



ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

The Springfield Project is delighted to welcome Zoe Challenor as 'Artist in Residence' for 2021-22. Zoe is co-founder and director of B'Opera and has been a valued partner of The Springfield Project over recent years, performing at our Creative Families Festivals and being part of the Sounds of Play Early Years Music Project. Zoe and The Springfield Project have a shared passion for increasing access to the arts for our children, families and the wider community. We value the role that the arts can play in child development, emotional wellbeing, self expression, confidence, family relationships and social cohesion. This exciting development will allow us to develop this work further and bring some musical joy to everyone at The Springfield Project.



"I'm looking forward to working more with The Springfield Project - every time I visit I'm delighted and impressed by the people and what you are all doing. There is such friendliness, curiosity, openness, and in that atmosphere the children thrive and flourish. It's a joy to be around, and to contribute to that vision." – Zoe Challenor

AIMS OF THE ARTIST RESIDENCY

The residency has three primary aims:

1. To provide our children and families with a rich experience of music and singing, through regular artist-led sessions. Music and singing will be used to enhance and develop the EYFS provision in our settings, providing children and families with the opportunity to develop their musicality and love of music, as well as using music to enhance other areas of the curriculum and support all round development.
2. To provide opportunities for the artist to explore their practice for children, young people and the wider community with a view to continuing their development as an artist alongside the teams at The Springfield Project.
3. To support the continual professional development of staff and volunteers at The Springfield Project, through increasing their understanding of the value of music in their practice, and developing their skills and practice in music making.

Zoe will be with us approximately once a week over the next academic year and will be working with children, parents and staff in all of our children's services.



Zoe Challenor – Biography



Zoe Challenor is a freelance creative practitioner, who graduated in Singing as a prizewinner from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She has been an Early Years Music Workshop Leader for Birmingham Hippodrome, with weekly sessions over two years. For Welsh National Opera she mentors amateurs, leads sessions in person and online for refugee families with young children, facilitates workshops in creative composition with refugee women, and leads primary school vocal workshops introducing young people to opera.

Zoe co-founded and now runs and directs B'Opera, which sits on the Birmingham Early Years Music Consortium alongside the city's major arts and Early Years organisations, shaping best practice in Early Years Music. Zoë delivers CPD sessions to musicians and members of the Early Years workforce as part of the project.

Zoe has written and co-written five baby operas for and performs regularly with B'Opera, including Arts Council funded show *Alice and the Library Tree* in 2019, which played for the community in which it was made, then toured to Birmingham Hippodrome last February. Until recently, Zoe was choral director and singing teacher at Junior Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London (for eight years).

Creating interactive baby operas for families of all backgrounds in the Midlands has been a driving force in Zoe's work for the last four years. Babies are inherently musical, and need a variety of skillfully-delivered, high-quality musical experiences from a young age. As enshrined in law through Article 31 of the UNCRC, they have a right to free and full participation in cultural and artistic life. Living in a society that has largely lost musical confidence impacts how they access music. Tackling that has been the focus of her work. She is intent on reclaiming the word "opera" which simply means "work", and demonstrating that it is for everyone. She believes that when audiences "find their voice" and participate actively in the arts, change happens, which led to making *Stolen Moments*, enabled by an ACE Emergency Response grant, employing other creatives to tell the story of babies separated from their older relatives, using children's voices to make the soundtrack, giving a voice to young children and their families.

Zoe has recently been awarded a 'Developing Your Creative Practice' grant by Arts Council England to further develop and research the idea of empowering audience voices in a variety of ways, from using technology to live sample and include children's voices in her work, to running singing circles for new parents.



Watch B'Opera's short promotional video [here](#):
[Hear Zoe speak about B'Opera](#) at The Royal Society of Arts
View B'Opera's Arts Council funded short animated film
about babies separated from older relatives during
lockdown: '*Stolen Moments*' is [here](#)
For more information visit <https://www.bopera.co.uk/about>