

JAM

2025

YEAR in REVIEW

2025



John Frederick Hudson, PhD
Artistic Director

25th Anniversary of JAM

Celebrating 25 Years of New Music, Community, and Creative Discovery

Over the past quarter-century, **JAM (John Armitage Memorial Trust)** has commissioned and performed more than 45 new works and created a freely accessible video library of music and practical resources that has attracted over 100,000 online views. Through our annual Composer Residency each July, we have nurtured and supported many British composers. Today, JAM and JAM on the Marsh stand at the forefront of new music in the UK — internationally recognised and highly respected for championing creativity and innovation.

In 2025, JAM presented an exceptional year of activity, hosting **12 concerts** packed with music by living composers, alongside **7 free events**, **3 exhibitions**, **3 theatre performances**, a **Composer Residency** and a **Virtual Festival**.

On behalf of the Trustees and the JAM team, **thank you** for your support. Your generosity, belief and enthusiasm make everything in these pages possible, from bold new commissions and world-class performances to the community projects that transform lives across the year. Your support sustains our mission and ensures that JAM can continue to inspire, innovate and champion the voices of the future!

25 Years of championing new music	12 Festival seasons	300+ Annual events
45 Commissions 15+ hours of music	100+ Partner Artists and Organisations	55 Educational videos online







Music of Our Time

JAM's season opening concert since 2001

Our year began on Wednesday, 26 March with ***Music of Our Time***, JAM's annual celebration of contemporary music and the beating heart of our calendar year. Under the direction of **Sarah MacDonald**, the **Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge**, joined **Onyx Brass**, organist **Simon Hogan**, and soloists **Claire Seaton**, **Philippe Durrant** and **James Emmerson** for a stunning concert spanning music from 2003 to 2025.

The programme featured seven works by living composers, including three JAM commissions:

- **Timothy Jackson**: *No Answer* (2003)
- **Paul Mealor**: *Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal* (2010)
- **Joseph Phibbs**: *Seven Songs of Nature* (2025, world premiere)

In addition, works submitted through our annual *Call for Music* by **Alan Bullard**, **Laura Heneghan** and **Eoghan Desmond** were performed, alongside a piece by **Sarah MacDonald**.

Music of Our Time was a true celebration of **new music** and **creative excellence**.

Top: St Bride's Church, Fleet Street
Middle Left: Joseph Phibbs, composer

Middle Right: The Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge

Bottom: Residency Composers

COMPOSER RESIDENCY

In July, JAM welcomed three emerging composers — **Zsolt Balint**, **Nien Chin Chai** and **Sophia Hurst** — to Romney Marsh for an intensive 12-day Composer Residency: a creative laboratory designed to nurture new talent and spark bold artistic innovation. Led by **Paul Mealor LVO** and JAM's Artistic Director **John Frederick Hudson PhD**, and working closely with Artists-in-Residence **Thomas Kelly** (piano) and **Beibei Wang** (percussion), the residency immersed composers in daily workshops, mentoring, rehearsals and collaborative experimentation. This year focused on the unique interplay between piano and percussion, with composers encouraged to push boundaries and refine their voice through hands-on exploration and performance.

A highlight of the residency was a beachcombing session with photographer **Wendy Carrig**, where composers collected found objects to transform into new percussive sounds: a direct meeting of landscape and music that captured the spirit of the Marsh. The residency culminated in world premieres at JAM on the Marsh 2025, showcasing new work shaped by place, imagination and the fearless creativity that defines JAM's approach to composer development.





JAM ON THE MARSH

A festival alive with creativity, community and bold new music.

Before we could blink, **JAM on the Marsh** arrived, 3–13 July: a festival alive with creativity, community and bold new music. In his first year as Festival Curator, **Edward Armitage BEM** crafted a wide-ranging programme with two strong threads: Mealor @50 and The Belle Époque.

Mealor @50 celebrated some of Paul Mealor's most significant works, including the British premiere of *The Light of Paradise* performed by the **BBC Singers** and **Ferio Saxophone Quartet** under **Sofi Jeannin**; *Symphony No. 2* in the debut concert with **Britten Sinfonia** conducted by **John Frederick Hudson**; and *The Farthest Shore*, performed by **The Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge**, **Onyx Brass**, organist **Robin Walker** and community choirs of all ages under **Sarah MacDonald**.

The **Belle Époque** appeared across the festival in recitals by **Thomas Kelly** (piano) and **Daniel Cook** (organ), and in concerts by both **Britten Sinfonia** and **The King's Singers**.

We also celebrated the 65th birthday of our long-time collaborator, **Jonathan Dove**, with a performance of his *Out of Time*, followed by his own *Late Night Music: Six Meditations,* a luminous festival highlight.

New music remained at the heart of the festival, with nine world premieres by **James Aburn**, **Zsolt Balint**, **Marisse Cato**, **Nien Chin Chai**, **Dani Howard**, **Sophia Hurst**, **Paul Mealor**, **Barry Mills** and **Steve Richer**.

Changeling Theatre returned with a wonderfully irreverent *Twelfth Night*, and **National Theatre Live** featured through Cinemarsh the very popular *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Our cabaret concert, featuring **Rebecca Afonwy-Jones** and **John Frederick Hudson**, added a joyful burst of glamour and wit to create an intimate evening that delighted audiences.

The visual arts were equally vibrant. Photographer **Wendy Carrig** presented *The Woman Who Fell to Earth* and created striking portraits of our Residency composers. Exhibitions by **Daniel Lehan** and **Marc Christmas** added further texture to the programme, with Lehan's *Drawn Torn Glued* spanning three churches and explored via a Marsh-wide bus tour.

Brinley Hughes received the President's Award for his dedicated service to JAM, and the festival wine tasting with **Matthew Jukes** proved both hilariously entertaining and genuinely illuminating, a joyful exploration of Australian wines.

JAM on the Marsh 2025 was a landmark year: a dynamic blend of professional excellence, community spirit and artistic innovation.

Left Page: John Frederick Hudson congratulating Paul Mealor after his *Symphony No.2* performance with Britten Sinfonia.

Middle left: Rebecca Afonwy-Jones
Middle right: Alex Wright in Paul Mealor's *The Farthest Shore*

Bottom: Audience members







OUR COMMUNITY

A Year of Impact

Within JAM's community, we continued our commitment to outreach. Since 2014, thousands of people each year living on rural, Romney Marsh, Kent take part in JAM's free year-round community arts projects, driving skills, ambition, well-being and community cohesion. These projects would not happen otherwise.

Community Partnerships

JAM is passionate about community partnerships, working with over 50 partners each year to deliver its activities.

> "JAM helps our community flourish through outstanding education and events." — Mayor of New Romney

Weekly Singing

Led by Rebecca Lodge Birkebæk, the Sunflower Singing meets weekly and performs three times a year. Removing attendance fees has increased participation, confidence and wellbeing.

> "Singing is so good for my mental health — inspiring, unique, fun."









Top: Children singing in *The Farthest Shore*

Middle left: Volunteer Sian Edwards
Middle right: Volunteer Claudia Ott

Bottom Left Page: Jillian Bain Christie giving a printmaking workshop

Art Projects

In 2025, all of JAM's art projects at the Romney Marsh Community Hub were fully booked. Each project culminated in exhibitions, bringing local art into public spaces. Workshops were led by: Jillian Bain Christie (printmaking), Wendy Carrig (photography), Daniel Lehan (collage) and Penny Graham (ceramics).

> "I didn't think I could do this... and ended up proud of what I made."

Sixth Form Futures Development

In partnership with The Marsh Academy, JAM launched a new initiative to provide practical career development in sound, film, marketing and event production, thus opening pathways into creative industries.

> "JAM's work experience made me feel I could actually do this as a career."

Volunteer Engagement

Local volunteers play a vital role in JAM's year-round delivery, from planning and promotion to welcoming audiences at events.

> "Being involved with JAM lifts my soul. It's the highlight of my year."

JAM DIGITAL

A Free Global Composers' Resource - expanding access to education and new music

As JAM celebrates 25 years, we not only reflect on our history of commissioning and championing new music but also on how we have evolved as an organisation to support composers in new ways. One of the most significant developments in recent years has been the expansion of JAM's digital presence, born out of necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. When live performances paused for Covid, JAM managed to have its festival funding repurposed, enabling us to film our entire festival programme and release it – for free – on digital platforms to ensure that creativity could continue to thrive. Over 20,000 people watched these performances around the world.

From this, the **JAM Composers' Resource** was created which is an invaluable, free online hub providing composers with essential tools to explore, learn and develop the craft of writing for different forces. Since launching these digital initiatives in 2020, JAM's YouTube channel has grown to over 180 different videos, which have collectively been viewed over 130,000 times.

[54] Education Videos

[116] Performance Videos

[21+] Hours of Music

These Educational Videos were created in partnership with:
The VOCES8 Foundation: Writing for Voice
Sacconi Quartet: Writing for Strings
Onyx Brass: Writing for Brass Quintet
Francesca Massey: Writing for Organ

Explore our **free Composers' Resource** at jamconcert.org/composers-resource

JAM VIRTUAL

Since 2020, JAM VIRTUAL has opened our festival to audiences across the globe, transforming JAM on the Marsh into an international experience. What began as a creative response to necessity has become a defining pillar of JAM's identity: a digital platform that allows anyone, anywhere, to take part in our season.

This year's edition — produced by John Frederick Hudson, recorded with Edward Armitage's pristine, broadcast-quality sound and brought to life through Gareth Kay's imaginative, atmospheric filmmaking — featured thirty-six works spanning solo, chamber, choral and orchestral music. The virtual series showcased Thomas Kelly, Rebecca Afonwy-Jones with John Frederick Hudson, the Chapel Choir of Selwyn College, Cambridge, Onyx Brass, Sarah MacDonald and JAM Sinfonia led by Igor Yuzefovich.

Audiences from every corner of the world tuned in, many writing to say how much they value the chance to experience the festival "from afar" and praising the immersive viewing experience. JAM VIRTUAL now stands as a world-class extension of the festival, making bold new music, exceptional performers and the spirit of JAM accessible to all, regardless of geography.



JAM COMMISSIONS

2025
Marisse Cato: - *ligand-tendon-*
Stephen McNeff: *Violin Concerto*
Paul Mealor: *A Humble Light*
Joseph Phibbs: *Seven Songs of Nature*
Steve Richer: *Aurora*

2024
John Frederick Hudson: *Wild Earth Blazing*
(libretto by Esme Lloyd)
Jago Thornton: *Murmurations*
Isabelle Ryder: *Illumination*

2023
Mark-Anthony Turnage: *ONYX 23*
Richard Peat: *The Sky Engine*
(libretto by Timothy Knapman)
Tara Creme: *The Song I Came to Sing*
Christopher Churcher: *Evening Star*

2022
Judith Bingham: *Concerto for Clarinet*
Janet Wheeler: *Up in the Morning Early*

2021
Jack Oades: *Between the Stormclouds and the Sea (text by Grahame Davies)*

2020
Paul Mealor: *Piano Concerto*

2019
Daniel Saleeb: *Soliloquy*
James Aburn: *Silent Shadows*

2018
Rory Boyle: *Songs from the Marshes*

2017
Tom Harold and Stuart Beach: *Voices of Vimy*
(text by Grahame Davies)

2016
Paul Mealor: *The Shadows of War*
(text by Grahame Davies)
Thomas LaVoy: *O Great Beyond*

2015
Thea Musgrave: *The Voices of Our Ancestors*

2014
Giles Swayne: *Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo*

2013
Paul Mealor: *The Farthest Shore*

2012
Julian Phillips: *Body of Water*

2011
Philip Cashian: *All Things Wear Silence*

2010
Paul Mealor: *Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal*
Tarik O'Regan: *The Night's Untruth*
Hannah Kendall: *Fundamental*
Richard Peat: *Fiery the Angels*

2009
Steve Martland: *Darwin*

2008
Gabriel Jackson: *The Spacious Firmament*

2007
Adam Gorb: *Thoughts Scribbled on a Blank Wall*

2006
Judith Bingham: *My Heart Strangely Warm'd*

2005
Paul Patterson: *The Fifth Continent*

2004
John McCabe: *Songs of the Garden*

2003
Jonathan Dove: *The Far Theatricals of Day*

2002
Timothy Jackson: *No Answer*

MISSION OF JAM

JAM is internationally recognised as a creative, dynamic, forward-thinking arts organisation, with new music at its core. It embraces artistic risk-taking through contemporary innovation, exploration, collaboration and creation, that intentionally integrates high-quality performances and education.



2026 marks the beginning of JAM's next chapter: a move to a truly year-round creative organisation with a national footprint. Our aim is simple: to make great music, bold new work and meaningful community engagement available throughout the year. With monthly activity, expanded partnerships, deeper composer development and a focused five-day festival, 2026 promises to be our most sustainable and creatively ambitious season yet.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 SEASON

Music of Our Time
JAM's Season Opening Concert: 26 March, 7pm, St Bride's Church

JAM on the Marsh Festival · 8–12 July 2026

Composer Development
• Two Composer Intensives (Spring & Autumn) supporting six emerging composers.
• Flagship Composer Residency in May with performances at the summer festival.
• Expanded digital learning through JAM's 200+ educational videos, freely accessible worldwide.

Community Engagement
• Weekly Sunflower Singing with three public performances.
• Four art workshop series (April, June, August, October).
• Continued partnership with The Marsh Academy for 6th-form futures development.

PAUL MEALOR
LVO CSTJ FRSE
President of JAM

CREATIVE TEAM

John Frederick Hudson PhD · Artistic Director
Edward Armitage BEM · Festival Curator
Sarah Armitage · Head of Marketing & Fundraising
Karen Gambrell · Grants Administrator
James Aburn · Festival Operations Manager
Anthony White · Festival Content & Marketing Assistant

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Edward Armitage BEM · Chair
Sarah Armitage
Charles Cochrane
Timothy Jackson
Patricia Rolfe

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