

## **NEW DIRECTIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION: THE NATIONAL PLAN AND HUBS**

*As the National Plan for Music Education begins to embed itself, and we reach the mid-point for the current funding of Music Education Hubs, it's time to take stock of where we have got to and what comes next. What can we learn from some of the new models for collaboration and partnerships? Will structures have to change even more radically, to ensure sustained public investment in music education?*

**Deborah Annetts**, Chief Executive, ISM

**Carolyn Baxendale**, Head of Service, Greater Manchester Music Hub

**Althea Efunshile**, Deputy Chief Executive, Arts Council England

**Darren Henley OBE**, Managing Director, Classic FM (chair)

**Philip Castang**, Chief Executive, Newham Music Trust

As one of the underlying general concerns, the panel highlighted the importance of the arts being reintegrated into the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, maths) and that partnerships between schools and professional organisations/venues were to be encouraged, mentioning music's transformative power coming from good teaching in the classroom and a good experience outside of the classroom. With reference to the 2013 Ofsted report on the hubs, the ACE called music education by schools patchy and was clear to state the responsibility in this case lay with headteachers and the government as the Ofsted report had said, and that its intention was not to say that music hubs were failing. The ISM took issue with this stating that from the government's side, pupils were encouraged to take EBacc subjects (which currently doesn't include creative subjects) for the school to succeed in the league tables. They demanded that Ofsted should emphasise that good music education is crucial for success in league tables, or preferably even scrapping the league tables altogether, thereby clearly signalling the value of the arts within the curriculum.

The two specific cases of Newham and Manchester provided examples of the practical realities of those working in or with the music hubs.

In Newham, one of the most economically deprived boroughs of London with the lowest level of adult art engagement in the UK, and highest level of Artsmark in schools, progress through music hubs has been monitored and proven through an independent year-long review commissioned by the whole borough. However, the Newham Music Trust senses a tension between the ACE and community, attributing it mainly to linguistic misunderstandings and an uncertainty about the individual role of the parties involved.

In Manchester, the music hub has partnered with 9 different music services and has 15 organisation partners. So far, this hub serves to teach that the hubs can greatly simplify processes, simply by not having to build business relationships, develop ideas and monitor projects individually, but by having a single centre of operation. However, the music hub should not act as a merger, but rather encourage the local music services to preserve their distinctiveness recognising that they know their local schools best. However, as the need arises the merging of certain areas is currently being looked at. A key area of learning is about the quality of the partnerships.

Those wanting to found new hubs should be reminded that every hub should be context-driven rather than a transferred model from another city. Partners can bring a different input to the hub that the music services cannot provide, and the relationship proves to be fruitful as long as a collective mission is shared. Partners need to know where their offer fits into the music hub, whereas the hub itself should make expectations clearer on the importance of connections. Hubs don't yet have consistent measurements for quality – this must be a priority.

A good relationship with the headteacher of the school is crucial in every case, as they are the main facilitator or obstacle of success for the music hubs. In light of this, the propositions ranged from developing a good

personal relationship with the headteacher, addressing a certain local strategy within the area or using the Ofsted report as a discussion topic when approaching them. Mentioning the transformative effect of music education and linking it back to general academic success was also mentioned.

With regards to the strengthening of new hub leaders in the next generation, the necessity to clearly identify leadership capacity within the staff was mentioned, as a business-minded person is equally as necessary as someone understanding the hub's structure. ACE has sourced some funding for the development of leadership capacity.

Finally, the panel agreed that music hubs so far had improved the quality of music education, but reiterated the necessity of employing a mechanism to ensure communication between the hub and the headteacher as well as the government and to cultivate a stronger sense of involvement with teachers in general. It was also stated that the hub's core role and side roles should be revisited and assessed constantly and that any merging within the hub must always be organic. Additionally, the panel expressed the need for culture subjects to be mentioned in Ofsted reports and to be considered on a par with EBacc subjects.

## **NEW DIRECTIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION: FREE SCHOOLS & ACADEMIES**

*With the National Plan for Music Education and Music Education Hubs, and a new National Curriculum that is only applicable to maintained schools, how are orchestras and other professional music organisations engaging with the growing number of free schools and academies? What compelling offer do we need to make to ensure they buy into what we have to offer?*

**Rachel Barnes**, Head of Music, Hackney New School

**Steve Pickett**, Education Director, Hallé

**Veronica Wadley** (chair)

**Bryan Welton**, Director of Music, Ark

Concerning the cooperation between orchestras/music organisations and free schools and academies, the importance of a good relationship with the headteacher was a repeatedly addressed issue as in the previous session. It was stressed that the organisation's ethos must line up with the school's ethos and the school contact needs to share a communal vision with the school itself, so that the organisation can function as a beacon of the school. Communication problems need to be tackled as they can lead to the academies not fully understanding the project of the organisation. Ideally, the project design should fit the school's requirements as they are not necessarily following the National Curriculum. The situation of music teachers needs to be taken into account as it is not an easy one. Any cooperation demands great flexibility from them and they can often experience a perceived lack of support from the school, feeling isolated in their subject.

Different organisations have different aspirations, such as complementing the curriculum or focussing on providing a good experience. Luckily, promising connections can be made easily due to the amount of business-minded people in the sector.

Principally, inclusivity is to be valued over quality at this stage. However, there can't be a single model on how to reach the children, but that process very much depends on the academy chain. An important aim is to come up with fresh approaches that break down preconceptions about classical music and offer the children the opportunity to connect with it again. Many children actually receive their motivation from school instead of home, which in turn is a key driver for the school itself. This offers music organisations many opportunities, however any kind of project must be built on the specific situation of the respective school, responding to specific needs. Hereby, it is crucial to listen to the student voice. This entails paying close attention especially to those students that seem to be lost in projects and then responding to that process, trying to gain them back. It needs to be kept in mind that there are lots of ways of facilitating that do not necessarily have to be didactic.

Hackney New School, which is a free school newly opened in September 2013 follows the National

Curriculum and welcomes all types of talent across the musical sector, not only classical. The school's main focus lies in participation in music with a holistic approach to musical learning during the day in curricular lessons, instrumental and personal classes and a points system to encourage students to practice during breaktime. No orchestras were working with HNS yet and an open invitation was given to any who were interested in working with it.

## **NEW DIRECTIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION: YOUTH ENSEMBLES**

*Written into the script of Music Education Hubs is that every child has the opportunity to perform as part of an ensemble and to take their talent further. As our national youth orchestras aim to increase their intake from state schools, what steps need to be taken to create a level playing-field with private schools? And as the Sistema model rolls out across the UK, what other models exist for breaking down the barriers and providing a pathway into local and national ensembles for young people from disadvantaged communities?*

**Sarah Alexander**, Chief Executive, National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain

**Dan Francis**, Twyford School

**Carol Main**, Director, Live Music Now Scotland (chair)

**Marshall Marcus**, Chair, Sistema Europe

**Surya Turner**, Director, Kuumba Youth Music

There are currently 8 major Sistema projects in the UK. The Latin American Sistema models exhibit various promising aspects that the UK hopes to learn from, among them the emphasis on the joy of playing, a lack of fear of failure, energy and positive atmosphere, peer-teaching and ensemble learning, inclusion of special needs children and developing leadership capacity in young musicians. Children as young as five years old may enter Latin American Sistema ensembles, practicing up to 4 hours a day, six days a week. These are aspects that British youth ensembles could greatly benefit from. In the Sistema model, inclusion and excellence are not considered mutually exclusive but rather two ends of a paradigm, with inclusion more a solution to a specific problem than a problem to be solved.

Due to its focus on excellence, the National Youth Orchestra has encountered the problem of state school pupils' applications being rejected due to lack of sophistication in ensemble skills compared with pupils from private schools. This makes it very difficult for the NYO to have their orchestra reflect the national demographic. The NYO hopes to counteract this by working with hub partners on a solution and inviting the unsuccessful applicants to participative Inspire Day Sessions during the holidays to keep them involved.

Founded on a different vision, Kuumba Youth Music is an ensemble representing minorities in music, especially black and Asian children. Here, music is regarded as a tool for self-expression and personal development. The founding impetus came from parents who didn't really know about classical music but still believed that an ensemble could instill motivation, confidence and discipline. The ensemble tries to counteract the phenomenon that gifted musicians from an ethnic minority and economically challenged background often experience, which is the lack of a positive musical role model. The project is deeply rooted in the community and backed by the children's parents.

At Twyford School in Ealing, students are encouraged to first learn to play and improvise before they learn to read and write music. They are then grouped into collectives, small clusters of existing instrumentalists that rehearse together and then come into an ensemble. This is to prevent students from becoming isolated or being lost in the process.

The panel agreed on the importance of inspiring children and remembering that a musician is someone who has the skills to make music with others and therefore need to make sure that more children are engaged that way. In light of this, it is important not to rely too much on a strict model so as not to let the idea of a process that should be taking you forward keep you from developing ideas and things you feel are right.

## **NEW DIRECTIONS: THE CONSERVATOIRE WAY**

*Following publication of Conservatoires UK's strategic plan for 2013-15, where do colleagues in the conservatoires and the professional sector see the sector in ten years' time? Is The Conservatoire Way a smooth or rocky one? How sustainable is the additional investment required from government for the specialist conservatoires, at a time of continued funding cuts and when western classical music is increasingly deemed elitist and irrelevant?*

**Jonathan Freeman-Attwood**, Principal, Royal Academy of Music

**Claire Mera-Nelson**, Director of Music, Trinity Laban

**Ian Ritchie** (chair)

**Dougie Scarfe**, Chief Executive, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

Preparation is difficult in an ever-changing world of professionalism, and one-to-one lessons at a conservatoire are absolutely necessary to get top people up to the required level. However, the higher education world is most unstable and 90% of students are white British, often upper middle class students from the independent sector instead of lower middle class, state school pupils who often cannot afford expensive teaching and London living costs.

There is an overseriousness and overcommitment in students, the young people want work and are very focused and dedicated. However economic obstacles often prevent them from reaching their full potential: In London, students must often take on jobs out of financial necessity, therefore cutting short on their practice time which is a factor of excellence. It is important to consider what conservatoires could do to help in this context.

Looking further than London, there is a definite need to unlock more funding for grants and scholarships, possibly from the EU Creative Economies. This would enable talented students from other UK regions to experience conservatoire teaching in the City as opposed to distance learning which cannot generate the same excellence or offer the same preparation for the professional world.

How can conservatoires teach further employability in general? Initiative in itself cannot be taught, but encouraged through role models and projects where teachers step back and let the students take over. Most artists seem to lack skills in business due to the conservatoires looking for very conservative skills as opposed to entrepreneurial talent. Transferrable skills should be reinforced in conservatoires as they signify well-being for the musician. When deciding between two people, what should be the deciding factor? Possibly the ability to engage with the community? Music is a profoundly social activity and people need to feel confident that they do not need a code to enjoy it, it needs to be approachable. Practically, the way to do this is to prioritise obtaining instruments for children and getting them to play.

The panel agreed on the fact that the sector is too fragmented and does not advocate together. The right kind of advocacy is to get a sense of what can be done with music out to students and thus, out into the world. To ensure better advocacy, it is also important to think about the topic of musicians' contributions to public economy and develop a method how to present pure economic evidence apart from social and educational benefits.

Report written by **Fiona Orpin**