

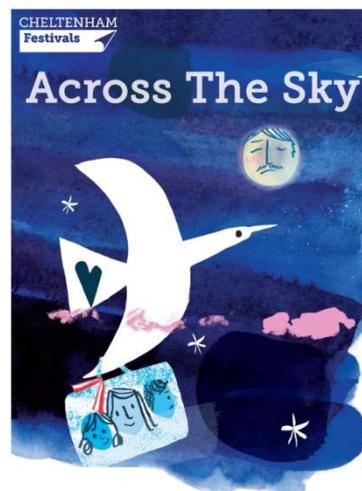
Across the Sky: evaluation summary¹

About *Across the Sky*

Across the Sky was a brand new community opera. Co-created from scratch by people from in and around West Cheltenham and an expert creative team, the opera was performed as the finale to the 75th Cheltenham Music Festival.

'The cast'

- Over 100 children and young people from St Thomas More Primary School, Hester's Way Primary School and All Saints' Academy shaped ideas for the narrative and score through creative writing and composition workshops, with many taking part in the performance.
- Over 30 local residents helped create the music, with 24 going on to perform in a new community choir - 'Local Vocals.'
- Composer, conductor and musical director Michael Betteridge, librettist Miranda Walker, vocalist and conductor Gina Baker, director Bryn Holding, professional soloists and the Gloucestershire Youth Chamber Ensemble worked with local residents, and in schools, to take the opera from blank page to stage.
- A project team from Cheltenham Festivals (originators of the project) knitted all the threads together.



The vision

Across the Sky aimed to put West Cheltenham residents at the heart of Cheltenham Music Festival, in turn helping those involved to:

- meet new people, make new friends and feel part of the community
- learn new skills
- grow in confidence
- feel good about themselves and where they live
- feel an increased sense of well-being.

The project also aimed to leave a legacy, giving those taking part an appetite for more.

The evidence

A range of evidence was used to evaluate *Across the Sky's* success in achieving its vision and learn lessons for the future. Sources used included:

- survey data, informal feedback from a Local Vocals reflection evening and 'Stories of Change' gathered from Local Vocals members and the creative team
- a mix of letters, drawings and survey data from 71 young people across all 3 schools, sharing their thoughts on taking part, plus teacher feedback from two schools

¹ Summary based on an independent evaluation of *Across the Sky* carried out for Cheltenham Festivals by Eastside Primetimers, specialist consultants for social organisations.

