



## Introduction

Continuo Foundation has been committed to supporting emerging talent from the very start. Toward the end of our first year of grant making (2021), as audiences slowly began to return, we decided to increasingly focus on young musicians. As a result, Continuo introduced a new category in January 2022 (Grant Round 3) to extend support to musicians – primarily recent conservatoire graduates – who had formed ensembles in 2019/2020 and were among the hardest hit by the pandemic. In the words of our former Trustee and presenter of the BBC Radio 3 Early Music Show, Hannah French:

*“If well-established ensembles have been struggling during the pandemic, imagine the situation for musicians who have recently graduated and formed ensembles, or for established players who have tried to set up new groups. We’re turning our attention to ensembles that have only had the chance to perform together for a short time and still have big aspirations to fulfil.”*

This new eligibility category, where applicants are required to submit a ten-minute video from a performance or rehearsal, in lieu of a performance history, opens access to funding to groups who are new on the scene yet already performing at a high level. Thanks to the skill of our expert Advisory Panel, whose judgement across six rounds of grants and 145 projects has been flawless, these grants also confer a mark of quality upon the young groups. This combination of funding and recognition have been vital to enabling these musicians to build their careers on solid foundations.

We dedicated 20% of each £100,000 funding pot in Rounds 3 – 5, and 40% in the Round 6 awards announced in September 2023, to recently formed ensembles. So far, 19 emerging ensembles have benefited, and several have received additional support in subsequent grant rounds to continue building on the momentum gained through the initial grant-funded project.

## Case Study – Ensemble Augelletti

Ensemble Augelletti was founded in 2019 by recorder player Olwen Foulkes. The core group of five, run by the musicians without an agent or management team, specialises in creating programmes that connect baroque chamber music to the everyday stories of people living in the 18th century.

### Continuo Grant-Supported Projects

(May 2021) Debut recording of a chamber music collection curated by Anna Amalia, Princess of Prussia, Abbess of Quedlinburg (1723-1787). *The Library of a Prussian Princess* CD was released in February 2022 on Barn Cottage Records.

(November 2021 to September 2022) *Pick a Card*, a year-long digital project exploring the historical playing card collection of the British Museum. Episodes were released via weekly videos on social media in collaboration with the Voces8 Foundation and Brighton Early Music Festival, available to watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/@ensembleaugelletti/playlists>

(June to September 2023) *Mrs Philharmonica* concert tour with three performances of an imaginative programme stemming from Olwen's independent research into an unknown (and yet to be identified) 18<sup>th</sup> century woman composer who signed her works 'Mrs Philharmonica'.

### **Impact**

Based on their debut CD, Ensemble Augelletti were able to build a UK concert tour of the *Library of a Prussian Princess* programme. Through the *Pick a Card* series, the group grew their online following significantly. Since 2021, the group have been featured on BBC Radio 3 *In Tune* and the *Early Music Show*, and in June 2023, Ensemble Augelletti was selected as the **BBC New Generation Baroque Ensemble** for 2023-2025! Commenting upon this achievement, the group's founder said:

*"We have come a long way in the last couple of years and so much is down to the support of the Continuo Foundation. It's one thing to have ideas and ambition for a project, but a completely different thing to have them alongside the support to make them happen and bring them to the attention of others! We can't overestimate the impact for us."* - Olwen Foulkes

Concert promoter *Music on the Quantocks* spotted Ensemble Augelletti's *Mrs Philharmonica* project on the Continuo Foundation website and invited them to give a concert in Taunton in September 2023. Ticket requests were received from 600 people for a local venue with only 200 places. Unsurprisingly, the group was delighted to have been invited to return for another performance next year.

*"The thing about Continuo's support is the 'guarantee' it offers a promoter about the quality of the performance. And, for those of us running concerts a long way from London, Continuo's funding acts, in effect, to level the playing field. London promoters rarely have to face the crippling travel and accommodation expenses that prevent far too many top Baroque musicians performing live in Somerset and the West Country."* – Fay Chilcott, Music on the Quantocks

Following on from the relationship Ensemble Augelletti developed with the Voces 8 Foundation through the *Pick a Card* series, they have been selected to collaborate in an outreach project in early 2024 entitled *Augelletti's Aviary*. Two hundred local state school children (5-6 years of age) will be invited to the Voces 8 centre for an immersive musical experience focused on Mozart's notations of the songs of his pet starling. This project, awarded a Continuo grant in the latest round, also aims to introduce the students to baroque instruments and raise awareness of birds in the natural world.

## Conclusion

Our recently formed ensemble initiative, to support musicians at the vital early stage of their careers or at the start of a new creative initiative, has proved to be one of the most impactful areas of Continuo Foundation's work. We have also seen the number and quality of applications from these emerging groups increasing with each round. Continuo's grants have become a mark of quality and an endorsement which has helped young artists to gain visibility, engage successfully with promoters and secure access to additional funding - a powerful combination for future success. We intend to continue to offer this support to groups of musicians at the crucial early stage of their careers and to increase the amounts allocated in each round. This will also ensure the pipeline of music talent for the future.

## **Appendix - List of Recently Formed Ensemble Grantees** (with link to Continuo Connect profile)

1. [Apollo's Cabinet](#)
2. [Arculo Consort of Viols\\*](#)
3. [Cedar Consort](#)
4. [Divertissements Chinois](#)
5. [Ensemble Augelletti](#)
6. [Figure](#)
7. [Hex](#)
8. [Irlandiani Players](#)
9. [Le Foyer des Artistes\\*](#)
10. [Liturina\\*](#)
11. [Manchester Baroque](#)
12. [Musica d'Outrora](#)
13. [Noxwode](#)
14. [Obligato\\*](#)
15. [Parnassus](#)
16. [Sakuntala Trio\\*](#)
17. [Sounds Historical\\*](#)
18. [Spinacino Consort](#)
19. [The Vauxhall Band](#)

\* Denotes new grantees selected in Round 6 (September 2023)