# Manchester Camerata – Here We Are Impact Report 2026

Making Greater Manchester a better place to live through music

# Executive Summary

**For the second year running, Here We Are has brought exceptional live music into the places and communities of Greater Manchester – supporting wellbeing, belonging, connection and creativity.**

Across one week, **3,940** people attended **22** performances, **16** Music Cafés for people living with dementia, and **4** open rehearsals – in airports and car parks, museums and market squares, across communities throughout the region.

Audiences told us that these experiences make a real difference to their wellbeing, the places they live and the communities they are part of.

The opportunity now is to build on this success and make Here We Are a mainstay of Greater Manchester's musical landscape – using music to help make our region an even happier, healthier and better place to live.

Sharing a Shell & The Snail and The Wale at Manchester Museum

# Impact at a Glance

**50%**

experienced Manchester Camerata for the first time

**£22.5k**

contributed in-kind by partners and volunteers

**3,940**

attended in 5 days

**16**

Music Cafe Taster Sessions for people living with dementia and their carers

**291**

community survey responses

**1 in 3**

had either never seen an orchestra or had not seen one for more than three years

**93%**

say performances make their local area a better place to live

**96%**

say orchestral performances improve their wellbeing

**22**

performances

**36**

local artists collaborated with

*“Bringing exceptional live music to audiences and communities beyond the traditional concert hall.”*

*“Since having children it’s been much harder to get out and hear live music. Taking music into the places where families can get to during the day is transformative.”*

*“Energetic, creative and irreverent – a great addition to Manchester’s cultural landscape.”*

*“I had goosebumps throughout.”*

*“Fun, uplifting, entertaining, relaxed, professional.”*

Carpark Minimalism at Stretford Mall Car Park

# Making Orchestral Music Accessible

**Last year, audiences told us that the biggest barriers to attending events were cost, travel, time and family pressures. This year, we responded by continuing to make Here We Are free, and making performances even more local, flexible and family friendly.**

As a result, we are reaching beyond the traditional orchestra audience and creating opportunities for people from across Greater Manchester to experience exceptional live music.

*"It was great to see such a wide range of the community there - it felt really inclusive."*

*"My daughter is profoundly disabled, she is non-verbal and severely sight impaired. She adores books and classical music and this had both."*

*"Joyful, accessible event which brought a wide variety of folks together in shared experience."*

**50% of audiences encountered Manchester Camerata for the first time at Here We Are**, while 1 in 3 had either never seen an orchestra or had not seen one for more than three years.

For new audiences, discovery often happened through people and place:
**31%** through Facebook and Instagram
**24%** through word of mouth
**22%** by stumbling across an event in person

The message is clear: when orchestral music is visible, local, affordable and flexible, more people can experience it.

Sharing a Shell and The Snail and the Whale at Manchester Museum

The Old Courts, Wigan

Stockroom, Stockport

## Music and Wellbeing

**Audiences tell us that music makes them feel better, with 96% saying orchestral performances improve their wellbeing and lift their spirits.**

Audiences described feeling:

**HAPPIER · CALMER · INSPIRED · CONNECTED · REFLECTIVE · ALIVE**

*"It's like mindfulness: you switch off from everything else while you are listening."*

*"Today's performances have really lifted my mood and improved my wellbeing over a particularly difficult week…"*

*"They made me feel human… and remember that being human and being alive is a miracle."*

Alongside our wider work for people living with dementia as the National Centre of Excellence for Music and Dementia, audiences send a consistent message: orchestral music can play a powerful role in supporting people's wellbeing.

## Improving Local Places

**We believe that music can improve the prospect of places, and give audience members a greater sense of community – the people of Greater Manchester agree.**

**93%** say orchestral performances make their local area a better place to live.

**76%** say performances make them feel more connected to their local community.

Audiences value what happens when music appears in their neighbourhood, within their community, in a place that feels like theirs.

Here We Are shows how cultural activity can contribute to the character, vitality and connection of local places – helping make Greater Manchester an even better place to live.

# Performances

The Met, Bury with Emily Mercer

Music in Mind Music Cafés for People Living with Dementia

The Expansion of Sound at The Monastery, Manchester

Goofus Theatre x Manchester Camerata at Salford Royal Hospital

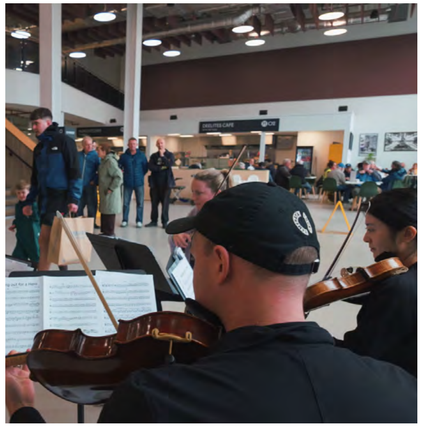
Bolton Library: Sharing a Shell and The Snail and the Whale

Dementia Friendly Performance at St Andrews House, Tameside

String Theory: Rap, Soul & Strings at Rochdale Town Hall

Manchester Piccadilly Train Station with Ethan Loch and Christoph Altstaedt.

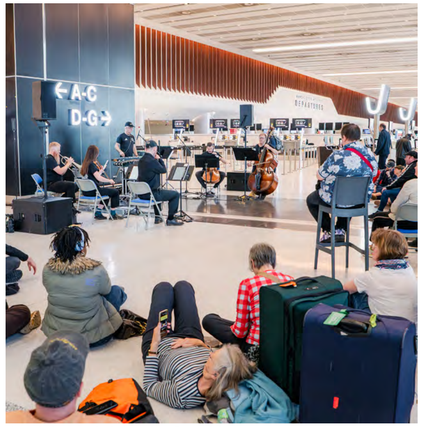
# Performances



Oldham Market Hall: Oldham Together

Manchester Camerata at Stockroom, Stockport

Manchester Museum: Sharing a Shell and The Snail and The Whale




Ambient 1: Music for Airports at Manchester Airport

Gospel of the John Bull, The Old Courts, Wigan

Carmel Smickersgill x Manchester Camerata at Aviva Studios

Carpark Minimalism, Stretford Mall Car Park

Open Rehearsals at The Monastery, Manchester

# What Audiences Want Next Year

**Audiences are clear about what they want next.**

They want exceptional live music in every borough; free and affordable experiences in unexpected places; more opportunities for families and young people; collaboration with local artists and communities; and more moments of joy, connection and wellbeing.

Next year, **Here We Are will return from 17–19 September**, contributing directly to Greater Manchester's:

**WELLBEING & HEALTH**
Improving people's lives across the region.

**CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY**
Countering social isolation and loneliness.

**QUALITY OF LIFE**
Making local areas better places to live.

**CULTURAL EQUITY**
Ensuring all ten boroughs share in Greater Manchester's creative life.

**MUSICAL LANDSCAPE**
Sharing the power and joy of music across the region.

Stockroom, Stockport

# Your Support

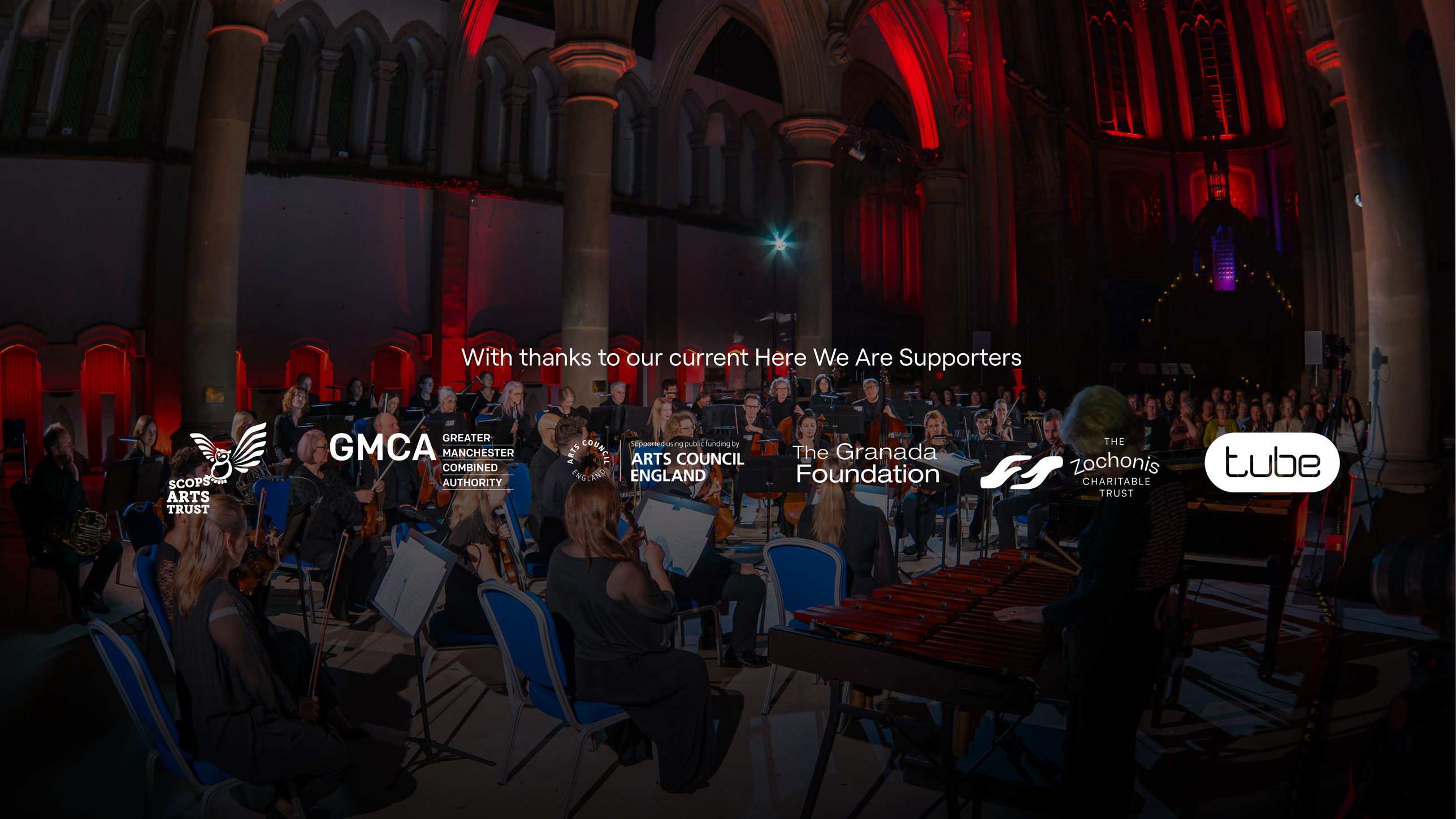
**Here We Are has shown the power of bringing exceptional music into communities across Greater Manchester – improving wellbeing, creating connection and making local places better.**

With the support of trusts, funders, philanthropists, legacy givers, businesses, local authorities, health partners, universities and community organisations, we can build on this every year: bringing free and accessible music to all ten boroughs, supporting local artists and communities, and creating extraordinary experiences where people live.

**Together, we can make Greater Manchester a better place to live – through music.**

**Here We Are. Now let's build what comes next.**

Manchester carers co-composed new orchestral piece They Are Our Lives, performed at The Monastery



With thanks to our current Here We Are Supporters

SCOPS ARTS TRUST

GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Supported using public funding by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

The Granada Foundation

THE Zochonis CHARITABLE TRUST

tube