishing this network of relationships is important to us.



Visit the latest financial accounts [here](#).



OUR TEAM

Our team of full-time and part-time staff cover key areas of programming, finance and marketing. We supplement this with volunteers, supporters and external expertise. Our Public Engagement Manager runs much of our year-round activity, and we host placement students who wish to explore a career in the creative industries.

The team is supported by a highly engaged Board of Trustees who work with the Festival Director to set the Festival's strategy, hold the team to account and generally encourage and support.

Find out more about our team [here](#).





THE ROLE

The role of Festival Director & Chief Executive presents an exciting opportunity to lead an already successful organisation into the next phase of its development. We're looking for someone who is passionate about the role that arts organisations can play within communities and regions, who can bring new perspectives, skills and experience to our work, and who can help us realise the potential of a vibrant arts Festival within a culturally rich heritage setting.

As an early priority, the Festival Director & Chief Executive will be expected to lead the development of the Festival's next 3-5 year strategy and business plan, together with a multi-faceted artistic programme that achieves the non-financial and financial objectives of the business plan, identifying any organisational changes necessary to support the new strategy.

Reporting to the Chair of the Board, the role combines artistic and executive responsibilities, as follows:

Artistic & Strategic Leadership

- Lead the delivery of the Festival's mission and objectives.
- Set the artistic vision and strategic direction for the Festival, working closely with the Board through regular dialogue and reporting.
- Through compelling programming, consultation, marketing and communications strategies, enhance a sense of ownership and trust by audiences and participants.

- Seek out exciting events to bring to Canterbury that don't appear at other times of the year, creating an exciting, dynamic, high quality cultural and creative programme of activity and engagement.
- Initiate artistic partnerships and collaborations that will further the aims of the Festival and raise its reputation and profile locally and nationally.
- Advocate for the Festival, pro-actively developing and maintaining strong relationships with key stakeholders.
- Increase and widen engagement with Festival activities, in particular with a diverse range of young people.

Operational Management

- Provide clear vision, direction and motivational leadership for the Festival team (full-time, part-time and engaged artists) in a consultative, collaborative, equitable and effective manner, in line with HR policies and best practice.
- Identify and implement creative change where necessary.
- Seek out new sources of income, directing and contributing to income generation initiatives and activity, brokering new relationships with sponsors and funding bodies, including Arts Council England.
- Support and engage in the development of fundable programmes to promote the arts in the wider community, including with other organisations, throughout the year.
- Set and monitor annual budgets, balancing artistic and financial risk.
- Ensure compliance with Health & Safety legislation.
- Ensure that statutory requirements are met, that procedures are in place and accountability is understood and accepted at all appropriate levels.

THE PERSON

Our ideal candidate will be an energetic, dynamic and inspirational arts leader who can successfully lead the delivery of the Festival's mission and objectives and is able to demonstrate the following attributes.

Experience, knowledge and skills

- A successful track record in a senior leadership role within the arts, cultural sector, or creative industries.
- Knowledge of the performing arts ecology in the UK and internationally, and the trends to which they are subject.
- Demonstrated experience of balancing creative risk and ambition with sound financial management.
- Experience of leading, managing and motivating a successful team.
- Demonstrated track-record in income generation and fundraising from a variety of sources (individuals, sponsors, charitable trusts and funding bodies).
- Strong budget management experience, including setting and negotiating realistic artistic fees and working with uncertain budgets.
- Experience of organisational risk assessments.
- Understanding of audience development and marketing plans, including the strategic use of technology and social media to support and promote the work of the Festival.
- Understanding of the role that funding bodies such as Arts Council England and Trusts and Foundations can play in the Canterbury Festival.
- Insight into how to work in a small city, with a strong international profile, and how to engage productively with its community.
- Proven ability to command respect and operate as an effective advocate for the Festival, maintaining excellent relationships with key stakeholders, including the Board.
- Ability to cultivate and nurture a diverse network of contacts and partners, and negotiate effectively on the Festival's behalf.
- Excellent written communication skills and good attention to detail, with the ability to act as the Festival's spokesperson in a variety of contexts.



Personal qualities

- An inspiring team leader, inclusive and generous.
- Proven clear and timely decision-making.
- A strong collaborator.
- A strategic perspective, with a clear vision of how the Festival might develop, whilst maintaining the capacity to get involved in detail when necessary.
- Politically astute, with the ability to strike the right balance between trusting others and making change.
- Enthusiasm and curiosity, with wide range of eclectic knowledge.
- A keen sense of personal responsibility and accountability.

Terms of Appointment

Contract type	Permanent, full-time, based in Canterbury.
Salary	£65,000 to £70,000 depending on experience. The Festival's Remuneration Committee annually considers staff salaries and rewards achievement against objectives, within benchmarked limits.
Probation period	Six months with one month's notice period.
Notice period	Six months for both parties.
Holiday entitlement	Annual leave for full-time employees is 25 days per year plus UK bank holidays. The office closes between Christmas and New Year and any working days in this interval are additional leave in recognition of hours worked during the Festival fortnight.
Pension	The Festival is part of a Standard Life (SLAC) stakeholder pension scheme to which the employer contributes 4% of salary and the employee 5% (or more if they wish).

How to apply

To apply, please send a CV and a covering letter stating why you think you are suitable for the role, and how your experience aligns with the attributes set out in the Person Specification, to our recruitment consultant, Helen Sprott, Managing Director, AEM International Ltd, at hsprott@aeminternational.co.uk.

Letters should be no more than three pages. All applications will be acknowledged.

If you do not wish to submit a written application but would like to apply using alternative means, for example, by submitting a video application, then please contact Helen Sprott at the address above.

Please ensure that you complete and submit the Equalities Monitoring Questionnaire with your application. This is available to download from [AEM International - Opportunities in Arts, Entertainment and Media](#) under Festival Director & Chief Executive, Canterbury Festival.

The Canterbury Festival welcomes applications from the broadest range of candidates, particularly from those groups that are underrepresented in our sector,

If you would like an informal, confidential conversation about the role, please contact Helen at hsprott@aeminternational.co.uk.



APPLICATION TIMETABLE

Closing date for applications

Monday 17th June at 5pm

Preliminary interviews with AEM International

Week commencing 1st July, online

First round interviews

**Wednesday 18th July, in
Canterbury**

Second round interviews

**Wednesday 24th July, in
Canterbury**