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## **Passim Awards 2023 Iguana Music Grants and Introduces Gecko Fund**

### *Grants Support New England-based Musicians*

**(Cambridge, MA)** Passim has awarded \$40,950 to 23 artists through their Iguana Music Fund. For more than fifteen years, the Iguana Fund has been able to provide funding to hundreds of career building projects. In addition, Passim has introduced The Gecko Fund this year, which supports creative narrative works in the New England music community, granting \$5,000 to one artist annually. Passim will host the Iguana Music & Gecko Fund Showcase on May 13, 2024, at 7:00 pm, to celebrate the talents of the artists who have received funding from these two programs.

"Over the last 16 years of the Iguana Music Fund, Passim has been fostering local artist development and giving musicians a leg-up in their careers," said Abby Altman, Club Manager at Passim. "This year we continue to broaden our support of the community by introducing the Gecko Fund. We continue to reach new facets of the New England music scene, funding projects this year from Americana and bluegrass to hip-hop and R&B."

Grants are used to aid artists that are working to help their community or further their careers. Passim has awarded more than \$594,000 in grants for the past 16 years. This year, Passim received more than 140 applications from across New England for the Iguana Music Fund.

The Gecko Fund aims to support artists early in their career in their aspirations to create a body of musical work that is linked through a narrative arc. The grant is funded by Steven & Cindy Chao and established in honor of Steve's late sister Caroline Chao. Caroline was passionate about musical theater, worked extensively as a lighting designer on Broadway and at the Santa Fe Opera, and passed away in 2019 from an aggressive cancer. The winner of the inaugural Gecko Fund grant is the band Noble

Dust. The folk/pop group has shared stages big and small for nearly a decade, and this past summer released their album *A Picture for a Frame*. The band plans to use the grant to make their sophomore album available on vinyl.

Through the Iguana grants the Iguana Music Fund will help support a number of artists in recording projects including Abby Lokelani, Adeline Um, Almira Ara, Chrysalis, Elias Cardoso, Hannah O'Brien & Grant Flick, Lila Wilde, Maddie Lam, Model Peril, Naomi Westwater, Nicolás Emden, Paul Willis, Spirit 47, and Terry Borderline. Artists like The Rough & Tumble, Simon Robert French, and Ryan Curless will use the grant to purchase new equipment.

This year's round of grants will also help support several live performances. Circus 617, a collective dedicated to highlighting Boston-based professional circus artists, will partner with Opera on Tap to make a production that brings together opera singers and contemporary circus artists. With a cast of about 10 performers - half opera singers, half circus artists - the group will work together in pairs to create circus choreography and musical arrangements for each selected work in the program.

The Medford Trad Jazz Festival will hold their second event which will feature traditional jazz and blues bands from the New England area spread across two days at the Medford Condon Shell.

Mint Green will use the grant to underwrite a headlining tour "All Girls Go To Heaven" to celebrate the release of their debut album.

The Opening Doors Project, founded by Alastair Moock and Stacey Babb, will continue their concert and conversation series, putting on a free public concert and community conversation around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Several of the Iguana Music Fund recipients will be on hand on May 13, 2024 at 7:00 pm at Club Passim for the annual Iguana Music & Gecko Fund Showcase. The event is free and open to the public with donations going to the Iguana Music Fund.

#### **About Passim**

The mission of Passim is to provide truly exceptional and interactive live musical experiences for both performers and audiences, to nurture artists at all stages of their career, and to build a vibrant music community. We do so through our legendary listening venue, music school, artist grants and outreach programs. As a nonprofit since 1994, Passim carries on the heritage of our predecessors—the historic Club 47 (1958—1968) and for-profit Passim (1969—1994). We cultivate a diverse mix of musical traditions, where the emphasis is on the relationship between performers and audience and teachers and students. Located in Harvard Square, Passim serves Cambridge and the broader region by featuring local, national

and international artists. Our ultimate goal is to help the performance arts flourish and thereby enrich the lives of members of our community.