

Wolfson Foundation Awards £200,000 Towards the Restoration of Historic Smith Square Hall

Major grant supports Sinfonia Smith Square's Doors Open capital project to secure the future of one of Britain's finest concert halls



3 August 2026

Sinfonia Smith Square has been awarded £200,000 from the Wolfson Foundation towards its landmark *Doors Open: Transforming Lives Through Music* capital project, supporting the restoration and renewal of the Grade I listed Smith Square Hall in Westminster.

The grant will help conserve one of Britain's most important concert halls and remove it from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, while creating the facilities needed to secure its future as a centre for world-class performance, professional musician training and community engagement.

At the heart of the restoration, the Hall's crypt will be configured to create a dedicated Learning Space, providing a purpose-built space for school workshops, community music projects and creative learning. The new space will enhance the rehearsal and workshop facilities for Sinfonia Smith Square's acclaimed international orchestral Fellowship programme, which has supported more than 700 emerging professional musicians from around the world since its launch in 2002.

Rosie Fraser, Chief Executive of Sinfonia Smith Square, said:

"We are enormously grateful to the Wolfson Foundation for this significant investment in the future of Smith Square Hall. Their support will help safeguard one of Britain's great historic

concert halls while ensuring it continues to inspire audiences, nurture outstanding young musicians and serve communities for generations to come.

'Doors Open is about much more than restoring a remarkable building. It is about opening the Hall to everyone - to the families, schools and communities on our doorstep and further afield who have never had access to the music and education it can offer. The Wolfson Foundation's support brings us an important step closer to realising that vision.'

Paul Ramsbottom, Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation, said:

"This is a compelling project. It brings together the restoration of a Baroque masterpiece - Smith Square Hall - with the creation of new performance facilities. Crucially, these improvements - as well as allowing for wonderfully creative performances - also expand opportunities for participation in music making, not least by nurturing a new generation of extraordinary musicians."

The *Doors Open* capital project represents the most significant transformation of Smith Square Hall since its post-war reconstruction as a concert hall in 1969.

Once complete, the restored Hall will welcome more than 90,000 visitors annually while significantly expanding its artistic, engagement and community programmes. Construction is expected to begin in late 2027, with Smith Square Hall reopening in 2029 as a revitalised home for music, learning and heritage.

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Notes to Editors

Full resolution image can be downloaded [here](#).

For additional imagery and further enquiries, contact: Press@sinfoniasmithsquare.org.uk

Location: Sinfonia Smith Square, Smith Square Hall, London, W1P 3HA

Website: <https://www.sinfoniasmithsq.org.uk/>

Facebook: Sinfonia Smith Square | X: @SinfoniaSmithSq | Instagram: @SinfoniaSmithSq

About Sinfonia Smith Square

Smith Square Hall, formerly St John's Smith Square, has been a renowned concert venue since 1969 hosting a year-round programme ranging from community events to internationally acclaimed concerts. At its heart is the Sinfonia Smith Square fellowship orchestra. Formerly Southbank Sinfonia, the Sinfonia and Hall merged in 2021.

Sinfonia Smith Square brings together outstanding early-career musicians from around the world for an intensive year of training, performance and collaboration with leading artists. Its 700+ alumni now work across the music profession as performers, educators, and innovators.

Together, Smith Square Hall and the Sinfonia pioneer a new model: a constantly regenerating orchestra embedded in a centuries-old building. The Hall provides a home for the Sinfonia's musicians to create new work, take their place amongst a wide community of musicians, and shape the future of classical music.

In the coming years, the *Doors Open* restoration project will revitalise and safeguard Smith Square Hall, making it fully accessible and welcoming for audiences, performers, guest artists, and future Sinfonia cohorts.

Sinfonia Smith Square is a registered charity (number 1092461).

About The Wolfson Foundation

The Wolfson Foundation is an independent grant-making charity with a focus on research and education. Its aim is to contribute to civil society by supporting high-quality projects in science, health, heritage, humanities and the arts.

Since it was established in 1955, the Wolfson Foundation has awarded over £1 billion (£2 billion in real terms) to around 14,000 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.

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