

Powered imagination:

THE ALBANY YOUTH PROGRAMME

1400

YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED

4250

SESSIONS DELIVERED

2550

HOURS OF PAID WORK

(ALL DATA FROM 2019)



Lewisham Homes and the Albany
Creativity inspiring communities



the Albany 

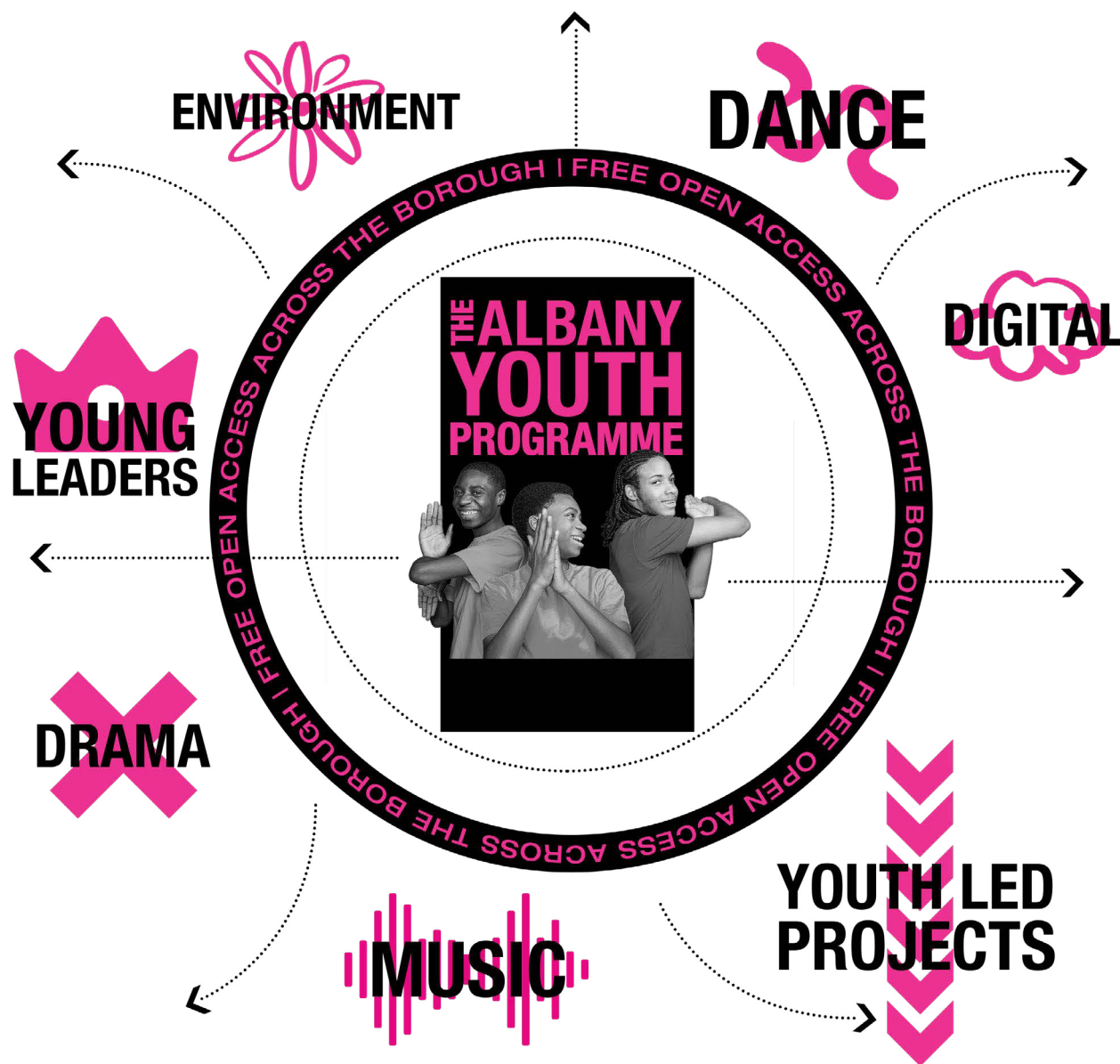
WHAT?

The Albany Youth Programme (AYP), in partnership with Lewisham Homes, unlocks creative potential and enables us all to benefit from the imaginative power of young people. Using creativity, young people connect with others, grow skills and confidence, imagine new possibilities, and find pathways into future jobs,

We provide free, open access and targeted opportunities, going to where young people are across the borough, in estate-based youth and community centres in partnership with Youth First, our youth service.

Young people lead in all aspects of the programme, from devising projects, facilitating sessions, and supporting their peers to creating events, writing the scripts, producing the music, and choreographing the moves, as well as shaping and guiding the wider organisation.

The Albany Young Leaders came up with the guiding principle - which now informs all of our work - for us to **LISTEN**, **CONNECT** and **AMPLIFY** the voices of young people.



WHY?

1 Creativity is a powerful tool for community connection and collaboration as well as social change. By developing their creative imaginations and belief in their own potential, young people devise new possibilities, facilitate thinking in new ways, shape big ideas and inspire change.

‘Investment in creativity and culture can deliver broad social benefits, through the skills they offer to young people and workers, the economic growth they generate, and the part they play in building healthy, close-knit communities’¹

2 The creativity, imagination and people skills that we develop in young people, hold a unique value in a world where computers can do many of the jobs humans used to do. We use the arts to equip young people to be economically successful across numerous career pathways.

‘Creativity is likely to become even more important in the future job market’²

3 There is an endemic lack of diversity in terms of ethnicity, class, and disability in the creative and cultural sector. We invest in the huge local talent we have around us, supporting young people into paid work and into leadership roles, in order to radically re-shape the sector and redress the outdated power structures which exist.

‘There remains a persistent and widespread lack of diversity across the creative industries’³

‘The creative industries will not maintain their extraordinary level of success if they do not have access to a diverse mix of talented people.’⁴

¹ *Let's Create Strategy 2020-2030* Arts Council England

² *Creativity and the Future of Skills*, Eliza Easton, Head of Policy Unit, Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC), Jyldyz Djumalieva, Data Science Research Fellow, Nesta, 13 November 2019

³ *Let's Create Strategy 2020-2030* Arts Council England [click to see source](#)

⁴ Open Letter to our new Prime Minister, Alan Bishop, Chief Executive, Creative Industries Federation 23.7.19



HOW?

- >> The combination of high-quality youth work and professional artists, unlocking young people's transformative potential.
- >> Going to where young people are through estate based provision and offering opportunities to try out different creative arts for free and to become part of the wider Albany community.
- >> By ensuring young people have the power to shape the organisation, to create projects, to lead delivery, to facilitate sessions and crucially, get paid for their work.
- >> By facilitating high quality, professional, well resourced work, young people see themselves as professionals and make work for paying audiences to enjoy.
- >> By building professional connections and networks so young people can succeed in the creative sector which is often reliant on who you know.
- >> By building deep community connections and finding platforms for collective action and social change.

“The Youth Programme has always been integral to the Albany but in the last few years it has really come into its own. Young people have taken the lead, influencing the Albany's artistic direction and the way it's run, as well as taking the youth programme in radical new directions. From Board members to strong new creative voices, they're providing the new generation of leadership that the venue needs.”

GAVIN BARLOW, CEO



CHIQUITA

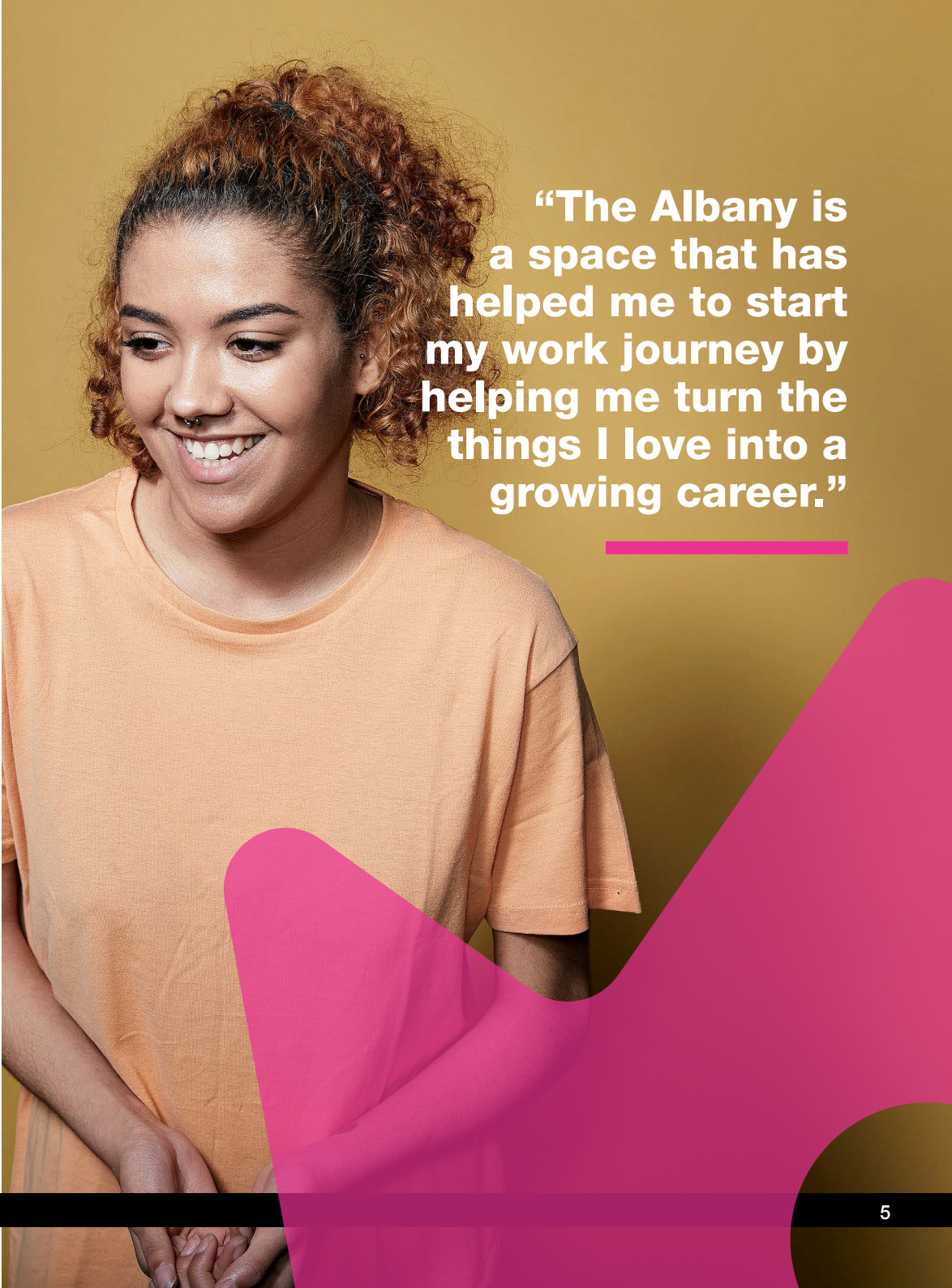
"I live in Deptford, I've lived here all my life. I first came to the Albany when I was 12. I have built my career as a creative at the Albany, developing my own work as an artist and cutting my teeth as a facilitator.

I've been a freelance creative for three years now. I have been a part of Sounds Like Chaos for ten years, I've performed with them at the Albany and nationally. I was an Albany Young Creative and I am currently an Albany Young Leader. I also work as a facilitator and artist with Albany residents BelEve, designing and delivering workshops for young women to give them the confidence to speak their mind. I have worked with Heart n Soul at their various club nights and I also work as a practitioner with the Albany's drama programme for 8 to 13 year olds, Uncover, and as a chaperone for the Albany's dance programme Love2Dance.

The Albany is a space that has helped me to start my work journey by helping me turn the things I love into a growing career. It is a place where I've met a great support network of artists, who have also become a great support system of friends.

There is such a wide range of artists. People of many ages, different experiences and a wide variety of art styles. It's a place for everyone, even the people who don't like the arts, because there is so much happening you cannot help but be exposed to some creative chaos.

The Albany is necessary because it brings us together with all our differences. It gives young people a space to be, to channel internal struggles and stresses that they have and put that into an expressive creative outlet. The Albany gives everyone space to be themselves"



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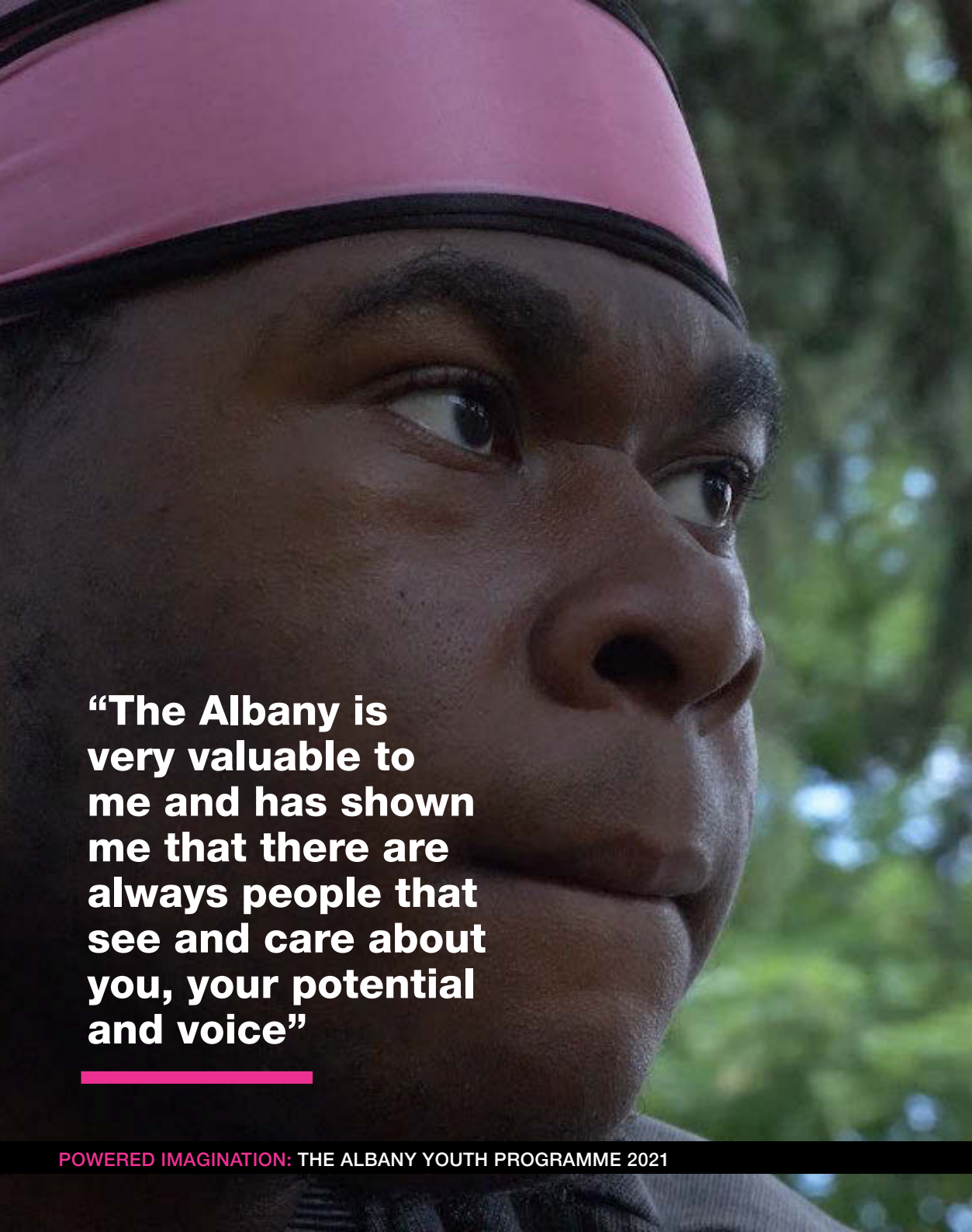
AMMARAH

Ammarah came up through the youth programme and Sounds Like Chaos and now co-facilitates on our drama programme Uncover, MC's many of our events, and facilitates on our Love2Dance programme. Ammarah created a regular event at the Albany, 'Standards' which is a platform for amazing young local talent to come together as well as a space for deep, reflective conversations.

"At Standards, watching my friends feel comfortable sharing their work in the space and having open honest discussions with the audience was really inspiring for me because it reminded me of the importance of having open spaces for creatives to explore their work"



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“The Albany is very valuable to me and has shown me that there are always people that see and care about you, your potential and voice”

TYREKE

“I am a 20-year-old artist, focused on acting, writing and spoken word/poetry. I have always enjoyed performance and all things creative, and definitely hope to have a career and profession in the arts, as this world and sector is my passion.

I think a big reference point for me on this was when I saw a play there when I was 16 years old, and I just remember my first thought within the opening five minutes was how much I wanted to be in, or make, a play like that.

The Albany is very valuable to me and has shown me that there are always people that see and care about you, your potential and voice, even when as an artist you sometimes feel as though there isn't. I have been implementing all the skills taken from the opportunities there into every single thing I approach – whether that be creative or not. Some of these skills include confidence, openness, risk-taking, and the general ability to just be myself and be comfortable with that. Really and truly, to me the Albany just means home and growth.”



“Through our programme we aim to change lives, save lives and better our community”



AARON AND LOVE2DANCE

Aaron set up Love2Dance (L2D), the Albany street dance programme in partnership with Lewisham Homes. Having always lived in Lewisham, growing up he was known as ‘the dancer’ from early on. He began teaching at the age of 16 and hasn’t stopped. L2D now provides 13 hours a week of free, open access street dance sessions at youth centres across the borough.

L2D is led by the ideas and imagination of the young people, with participants providing peer support, developing the choreography and designing the productions including the music, costumes and set. The annual Hip Hop Theatre production is an opportunity for young people to showcase their immense talent and create extraordinary art. Incorporating high production values, the performances are treasured by local audiences and receive recognition across the arts sector.

Aaron says “Through our programme we aim to change lives, save lives and better our community by providing educational leadership training and employment opportunities whilst promoting community cohesion through the arts”.

“Love2Dance exists to help improve the health and wellbeing of young people by engaging those who have an interest in dance performance but cannot afford to attend professional classes. The programme is also designed to provide access routes into other professions within the performing arts industry”.

REECE

Reece aged 17 has been coming to Love2Dance since he was 11 years old:

“I’ve developed so many skills: dance skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, and so much laughter - all of which allowed me to become... really the person that I am today.


For me Love2Dance was a space to come at the end of the week to forget about school, forget about problems at home. You dance, and you can have the time of your life rehearsing, having fun and also it’s a good way for us to just keep fit, stay healthy and get that exercise in that we need.

Love2Dance is also about a connection with my peers. I haven’t seen them for over a year now because of COVID-19, but we still talk to this day. There’s also another connection, which I really enjoy, the connection with my dance teacher. We all go to different places together, watching different shows, taking in ideas, discussing them with each other. We have built so many connections, whether it’s with people as young as five or my age.

I have learnt to be a leader at Love2Dance. I put sets and choreography together. I lead other young people and they see me as a role model which is very, very heartwarming. I enjoy that people look up to me and come to me about problems and what’s going on and what makes them happy - it’s one of the best feelings ever. We do yearly shows together, and to see all your hard work and their hard work put into the show - it’s a massive outcome.

The Albany changes people’s lives, by inspiring them to do more and be better. I think that’s one thing I have really enjoyed... watching people get inspired and me being inspired.

Every borough deserves an Albany”

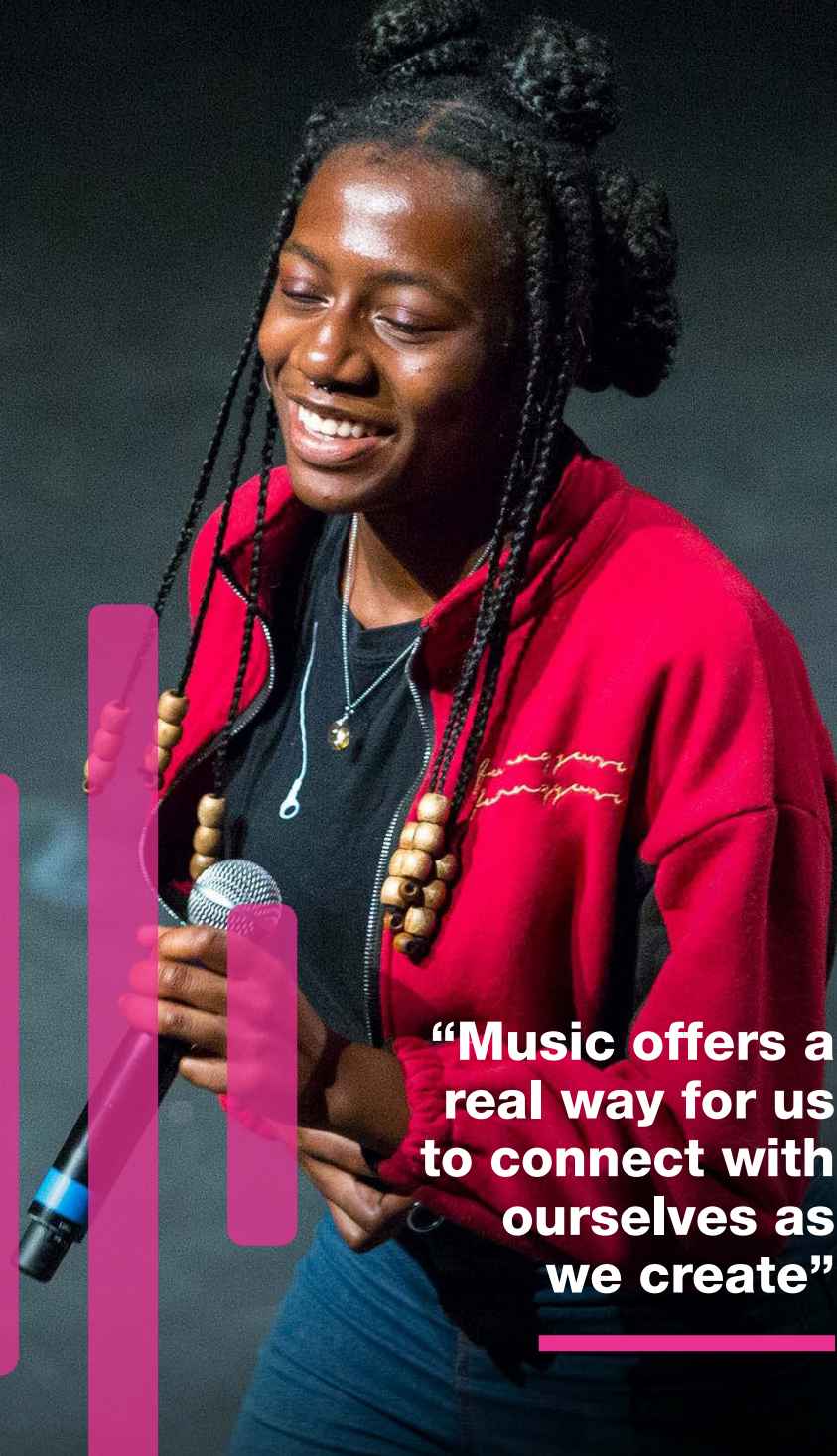


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ABIMARO

South London singer songwriter Abimaro has led our SE8 Sound Collective project, an intensive music making project where young people make original music and create their own performances.

“Through offering spaces where young people can create and use music in their own way they are able to forge another way of thinking about themselves and their creativity. Music offers a real way for us to connect with ourselves as we create...it’s about the music, the stories, and the integrity of that process...”



**“Music offers a
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“We were introduced to everyone in the Albany, whether that be an artist we bumped into in the cafe, front of house staff, or Artistic Director or the Chair and CEO, that made us feel like part of the fabric of the place.”



LAKEISHA AND UNCOVER DRAMA

“I work as an actor, a writer and facilitator”.

Lakeisha came to the Albany and then Sounds Like Chaos as a child, becoming a young Associate Artist. This meant space, opportunities and connections. Lakeisha now leads the Uncover drama programme for 8-15 year olds at the Albany and works as a professional actor and theatre maker. She recalls:

“We were introduced to everyone in the Albany, whether that be an artist we bumped into in the cafe, front of house staff, or Artistic Director or the Chair and CEO, that made us feel like part of the fabric of the place. So we had a connection to the building which encouraged us to go for opportunities. That created those networks for me personally.”

“I feel like drama is a really great device, and the Albany works with really amazing, different groups of people ... working with those groups is a great opportunity to allow people to really see each other and be held accountable for looking after each other and just be in a community”.

KIERON AND REZON8

REZON8 was created at the Albany by 19 year old Lewisham resident, Kieron Morris, aka @kamzzofficial, to support young talented creatives who do not ordinarily get access to essential resources such as studio time, industry knowledge and consistent support.

REZON8 provides a space that allows young musicians to express themselves freely through music of any genre without restrictions or censorship, in order to empower the next generation of talent.

Kieron says “I noticed at school that students with behaviour or attendance issues wouldn’t be given a chance to be listened to, and had a lot of pressure put on them to do things without the right kind of support, and without the material they were taught being made relevant. I want my record label to be a place where young people can speak their minds, be heard, and be supported with their own learning, rather than forced to learn in a way that doesn’t work for them.


Lewisham is full of people from different backgrounds, all of them with different stories to tell. Through my label I want to give the young people a chance to tell their stories and amplify their voices, and a chance to be themselves without judgement.”

Documentary about REZON8 [WATCH HERE](#)

Rezon8 Releases REZON8 [WATCH HERE](#)

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JAGAN AND LAURYN - THE CREATIVE CODING COLLECTIVE

The Creative Coding Collective was set up with support from the Young Londoners Fund, in partnership with Lewisham Homes, as a free programme for young people aged 16-21. The project provides training in universal coding languages, support and mentorship as well as the opportunity to receive a paid, supported, internship at a local tech firm.

Lauryn, aged 22, was part of the first cohort for The Creative Coding Collective. Lauryn completed the training sessions and was instrumental in project managing the youth-led collective who have worked together to build their own website, Lauryn then went on to take up a paid placement and was supported into paid work as a Graphic Design Assistant at a large construction company. Lauryn says

“I am so thankful to Jagan for believing in me. Managing the Creative Coding Collective showed me I am actually really good at managing

people and actions. I think learning the coding languages as part of the project, and then leading on project management, I have created a dynamic in my mind where the possibilities of what I can do are endless”

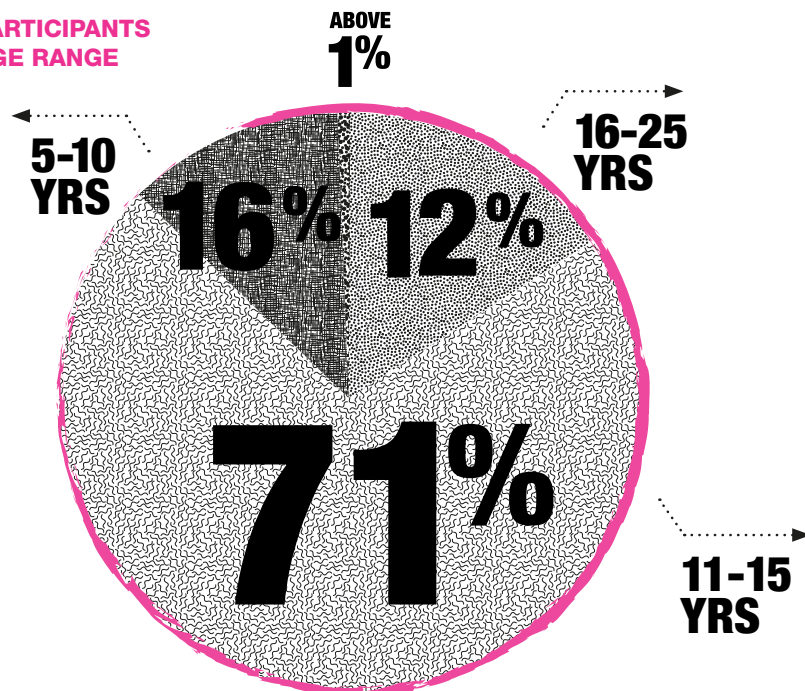
Jagan, Lead Facilitator said that “previous experience of running coding courses with people who have had little or no prior experience in coding has reinforced the idea that anyone can learn to code. We set up The Creative Coding Collective for young people from communities under represented in the tech sector. The response has been tremendous. The project is a ‘hackathon’ that brings ideas and influences of all participants to develop a digital repository of digital art and music.”

“Coding for the internet addresses a large skills shortage in the UK jobs market. It is one of the very few sectors where demand for qualified coders outstrips supply, and entry level jobs are plentiful. These skills are a way for young people to find well paid jobs and economic independence”.

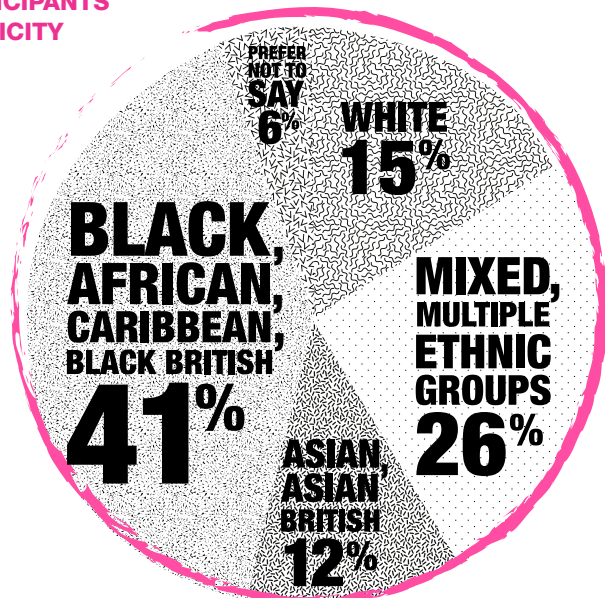
[FIND OUT MORE HERE](#)

NUMBERS

PARTICIPANTS AGE RANGE



PARTICIPANTS ETHNICITY



96% 1400

SKILLS

96% said they have learnt new skills being part of the programme

PARTICIPANTS AGED 5-25

91% 4250

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

91% of young people surveyed made new friends from being a part of the programme

SESSIONS DELIVERED

81% 2550

CONFIDENCE

81% said their confidence has increased being part of the programme

HOURS OF PAID WORK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

45+

From surveys with 150 people young people across the L2D and Uncover drama programme 2019

PAID CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The Albany is driven by the passion and energy of the people it serves. This is particularly true of our young people whose ideas and imagination continue to fuel the work that we do. They are represented in every aspect of our work which only strengthens our diversity, reach and impact. They are participants, performers, producers, makers and creators. As Young Leaders they sit on our Board, they develop projects, they engage with our communities.

Our young people are continuing to ensure that our work is diverse, our reach is wide, and our doors are open for everyone and that anyone can contribute to our future”.

DAME JOAN RUDDOCK, CHAIR OF THE ALBANY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We wish to thank Art of Regeneration for collaborating on the creation of this report, as well as the incredible young people, artists, staff, parents, carers and partners who make the Albany what it is.



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



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FUND**



Lewisham



Lewisham Homes and the Albany
Creativity inspiring communities



ART OF REGENERATION

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON

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We asked the questions ‘how does involvement in creative arts really benefit young people?’ and ‘what does it give them that they will take forwards in whichever direction they go?’. We did our research including looking at what skills are needed now and will be in the future. From this we have developed this Creative Skills Coda which sets out the different kinds of skills that are engendered in creative practice.



+ CREATIVE SKILLS

Creative thinking – imagination and visualisation
Originality – innovation and inventiveness
Arts and crafts skills – design and making
Expression – oral, physical, visual, written, audio, etc
Experimentation – risk taking and exploration
Performance skills

+ PRAGMATIC SKILLS

Interpersonal skills – client, customer, personal service, etc.
Operations analysis – improving how something works
Digital skills
Technology design
Project management and organisational skills

+ PERSONAL QUALITIES (SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL CAPABILITIES)

Resilience – overcoming obstacles, persistence
Active learning
Experimentation – risk taking, exploration
Motivation, initiative, leadership
Openness, flexibility and imagination

+ AGILE THINKING

Critical and systems thinking – logical thinking and problem solving
Fluency of ideas
Applying knowledge – understanding
Experimentation – risk taking, exploration
Evaluation – reflection, review and applying learning

+ WORKING WITH OTHERS

Communication – active listening and oral expression
Collaboration – sharing and reviewing
Coaching and developing others, providing expertise
Leadership – judgement and decision making
Engaging with difference

+ CONNECTIONS AND NETWORKS

New friends
Community connections & civic engagement
Mentors / role models
Working with professionals
Widening online networks / profile