

Production Syndicates

Increasing engagement and donations from membership



Image courtesy of English Touring Opera. Giulio Cesare © Oliver Rosser

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“Joining a Production Syndicate gives donors a unique opportunity to get closer to the action and provides English Touring Opera with vital funds to support its touring work.”

Oliver Doyle

English Touring Opera



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English Touring Opera (ETO) is the leading touring opera company in the UK. It tours productions in Spring and Autumn and presents as many as 110 performances per year.

In 2013 our former Head of Partnerships and Development, David Burgess, launched ETO Production Syndicates to increase engagement and donations from our membership.

Production Syndicates provide donors with a unique opportunity to get closer to the action and ETO with vital funds to support its touring work. They raise as much as half of our Individual Giving target each year.



About Production Syndicates

A Production Syndicate is a group of individuals who come together to support a production.

Joining a Syndicate enables the donor to learn more about the opera they are supporting, in the company of like-minded people. They get much closer to the work, joining the cast and creative team at every stage of the process — from initial designs, through rehearsals and the first night performance.

We ask individuals to make a donation of £1,000 or above to join a Production Syndicate. While many choose to give beyond this, it enables us to keep Syndicates accessible, allowing each supporter to make a significant impact and truly see the difference their gift has made in performance.

We have one Production Syndicate per season to support our Spring and Autumn tours. With our Autumn tour usually focused on Early Opera and the Spring on later works, the repertoire and case for support change drastically each time. This enables us to appeal to different tastes and motivations for giving. One Syndicate might be built around presenting a fun, accessible work which will inspire the next generation of opera lovers, while another might bring to life something that is only rarely performed.



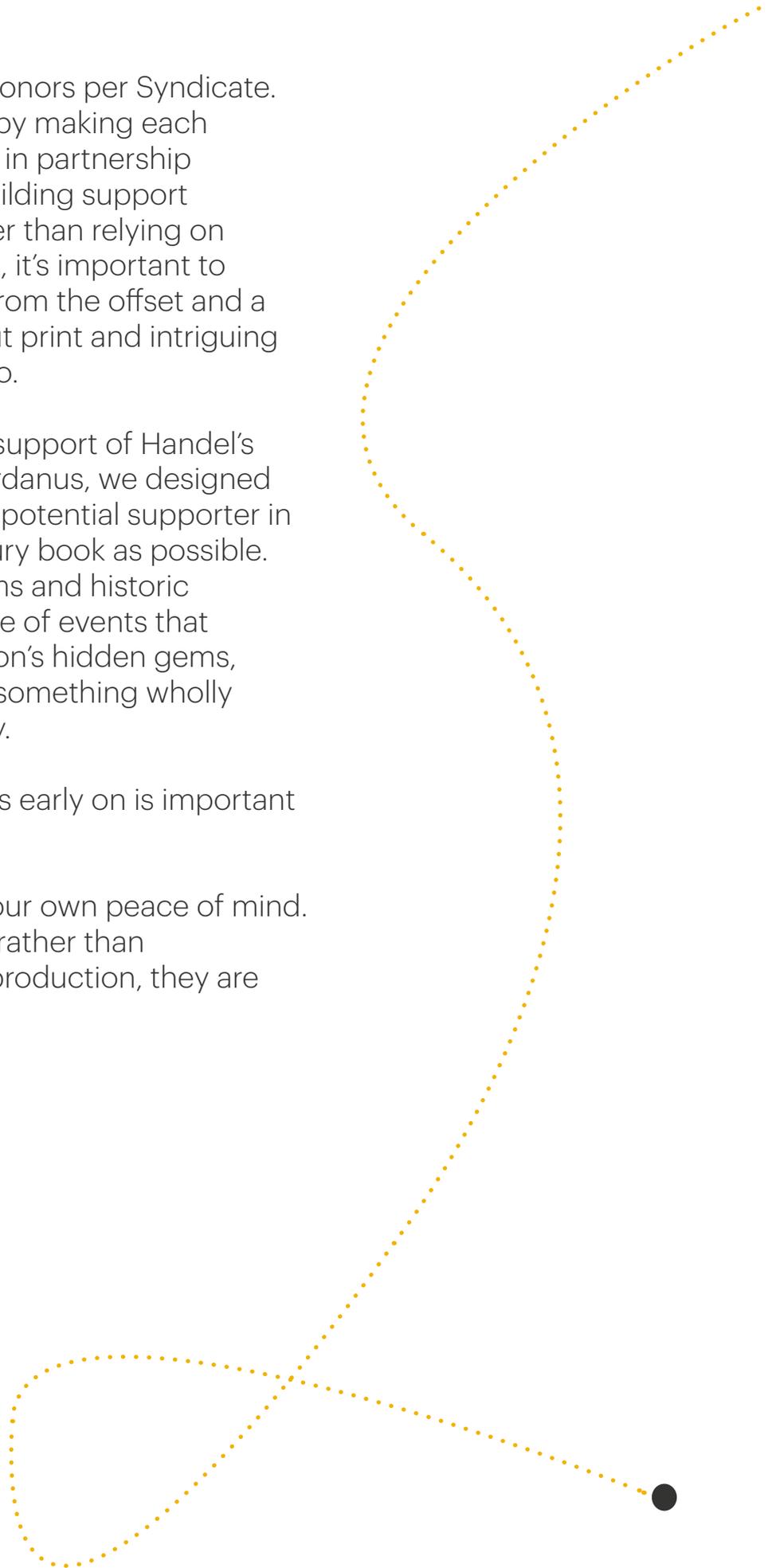
Growing the Syndicates

At the moment we have 8 - 15 donors per Syndicate. We aim to build that up further by making each Syndicate truly unique, working in partnership with other organisations and building support for productions far earlier. Rather than relying on the title alone to attract support, it's important to capture people's imaginations from the offset and a combination of well-thought-out print and intriguing events is a great way of doing so.

For this Autumn's Syndicate, in support of Handel's Giulio Cesare and Rameau's Dardanus, we designed and printed brochures for each potential supporter in as close a style to an 18th Century book as possible. We also partnered with museums and historic buildings to create a programme of events that opened doors to some of London's hidden gems, resulting in the presentation of something wholly idiomatic and charmingly quirky.

Building support for productions early on is important for two reasons:

1. Early pledges are great for your own peace of mind.
2. It makes the donor feel that, rather than contributing financially to a production, they are enabling it.



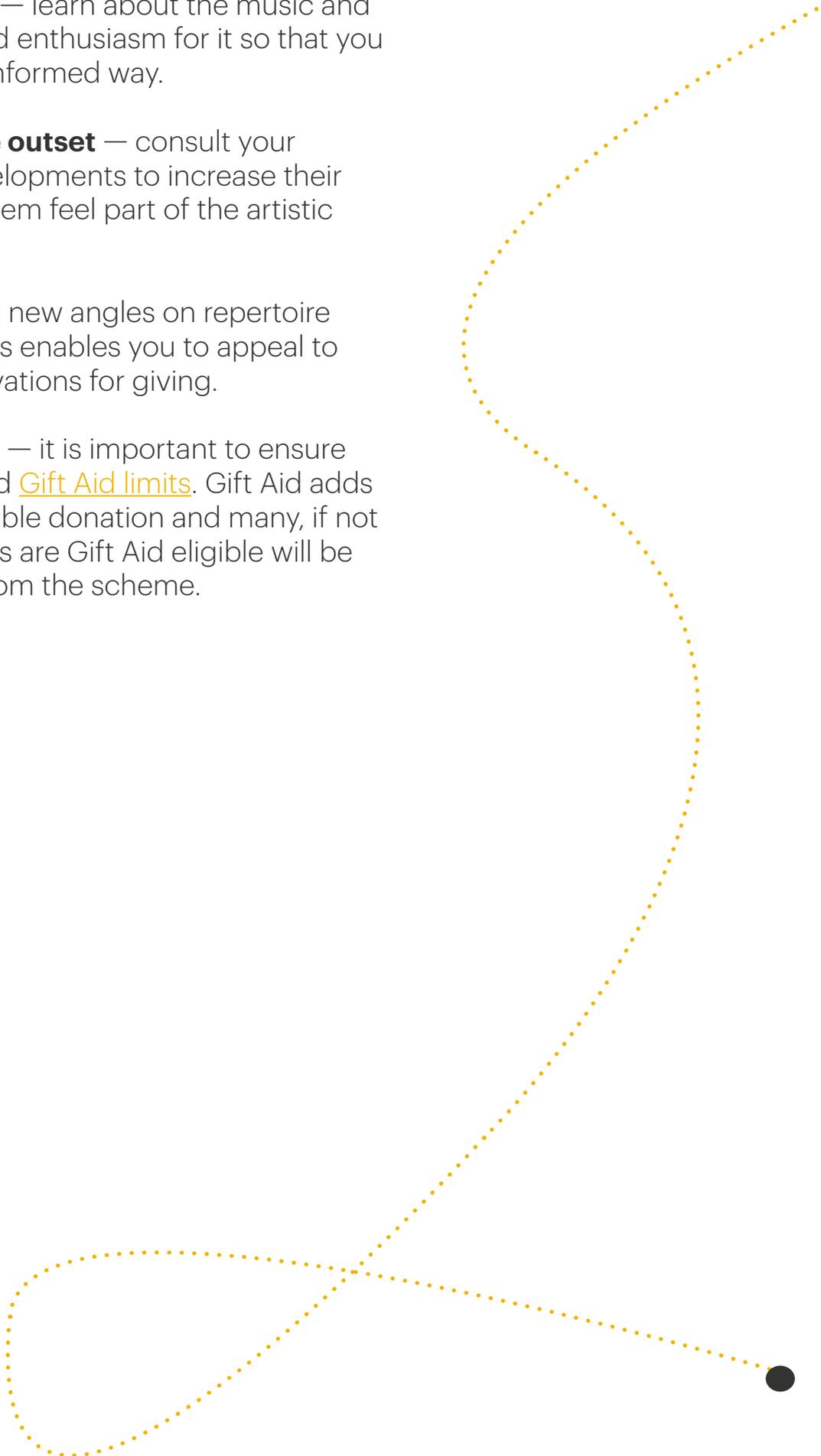
Recommendations

Love what you're doing — learn about the music and build your knowledge and enthusiasm for it so that you can talk to donors in an informed way.

Involve people from the outset — consult your donors about future developments to increase their involvement and make them feel part of the artistic process.

Provide variety — taking new angles on repertoire and associated disciplines enables you to appeal to different tastes and motivations for giving.

Be careful with benefits — it is important to ensure that benefits don't exceed [Gift Aid limits](#). Gift Aid adds an extra 25% to each eligible donation and many, if not all, supporters whose gifts are Gift Aid eligible will be keen for you to benefit from the scheme.





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