



Capsule Information



Supersonic Mass - 2023 Festival

History & Background

Capsule is a Creative Producer and champion of experimental music and art. Founded and led by Artistic Director and CEO Lisa Meyer. Through our annual Supersonic Festival, large-scale projects like Home of Metal, and Artist Development programme, we craft extraordinary new work for curious audiences. Our work is of the highest quality, authentic and inclusive. We have a unique ability to present contemporary work in a playful and imaginative way in different contexts, allowing us to reach out to diverse audiences.

Track record

From small beginnings, we have worked with major artists such as Kim Gordon, Morag Myerscough and Black Sabbath, maintaining a DIY ethos that has developed and supported hundreds of emerging artists. We are responsible for conceiving and producing some of the region's most ambitious and successful cultural projects, including:

- The ground-breaking heritage project Home of Metal - a fan-generated digital archive that informs an expansive international programme of exhibitions and events. The first phase of the project (2011) generated a **PR value of over £1 million**, reaching **200,000+ people**, of which **35% visited a cultural institution for the first time**. The 2019 programme further engaged with **350,000 people**, from **52 different countries** around the world. **PR coverage was worth £3.3 million**, and the estimated **economic impact was £3.2 million**. In addition, we worked with 80 volunteers.
- A 4-month cross-art form festival for the opening of the largest library in Europe, the Library of Birmingham, which saw over **1.1 million visitors** take part in an extraordinary cultural programme exploring the notion of the Library as a cultural venue – working with **469 artists**, creating **57 new commissions**, producing **113 performances & 183 workshops**.
- Over 20 years of producing/curating Supersonic Festival, an experimental music and arts festival that draws in audiences, performers and industry representatives from across the globe. Supersonics' programme is consistently praised by national & international press for its quality and innovation, as well as excellent organisation & production values. In 2019 we were named by **The Guardian** as '**The UK's best small festival**', with a 5* review. **The Independent** described Supersonic as '**a true alternative to the alternative**' and in 2017 we topped The Guardian's list as the best **International Experimental music festivals**, with a 5* review from Arts Desk & The Quietus heralding us the best European festival for new music. Our appeal stretches from broadsheets to Indie DIY magazines, with BBC 6 Music as one of our lead media sponsors.
- In 2020 we pivoted against a backdrop of the pandemic and produced Sofasonic Festival, a weekend of 40 digital events, workshops, talks and DJ sets. The weekend was streamed via YouTube. The digital festival was seen as sector leading, with invitations to talk at Ace's **Digital Culture Network** event in partnership with **Google Arts, British Council Music Sector Round Table**.

2023 marked the 20th anniversary since the festival began, and gave the team the opportunity to reflect on the fact that in the two decades since it began, so much has changed in the world of festivals and live music; the gentrification of Digbeth, a crowded festival market, the pandemic, Brexit and the end of freedom of movement, austerity, and rising costs. Despite these increasing challenges our work continues to grow from strength to strength whilst staying true to its core aims.

Over the weekend our programme had **3500 live audience** members, we recruited **66 volunteers**, **audiences travelled from 18 countries** (Australia, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany,

Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA.

We achieved some tremendous press:

★★★★★

“the care and community at this independent festival of outer-reaches sounds is evident in every single detail as it celebrates its 20th anniversary.”

The Guardian

“Britain’s very best underground festival... Lankum might be riding high off the back of a universally lauded, Mercury-nominated masterpiece of a new album (The Quietus’ number one of the year so far, no less), yet the awe with which they speak about Supersonic is testament to the event’s oversized influence in the underground, a status earned over two decades hard graft. It’s not only the best festival they’ve ever played, Lynch, says, but the best they’ve ever been to.”

The Quietus

“it’s clear that this is a festival that genuinely cultivates community, both through its carefully considered programme of bands, talks and workshops, and the unparalleled warmth of its atmosphere”

The Wire

“Supersonic is full of these wild adventures. It’s one of the best festivals out there that defines the core of these gatherings – places that change your life and send you down a myriad of new rabbit holes. It takes chances, creates culture and disrupts culture in a true visionary style that makes it one of the key calendar events.”

Louder Than War



Audience members at Supersonic Festival 2023

Organisational Values

As an organisation we hold our values close to our hearts – we passionately believe in them, and they guide all areas of our work. We believe these values are both universal yet pertinent to the work that we do uniquely as Capsule. They shape our mission...

- ***Capsule are good hosts - we welcome all!***

We are all audience members

We plan/consider carefully & put ourselves in our artist's and audience's shoes

We build confidence in others

We talk simply and clearly and avoid jargon if possible

We maintain a positive, can-do attitude on the ground and are approachable

We make sure everyone feels like they belong at our events

- ***Capsule are authentic - we do it for the right reasons***

We are rigorous in our work and the claims we make

We act with integrity - we are sustainable but will not put commercial considerations ahead of our values or compromise on quality

We programme artists/workshops/talks addressing socio-political issues to open up debate

We take responsibility & pride in what we do
We are uncompromising in quality

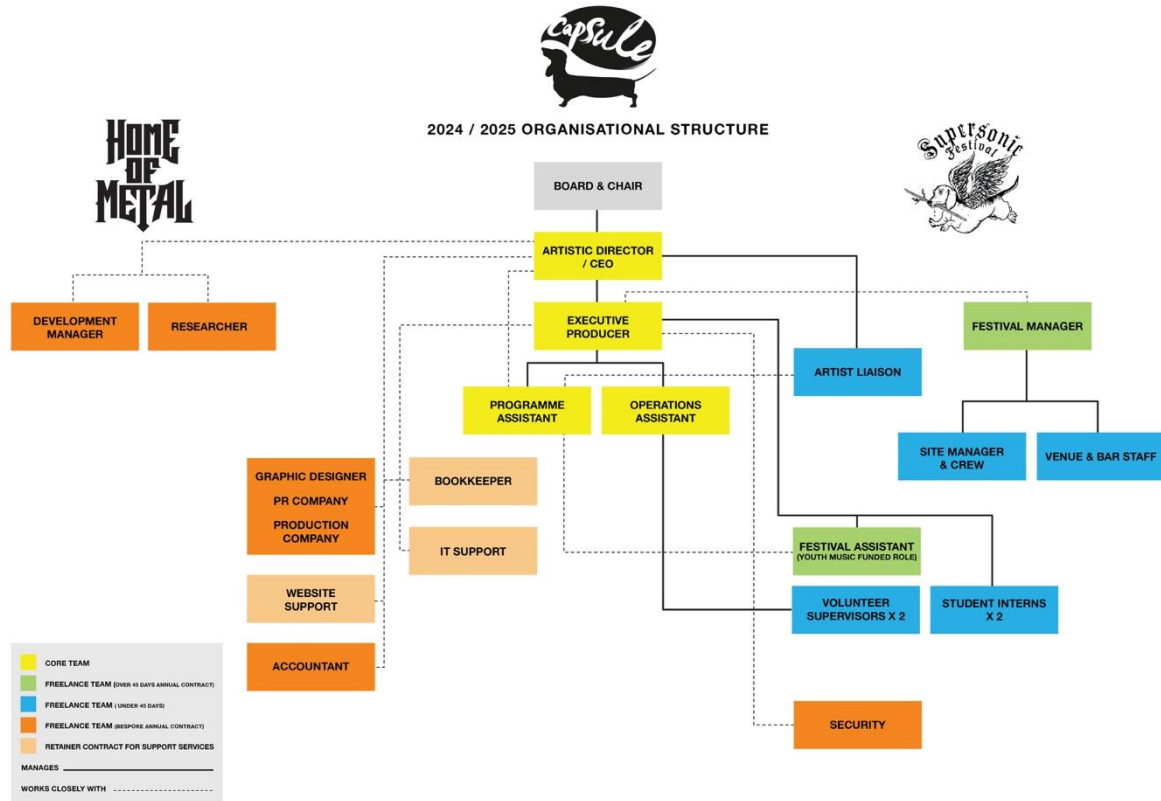
- ***Capsule are tenacious - we are problem solvers***

We have a rigorous professional attitude to our work
We are flexible and responsive
We are fair but economical - we stay within budget
We avoid rigid thinking

- ***Capsule are curious - we introduce people to great things & each other***

We create a culture where people can be themselves
We don't stick with the status quo
We make things affordable and open spaces to new audiences
We use humour and are approachable
We don't make assumptions about our audiences
We work collaboratively to make it happen!

Capsule organisational structure



Current board members

Benedict Fisher - A communications specialist, Ben has worked in the arts, tourism, property, and utilities sectors. He is currently director of communications at the Solicitors Regulation Authority. A huge fan of Capsule's work since 2002, he has enjoyed dozens of our events over the last two decades.

Dr. Lina Khatib - Is the co-founder of the World Metal Congress and the director of the SOAS Middle East Institute. She is also Chair in Middle East Studies and Professor of Practice in Politics and International Studies at SOAS University of London. Previously she was director Middle East and North Africa Programme at Chatham House. Outside of her work in policy and music, she has created visual art, published seven books and is currently developing a theatrical performance. She is also an Associate of the Imperial War Museum Institute.

Laura McDermott - Is Creative Director of the Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts. The space (formerly Gardner Arts Centre) is an interdisciplinary arts hub connecting University of Sussex to Brighton & Hove and the wider national and international arts and research community. Previously (2009 – 2015) Laura was Joint Artistic Director (with Harun Morrison) of Fierce Festival – an international festival of live art, queer politics and activism in Birmingham. In 2012-13 Laura was awarded a CLORE Fellowship in Arts Participation and Engagement, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Laura was a creative producer at BAC (Battersea Arts Centre) in London, from 2005 – 2009, where she programmed seasons, festivals and was lead producer for the Punchdrunk and BAC co-production The Masque of the Red Death.

Pippa Moore - Is the Director of Development at the Young Vic theatre in London. Pippa was formerly Head of Fundraising at the De La Warr Pavilion, where she helped to develop and fund the Outlands experimental music touring network in 2017. Outlands included nine national partners, including Supersonic, who commissioned and toured six new productions across the UK and the world.

Stuart Rogers (Chair) - born and educated in Birmingham and has worked in theatre management/production since 1973 when he became Theatre Programmer for the Birmingham Arts Lab. He then moved on to manage the Gulbenkian Studio Theatre and Newcastle Playhouse in Newcastle upon Tyne, followed by periods as Executive Director for Chester Gateway Theatre and Nottingham Playhouse. Following a couple of years in the southern Italian city of Bari working with the international touring theatre company Teatro Kismet, Stuart returned to Birmingham in 2002 to take up the post of Executive Director at Birmingham Repertory Theatre. He left that position in 2019 to concentrate on freelance producing.

Past Board Members

Gina Crane (Director of Communications and Learning Esmée Fairbairn Foundation),

Anna Russell (Regional Director National Trust), **Debbie Kermode** (CEO/Artistic Director Midlands Art Centre).