

Sam Shepherd (Floating Points)

Floating Points, AKA Sam Shepherd, is a DJ, producer, composer and PhD neuroscientist based in London and originating from Manchester. His music is known for its improvisational qualities, fusing jazz, classical and dance. His 2015 debut LP, *Elainia*, was penned while Sam was completing his PhD, which he subsidised through DJing. His 2nd LP *Reflections – Mojave Desert*, was released in 2017.

The funding was received in the first full round of Momentum after its pilot phase. (Sam applied for £15k and received £10k). This helped to cover session musicians, PR and, to a lesser extent, the expenses of producing new work.

Sam saw Momentum advertised in various places across the music press and social media. He considers the release of *Elainia* as absolutely linked to the investment provided by Momentum.



At that time, I was a prisoner to my finances rather than to my ideas...I was clear what I needed, clear on expectations for Momentum, and clear these expectations were met. I didn't want to sign to a label so this was also important to remain independent.

Momentum enabled Floating Points to work with musicians who would otherwise have been difficult (and certainly more expensive) to recruit. It also leveraged an additional £50,000 of in-kind investment to support his work. Sam reflects on the value of the Momentum funding, its timing and impact:

*Momentum is a great idea – taking on a certain level of artist. I felt I had got the right funding at the right stage of my career. I had never had any funding before and I was not on a label. This made the application so important and I wasn't bullsh*tting about my situation.*

Elainia was a critical and commercial success, with Rolling Stone calling Floating Points one of "contemporary electronic music's most forward-thinking talents".

Floating Points have grown enormously in profile since funding – from a 'DJ's DJ' (*The Guardian* 2015), to an important live act playing festivals and gigs with a live band. *Reflections – Mojave Desert* grows from this journey. Three years on from Momentum funding, Sam reflects on the difference it made and the role of independent funding for artists ready to go to the next level:

It gave me confidence and the financial support immediately helped. The reality is, artists need to be entrepreneurs. When the support isn't there, unless an artist is signed, it is really hard to achieve your goals. This is why Momentum matters.