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**St Hugh’s Foundation for the Arts – Report**

Graziana Presicce: *(Re)Discovering Women Composers*

Graziana Presicce is a classical pianist based in Hull. Graziana applied to the Artists Respond Award (2022) to focus on piano solo works by women composers, with the aim of incorporating them into her own piano repertoire and eventually disseminating these works into her future concert programmes.

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I am extremely grateful to the *St Hugh’s Foundation for the Arts*. Thanks to the *Artists Respond Award*, I was able to allocate a focused period of time exploring, researching and familiarising with piano solo works by women composers.

The motivation behind this project was the increasing awareness of how gender-unbalanced numerous concert programmes are – but most importantly, in my own repertoire. Yet, a lot of the freelance work I have undertaken since completing my PhD studies frequently involved providing piano accompaniments to other musicians, often following their repertoire choices and moving swiftly from one project to another with little time to build my piano solo repertoire without worrying of the financial implications of taking the time to do this. This funding allowed myself to take a period of time to discover and immerse into various works by women composers – something that I was very much keen to undertake for a while. Whilst encountering more and more exciting works and composers which I never came across before, I soon realised that this funding enabled the foundations of a much larger project, as the list of works I wanted to work towards grew rapidly! I am therefore confident that this project will not stop at this stage, but it’s, instead, the beginning of a new ongoing stream of work.

Another unexpected benefit from this project was that, as I was exploring new music works, my personal and professional network of musicians, composers and researchers from the field also gradually expanded, allowing for new helpful encounters, which I hope might one day lead to the start of new creative projects. The funding also allowed for the purchase of new scores, including buying music directly from some wonderful living composers, which I was thrilled of doing, since it directly supports other fellow freelancers. This is certainly something I personally want to keep going.

Whilst the time spent on this project has been extremely valuable and important to me, the timing unfortunately also coincided with a particular period of some personal difficulties. However, I wish to thank the generous understanding of the Trustees for allowing the flexibility and later submission of this report. A challenge during this time has been the slowing down of some aspects of the project, such as getting pieces “concert ready” at a faster pace; however I am certainly not discouraged and very motivated to continue to move this forward, with the scope of eventually gradually incorporating more and more works by women composers in my future concerts.

On a much more positive note, during this period I have also been approached by a music label, which expressed an interest in releasing recordings by the Hull-born composer Ethel Leginska. Whilst these are still initial discussions, I was thrilled at the possibility of professionally releasing Leginska’s recordings in the future. I will certainly keep the Trustees updated, should this be successful. Revisiting her works was also possible thanks to this funding. Regardless of this specific label, nonetheless, I also intend to create more recordings in the future and will be delighted to share these with you when ready, should that be of interest.

Another unexpected but just as enjoyable aspect was the lengthy process that researching new composers and new works can take. Whilst lengthier than originally anticipated, however, it has been an enthusiastic discovery to see the numerous possibilities available. I am very much looking forward to refining these new works by women composers and eventually presenting them to an audience – both in-person and through recordings.

I wish to once again thank the wonderful team behind this Foundation for this unique opportunity given to me.

<https://www.grazianapresicce.com/>