

# + The National Funding Scheme

## CASE STUDY NO 7

### Battersea Beatbox Academy & The Bach Choir

Using performance to inspire giving

14th November 2014



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**Battersea Arts Centre representative:** Kane Moore, Senior Development Manager

**The Bach Choir representative:** Paul Cutts, Chairman

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Audience members were 89% more likely to give immediately after a direct appeal
- 75% donors gave by the £5 text channel
- 2 out of 3 of donors added Gift Aid
- Just under 50% of donors shared their details with the organisations
- Donations displayed on a screen in real time sent a powerful message to donors and encouraged competitive giving between audience members

## THE EVENT

The National Funding Scheme hosted a celebratory drinks reception on Fireworks Night at the Museum of London where guests were invited to enjoy a private view of the London 2012 Olympic Cauldron (a cause supported by DONATE) and also to be entertained by two performance groups: the High Heels (from the Bach Choir) and Beatboxers from the Battersea Arts Centre. During the event the master of ceremonies spurred on the audience to make donations to both causes. Members of the audience could give in three ways: through the web app (any amount) or a £5 SMS text donation, or by scanning in a QR code.

Throughout the evening a large screen showing every donation was projected on the wall. In between songs the audience listened to the performers talk about their campaigns and the need to receive donations. The combination of the energetic MC, the totalizer screen and the performers' direct appeals resulted in members of the audience making multiple donations, in situ, using their mobile phones. Donors were prompted to add Gift Aid and received a personal thank you from the organizations after every donation.

## THE ORGANISATIONS' PERSPECTIVE

We asked Kane More (Senior Development Manager at Battersea Arts Centre) and Paul Cutts (Chairman of the Bach Choir) for their perspective on the event and the use of DONATE to raise funds in a live environment.

### What were the key lessons learnt from running this event?

**Paul Cutts (BC)** Don't be backward about coming forward and asking for support. We did explain our campaign at the start of our performance but perhaps we should have reminded the audience throughout our routine, giving examples of what a specific amount of money would help us achieve. For instance, explaining how much it costs for us to hire music every year, or for a concert, might have made the scale of our fundraising ambitions seem more realistic for people and therefore encouraged them to give more – although we were delighted that, from an audience of fewer than 50 people, we still generated several hundreds of pounds for a 20-minute sing.

**Kane Moore (BAC)** I think we really built on our use of DONATE at our previous Beatbox event. Our young people have definitely become more confident at talking about the impact of the Beatbox Academy in their lives and painting a compelling picture of why guests should donate. The Beatbox leader Paul was really good at encouraging guests to donate and punctuating their performance with shout outs to donate. Our Beatboxers always strive to put on the best show possible, which requires facilitator time and technical support. Once this has been accounted for the actual money raised at the event was quite low. I wonder whether there are ways of better communicating the "cost" of such events to guests.

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## How has DONATE changed your thinking and approach to asking directly for support from audiences and supporters?

**Paul Cutts (BC)** One of our challenges as a large-scale choir without a venue of our own is that we are often not allowed to make direct fundraising asks from the stage of our host concert halls. Nor do we generally have access to their box office and ticketing information, making it hard to keep engaging with people who are clearly interested enough in our work to attend our performances. We feel it is vital to a successful campaign that we can make a human ask for support: it's much more powerful than a static ad in a concert programme, even if it includes DONATE messaging. We're hoping that, with the experience at the Museum of London proving to be so positive, we'll be able to persuade our host venues to allow us to make more direct calls for support from the stage.

**Kane Moore (BAC)** Working with DONATE has really helped changed the culture of our organisation around fundraising. Like so many arts organisations we have not historically been great at asking our audiences for support or even at letting them know we are a charity. Over the last twelve months we have got our producers, artists, staff and young people really on board in making direct asks for support. We have been doing shout outs at the end of shows for our capital campaign, with cash gifts totalling £50-£120 per night. We have tested used the DONATE Events platform twice now for our Beatbox Academy. The success of these events has really helped our young people to understand the value of what they do and they are very keen to continue to build fundraising messages in to future shows and gigs. It really helps that all money raised at these events goes directly to the Beatbox budget to go towards their ambitions for the future of the programme.

## Looking forward, how will you use DONATE for other campaigns/events?

**Paul Cutts (BC)** Our major focus for the next two years is on our 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign. We see a powerful role for DONATE in a number of contexts but particularly around events-based activities such as gala fundraising dinners, auctions and the like. We'll also be running e-campaigns with DONATE messaging, ads in concert programmes and possibly even radio trails referencing the campaign. We'll also be asking our Friends and Associate Members to experiment with technology and consider making an additional donation through the DONATE platform.

**Kane Moore (BAC)** We are planning to incorporate DONATE in to signage for our capital project; the design of this is being led by design group Bread Collective (<http://www.breadcollective.co.uk>). We have also used the DONATE text code on all our ticket stubs. Our work with DONATE to date has shown that passive signage is not the best way of encouraging donations. We have already enjoyed great success in shout outs about our capital campaign at the end of shows and will now look for ways of using the DONATE platform as a means of making a gift at the time when audience are most encouraged to support, at the end of a great show. Similarly we will continue to work with our Beatboxers to look at ways of tying in fundraising messages in to their future shows.

## How important is promotion of the cause by the organization?

**Paul Cutts (BC)** Critical. Technology is just a tool. You wouldn't expect a website to generate money unless it was clearly targeting its message at appropriate audiences. The problem for many amateur organisations like ours is that we don't really understand our audiences well enough or have powerful enough databases and IT systems to support our ambitions. There is also a challenge when it comes to resourcing a fundraising campaign so any technology tools that offer an easy bolt-on solution (and that brings some level of marketing collateral and visibility outside our own promotional channels) is a very positive thing.

**Kane Moore (BAC)** Very important – passive signage gets a slow trickle of donations but face-to-face asks have been very successful, even more so than asks through direct email and letter communications.

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## What are the advantages to you of the DONATE platform?

**Paul Cutts (BC)** Instant Gift Aid is useful and the ease of giving is great – particularly when our audience demographic is typically more digital immigrant than digital native! That said, a third of our 200+ members are currently aged under 30 so we're hopeful they will lead the fundraising charge through the DONATE platform and help develop a strong social media presence for it.

**Kane Moore (BAC)** The advantage really is about starting a relationship with our audiences, which may lead to bigger gifts and support in the future. We are now looking at how we can create really compelling thank you messages, which encourage all givers to share their details with us (at the moment only about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of donors share their details), and building a strong comms strategy to keep them involved. At the last DONATE event we gave away free audio of the Beatboxers recent show; these sort of perks feel like the right way to go.

## THE ORGANISATIONS



**Battersea Arts Centre** Since opening in 1980 in Battersea's former Town Hall, we have supported theatremakers to create groundbreaking work and invite audiences to participate in the development of new theatre across the building, in London, the UK and beyond. Many of Britain's most exciting and successful companies, from Complicite to Punchdrunk, have presented work first here. BAC is a world-class theatre and a truly community venue, a place open to everyone and that gives back through the wide range of youth and community activities we run.

**The Bach Choir** Under our acclaimed musical director David Hill, we regularly perform and record at home and abroad in prestigious venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and Abbey Road Studios. With talented singers coming from all walks of life, an international touring schedule and an outreach programme that takes our passion for music into inner-city schools and beyond, we perform and share music for everyone to enjoy, whatever their age or background. We also commission works to bring new music to life for audiences everywhere.

## THE CAUSES



**Battersea Arts Centre's** Beatbox Academy has been running since 2008, founded by world-class beatboxer Shlomo. It is open to all 13-21 year olds, giving them the opportunity to develop their beatbox, MC and vocal talents through weekly drop-in sessions during term times, open mic nights and through creating shows with professional musicians and artists. Beatbox is a really inclusive and vibrant art form – all it requires is a mouth and a microphone. With its links to hip hop and dance music it appeals to young people of all ages and backgrounds. Through the Beatbox Academy we are able to involve young people from local estates across Wandsworth and Lambeth, who would never normally step foot inside an arts venue.



**The Bach Choir** has represented the best of British choral excellence for almost 140 years. Can you help us sing on for another 140? In 2017 The Bach Choir will celebrate its 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary – and to celebrate we are launching a major endowment campaign. Every year The Bach Choir needs to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds in order to take its unique sound to audiences at home and abroad – be it outreach projects with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to international tours, recordings, broadcasts and new commissions. We receive no core funding from government or local authorities and rely entirely on the generosity of our members and supporters to carry on sharing our love of music at the highest levels. Our target - £1.4m – represents £1,000 for every year we've been singing. Hitting our target means we'll be able to cover our costs for another decade. If you love singing and, like us, believe it can change people's lives, then please help us by contributing any amount you can.

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