



ENSEMBLE MAGAZINE

No. 120 / Summer 2023

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*Crown Lane Studio - see page 22

INNOVATION in MUSIC EDUCATION

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Nicholas Smith
Director of Music
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WELCOME EDITORIAL



Keith Ayling
Editor

Exploring how we can be innovative will help you to focus on effective ways to find those *lightbulb moments* that make teaching worthwhile.

We're excited to launch the new issue of Ensemble with a theme of innovation. But what is the difference between creativity and innovation? An exploration of dictionary definitions provides us with a key distinction. Innovation has to either produce change or include something radically new.

Within our field this could be a change in the curriculum we deliver, a change in the way we understand learning or a development of the way we use instruments and tools to encourage young minds. I hope that this issue inspires you to be innovative in the way you deliver music in your school. It is certainly bigger than other recent issues and we have tried to pack as much in as possible.

But more than that, I would also hope that exploring how we can be innovative will help you to focus on effective ways to find those *lightbulb moments* that make teaching worthwhile. We all need them every now and then - the moments that remind us why we chose this as a career.

Innovation often comes at us from different directions. The biggest of these at the moment is the conversation surrounding artificial intelligence (AI). It is having a huge impact on music making. I recently saw a Shark Tank episode (America's Dragon's Den) where an entrepreneur had invented motion sensors to allow extremely accurate violin performance without holding the instrument itself. I'm not proposing this becomes the norm, but the reality of seeing young people unable to hold an instrument

achieve the same quality of sound and musical knowledge is remarkable. Kris Halpin demonstrated a similar innovation at the year's MTA Conference, performing beautiful music with micro gestures amidst a hugely inspiring conversation as our keynote.

AI is also speeding up creative workflows. Within the industry it is providing advanced search of music catalogues, developing advanced plugins for recording and changing the mastering of music. The stories you may have heard about ChatGPT constructing lyrics and apps cloning vocals are of course true, but essentially clickbait for the advertisers. As an assessor for a songwriting degree, I do worry how I will be able to tell a set of lyrics written by a student and one written by a bot.

Artificial Intelligence, whether we like it or not, is changing the way we construct and generate music in both its recorded and live forms. UK Music Chief Executive, Jamie Njoku-Goodwin recently appeared before MPs to outline the potential impact of Artificial Intelligence on the music industry. He reiterated that as an assistive tool, it is hugely beneficial. But where it infringes copyright and rightsholders, we must be very careful.

As a musician and songwriter myself I have to explore these topics and I would be lying if I didn't say that as we dive deeper into the world of AI and music technology, my hope is that original music, played in front of a live audience will flourish as a result.

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JOIN US



If this is the first time you have read Ensemble Magazine, welcome!

You may have been recommended to the Music Teachers' Association by a colleague and recently joined. Please accept our welcome to the most vibrant association of music teachers in the country. We hope that we can support your teaching, your students and your career by connecting you with experience and wisdom from colleagues around the country. The Music Teachers' Association is the largest and longest established association of music teachers in the UK, supporting all who are connected with a school music department. In challenging times we must work together and stand together for the

Membership rates 2022

Full Membership	£68
Instrumental / Self employed	£51
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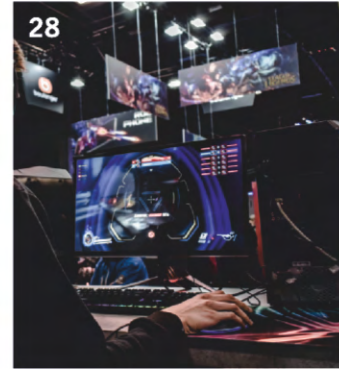
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Chris Cobb
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Liz Dunbar
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William Ring
Howarth of London



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Worthing Manufacturing Workshops

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Catherine Barker is the Music Teachers' Association President 2023-2025 and Head of Music and Performing Arts for United Learning, the largest national schools' group.

It is my enormous pleasure and privilege to introduce myself as the next President of the Music Teachers' Association. This brilliant organisation strives to serve not just the membership, but music teachers working with children and young people far and wide – with a committee of fantastic teacher volunteers and a very small – and hard working – team in the background making everything happen. I come at this from the perspective of being a music teacher who is lucky to work with and support a wider range of school settings in my day job at United Learning. I'm excited to be able to extend this mission by stepping up in the MTA, albeit with some nervousness: Don, and Simon before him, have left very big boots to fill.

I want to formally recognise on behalf of the membership, our sincere thanks to Don Gillthorpe for his enormous contribution during his role as President over the last two years. During his tenure, our membership offer has continued to grow, with superb events, publications and opportunities with partner organisations, all with insightful and principled leadership. He has driven us all forward, whilst himself stepping up into senior leadership in his own school, and alongside leading a successful life as a professional musician. We are so grateful for his leadership of the MTA as we have been rebuilding music provision following the challenges of the pandemic – thank you Don.

As we move forwards, I have two priorities during my role as President of the MTA. Firstly, to continue to grow and refine our offer so that we serve the evolving needs of the membership and the sector, so that music teachers can continue to inspire children and young people. Our flagship conference, Music Teacher Mondays, Ensemble, our teaching resources – these

are all high quality and having impact. But, we can't ignore the context that we are working in. Aspects of our wider music sector are in crisis and that ripples across to us: the most significant of these challenges being teacher supply and recruitment into music teaching as a profession. The MTA is well-placed to look at this, therefore my second priority will be to actively work in this area, aiming to help safeguard the future of our profession and the continued impact of music teaching in schools.

I look forward to working with existing and new members of the committee, developing their roles as we continue to move forwards with our commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion at the core of our practices. We are so grateful to members both in and beyond the committee who contribute to the work of the association. If, as a member, you have ideas for the organisation, please don't hold back in stepping forwards and getting involved. If everyone who has a great idea does this, we will continue to progress and have even more impact. You can always reach me via the President's email: president@musicteachers.org

With progress in mind, the summer edition of Ensemble is especially themed around '**Innovation**', considering the possibilities on the horizon for us all in music education. Looking ahead with hope, optimism and vision – the MTA isn't standing still.

Catherine Barker
MTA President
president@musicteachers.org

ASSOCIATION NEWS

CONNECTING - INSPIRING - LEADING



Welcome to the 120th issue of Music Teachers' Association Magazine: Ensemble. The magazine seeks to support you in your music teaching and to network teachers together through the sharing of classroom experiences, advice and wisdom.

Take a look at our INNOVATION feature section (from page 19) which has valuable ideas and resources to help you develop your career in these times.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Fb. www.fb.com/MusicTeachersOrg
Tw. www.twitter.com/MusicTeachers_

The Music Teachers' Association is the largest and longest established association of music teachers in the UK, supporting all who are connected with a school music department.

Our year-round CPD programme of webinars, podcasts, e-bulletins and Ensemble magazine, supported by our Facebook Staffroom and Annual Conference, enables music teachers to connect with each other, share ideas, develop good practice and work together in partnership.

The MTA works with our partner organisations, HMC, ISM and Music Mark, to support and advocate for music in schools, inspiring a membership which passionately believes that every child should benefit from outstanding music education.

To join the MTA for only £68 per year, visit www.musicteachers.org

OUR CONFERENCE

Thank you to everyone who attended and presented at our Annual Conference at **Loughborough Schools Foundation** in May. Next year we will be visiting Queen Anne's School, Caversham near Reading - the school of our Honorary Treasurer, John Padley. Please mark the date in your diary: May 17 - 19, 2024.

OUR ONLINE EVENTS

Our online events continue to be very popular with a comprehensive range of online professional development for both our members and the wider music teaching profession. These include webinars, teach meets and curriculum-based sessions.

OUR PUBLICATIONS

Members automatically receive all of our publications to resource their teaching. Our termly magazine has been nominated for association magazine of the year and is a highly respected journal of music education. Our Music Directory (for independent schools) gives parents details on music departments and our Podcast, Online CPD, regular e*bulletins and Facebook Staffroom complete our comprehensive resources for your teaching.

OUR WEBSITE

Our website is a hub for our work and continues to be the focus for conference details. We want to attract new members and more accurately reflect the association and its national voice, as well as providing resources for the teachers we serve. www.MusicTeachers.org

TEACHING NOTES MUSIC TEACHERS' PODCAST



Catch up with the MTA Podcast

The Music Teachers' Podcast, Teaching Notes, covers all aspects of Music Education, both in the UK and beyond. Interviews with Music Teachers sit alongside comment from industry professionals and education experts as well as a multitude of resources and reports from conferences and Expos. Hosted by Patrick Johns.

Episode 78.

MTA CONFERENCE SPECIAL

Greg Coughlin discusses non-traditional routes to GCSE Music, Lisa Coley introduces the range of microphones available from **Sontronics**, **Rebecca Arnold** chats about her experiences at her first MTA Conference, and **Charles Price** explains how to demystify the composition process, especially at Key Stage 4.

Finally, outgoing president **Don Gillthorpe** reflects on the last two years, and incoming president **Catherine Barker** looks ahead to the future.

Episode 77.

Cynthia Stephens-Himonides and Maria Mendonça talk about incorporating Gamelan into curricula, particularly as a way of including disengaged young people; sneak previews of two of the 2020 MTA Conference sessions, with Mark Wilderspin ('How to take student compositions from good to great') and Lucinda Geoghegan ('The Kodály Approach'); and Naomi McCarthy from the ISM, discusses their new campaign Save Our Subjects.

Episode 76.

Vanessa Wilson-Best discusses current matters in music education, and gives an overview of the forthcoming Great Escape Festival's Music Education Conference; composer-in-association with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Gavin Higgins, introduces the BBC's Young Composer Competition; and Dr Anthony Anderson explores his recent RiME presentation, looking at the 'telescoping' of KS3 curricula down from three years to two.

Episode 75.

Amelia Parker, co-producer of BBC Radio 4's "Rethinking Music" series on music education, chats about the making of the series; Simon Toyne, Sophie Taylor-Denton and Caius Lee talk about the Rodolfus Foundation's Choral Courses for young singers; and Dr Anna Mariguddi gives a preview of her RiME presentation, looking at Dr Lucy Green's model of informal learning in the current music education landscape.

Episode 74.

Kwame Bakoji-Hume on West African Drumming, and misconceptions about the music; Judith Weir with compositional tips (from Music Teacher Mondays); and Mark Aitchison looking at long-term changes to classroom practice following the pandemic.



SPECIAL EDITION

Episode 60. National Plan for Music Education Special

In Episode 60, Patrick talks to two of the panel of experts, who helped to shape the new National Plan for Music Education, "The Power of Music to Change Lives": Jamie Njoku-Goodwin and Catherine Barker.



MTA

SCAN ME



ONLINE EVENTS



As we head into the summer months when you will hopefully have some well-deserved downtime, don't forget that you can check out all of the recordings from our **online CPD sessions** by simply logging into the members' area of the website with the password 'beethoven'.

Highlights from last term include an inspirational Hibbins Series webinar with Dr Steven Berryman and Professor Jonathan Cross taking an analytical view of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. Jonathan delved into the Lithuanian folk influences behind the work's motifs, analysed score excerpts, highlighted some of the most iconic performances and their choreography, and even showed us how the 'Rite' chord found its way into Afrika Bambaata's 1982 funk hit, *Planet*

Rock! The session ended with suggestions for further listening across a range of composers who were influenced by Stravinsky, and this is must-watch for any pupil studying this as a set work.

We were privileged to be joined by composer Judith Weir CBE as a guest speaker on our popular Music Teacher Monday series, discussing the challenges of getting started with composition as she herself embarks on one of the most significant commissions of her career writing for the King's Coronation. Talking candidly about her own composition techniques, inspiration and methodology, Judith also answered questions around how best to support pupils composing to a brief. Meanwhile, for those of you teaching EYFS, KS1 or KS2, Dr

Rebecca Berkley hosted a session on the free schemes of work created as part of the Ralph Vaughan-Williams 150th anniversary celebrations last year. There was singing, clapping and even drawing as she demonstrated all the techniques you would need to deliver the individual schemes in your own classroom, and provided some fun ideas that would be easy for both specialists and non-specialists to replicate.

These and many more sessions are all available to watch in your own time, and are a benefit of your MTA membership. So do have a browse, and if you have any ideas of what you would like to see featured in our online events next school year, drop me a line on gill@musicteachers.org.

Previous



Dr Steven Berryman
The Hibbin Series:
Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring



Professor Jonathan Cross
The Hibbin Series:
Stravinsky's The Rite of Spring



Judith Weir CBE
Music Teacher Monday
Composition



Rebecca Berkley
Ralph Vaughan-Williams 150th
anniversary celebrations

Forthcoming

Music Teacher Monday

5th June 2023 | 5:00pm

Join our popular Music Teacher Monday series, where regular hosts James and Liz are joined by guest speakers, answering your questions in this informal support session.

Trainee/Early Career Teacher support session

15th June 2023 | 5:00pm

Margaret Edwards and Mark Aitchison lead a support session for Trainees and Early Career Teachers coming to the end of their first or second year in teaching. This is a chance to reflect on what has been learnt this year, plan for September, share ideas with peers and ask questions.

National Plan for Music Education

26th June 2023 | 5:00pm

As the next stage of our NPME sessions, Catherine Barker will be looking at formulating development plans head of September.

Music Teacher Monday

3rd July 2023 | 5:00pm

Join our popular Music Teacher Monday series, where regular hosts James and Liz are joined by guest speakers, answering your questions in this informal support session.

National Children's Orchestras



National Children's Orchestras auditions for their 2024 programme will be opening this April!

With NCO, more than 650 children each year explore

their creativity, expand their skills, make friends and have fun making music together. Children come together in 3 National Orchestras for residential and concerts and 4 Projects Orchestras for non-residential weekends.

Children who play an orchestral instrument and will be aged 8-13 as of 31st August 2023, can audition for NCO 2024 by video, for free, between late April and Mon 31st July 2023. To find out more visit www.nco.org.uk

OneStage



It's been a busy start to 2023 for **OneStage** with tours travelling every month, in the usually quieter "winter season". January started with a wonderful 100

strong university choir plus supporters travelling to Nice and the Cote d'Azur, where they were greeted warmly with full churches and a wonderful reception from the locals. Not normally a destination associated with the winter months, the south of France has a lot to offer off season and we look forward to returning to this area with other groups for some winter sunshine and fantastic performance opportunities.

February half term we hosted concerts in Germany and northern Belgium and at the end of term in March, school groups travelled to Paris, Prague, the Rhineland and the Northeast of England. In April several groups travelled to Belgium and the Netherlands.

With the days getting longer and warmer across Europe, we're looking forward to opening up the range of concert venues available with hundreds of performances planned in a variety of carefully selected venues. May to August 2023 will see concerts take place in bandstands, town squares, galleries, cathedrals, amphitheatres, jazz festivals, cultural centres, open air stages, local parades and fêtes and more.

The OneStage team are enjoying travelling frequently on inspection visits and working closely with teachers, musical directors and safeguarding leaders to ensure well-structured and meticulously planned music tours.

Hal Leonard Catalogue

With leading publishers such as ABRSM, RSL, LCM, Willis Music, Vamoosh Music, Bosworth Editions, Dehaske Publications, Durand-Salabert-Eschig, Ricordi, Novello and Chester Music, Hal Leonard Europe is looking forward to furthering its mission to provide top-quality music resources for life-long music learning for all Music Teachers.

In addition to the Hal Leonard education catalogue, you can also discover [Hal Leonard's Music Class](#), a revolutionary interactive resources platform for Primary school music teaching, and the Hal Leonard SAM-Klang series, which offers choral masterworks that cater to three major challenges choirs face today: a lack of lower voices, financial burdens of large orchestral productions, and the need for accessible choral works for developing voices. To view a perusal score, listen to excerpts and learn more about SAM-Klang, please visit www.sam-klang.com.

Warwick Music Group

Warwick Music Group have continued their innovative approach to design and developed a brand-new descant recorder. Their latest musical instrument, **pCorder**, launches in May 2023.

pCorder is the world's first carbon-neutral and fully recyclable recorder. This sustainable approach even extends to the packaging. pCorder is shipped in a unique "box for life" that can be used to keep the instrument safe, as well as being easily recycled to cut down on unnecessary waste. pCorder is designed and made in the UK, lowering emissions and ensuring a quality product that you can trust.

It isn't just the planet that pCorder is out to protect. The anti-microbial finish is designed to reduce the growth of harmful bacteria, letting students and their teachers concentrate on making music. Its robust three-part, ABS construction, along with premium features such as a curved windway, make pCorder a great addition to classroom learning and the beginner instrument space.

Supported by a growing number of educational resources and tools for teachers, educators and parents, pCorder joins instruments like pBuzz and pBugle, designed to make starting in music as enriching and enjoyable as possible. As the first instrument manufacturer to achieve carbon-neutral status for all of its instruments, the pioneering approach will ensure that the next generation of musicians grows their skills and passion in a sustainable way.

pCorder will be available from music dealers and online retailers with an RRP of £7.99. To find out more about pCorder and other innovative instruments from the team, head to www.pbone.co.uk.



Yamaha Pianos



Just take a moment to consider everything that is asked of a piano within an education setting...

A practice & recital instrument for solo keyboard students; accompaniment for instrumentalists, vocal students and choral ensembles; grade examinations; recording; a key part of pop and jazz ensembles; accompaniment for assemblies & congregational singing; dance and musical theatre – the list goes on and on. The piano is the living, beating heart of your school's music department. And yet so many teachers find themselves working with pianos that are well below the standards required and long past the end of their useful educational lives, due to budget constraints, deteriorating condition of existing instruments and even developments in technology.

Yamaha believes that every child, in every school, should have access to at least one high quality piano which allows and inspires them to learn, compose, and perform.

That's why we are proud to introduce ONE GREAT PIANO – a new initiative that makes a good quality instrument attainable for any school. ONE GREAT PIANO does not require any capital expenditure and protects your school from price inflation. Fees can be treated as an operating expense, maximising the potential of your capex budget, and of course having a new instrument removes time consuming inventory management, affording teaching staff more time to teach and inspire.

ONE GREAT PIANO fees start from just £15 per month, and a choice of popular digital, acoustic upright and grand piano models is available. For more details and to discover how ONE GREAT PIANO can transform the quality of pianos in your school, contact James Sargeant, Institutional Business Manager, Yamaha Music Europe: (E) james.sargeant@music.yamaha.com (M) 07949 796492

Naxos MusicBox

Naxos have added a major new section to their popular MusicBox resource for KS2 and KS3. 'Ingredients', a comprehensive introduction to music theory, presents pitch, notation, rhythm, dynamics and timbre in fun and colourful 'Mix' sections, accompanied by audio and video material, adaptable interactive exercises and full-length demonstration pieces. MusicBox continues to offer a huge breadth of content, including downloadable lesson planning material, ideas for composition, Model Music Curriculum playlists and over 4000 audio and video examples. It can be used in a classroom setting or one-to-one and is popular with schools

and music hubs alike. Naxos' flagship Naxos Music Library is also available on a subscription basis to educational institutions, offering nearly 3 million tracks to stream ad-free, a huge written resource bank, interactive dictionary and aural trainer, and a dedicated app for offline listening.

Both resources are available FREE of charge for up to a month before subscription, by visiting the respective websites www.naxosmusicbox.com, www.naxosmusiclibrary.com or contacting Julian Edwards jedwards@naxosmusic.co.uk 07768 448381.

Aspire Organs

New partnership with AXIS leasing education and merger with MRS Wales

In addition to our 4-year interest-free purchase options for new instruments, we are thrilled to announce our new partnership with AXIS leasing education. **Aspire Classical Organs** is committed to providing our customers with the best possible options for purchasing and financing their musical instruments. With this new partnership, we can now offer up to 7-year lease plans on our organs, with purchase options available. By partnering with AXIS leasing education (a leading provider of financing solutions for

educational institutions), we can now offer our customers an even wider range of financing options for their organ purchases. We have a lease plan that can fit your needs and budget.

We believe that everyone should have access to high-quality musical instruments, and our partnership with AXIS leasing education is one more step towards making that a reality.

We are also pleased to announce that Aspire Classical Organs has

completed a merger with Music Repair Services Wales. We can now offer our customers a one-stop shop for organ sales and rentals to instrument repairs and maintenance. As accredited warranty/non-warranty service agents for Roland, Marshall, Casio, Kawai, Yamaha and Viscount, we look forward to welcoming you to our new location and continuing to serve the music community with excellence.

www.aspireorgans.co.uk
www.mrs.wales

Sing for Pleasure

In March 2023 **Sing for Pleasure** welcomed our new CEO, Paul Cutts. Paul comes to SfP with an impressive range of experience that spans the cultural, corporate and charitable sectors, and has a passion for the transformational power of singing. We believe we have huge potential to make an even greater contribution to the choral tapestry of our country through conductor training, music education, publications and sharing our passion for singing. Our heartfelt thanks go to Stephen Gregson as he steps down from the interim CEO role.

It's been a busy start to 2023, with conducting courses in Glasgow (at the University of Glasgow) and London (at Francis Holland School) welcoming participants at all levels of experience. Our next weekend for conductors takes place at Bromsgrove Preparatory School in June, and in August we return to Keele University for our annual Summer School for conductors and singers. We've also held two Choir Showcases (Liverpool and Rugby) and a singing weekend in York, focusing on works by Bach and Haydn. For full details of all upcoming events, including two more Showcases and a weekend in Manchester, see:

<https://singforpleasure.org.uk/events/>

Bursaries for teachers: We continue to offer generous bursaries for primary teachers, and those under 26, at all conductor training courses - full details here:

<https://singforpleasure.org.uk/bursaries-scholarships/>

Publications and membership: Our great-value sheet-music for children and adult choirs is available in our shop.

<https://singforpleasure.org.uk/shop/>, and it's worth noting that annual SfP membership (£45 standard, and £15 for under 26s) entitles course attendees to a £55 discount on fees at either event, along with a range of other benefits and discounts. <https://singforpleasure.org.uk/join-sfp/>

Club Europe



Stunning landscapes, rich culture, unique performing venues on music tours to Southern Tuscany

A music tour in Southern Tuscany and Umbria really is a once in a lifetime opportunity for young musicians; a chance to perform in and discover a part of Italy that is rich in culture and gastronomy, as well as beautiful weather and stunning landscapes.

Club Europe Italian Operations Manager, Eleanor Robinson, has been organising concerts in Southern Tuscany and Umbria for 25 years: "There is such a variety of traditions, architecture, art and landscape within these two regions. They are full of beautiful little hilltop towns that are perfect for spring, summer and autumn concerts. All types of musical groups can perform in stunning central squares with renaissance and medieval churches, cathedrals and palaces providing the backdrop. The local government in Perugia also organises a little music festival, which can include young groups, with venues in Perugia and surrounding towns. Our groups can stay right on the banks of Lake Trasimeno in Passignano or close to Montepulciano in Chianciano Terme. Both are within easy travelling distance from Perugia, Siena, Assisi, smaller Umbrian towns and cities. Larger cities like Florence and even Rome are also possible concert venues or excursions."

For more details, get in touch with youth music tour specialists Club Europe at travel@club-europe.co.uk.

The Maestro Online

The Maestro Online Ltd, recent winner of three European grants for Digital Innovation and Internationalisation, has been continually expanding.

In the Celebrity Masterclass series, we have recently released composition and improvisation masterclass courses by Will Todd (composer and improviser extraordinaire), Jazz Piano masterclasses with Richard Michael BEM (BBC Radio Scotland, published by Hal Leonard) that start from scratch, singing, organ and other piano masterclasses too.

In editing stages there are masterclasses by Robert Emery (who orchestrated and conducted for the *Bat Out of Hell* musical) on orchestration, Daniel KR (Founder member of Voces8, vocal credits Harry Potter and more, former ENO) on Performance Anxiety, Darius Battiwalla on silent movie improvisation and an entire guitar series. There are many

more in planning and we welcome requests for

masterclasses in areas of specific interest to the needs at your school. The keyboard/piano curriculum series is ideal for Years 5-8 wanting to use famous pop snippets to embed deep theory, improvisation and performance skills including chord progressions, scales, intervals and so much more. They now include the more extended "No More Autotune" series as well as Classical Piano Improvisation series (based on partimenti).

In the coming weeks, an entirely new learning management system will be released on the platform so that you can monitor where your students are at and they can see their own progress too.



Collins Music

Collins Music wins at Music and Drama Education Awards

Collins Music had a fantastic win at the recent Music and Drama Education Awards, with the award for Excellence in Primary/Early Years going to **Listen & Celebrate** by Nate Holder and Helen MacGregor!

Introducing a selection of 15 pieces from a range of time periods, countries and styles, with lesser-known composers interwoven with pieces from popular culture, Listen & Celebrate offers a glimpse of the huge variety of music in the world. The resource not only encourages pupils to celebrate the people who wrote the music but also offers an immersive experience through active listening and composing activities.

Collins Music was also shortlisted as a finalist at the Music & Drama Education Awards in the 'Excellence in SEND (Music & Drama)' category for its new **SEND scheme from Music Express!** The scheme includes six topic-based units for use in special school classroom environments or for

small group and individual intervention work in both special and mainstream schools.

If you're looking to enrich and diversify your primary music lessons, or you're looking for a cross-curricular primary music scheme which supports your pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, visit the Collins Music website at collins.co.uk/music to find out more.

Have you seen the latest addition to the Magic series?

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HOWARTH OF LONDON 75th ANNIVERSARY

2023 sees Howarth of London celebrate the 75th anniversary of its establishment in 1948. For a company to continue successfully for that length of time it will have had to go through changes of leadership, and mutate and develop accordingly, but ideally retain a core focus.

Howarth of London has always been an oboe maker as its primary operation, and from the start the company made instruments for leading players. The first oboe (serial number 1001) was purchased by Edward Selwyn, principal oboist in the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and pleasantly it is now back in the possession of the company.

Over its 75 years Howarth has also developed an important retail arm to the business, diversified into making its own clarinets and bassoons alongside the oboes in the manufacturing workshops, and developed an innovative range of 'Junior instruments' for primary age players. Howarth is therefore in a unique position, in that

the retail side of the business is backed by a high level of technical knowledge about woodwind design and construction from the manufacturing unit.

Howarth of London now operates from two locations. The shop in London, which is the part of the company most familiar to customers, has always been in the Marylebone area of west London. It offers a complete service for woodwind players, including new and second-hand instruments, servicing by one of several specialist technicians from tweaks to comprehensive overhauls, and a range of accessories and music. All the shop staff are graduates and are able to offer very specialist advice to advanced players - and apprehensive parents of children just embarking on their musical journeys are equally well catered for!

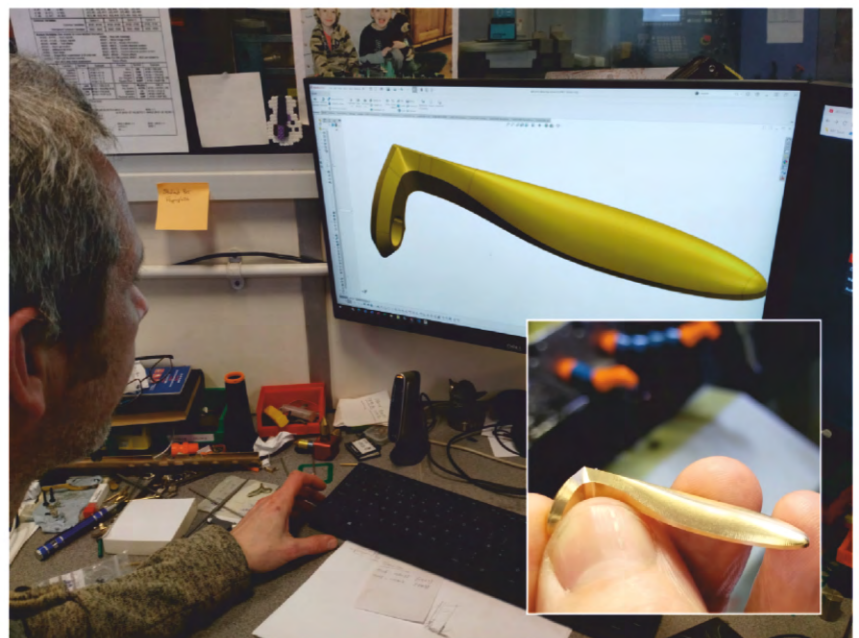


William Ring has been making instruments since his gap year in Germany in 1977. After reading music at Cambridge, he went back to the workbench in 1981 at Howarth's manufacturing workshops in Worthing, and has spent his time developing and manufacturing oboes and bassoons.

However, the London shop is only one half of the business. The other part is the instrument-making, based in the manufacturing workshops in Worthing, West Sussex, right by the sea! Howarth is now the only major woodwind manufacturer producing instruments from raw materials in the UK - from 'blocks of wood and sheets of metal'. However, what started out in 1948 as a very traditional, labour-intensive, cottage-industry operation now uses cutting-edge computer design and machinery to make components to tolerances of fractions of a millimetre.



1. Inside the shop at Howarth of London
2. CAD work on components with inset for actual size



In the last 25 years, alongside developing a full range of models covering all levels of player and the different key systems used in the UK and outside the UK, Howarth has thought increasingly about the ergonomics of their instruments, especially in regard to primary-age learners.

Working to these standards allows the building of consistently high-quality instruments – by hand-working craftspeople! Assembling and finishing these components remains a highly-skilled manual process, very similar to how it was carried out in the 19th century; there is no substitute for the human eye and ear. The workshop is often described as having a 21st - century ground floor with all the modern machinery, and 19th - century first floor where everything is done by hand!

Given that from a mechanical perspective, woodwind instruments have undergone remarkably little change in basic design in the last 150 years (all woodwinds still use the mechanical basics developed in the 1830s and 1840s of metal posts that suspend long axles to activate simple levers), what progression has there been in that time? And what part has Howarth played in that?

In the last 25 years, alongside developing a full range of models covering all levels of player and the different key systems used in the UK and outside the UK, Howarth has thought increasingly about the ergonomics of their instruments, especially in regard to primary-age learners.

Often the classical music industry remains tied to 'tradition' and change can be slow. However, developing the 'Junior' range of Howarth instruments has meant learning to think more flexibly about who is going to play them, and has resulted in significant changes in designs. The 'Junior' initiative has also been entirely driven by teachers' requirements; they approached Howarth for 'hardware' solutions to educational needs. Howarth took the approach of thinking of the instrument primarily as an item of educational kit (so don't be too precious!), and therefore design it to

best fulfil its specific role for a beginner at a particular stage of their physical and intellectual development. The danger in making and teaching 'good' instruments is to fall into the trap of thinking they have to be a 'full' instrument, able to play all necessary octaves with all the chromatic notes. If you think of an under-10 soccer team being expected to play on a full-size pitch with a full-size football, it's just not appropriate for their age and capabilities and will as likely do more to disincentivise than encourage!

String instruments can be different sizes for smaller players without affecting the musical capability, but this is not so simple on a wind instrument with its complex mechanism. What aspects of a 'complete' instrument can be taken away to make it easier for the inexperienced player, who is then incentivised to learn? Often the player is younger, so the bassoon was shrunk to a mini-bassoon. For the Junior oboe or Junior clarinet the mechanism was simplified, which gives advantages of reduced weight and less complexity, with less to get damaged, go wrong or need repair. Catherine Millar, formerly head of woodwind in Berkshire has said, "It is arguable that instruments for beginners need to be of a higher quality than those for experts. Beginners lack the skills to work around and need something that works."

However, you don't want this to limit the essential musical capabilities of an instrument, within the designed constraints. It only occurred to Howarth after building the Junior oboe that they have actually made a 'baroque' oboe, in terms of its musical capability! One teacher bought one to play trio sonatas on, simply because it was so light and enjoyable. And it has enough range to be capable of playing the full Mozart solo oboe repertoire as well!



Thinking about the design of wind instruments more ergonomically like this can be applied to other models – they are not immutable! Posture and the physical aspects of playing are now correctly on the agenda, so it's important that younger players are able to enjoy playing careers of maybe 50+ years comfortably. In conjunction with teenage players at the Purcell School, Howarth have developed a 'small hands' cor anglais with the mechanism adjusted for a smaller hand-stretch. Some of these developments of the mechanism are also being cross-applied to more advanced models where adult players also can have a smaller physique, and custom adaptations are occasionally made to standard instruments to facilitate a short hand-stretch or other limitations.

At the other end of the scale, in conjunction with the oboist Christopher Redgate, Howarth have designed and built a '21st century' oboe, capable of playing an increased range of microtones and multiphonics.

And for the next 75 years? We may not be around to witness it, but while classical music and the unique and special sound of the oboe is valued, the years ahead remain an exciting prospect!

www.howarthlondon.com

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innovation in music education

INNOVATION ISN'T DOING SOMETHING NEW, IT'S DOING SOMETHING BETTER



Ross Garrard
Founder & CEO of Practice Pal

When you consider the concept of innovation, what comes to mind? Is it something brand-new? Could true innovation go beyond novelty? Or perhaps there is a place for the past, for combining historic wisdom with something fresh and relevant.

'Innovation' is a buzzword that's often thrown around in the world of education. Everyone wants to be seen as a frontrunner, a leader, a beacon of best practice and innovation. Yet, paradoxically, change can be met with huge resistance and, at times, even despised in the education sector, particularly in the UK. So, how can we reconcile the desire for innovation with an aversion to change? What if there's a way to innovate without abandoning tradition and wisdom?

I'll share a little about myself, so you can understand why I care so much, and decide whether it's *actually* worth finding your glasses to give this a proper read. Well, I'm Ross. It's an old Celtic word meaning 'man with rubbish name'. I'm the Founder and CEO of Practice Pal, a purpose-driven music EdTech startup named 'Innovator of the Year 2022' by Bett. I'm also the guest principal percussionist with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Royal Ballet Sinfonia. I may have even been your or your students' examiner during my time with Trinity College London. But if we rewind to circa 2009 when I graduated from music college, I'll be the first to say I was a superbly mediocre music teacher. Really, nothing to write home about (unless those messages began: 'Dear Mum, my music teacher is superbly mediocre. How's Dad's back?').

The Value of Wisdom

Innovation isn't just about being cutting-edge; it's also about being wise. One of the legitimate reasons for fearing change is that a new idea or theory often won't be based on learned wisdom: something which is built up over years of experience and reflection—which takes time. Unless... you cheat and steal from the past.

Society seems to have a harmful tendency to ditch the past. This can lead to 'historical snobbery'. It's loosely defined as turning our noses up at anything that wasn't invented in the last five minutes. With this attitude, we end up throwing out the good along with the bad, in favour of something new. It

also perpetuates the idea that innovation and novelty are inextricably linked, which has a direct effect on education.

Wisdom allows us to critically evaluate ideas that work and those that don't, allowing us to make informed decisions about the best way to move forward. It helps us discern between fads or trends, and make sound judgments about concepts that are worth adopting. We can avoid repeating the same mistakes by basing our 'innovation' on accumulated knowledge and insights.

Innovation isn't just about being cutting-edge; it's also about being wise.

For me, this meant standing against tech innovation that aimed to replace teachers. Why would you replace the student-teacher relationship, something that has profoundly changed the lives of countless students over millennia? No doubt many of us still have a close and influential relationship with our music teachers, which have lasted far beyond our time learning with them. A connection that profound simply cannot be replaced by tech. This meant that right from the beginning, as I built Practice Pal, I looked for ways to remove the barriers between teacher and student. It was important to provide a space where this relationship could truly flourish, rather than instigate a clever fad for solo learning. In this case, innovation meant using tech to unearth the wisdom of the past rather than inventing something new. It's amazing how wise you can pretend to be when you realise that you'll never be as wise as the historical hive mind!

The Art of Curation

So we've established that true innovation relies on wisdom: drawing from existing knowledge, ideas, and inspirations. But wisdom unlocks an opportunity for curation. Most of what I'm writing is 'curated' (stolen) from many clever people and varied perspectives I've encountered. And I've been perfectly happy to bounce ideas off ChatGPT! As music teachers, not only do we stand on the shoulders of giants

If we reframe innovation as creating a beautiful outcome, rather than focusing on efficiency or impact, we can nurture a desire for change that far outweighs the fear of it.

who have shaped the musical landscape over the years, with a rich heritage of musical traditions, styles, and techniques that have stood the test of time—we have an overwhelming access to current theories and ideas in our digitally connected world.

Just like many of us who carefully selected tracks to create a unique mixtape, we can curate a new mixtape of innovative tech and resources. We can borrow, adapt and blend whatever we like to create a fresh and relevant learning experience for our students. As I think about how to shape our mission to fully enable music-learning at Practice Pal, I want to bring the best of the best into a single, accessible and unified place. It's why early on we digitised the idea of practice notebooks and replicated practice supervision with a virtual practice corridor. These ideas weren't original, but I'd argue the *implementation* was—and Bett awarded it 'Innovator of the Year' in 2022 so, I reckon we can claim it!

The Power of Iteration

Innovation is not a one-time event; it's an ongoing process that involves continuous refinement and improvement. It's about improving one step at a time, whilst evolving our ideas, methods, and approaches based on feedback and outcomes. Just like a sculptor who continuously shapes and reshapes their creation, we need to constantly iterate to be more effective and impactful. This does mean change, of course. But when the changes are small, they're less scary.

Because iteration involves small frequent changes, it gives us greater scope to experiment, take risks, and learn from our failures. We can always revert by one step without it being catastrophic. I love the way we approach this in the team at Practice Pal: we often release about twenty things a week (some of them so small you wouldn't even know it) and are constantly refining. Spoiler alert: at the moment we're doing something pretty cool with lesson notes and student progress tracking, which will start (iteratively, of course!) to hit the platform in the next couple of months.

Iteration enables us to adapt to changing student needs, technological advancements, and (if we must) accommodate the latest education fad. By embracing an iterative mindset, we can make real strides to evolve our teaching methods, materials, and assessments to better meet the needs of our students and achieve our educational goals. Innovation isn't about a destination; it's a journey of continual improvement towards a harmonious and beautiful outcome.

A Beautiful Outcome

If we reframe innovation as creating a beautiful outcome, rather than focusing on efficiency or impact, we can nurture a desire for change that far outweighs the fear of it. Beauty in this sense has the power to inspire minds, cultivate joy and connect emotionally. So when we aim for something beautiful, we can engage our students, colleagues and parents on a deeper level, which happily ends up delivering efficiency and impact as a natural result.

One of the motivators for me in founding Practice Pal was the lack of harmony and beauty I saw in education. The ugliness of the infrastructural environment in which music teachers are gallantly attempting to equip students is really not a place that allows anyone to flourish. I grew immensely frustrated at the unequal access, chaotic communication and unrealistic expectations put on both students and teachers. It's why my vision for Practice Pal is of a platform that connects everyone involved in music learning (parents and SLT too!) so that they can discover the true value of music—something we're all so familiar with, but which our society increasingly takes for granted.

Innovation is about Doing Better

Innovation isn't doing something new, it's about doing something better. Let's not fall victim to historical snobbery, but draw from the wisdom of the past to create something fresh and relevant. Technology is key in borrowing, adapting and blending ideas with accumulated knowledge and insight. Only then will we unlock far wider access for those currently losing out.

For us, in music education, the value of teachers and the profound impact they can have on students' lives is immeasurable. So we must use the huge scope of innovative opportunities to allow teachers and students to truly flourish. Let's embrace change, employ wisdom, and beautifully innovate to pave the way for the bright future that music education deserves.



INNOVATION IN THE STUDIO



Richard Llewellyn



John Merriman

Richard Llewellyn recently visited John Merriman (Director) at Crown Lane Studio in South London. This innovative studio aims to be the most accessible, sustainable and community focused recording studio in the world!



Please can you tell me a little bit about yourself and why you opened Crown Lane Studio?

Leaving my career in secondary music teaching came as much as a surprise to me as it did everyone else. There wasn't even a hint of falling out of love with it - it gave me such purpose, and the pupils endlessly inspired me too. Productions, interactive lessons, entering regional competitions, becoming a singing school were all things I got up in the morning for. But everything changed one terrifying night.

My wife and I were driving through England's country lanes, wipers beating full speed. We found ourselves heading steeply downwards towards a ford. We were unaware that the water we were hoping to cross had long since dramatically burst its banks. Our car was swept into the current. Swirling and taking on water we were taken steadily downstream, gaining momentum. Eventually, after a risky exit through the only open window, we swam and scrambled for survival, eventually making it to sodden land. From the freezing safety of the bank, we watched the car disappear into the dark fast-flowing water.

Many people have these moments that make them suddenly braver at making decisions - and for me this was it. I handed in my notice and launched Crown Lane Studio. Seventeen years ago.

What makes Crown Lane Studio different?

Our vision is simple. We're aiming to be the World's Most Accessible, Sustainable and Community Focused Recording Studio. It keeps us focused and keeps our values close when making every decision. In the back of my mind is also an unusual motivation. Because I wouldn't personally choose to pay to use a studio (which is the case for many people) I have to constantly be willing to reinvent the business to ensure we're fulfilling the changing needs of the sound industry, constantly solving today's problems in sound.

Have you had any big stars record at Crown Lane Studio?

Although we have had many (and normally enjoy every minute of those sessions) we don't really talk about those that have recorded here. Mainly because we want each guest to the studio to completely own the space as their own, without expectation or insecurities. For this same reason, we intentionally have no pictures on the walls or genre-specific styling. When you arrive, the place and the team are 100% here for you. Whether it's a regular BBC session, school students or an artist's first time in a studio.

Why have you invested so much time and money making your studios fully accessible and inclusive?

This is a studio for everybody and because everyone is welcome, it is our obligation to ensure there aren't barriers to entry or exit for anyone. I specifically mention 'exit' as I have learnt that many places and situations are accessible, but only to a point. Our education course for example used to be accessible, to a point, and yet the method of assessment deemed it inaccessible to some. We then rebuilt the course, starting with a more accessible assessment at the exit point, and worked backwards.

For us, inclusivity means a number of things, but initially it starts with the attitude of all the people who are on the team here.

Because we have education, live events, and a coffee/events space - training the team regularly is essential. One night for example was a fun 'Introduction to British Sign Language (BSL)' course; a fortnight ago we had a two-day 'First Aid Level 3' assessment. This investment doesn't come cheap, but the attitude of the team forms the foundation for the experience that every user receives. We have all the ramps, hoists, and compliant signage, but without the team's expertise, attitude, and good humour the creative freedom would not be possible.

Interesting you also ask about cost, as there have been times when cost has almost prohibited our desires for accessibility. Like last year when we knew a particular regular client would have a huge barrier removed if we could install a ceiling hoist in the accessible toilet to save them hiring one each day. Sadly, for a small business, the £5000 price tag seemed a step too far - particularly coming out of the pandemic. I do like to try and find a way around problems, and the team knows to only bring potential solutions not problems - so, in modelling this principle, I decided to try my first crowd funder as a potential solution. Incredibly, the customers of the coffee shop and studio clients from around the world stepped in and invested. We had the hoist installed at absolutely no cost to us and ahead of our client's recording sessions. It made the world of difference to them, and many subsequent clients.

I think the process of involving and relying on others has also helped the wider community to feel an ownership of inclusivity in general. We have told the story countless times to those looking around the studio and most are unaware of the freedom a ceiling hoist (for example) can bring.

What simple things do you think Schools might be able to do to make their Music Departments more accessible and inclusive?

The first step (I have learnt the hard way), is to ask those living with disabilities what barriers would be most helpful for us to remove, rather than presuming. It has been during

these conversations that really interesting changes have been made. I would never have realised, for example, that most accessible toilets have a pedal operated bin often inaccessible to users. We've replaced ours, at their suggestion, with a motion-sensor bin. It wasn't expensive and has made a huge difference to them and many others. It's also fun for younger visitors who now love putting things in it! We've also learnt that to make the changes universally helps the barriers to disappear between those with disabilities and those without. There is nothing in the look and feel of the studios that would make anyone know it's accessible; it's completely integral to the space.

Here are a few ideas we've adopted that could perhaps work in the music classroom:

- Always use font 14 or larger.
- Encouraging the school to add an accessibility widget to the website, ensuring it's functional on all student pages as well as the public facing pages (these can often be free).
- If sounds are going to be loud/sudden, ensure that there are warnings given with options of what to do if students are uncomfortable remaining in the space.
- Learn basic British Sign Language.
- Ensure all signage and labelling around the learning environment is consistent and of a decent size.

Finally, maintaining a sense of humour has been important for us here. We believe it should be embedded into accessibility as well. For example, our braille menus have jokes that only braille-readers will know; our image descriptions on our emails and website at times include humour rather than simply being functional. I've noticed there's often a preconceived and non-spoken idea that accessibility means serious. We are evidence that it doesn't have to be the case - and I think that's true in helping people relax in a creative subject classroom too.

Why is Music Technology important in schools?

Music and sound technology is embedded and entwined within most aspects of the teaching of music. It is how sounds are stored, manipulated, and consumed—there's no escaping it!

Although I was Head of Music

Technology, having now worked in the industry for nearly two decades, I don't really see the subject as a separate entity to music. I would far rather the world of technology was absorbed fully into the teaching and learning of music, sound, and the arts in general.

The employment opportunities in the world of sound technology are growing and the education system must provide for this work market. When employing new team members at the studio there's definitely a balance of skills required. There remains a level of musical sensitivity required for all sound jobs, even those centred around speech, foley and sound effects.

How are you involved with Music Technology in Education?

After many years purely focusing on running a commercial studio, I've missed what we can bring to the world of education. So, this year we've launched not only an onsite programme of training, we've developed an accessible online course that we're really proud of. Uniquely, the course welcomes the student into the world of sound, with backstage interviews, podcasts, live studio sessions, and in-person hybrid events. Definitely check out our brand-new Sculpt Course - an introduction to mixing. More to come too!

What words of wisdom could you offer?

From an observer of successful music schools there seems to be a correlation between the schools that form healthy partnerships with external organisations, practitioners, choirs, orchestras, studios, venues, and even other schools. I think this is true for anyone in music. Working in isolation, as so many bedroom producers do, often leads to one dimensional outcomes. It seems that the more collaborative and outward looking we are, the better the results are for everyone.

To find out more about Crown Lane Studio, check out www.crownlanestudio.co.uk



FALSE DICHOTOMIES IN MUSIC EDUCATION

Fairly frequently, Twitter kicks off about some kind of perceived dichotomy between the role of 'classical' and 'popular' music in education; this often seems to come from either a deliberately provocative 'hot take' (whatever that means), or because someone is looking through rose-tinted, decades-old spectacles at their own experience of music education. Now, aside from the fact that reducing all music ever to two very broad fields is absurd, the certainty that this will keep reappearing (remember the whole Mozart vs Stormzy nonsense?) suggests that we still haven't managed to square this particularly tricky circle.

I do not understand either position. I have never been able to figure out why anyone would create an entire curriculum around music that their pupils already know, encounter, and love; neither do I think that treating pupils as empty vessels to be filled, disregarding their existing musical interests, can lead to anywhere helpful. There has to be a middle ground which values and respects—but ultimately does not result in adults intruding upon—pupils' musical preferences and experiences, whilst providing windows into musical worlds that they never knew existed. Some of my most rewarding experiences as a teacher have come through introducing children to music that they would never have chosen for themselves, but the same is also true for a huge amount of music that they have shared with me over the years.

A similarly binary situation can arise when we consider the balance between innovation and tradition in music education (regardless of genre); in our attempt to innovate, there is a danger of throwing several tried-and-tested musical babies out with the bath water, in favour of a newly filled tub with lights, buttons, and a TikTok profile. Just because something is new and whizzy, doesn't mean it is necessarily good; just because something is older, doesn't mean it

Don Gillthorpe
Senior Assistant Headteacher
Ripley St Thomas CE Academy,
Lancaster



**We cannot possibly include everything
... so choices have to be made.**

should be disregarded (the brilliant Kodály method being a prime example).

The choices made when devising Key Stage 3 curriculums can fall into this trap: shine over substance, fun over fundamentals. The freedom offered by a scant National Curriculum is something about which other subjects are jealous, but this comes with a great deal of responsibility for curriculum leaders. In an hour a week over three years we have, at most, 117 hours of curriculum time to deliver a meaningful music education before the vast majority of pupils choose to opt out of academic music in KS4 and KS5. Where do we start? What is the point of those three years? What do we choose to include? By extension, what do we choose to omit?

The two false dichotomies above only serve to tie us in knots, do a disservice to our pupils, and sow division. The vast array of possible genres (practices?) to explore, both traditional and innovative, serve as potential vehicles for musical learning, rather than being ends in themselves. We cannot possibly include everything in such a short space of time and so choices have to be made. In order to do this, my recommendation to anyone constructing a curriculum, at any level, is to establish the sequence of musical learning (knowledge and understanding) which you want for

your pupils before doing anything else. Rather than making a pretty worksheet and then trying to shoehorn a Scheme of Learning around it, choose your musical intent first, as part of an overall sequence, and then design resources to meet that aim. Instead of deciding to 'do' baroque music with Year 8 (or blues, or Music Technology, or whatever...) and then trying to draw out useful learning, identify your musical aims at the start of the process and select a suitable genre which will best help to achieve these.

Rather than buying a class set of some fancy piece of tech. and then trying to figure out how to use it in every lesson, carefully plan what you want the children to learn and then buy the kit that will help you do that. Sometimes the answer will be to innovate, sometimes it will be to use a proven method from when Bach was a lad and this was all fields.

If you're a bit stuck with all this, don't know where to start, or would like to sense-check your thinking, do remember that the MTA is here to help. Get in touch if you would like to discuss your curriculum plans with an experienced colleague and we will make the contact for you; we are always stronger together.

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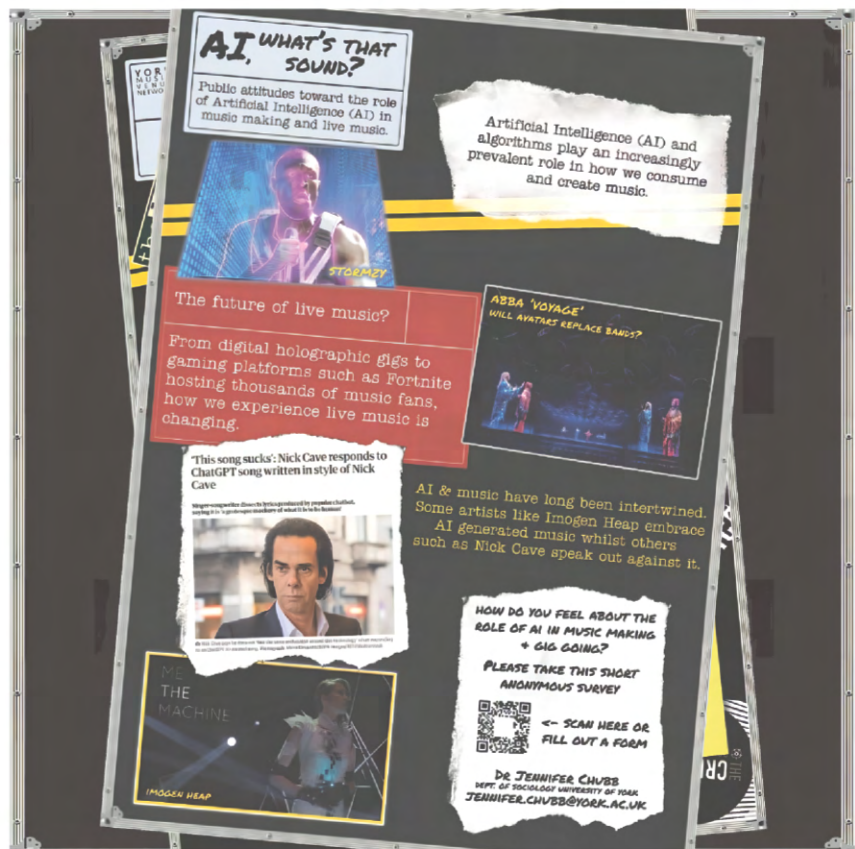
Dr Jennifer Chubb

Lecturer in Sociology, University of York

Public attitudes toward the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in music-making and live music.

Talk of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and algorithms is inescapable in today's society. You'd have to be hiding under a rock not to have heard of the popular chatbot Chat GTP for instance, one of the latest developments in AI causing a stir across almost every sector of everyday life. Music is no exception. Of course, AI and music have long been intertwined. The use of automation in music technology and in electronic music, for instance, have undergone many transformations over recent years. However, current advancements in AI models which identify and analyse component parts of music, such as rhythm, melody, and lyrical arrangement create new forms of music.

At the same time, our live music experience is changing too. Immersive live experiences such as ABBA's 'Voyage' famously launched a digital holographic concert. During the pandemic, augmented reality and streaming allowed us to experience virtual venues in the comfort of our own homes. From Fortnite to Minecraft, some of the world's biggest virtual gaming spaces have hosted gatherings of thousands of music fans. In this context, AI offers huge potential in how we access music. Further,



algorithms are influencing our music consumption and streaming behavior too. Want to know your 'year unwrapped'? Algorithms will do that for

you. Recommendation systems enable you to explore new and exciting genres and bands whilst record labels are urging platforms to stop AI from

scraping song data and claiming authorship in a bid to protect the rights of songwriters.

AI is seen to be becoming creative. AI can tell you a joke, paint a picture and tell you stories. Key questions arise though and here is my provocation, does AI know the joke is funny or understand the beauty of a painting or a piece of music? Who is the author of AI music-making? How intelligent are we really talking? Most experts would argue the answer is 'not very' and that it is the ability to feel, be spontaneous, express emotion and use situational judgment that distinguish humans from AI. Ultimately, the horse has bolted leaving us to question how we reimagine (and educate and teach) music in an age of AI.

My research is exploring some of these questions in a project focused on public attitudes to AI in music-making and gig-going. It can be said that AI divides opinion. Take, for instance, artist Nick Cave's vehement rejection of the use of AI in the songwriting process:

"This song sucks. What ChatGPT is, in this instance, is replication as travesty.

... Songs arise out of suffering, by which I mean they are predicated upon the complex, internal human struggle of creation and, well, as far as I know, algorithms don't feel. Data doesn't suffer." Nick Cave, The Red Hand Flies.

At the same time, artist Imogen Heap who used AI during the songwriting process described the experience as *"doing what I hoped it would do, which is what I hope AI will do for all musicians, which is to push us to the*

next level of our own creativity".

In this context, AI is pushing the boundaries of creativity, not replacing it. For others, like Nick Cave, AI can never replace the human 'feel' of music making. Both perspectives emerge clearly in preliminary analysis along with a range of nuance in between. Key concerns from musicians, gig-goers and producers emerge over authenticity, artistic essence, copyright, authorship and agency. Musicians are noted as a vocationally very vulnerable group and there are worries about role replacement. Conversely, those in support of AI do so with a view to maintaining some level of control over it. Using AI as another tool is generally supported but crucially only under the circumstances that songwriters are **transparent** about its use and that it supports human connection instead of removing it. Views differ across respondent type, suggestive of varying values ascribed to music making and gig-going.

Going forward, we might consider this provocation from one of our survey respondents that while the tools are increasingly available crafting songs is still an art and as these tools proliferate the digital divide may deepen:

I think to the layman, they see that anyone and their dog could be a hit artist by just typing some things into an AI engine, but we have kids with top studio grade DAWs, plugins and instruments in their bedroom yet only a minute percentage get past the idea it takes a lot of craft to produce a song. It'll become a different way of doing things but I don't think it will ever be as simple (or as cheap) as people may expect. (Participant 58 AIWTS)

...AI is pushing the boundaries of creativity, not replacing it.

Ultimately, can we reimagine music-making and education with AI? How far are we willing to go as educators, musicians and producers? AI is here to stay and regulation is lacking. We must work with these tools and educate students about the ethics of their use alongside balancing innovation with the need for authenticity protecting the craft.

The 'AI, What's that Sound' project explores public perception of AI drawing from interviews and survey data from musicians, sound designers, documentary film-makers, gig-goers and the general public. To take part in this research visit:



<https://bit.ly/AIMUSICSURVEY> or contact jennifer.chubb@york.ac.uk to find out more.

Dr Jenn Chubb is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of York. Jenn's research focuses on the interplay between science and society. To date, Jenn's work has focused heavily on the role of AI in the creative industries - in her project 'AI, what's that sound?', she explores approaches and public attitudes to the sonic framing of AI in narratives and stories. Her interests also include cultural impact, significance and future of music venues and music making with digital technology. Jenn is a musician, a strings and bass player in York band This House is Haunted. She is an advocate for women in DIY live music.

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“ **Playing many video games is both a social and an immersive experience for large numbers of young people and as such this is music that, over the hours spent mastering and completing a game, becomes firmly embedded in the memory.**

GAMING MUSIC: FROM CONSOLE TO CLASSROOM



Mark Wilderspin
Director of Music and Head of
Creative Faculty (Co-curricular),
St Paul's School

The video gaming industry is an enormous area of creative growth at the moment and, in recent years, the music for video games itself has gained a higher profile and a wider audience. Indeed, there was even a Gaming Music showcase as part of the BBC Proms in 2022. It is therefore no wonder that our pupils are finding this music engaging. In the past few years I've seen pupils choose to give presentations and talks on gaming music and have even had GCSE students offer piano transcriptions of video game cues as performance NEA! It is also music that they seem happy to listen to away from the context of the original game, for pleasure.

It's not hard to see why there is appeal for this music. Playing many video games is both a social and an immersive experience for large numbers of young people and as such this is music that, over the hours spent mastering and completing a game, becomes firmly embedded in the memory. At its best, it can be as moving and as sophisticated as anything that they might hear in a film and can play a key part in enhancing and enriching that immersive gaming experience. Much of the music that has been written for Japanese-developed titles, in particular, also has a neo-classical melodic charm that does prompt repeated listening away from its original context. This is certainly true of the works of Nobuo Uematsu, whose scores for the Final Fantasy series of games have amassed legions of fans and have benefited from orchestral arrangement and piano transcriptions that have given his music a secondary set of consumer experiences that, in some cases, have long outlived the obsolete consoles for which it was originally written.

As a mirror to the 'arranging up' of Uematsu's scores, the whole genre of chiptune (where popular songs and pieces are 'arranged down' to sound like they come from old 8-bit consoles) seems to have derived from a fondness and nostalgia for the primitive sound chips of games consoles of the 1980s. Whilst it may not be able to claim kinship with the 200-year history of symphonic programmatic music, or even the 100-year history of music in cinema, video game music clearly already has a history and legacy, albeit one that has emerged and developed rapidly over the course of around forty five years. In that time, we have moved from the simplest four-note motif repeating endlessly (but getting gradually faster as the aliens get closer) in Space Invaders to sophisticated orchestral music recorded with the kind of resources that approach a fully-fledged film score. In between, composers for video games have had to be

pioneers and push the possibilities of the technology as it has developed. Take the opening bars of Koji Kondo's iconic theme to Super Mario Bros (1985). It's instantly recognisable, perhaps even part of our common cultural capital. But writing the theme also required working with real limitations: the early Nintendo sound chips only had three-note polyphony and a single white noise channel – hence the somewhat stark opening dominant ninth formed only with root, third and ninth. And Kondo had to program all the music himself in BASIC! The luxury of porting over a MIDI file from the composer's DAW of choice was still some years away.

...music that is going to be repeated would rely more heavily on strong melodic hooks and rhythmic interest.

Gaming music has made its way into syllabuses in recent years, too. I teach the Music for Media option for AQA A level and, whilst gaming music is a footnote contribution of someone like Hans Zimmer, Michael Giacchino has the unusual distinction of having provided the first "orchestral" gaming score with Jurassic World for the Sony Playstation in 1997, and one of the named composers is Nobuo Uematsu. However, even within his career, there have been stylistic changes motivated by technical considerations as gaming technology has developed.

Hearing how this music works requires a different mentality to the way we approach analysing other styles of music, even other music for media. Early video game cues relied on simple looping and therefore repetition would not easily sync deliberately with player action. That means composers would rely on obvious musical tropes and gestures to merely suggest the right mood (such as "Bombing Mission" from Uematsu's score to Final Fantasy VII). It also meant that music that is going to be repeated would rely more heavily on strong melodic hooks and rhythmic interest. And, of course, the skill and experience of the player is a factor, too: a player starting a level for the first time might hear a cue looped several times before another is triggered.

In more recent times, the experience of the score is often not even linear in the sense of moving from bar to bar until the end. With the advent of being able to sequence, layer and process high-quality audio stems in real-time, however, the musical experience is much more like a film score that reacts in real-time to the player's actions. There may be various trigger points to move between cues (or, more recently, layers of the same cue to create an analogue for the intensity of the player's experience at any one time). Elements of the score may be randomised to ensure that the music doesn't loop obviously or over too short a time. And musical texture is likely to be more fluid as the player negotiates the challenges of the game. Studying the scores to the more recent Red Dead Redemption games will give you a good example of this. As your character wanders the vast open spaces of the map, the music is an ever-present and somewhat reassuring soundscape, providing an almost seamless and immersive experience. Analysing the effects of each scoring style, whether early or contemporary, therefore requires different techniques and contextual awareness, not least understanding the technical capabilities and limitations of the audio engine in question.

...there is no reason why gaming shouldn't be used as a stimulus for creative work in both melody and harmony at earlier key stages.

Using gaming experiences to foster good ideas in composition can also be fruitful in the classroom, though there is a caveat similar to writing "film music" in that writing genuinely compelling video game music is very difficult without an actual game to work to! But, with a clear and detailed brief, there is no reason why gaming shouldn't be used as a stimulus for creative work in both melody and harmony at earlier key stages, or developing skills in texture and rhythm at A level (aspects of composition that tend to get lost in the quest for more sophisticated thematic writing or harmonic surety). Because the 45-year legacy of gaming music has always had a strong connection with repetition at

one level or another, this is a style of composition that is ideally suited to DAW-savvy pupils, rather than those who work mainly with scorewriting packages. That is because the intuitive way of interacting with the software is to work with loops and layers. Getting pupils to break down their ideas into separate textural strata and to experiment with combinations of these is a good starting point. Then see how many ideas they can make work alongside each other in combination as possible. It's a good skill, and will open up useful questions of balancing different rhythms and melodic ideas in counterpoint. It will also get students to challenge and question when things don't work together and why. Are there too many notes fighting for supremacy in the bass register? Are the rhythms fighting with each other rather than collaborating? Does it feel too muddy? These are all good problems to solve. Most pupils will have heard Hans Zimmer's "Time" from Inception (or at least the album version that appears nowhere in the film). This can be a useful model for the kinds of layers that might prove useful when generating a sonic landscape for your hypothetical game.

Given that video games are rapidly achieving parity in their cultural significance as film, it's important for us to be aware of the developments here as we would with other genres of music. And it's certainly true that our pupils are engaging with and consuming this music with much enthusiasm. Tapping into this enthusiasm can be fruitful in the classroom, whether your syllabus specifically covers the genre or not. And I believe there is a great deal for us all to learn about the principles of gaming music, especially in the way that it refutes the accepted linear audio experience.



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COMPOSING AND INNOVATION

One of the great features of the MTA is the growing offer for members, driven by the membership itself. On the first Monday of each month, Liz Dunbar and James Manwaring host 'Music Teacher Mondays', carefully themed to reflect what could be on the minds of teachers at various points during the academic year.



Catherine Barker

Head of Music and Performing Arts at United Learning and President of the Music Teachers' Association

In March, the session theme was 'Composition' featuring a very special guest: renowned composer and current Master of the King's Music, Judith Weir. With 'innovation' as the theme of this edition of Ensemble, I thought it would be interesting to reflect on the MT Monday through this lens and ask the question: in composing, to what extent is innovation at play?

For many students, and teachers, composing can be the most challenging aspect of the curriculum to cover. Many of us in education don't necessarily identify as creators. This is understandable, given the diverse roles that we take on as music teachers (leaders and directors, tutors, facilitators, cheerleaders, administrators, programmers – the list goes on). As a career composer, Judith's primary aim is to create new works. Amazingly, the role in the Royal household has existed for 400 years, steeped within a tradition and organisation that famously changes very slowly. Despite this, she has a large amount of freedom when writing for Royal and national occasions. Her only consideration: to write for the occasion.

Starting points

Judith's process starts with thinking about the resources in the broadest sense; how many instruments or singers will be involved in the event? What will they be able to do? Knowing the performers is particularly relevant in a school context when we are arranging for ensembles, and Judith similarly has this experience when writing for Royal events. A Jubilee is a rather vague occasion, where there is

no particular indication of the musical character needed. However, if the event is at St Paul's, there is potential for boys' voices (trebles) with organ. Trebles are very young, some only eight years old, and so the melody needs to be simple and floating. The more challenging part goes to the adults in the choir.

It is likely that the service will be loud—with fanfare—so her music might be better in a contrasting mood, quiet and reflective. From here, the hardest part of the process is settling on the text: for her once a section in the bible was found with appropriate message (wisdom), this was a great help. Words are very important as they can suggest rhythm, melodic shape and atmosphere.

All of this provided clarity for when composing started. The forces involved and the brief itself, even if it is not prescriptive, made many of the decisions for Judith when she was writing for the Jubilee.

Bring together the things that you know about the task, and then it might not take too long when you actually start writing. Judith Weir

She also noted that inspiration can come from anywhere. Even a non-musical theme, where there is nothing on the paper or the screen, can be a very good starting point. Judith wrote a piece inspired by a forest; for the first few months she simply thought about forests, what they look like and what a piece of music could do. It's not necessary to think about music at all, and it can even generate more musical

ideas (and certainly more than if looking at blank stave or DAW).

The role of listening

Judith had recently attended a performance of Berlioz's *Symphony Fantastique*. A bass tremolo in the work inspired an idea for a long bass tremolo that she may use elsewhere in her own work. Picking up on little ideas, even two or three bars, discovering what is happening and then imitating the idea, is a starting point for something new.

Liz Dunbar also described her approach: starting with a class playlist—discovering what students love—then the structure of one of these pieces could be taken as a starting point for their own piece. She also teaches students how to write 'recipes' for composition modelling, using existing pieces of music. Through analysis and discussion, students learn how to identify and handle specific devices, enabling them to reverse engineer elements of the piece and create a new work as a result. To this, Judith commented that post-war, being original was a big thing in music. However, there is absolutely nothing wrong with taking inspiration from elsewhere. It will always sound different, unless you have completely copied it!

In the whole of music we are standing on the shoulders of others. JW

Using musical clichés can be purposeful; these too can be analysed and then put to good use in compositions. For example, a chord or cadence or a typical structural device

can be helpful. James Manwaring noted that he often draws attention to features of music during school ensemble rehearsals, such as melodic shapes or devices, particularly for Year 11s to lift and make use of in their own GCSE work.

A wide range of listening, reflecting changing tastes and influences, was also discussed. Judith had studied with John Tavener, and she reflected that she often thinks about his approach. Performing musicians, as well as other composers, can also be inspiring.

Composition processes

Freedom seems to be more at play in the second stage of Judith's ideation process; she described this (in a typically self-deprecating way) as improvisatory. With one hand playing a few notes or chords, she listens intently; playing the sounds with a physical sensation of the music is important to her. From here, the music is then developed: a melody or a simple line of chords. This can be as simple as a row of notes, it can even be a row of semibreves – all is better than nothing. Sometimes she will almost randomly play on the piano and pick out pitches. Or, she may take a favourite chord and then transpose it up or down and see what it sounds like in a new guise. Early sketches for a composition can look like harmony exercises, like a row of simple three part chords. Experimentation came across strongly.

Sometimes we expect lots of composing too soon, but the early stages can be slow. JW

When confidence is low in composers, beginning with simple starting points – a rhythm, or a short sung phrase, then working with what they have in the room, can be a good strategy. Liz encourages her students to not fear making mistakes or taking time, comparing the process to being just like a potter: you have to throw a lot of pots before you create a good one.

Liz, Judith and James reflected that these new ideas, both small and large scale, benefit from repetition. So much of music has repeating sections. Listeners welcome repetition, as it is something to hang on to, and musicians like repetition as it is more straightforward to learn and rehearse. Repetition can feature even in a single strand of melody, like using a sequence; even a simple piece of material can have huge potential.

Say it again, it was so good - say it again! Liz Dunbar

All agreed that there is a fundamental misconception with students' use of tonality and harmony, that leads them to think they are in some way 'breaking the rules of composition' if they aren't employing harmony in a functional way. What is necessary is consistency of style, and for first time or inexperienced composers, that consistency is learnt through exposure to a broad spectrum of repertoire and conversations about how and why great music has integrity.

For Judith, creativity requires the correct atmosphere - relaxed, with longer chunks of time available for work. Small bursts of time are better suited for adding performance directions, but a span of an hour is better for writing. With time on her side she is able to allow her subconscious to work and new ideas can appear as and when work restarts. New ideas may also require going back a stage, before trying again. Or, if there is a creative block, moving to another section of the piece (writing the final few bars) can generate new thinking. Importantly: if an idea doesn't work, it isn't discarded but laid to one side. A week later, the idea might be useful.

The social practice of composition

In her formative years, Judith formed a 'band' with a group of friends. The eclectic combination of instruments, accordion, oboe, cello, was a starting point for arrangements and playing these together - which was enjoyable. That was the catalyst for writing more: the pressure for formal harmony can drop away when there is a mixture of instruments, plus the clear social benefits of playing together increased motivation and her engagement with being involved in music-making. This resonated with James, who encourages his musicians who are just 'hanging out' in the music room to improvise together, despite there being a random collection of instruments.

Judith's favourite works from her own back-catalogue are invariably linked to their performances; she described some wonderful young performers who have reimaged her compositions. She tends to rework a composition after the first performance – live musicians can give great feedback. Similarly, young composers having their piece played by their fellow students can be a really useful exercise, making sure that it works on the instrument. Getting away from the screen can offer an

opportunity for the musicians themselves to suggest ways of working. Following the conventions of an instrument – another type of rule to follow – is an important ingredient of the composition process.

A composer could be seen as a creator who works mostly in isolation, but collaboration came across strongly in the discussion, both when working with musicians and workshopping a piece, or simply getting feedback from fresh eyes and ears. In the classroom this can be from a teacher or even another student.

James began the webinar with a profound statement, describing creating music as a 'way of being'. As composition is something that we all have to do, it can and should be so much more than just one lesson. For him, it is a way of teaching students about music and is an activity that is embedded in curriculum, using composition to learn as well as being regularly practiced. As students explore music, they turn to composing, to playing their instruments, to listening. And none of these musical practices are atomistic: we can't play or compose without listening.

My takeaway: in composition, innovation is at play to an extent. But – it requires structures, constraints, methodology. It shouldn't be in isolation. And it is a way of being, particularly for Judith Weir. There is much to learn for us as educators, and creators ourselves.

MTA Members can catch up on the session on the Membership area of the website.

Judith Weir's reflections on the session can be found here:



Her Jubilee Anthem 'By Wisdom' can be found on YouTube here:



IS THERE A PLACE FOR VIRTUAL REALITY IN INDIVIDUAL INSTRUMENTAL TUITION?

Will virtual reality headsets be a common feature of the instrumental lesson of the future? Ben Sellers, leader of Wiltshire Music Connect's 'Over the Digital Horizon project' writes about a unique research project that aims to shed light on this very question.



Ben Sellers

Leader in inclusive music pedagogy
Associate Musician at Drake Music
Inclusion specialist at Charanga

Is it possible to identify the first use of technology in an instrumental lesson? Was it the metronome in the early 1800s, or perhaps the first printed music in the 1400s? What we can be certain of is that the pace of technological development, and the amount of technology used in instrumental learning, has increased exponentially in the past few years. This trend follows wider societal shifts, most notably the development of the smartphone, a device that allows each of us to tune our instrument, download repertoire, record and listen back to our playing and even create and email audition videos with minimal fuss or cost.

What might be the next piece of hardware that radically changes the way we live and learn? One strong contender would be the virtual reality headset. The Meta Quest 2 VR headset is used widely (its app was top of the US app charts for the last two Christmases in a row) and it is likely that at least some of your pupils have access to a VR headset at home.

I first put a VR headset on a few years ago along with a group of pupils, and was able to watch a performance by the Philharmonia Orchestra as if I was there, turning my head to look around into the audience and moving between different areas of the orchestra. As an 'immersive experience' it is undeniably impressive, but how about as a teaching tool?

VR Piano Technology

There are now several apps available for the Meta Quest that claim to allow a user to 'learn to play' the piano. Those familiar with Guitar Hero will recognise the concept: moving coloured blocks overlaid over the user's real life keyboard,

As an 'immersive experience' it is undeniably impressive, but how about as a teaching tool?

signifying which key to press when. It provides a more immediate visual alternative to staff notation and 'gamifies' the learning process: users are told exactly how many notes they played correctly, and receive stars and other rewards as their playing becomes more accurate. In addition, apps allow users to slow down the piece, practise one hand at a time and loop tricky sections. Some are even beginning to use artificial intelligence to highlight areas of the piece that need work and suggest practice routines.

This approach will appeal to many learners, but as instrumental teachers we know that there is much more to learning an instrument than 'putting your hands in the right place at the right time'. What about phrasing, dynamics, articulation, posture and some good old human encouragement? It is clear to me that apps like the ones described cannot *replace* human teachers, but they might enhance certain elements of the learning process.

The Experiment

This is the premise on which a unique and very exciting experiment is about to begin. We have developed a partnership between the Royal College of Music, four music education hubs - Wiltshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk - and several secondary schools to explore the question:



In what ways can a virtual reality piano app support piano tuition for beginner pupils aged 13-16?

We will work with eight piano tutors and 32 beginner pupils for ten weeks. Half of the pupils will use a VR headset as part of their lessons, and also have a headset to take home and practise with. The other half will have regular lessons with no access to headsets. Tutors will be free to use the headsets in their lessons as much or as little as they like, and a team of researchers from the RCM will gather data from tutor diaries, questionnaires and focus groups, and compare the progress made between the two groups of pupils. We will consider whether access to VR increases pupil engagement and progress, including their motivation to practise at home. We will ask how the use of VR headsets in lessons affects what tutors teach and how they teach it, and we will also see if there are any ways that the software could be developed to better support teaching and learning.

Repertoire acquisition & Gamification

The specific app that we will be using for the research is called Pianovision, and is freely available on the Meta Quest app store. As a jazz clarinet player whose piano playing skills can best be described as 'jam along', I have been using the app myself to learn some simple classical pieces and was able to get to a point where a given piece sounded respectable much more quickly than when working from staff notation.

Each of the headsets has repertoire from the beginner books that the teachers will use pre-loaded, so my guess is that

One possible side effect of this new approach to learning is that pupils will need more convincing as to the value of staff notation.

pupils will be able to learn about fingering and hand position in their lesson, and then practise using the app. My hunch is that the strong visual stimuli, similarity with computer games and ability to progress at a relatively fast pace will engage participants for longer and lead to increased time spent practising and accelerated progression.

Notation

One possible side effect of this new approach to learning is that pupils will need more convincing as to the value of staff notation. The core argument for learning to sight read, to be able to play the music they love as well as discover new music, has already been eroded by the many 'cascade' style youtube videos that use a similar visual approach.

However, what happens when the pupil wants to play for someone else? Are they going to keep their headset on, and be completely disconnected from their audience? Are they going to memorise the piece before they are able to take their headset off and play? Or do they need to use a combination of VR and notation learning so that they can take their learning out of the virtual world and into the real one? Though it will require more work, my guess (and hope) is the latter. This is another reason why a human tutor is essential in a pupil's learning journey.



Tutor buy-in is key

I would love to stop each reader at this point and ask: 'what is your response to everything that you have read so far?'. It may be that you find the concept really exciting and are keen to try it out yourself. You may have a strong negative reaction to the idea of a pupil wearing a headset in your lesson, feeling it could disconnect tutor and pupil and lead to poor playing and learning habits. You may, like many of the tutors involved in the project, see the potential but have questions about how it might play out in practice.

Each of these responses is important because pupils' experience with the technology does not happen in a vacuum. Tutors are the gatekeepers and guides of each pupil's learning journey, and experts in instrument pedagogy. Without tutor buy-in there may be people who want to learn piano with VR, but they are unlikely to be able to do so effectively. Therefore, alongside exploring whether VR does indeed increase pupil engagement and progress, my role in the research is to explore tutors' attitudes to the technology before, during and after the project. The tutors on the project come from a range of stylistic and pedagogical backgrounds, and I am keen to see how the VR is used with a range of teaching styles and approaches.

Possible future developments

This piece of research is likely to be the first of many that explores the impact of virtual and augmented reality systems on instrumental tuition. Apart from diversifying into more instruments (unlike many other instruments the piano has the advantage of being stationary, and so easier to 'map' a virtual world onto, but similar systems for guitar are already in development), a natural next step would be to look at whether intermediate piano pupils - those who have been

playing for some time, but whose sight reading skills are preventing them mastering repertoire as quickly as they would like - benefit from using a VR system. Additionally, within improvisation, the app could highlight harmonic possibilities as the user experiments with different combinations. Finally, developing ways that indicate other musical elements, such as articulation and dynamics, could make a huge difference to a pupil's development of their musicianship.

Tutors as partners in development

Good instrumental tuition is flexible, pupil-centred and relational. Tutors are role models who provide access to ensembles and progression pathways. VR cannot do what a human tutor can do. However, that doesn't mean that others won't claim that it can. As experts in music and education we need to engage with developers now in order to shape what will come in future and its suitability for our profession. Developing evidence-based guidance on how VR can enhance, rather than replace, tutor-led instrumental teaching will support training and advocacy across music education and contribute to society's wider discussion of the role of VR in education. Through our partnership between tutors, hubs and the RCM, we hope to create an environment in which technologists, tutors and researchers can work together to create the best possible learning opportunities for pupils, increase pupil retention, and keep learning fun and relevant well into the 21st century.

Follow the project and find out more about the future of technology in music education:
<https://overthedigitalhorizon.org.uk>



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SEQUENCING FRAMEWORKS FOR KS3 COMPOSITION



Liz Dunbar
Creator and curator of
[@huntschoolmusic.com](https://www.huntschoolmusic.com)

Working from scratch as a composer is difficult. Faced with a blank page and silence, I'm lost. Give me a composition brief, a stimulus, a time frame, restricted forces, restricted resources - anything you like - and I'm off. My head starts filling with fragments of the music I've played, sung, written, and heard over the years. When students ask "how come you can do that and I can't?", my stock response is "because I've been on planet earth longer than you, that's all".

When composing using software, it's easy to fall into the 'blank page' trap. Swap out the blank piece of manuscript for a blank screen. It's an enormous barrier for even the most experienced composer, never mind students at KS3, GCSE and A level.

If you want everyone to feel like a composer in your classroom you need models, methods and musical recipes that have inroads for all students regardless of their starting point, and outlets for the more experienced and adventurous to fly.

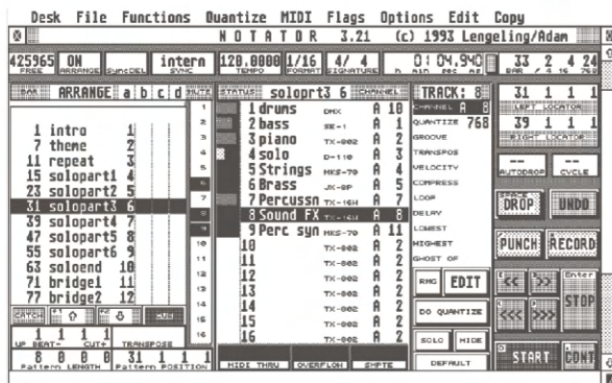
So, how do we equip our least experienced KS3 students so that they're not afraid of creating from scratch? How might we make composing the very reason they want to take GCSE, rather than the blocker? What are the incremental steps that lead students to a place where they are confident about working independently and bursting with ideas and techniques - ready to realise their musical ideas in sound?

I've been using sequencing software as an aid to composing, improvising and arranging for a long time. (Atari Notator....yep - that old)

What are the incremental steps that lead students to a place where they are confident about working independently and bursting with ideas and techniques - ready to realise their musical ideas in sound?

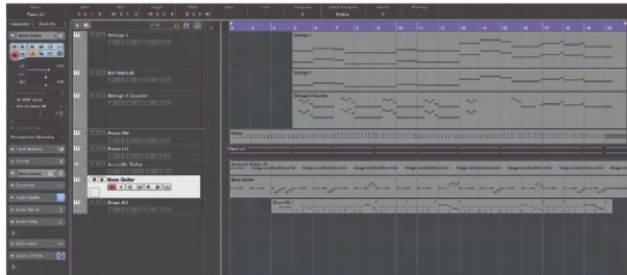
I'm lucky to work in a team where we talk endlessly about our classroom practice and try to improve what we do. During one of these conversations we talked about a common sticking point we were finding in students' sequenced composition work. While the opening 8 bars might work really nicely, the rest was just a festival of 'cut and paste' with a few holes for textural contrast. After much to-ing and fro-ing we distilled what the problem was. It was the fact that we were beginning the teaching of composition with a blank screen and an abstract task. Students weren't making a very good job of it because we weren't providing the right starting points. Nothing they created sounded anything like the music they were exploring in their listening, analysis and performance work. Composing was sitting apart from the rest of their KS3 curriculum experience. So we started building sequencing frameworks using pre-recorded tracks for students to improvise, compose and arrange inside. It changed everything.

Embedding tasks inside skeleton frameworks, that are based on existing pieces of music, has enabled more students to understand the purpose of what they're doing and create work that makes musical sense.



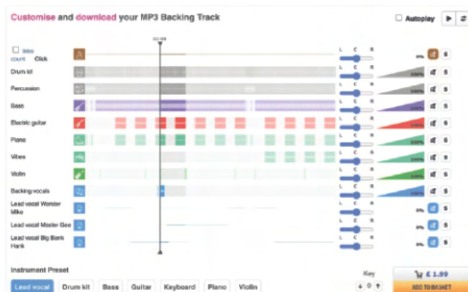
Five years on we have established three approaches to this.

(1) Pre-recorded audio and midi tracks recorded by us and embedded in the project e.g. this nice little 'Sherlock' exercise used to teach compound metre, harmony, chord inversions, pedal notes, sequential melodic writing, bass line writing, counter melodic writing.

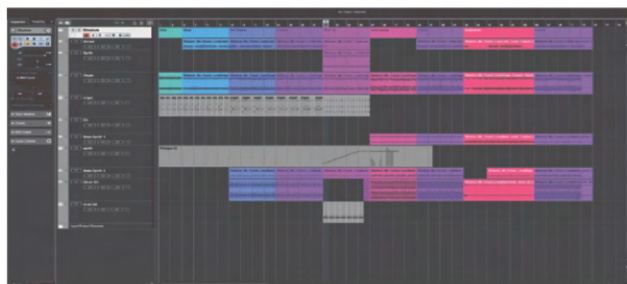


Scan here to see this action

(2) Pre-canned audio using individual tracks from arrangements created by www.karaoke-version.co.uk - a website my colleague Tim Burnage discovered. It's perfect for picking out parts that illustrate a specific compositional device. You audition all the tracks on the website, decide which tracks you would like in your mix, pay a couple of quid, download the .mp3 files and create a project that forms the 'skeleton' for students to work in.



(3) A mixture of us recording things and pre-canned audio.



Here are some of the benefits we have found from working like this when using sequencing software as a tool to support composing at KS3:

- It's a way of using material that is largely familiar to students as a starting point. (from this point we can move to unfamiliar repertoire across genres and where appropriate to the abstract)
- You can create entry points for all students regardless of their experience but with a real-world context (you could ask students to compose a 3-note ostinato, or a 4-note conjunct descending line in a blank project, but by using this embedded method, they can experience how those lines work in a complete piece of music eg. sitting inside 'Ostinato' from Holst's 'St Paul's Suite')
- Every time KS3 students use sequencing software as part of their training as composers, improvisers or arrangers, they are exposed to real structural frameworks (say goodbye to banal 'cut and paste', and hello to effective use of texture and meaningful architecture/story telling)
- You can flex every resource based on the cohort by providing a fuller or lighter framework. Some students will need more scaffolding than others, so you bespoke the template, either in advance or by responding live in the lesson.
- The more experience students gain, the lighter the framework can be, as devices and techniques become part of their musical thinking.
- It's a model that works all the way from straightforward copying in sound to absolute creative freedom.

If you're interested in how I created the video clips or examples of how you might go about embedding this kind of work in your own KS3 curriculum design, feel free to get in touch.

liz.dunbar.music@gmail.com

INNOVATION IN ENSEMBLES

Exploring a new way of learning with *Surround Sound*,
from National Children's Orchestras

Becky Cresswell

Communications Director
National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain

For young people, large ensemble playing facilitates teamwork, blend, collaboration, community; coming together to create something that cannot be achieved alone. However, there is a tension between the individual and the collective. The greatest orchestras around the world are those where the musicians speak with a unified voice, whilst also allowing individuals to shine. When teaching young musicians the skills of ensemble playing, there are inherent dangers that the process could become hierarchical, didactic and recreative rather than truly creative. At National Children's Orchestras we believe that creativity is what gives the art its meaning and value.

At NCO we want both the collective and the individual to flourish. We do this by keeping autonomy, identity and creativity at the heart of our approach to musical learning, and also through our dedicated creative music making strand, *Surround Sound*.

NCO's learning approach underpins the way we programme repertoire, the teams we choose to run our activities, how we prepare children online in advance of activities, how we rehearse, communicate and teach, and how we learn, listen, facilitate and care. That learning approach centres around our pillars – **Ambition and Excellence, Wellbeing, Creativity and Child Voice**.

Our three age-banded orchestras, who meet for week-long residentials, rehearse, refine and perform ambitious repertoire in ensembles of over 100 children. They also take part in *Surround Sound*, a series of creative music-making sessions which take their inspiration from the theme of the repertoire they are learning - anything from 'Toe tapping and Finger clicking', to 'Sounds of Home', and 'Dreams, Nightmares, Fantasies'. A dedicated Creative Lead designs the *Surround Sound* musical framework for each residential. This could be anything from template structures, modes and tonalities to work within, unifying rhythmic ideas, musical themes from the concert repertoire or sound worlds and textures.



All of this is shared in online training sessions with both the children and the tutors in advance of the residential, allowing time for the creative seed to be sown and for any bubbling ideas to have time to develop before we all meet in person.

During the residential week, the children then come together in mixed instrument *Surround Sound* groups of eight, each with a dedicated tutor to facilitate. They have three separate hour slots to create a 3 minute piece of music. Their creations are then performed in a celebratory in-house sharing. The sessions are guided by the children's ideas with gentle steering from the tutor to ensure all voices are heard, that the group stays focused and to provide help refining the final piece.

Surround Sound builds curiosity in our young musicians. How does music work? Why do composers write what they write? How should this understanding shape how I perform? This opens new avenues of musical exploration as well as strengthening the concert performance itself. For those children who go on to be music educators, professional musicians or take on other music industry roles, this curiosity will enable them to shape their own futures and has the power to innovate the sector and to attract new audiences to classical music. Through the tutors, who we support to facilitate *Surround Sound*, we also aspire to sow seeds of innovation through the industry.

Beyond the music, the creative skills children (and grown-ups!) learn are also transferable to other areas of life. These skills help us to generate new ideas of value and to create an Ethic of Excellence, where we constantly evaluate, feedback and refine our ideas. Time and time again we see *Surround Sound* foster confidence within our young people - those who may find aspects of more traditional learning tricky at times, often grow dramatically through working in a different way. Creativity helps us to appreciate individuality, diversity and collaboration. Creating a collaborative piece of art is a process where we define our goals, pool ideas, evaluate those ideas, we might combine some, or evolve them, we might disagree, we might find some new ideas and finally we create something of value that everyone owns. Working creatively also challenges students to think about who they really are, what they think and how they can make a difference. And finally, in a discipline that is so often predicated on creating 'perfection', creativity gives us permission to experiment and fail. It doesn't matter which walk of life we end up devoting our time to, the creative process helps us to understand how we might be fulfilled by appreciating and using our own individual skills. The mistakes and experiments along the way only make us better- if we do not fail at times, we will not truly be innovative, not truly be challenging and developing our ideas or fulfilling our potential.



“There is no success without risk and no risk without failure.”

Deborah Bull, Director, Cultural Partnerships, King's College London

“It's that one opportunity when you get to sit down and get creative with other amazing young musicians - it's a unique opportunity for me.”

NCO National Member, aged 14

In evaluating our activities we have learned that children enjoy the creative challenge of *Surround Sound*. They appreciate the variety of activities, the ownership, the sharing and a different, broader sense of team. Recently we witnessed children working beautifully together - responding sensitively, respectfully and with admiration for each other, as the different strengths of each child emerged during the creative process.

The children emerge from *Surround Sound* proud of their work and appreciative of their newly discovered skills. We've been delighted to see *Surround Sound* bring out the creativity and the voices of both the quieter and more introverted members of our orchestras and of the many neurodivergent young musicians we work with – these children regularly flourish and thrive in these sessions.

“Surround Sound made me explore my creativity as at the start of the week I had no idea what to play, but attending the sessions helped me to think about how I could contribute and make a piece of music. By the end of the week I felt very sure of myself and I could think of my own ideas.” NCO National Member aged 12

“There was a child who was feeling anxious in Main Orchestra rehearsals. But when he came into my Surround Sound group he was incredible, with lots of creative ideas. It was fantastic to see him so comfortable and his confidence blossomed each day.” NCO Music Tutor, 2022

“Everyone on the residential learns from each other, thanks to the support and clear engagement structure put in place for tutors and children alike, which generates the most amazing results.”

Liz Fyfe, NCO Music Tutor, 2022

Our music tutors are critical to the success of *Surround Sound*. They are supported at all times by the Creative Lead, who offers advice and drops into sessions to make suggestions. They also glean support informally from each other (there are 14 tutors at each residential!) learning what worked, what didn't, what we might do next. Having worked this way for six years now, we have seen that everyone learns through exploration, particularly when the final destination is unknown. Being comfortable with the unknown is perhaps the biggest challenge for us, as classically trained musicians. But the sense of pride and satisfaction in an interesting and open creative purpose, is alive and well in the tutors as well as the children. And the wonder and appreciation the adults feel - as we witness the children running with the ideas, creating a sense of team, leading the process themselves and emerging happy and proud - is well worth that brief discomfort!

“In Surround Sound the children experience a totally new way of learning. They experiment with ways to create, collaborate and explore their musicianship in a safe place.”

Hayley Wild, Music Tutor, 2022

“Surround Sound empowers young players to make their own musical decisions, as well as being an excellent exercise in team work and leadership skills”

Fraser Gordon, Music Tutor, 2022

Surround Sound is now in its sixth year and going from strength to strength. Inspiring, wonderful and impactful orchestral playing where the collective and the individual both thrive, is both a craft and an art. We concentrate exclusively on the craft at our peril!

INNOVATION IS OUR MODEL

Musicians and teachers have a huge wealth of reference when it comes to studying and admiring innovators. It is a joy to look in detail at those who shaped our industry, providing templates for creating, producing and performing music.

Whether it was Bach's use of tempered tuning to expand the sonic range of Western harmony, Edison's Phonograph, the first commercial device to play recorded analogue sounds, George Martin's production of the Sgt. Peppers album, pushing the limits of four-track recording, Jaco Pastorius taking the frets out of his 1962 Fender Jazz Bass to redefine what a bass virtuoso is and J Dilla's use of the Akai MPC3000 to humanise sampling, innovation is everywhere.

Whilst we admire the innovations of our favourite artists and composers, how many of us consider the innovators in music education? Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and Sarah Ann Glover for their research on how kinaesthetic skills and gestures helped us sight sing and internalise music without the need for notation. How about Christopher Smalls, who uncovered that 'musicking' is a by-product of the performer / composer or Ed Sarath's work on creating improvisational pedagogy to learn music theory, and Kenny Werner teaching us how to be effortlessly masterful by using mindfulness, making us aware of the inner struggles and unrest when making music? Whilst we never stop to think about the musical innovators we preach to our students, we must also remember that music teachers possess the power to innovate uniquely ourselves.

Why Innovate?

When I started my PGCE at Middlesex University, Sir Ken Robinson's 'Changing Education Paradigms' speech was one of the first videos played to my cohort. What struck me was how this speech seems at odds with the educational climate. Robinson's address might be provocative to some, but its tenet of education needing to modernise for a world ready for constant change is as necessary now as it was when I first saw it in 2014. Does education value innovation? Nick Gibb, Minister of State at the Department for Education, has a pragmatic view of innovation from his secondary school experience. Changes to education in the mid 1960s to late

1970s hampered his education and left an impression that change was only as good as proof of the intended outcome. Gibb's view should not be confused with sticking to tradition, but as he puts it, "If someone comes along and says phonics is great but there is this other thing, 'X', and it works better than phonics, then I will go on that course and see the evidence." (Tes.com, 2022)

“ Whilst we never stop to think about the musical innovators we preach to our students, we must also remember that music teachers possess the power to innovate uniquely ourselves.

Though I know nothing of the educational landscape at Gibb's time, I can relate to his necessity for innovation in education, backed up by research. Before my Master's study, I long held onto an idea about developing my teaching of improvisation. Still, I was too afraid to do anything about it, thinking that improvisation skills should be left to further and higher education programmes. Only when that idea became a full-blown voice in my head shouting, 'Do something about it!' did I investigate this and found that the teaching of music improvisation was



Mike Wright

Teacher of Music, Drama and Games,
MD for the Modern Music Ensemble
at Chigwell School

largely absent from secondary schools, thus beginning my research into developing improvisation in schools.

When I started playing music, I was motivated by finding new ways to compose and perform, and perhaps like many young musicians, I took the less obvious path in pursuit of a new one. The same was true when I started my PGCE, trialling new lesson planning and delivery methods. The problem with these approaches is that one can easily lose sight of the task; how many reinventions of the wheel would it take to stop spinning? How to find the balance between functionality and creativity in music teaching? Studying and researching is one way of forcing yourself to innovate your practice whilst improving your skillset. In Trinity Laban Conservatoire's MA Teaching Musician programme, I learned the significance of innovating through rigorous scrutiny of my research and ideas, invigorating my motivation to innovate my teaching practice.

The Culture to Innovate

Without making this article sound like a promotional piece for the MA Teaching Musician (Dr Rebecca Berkley runs a brilliant MA Education programme at the University of Reading as well!), committing my time, patience and energy to see how I can innovate my practice was the number one reason to study.

“ I have experienced what innovation can do to music education, and it has set me on a course of discovery and a lifelong purpose to innovate.

Finding innovative approaches to improvisational pedagogy split into two camps: do I want to fill a knowledge gap, or do I want to prove a theory? Provocations like these are imperative to innovation, especially if one desires transformation. This is where the Teaching Musician programme excelled, designing assignments to work in situations that compelled you to find or make your conclusions of innovative practice. Without my experience working with Phil Meadows at the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, I may not have been inspired to research what strategies, activities and methods the music teaching community uses for improvisation, or at the very least, suggest getting Michael League of Snarky Puppy to do a workshop over a few beers! Or the 'Technology in Music Education' assignment, which pushed my rationale for technology's use in music teaching and remote learning, also seeing my Year 4's use technology as an instrument to make music in ways they probably would never have used if using 'traditional' instruments. I also researched other academics, seeing how music academics have found their innovations.

Pamela Bernard's research on the salience of silence in performance revealed that a performer's use of silence (rests, phrases, space etc.) could be equally defining to their sound as the pitch/rhythm they play. There was also Dave Camlin's research that music operates in three dimensions; the 'performance' (performer, music), the 'participator' (audience, culture) and between these two, the 'paramusical' (binding the latter two together).

A Rationale to Innovate

This led to my dissertation on which strategies, activities and methods are most effective when teaching music improvisation in secondary schools. The

innovations came from the survey questionnaire and interviewees, who were kind enough to share their approaches and thoughts when teaching improvisation. Some surprising results came from improvisation used for devising performance, the neuroscience behind obtaining improvisational language and reasons why music education has yet to embrace improvisation. One aspect from the unpacking of my results suggests that improvisation could be viewed as a renegade to music education, going against how music teaching is structured and dominant towards notated music. If we choose to be innovative, there must be a cost in introducing new approaches, and if we need proof that some innovations could benefit us, we need to account for the risks in equal measure. This is something I consider as I embark on my motives for promoting music improvisation.

Having the privilege to be up-close and learn from current innovators in music research is something I never thought possible. I have experienced what innovation can do to music education, and it has set me on a course of discovery and a lifelong purpose to find my innovations. Although improvisation in music is not innovative, developing its pedagogy as part of my new department could kickstart unique and stimulating ways to make music. It may inspire other departments to do the same and find their innovations. Whilst I ride the wave of creative euphoria, balancing my ambitions to innovate and not alienate others will be imperative. Innovation can come at a cost, particularly if one creates too much change in a short space of time. Innovators had to sacrifice time and energy and experience many failures and rejections before their idea(s) became accepted.

The best innovations we music teachers can make is to enhance our experiences as musicians by shining a brighter

spotlight on them. Much like my concept of conveying my improvisation skillset to my students, I would not have known my innovation was part of a burgeoning community of like-minded music educators who care profoundly about developing improvisation in education. Innovation, therefore, is a choice we make dependent on our values and ethics. Not all innovations you make during your career must be paradigm-shifting, but they will be beneficial to the people who matter the most: your students.

Final Thoughts

In a high-pressured and political profession such as teaching, the risks of change and creativity must be met with trepidation and proof that new ideas can make a significant impact. It is also worth noting that you do not need further study to develop your creativity. A search on Twitter, MTA Staffroom Facebook group or going to MTA conferences can provide the spark to innovate as it did for me when Marion Friend suggested looking into the Teaching Musician programme to solve my existential quandary of spinning wheels, creatively speaking.

Further study helped me understand the untapped potential of the latter two in music education and gave me the headspace to incubate my ideas, and platform to share my findings with my peers. You might be fortunate enough to create new approaches to music teaching that have a similar influence to Jaques-Dalcroze and Glover et al, or create something that benefits your school for many years.

The question is, how innovative do you want to be? And if you want to transform, how willing are you to defend your ideas? And what will be the impact on you and your students?

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INSPIRATION

RANDOMNESS LEADING TO QUALITY MUSICAL LEARNING? HELP!

It would be so easy to respond, “well it's obvious, music is a creative subject” when considering the title of this question. However, there's a huge “disconnect” between where people begin their musical journey and the inspiration that led them to start it in the first place.



Robin Harrison
The Maestro Online

For me, my greatest inspirations were diverse. Firstly, I came from a musically-interested family. As an improviser I heard Harry Connick Junior perform “It Had to be You” live on Channel 4 at around the age of 15. As an organist, hearing David Titterington playing some Frank Bridge in The Proms on BBC Radio 3 was a pinnacle moment that eventually led to my research and PhD on the Late Style of Frank Bridge.

Once you have an inspiration, you decide to pursue instrument lessons. Your lessons might have begun a little like this: “This symbol means play this note with this finger for this length of time”. That's how my lessons began as a child. What inspired me originally? The sound of great musicians. What did the lessons teach me? Mechanics and robotic cloning. Was I still inspired? Well, a little bit, but eventually it began to tire.

How about improvisation and composition? Is there a distinction between performer and improviser? I had the great opportunity to live with a tribe in Gambia and study with two tribes in South Africa. In Africa there often isn't even a distinction between performer and audience as all are involved in tribal singing and dance (I experienced this personally, with the Mandinku tribe in Gambia). In the Renaissance and Baroque composers were not historically separate from 'improvisers' or 'performers' because they had formulas (now termed “partimenti”) that they learned and experimented with. They didn't start with “xxx's Easiest Piano Course”, nor did they start with middle C or keep their thumbs in a particular place for a couple of months. CPE Bach's, “Art of Playing Keyboard” is certainly a hefty text book (Mozart clearly learned from it), but unlike the modern equivalents, it talks about ornaments, figured bass, how to create an accompaniment with a chord progression and so forth. It is full of intense theory, but “learned through doing”.

The challenge is creating an education that starts from the inspiration, embeds the necessary technique and theory whilst maintaining spontaneity and creativity. It was a delight to make contact with the wonderful composer Will Todd recently when recording new masterclasses for The Maestro Online. Will talks about how he starts with an hour free improvisation in the morning with an attempt to keep the connection with his 'inner child', the desire to just have fun, creativity and spontaneity, responding to an instrument and what he feels and hears. He also says that if you haven't surprised yourself then you haven't achieved what you want in your practice session. “Surprise, surprise” (in my best Cilla Black voice)!!

The problem with improvisation as an educational method is that the options are almost unlimited, so “where do I start?” Stravinsky was famous for describing a blank piece of manuscript as the most daunting thing because he had too many options, but once he had two notes down, he knew where he was going. The best thing is to limit your options and then your mind becomes much more creative.

However, improvisation and creativity is at the heart of all that I do. Structured improvisation is the very way that I teach piano, organ, singing and more. It teaches theory rapidly and from the word 'go'. It develops a sense of understanding vastly beyond clone-like robotic learning. It puts “creativity” right back at the centre of “musical teaching”.

I would welcome correspondence, dialogue, debate, and ideas including collaborations on educational matters relating to my platform <https://the-maestro-online.com>

Dr Robin Harrison FRSA FGMS, “The Maestro Online” created an online educational platform with a complete difference, including celebrity masterclasses. Part of his educational pedagogy is published by Routledge. He is fortunate to be part of the Royal College of Organists Academy teachers and really enjoys teaching at their International Summer School.

ABRSM - WORKING ON WIDENING ACCESS

For most music teachers and learners, ABRSM is synonymous with exams and everything that goes with them. But ABRSM is so much more than an awarding organisation and has a clear ambition to enable more people to be inspired to learn, teach and make music, as Chief Executive Chris Cobb explains.



Chris Cobb
Chief Executive at ABRSM

Like so many in the music education sector, we would like to see a world in which people from all backgrounds are inspired to play, make and teach a rich diversity of music. This is something we always come back to, whether reviewing what we offer now or developing new support for music making, new resources to support learning and teaching or new approaches to tracking progression.

We want learners to discover repertoire they love that reflects the world around them. Working closely with partners such as Black Lives in Music, the Ivors Academy and the Musicians' Union, we're making our syllabuses and publications more diverse and inclusive. By commissioning new music and seeking out, supporting and mentoring composers from different backgrounds and traditions we're gradually making this happen. We're also excited to be working with our new Artistic Director, Alexis Ffrench, whose wide experience and knowledge is helping to shape future projects.

Partnerships are key to our efforts to widen access to music making and progression. Our fair access arrangements and adjustments have always been there to help those with specific needs who want to take an exam, but by working with others we can support even more musicians. We're sponsors of the National Open Youth Orchestra, we work with The OHMI Trust, who promote music making for people with limb differences, and we're supporting London's Tri-Borough Music Hub with their sector-leading work in fairness, diversity and inclusion. We're also exploring ways to support musicians learning the Clarion, an instrument you can play with any movement of the body, including head or eye movement.

Other sponsorship activities focus on initiatives that increase access, such as the RPS Women Conductors programme, the London Music Fund and outreach projects run by the National Youth Orchestra and National Youth Jazz Orchestra. Our expanded international sponsorship fund, Play On, is there to support similar activities around the world.

Supporting teachers is another way we're making a difference. With 200 pieces of music and accompanying lessons plans, Classroom 200 is helping teachers bring all kinds of music to life in their lessons. And it's free! For teachers looking for CPD, our Teacher Hub offers free and paid for courses alongside resources and a place to share experiences.

We want learners to discover repertoire they love that reflects the world around them.

Where assessments are concerned, our digital on-demand Performance Grades are providing greater choice, making it easier for learners to take the right exam at the right time. They open up opportunities to musicians who have learned to play by ear or who may benefit from playing in well-known surroundings or on a familiar instrument. To give more young musicians access to our exams, we also have an exam discount scheme, administered by Music Mark.

This is just a snapshot of current ABRSM activities. When it comes to widening access, there's always more we can do and our focus will always be on creating opportunities to encourage, support and celebrate music making, teaching and learning.

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ENTICING YOUNG MUSICIANS TO TRY THE ORGAN

David has been playing the organ since the tender age of 12 and, 55 years later, he is still passionate about keeping the instrument alive for young players.



David Mason

Chairman & Owner,
Viscount Classical Organs

Today it's tricky catching and holding young people's attention for any length of time, isn't it? Teachers have to look at innovative or creative ways to spark the flame of interest.

In years gone by, enticing youngsters to try the Organ was feat in itself.

Stumped by obstacles like: access to churches; restrictive playing times outside of school; and a general lack of support for young organists as a whole - we can see why that was.

However, since 2015, when we re-energised our focus on the next generation of organists, we have found that youngsters are pretty intrigued about this fascinating instrument and, given the chance, they will jump at learning to play it!

Here are some ideas on how to engage more young musicians to choose the organ. I've based this on our work with the London Organ Outreach Programme, schools we have partnered

with for special events, and the direct rescue operations we ran during lockdown to help students doing their examinations.



#1 Hold Organ Inspiration Days

Create a space to showcase what the instrument is like – so they can sit at it and have a play. We recently ran a successful day like this with Radley College. (see images)

#2 Offer digital organs as well as pipes

By only focussing on pipe organ playing, you may reduce the number of opportunities for your youngsters to play. Consider looking at also having good quality digital organs available, so you have *more instruments for more players*.

#3 Tell them about the variety of music genres

There is a wide variety of genres of music that can be played on an organ, and especially a digital organ. Remind your students that the music doesn't have to be slow-paced church hymns. The repertoire

can span most music genres, from preludes and fugues to jazz-inspired and other modern pieces.

#4 More playing time (and not in cold churches)

Having digital organs as practice instruments in schools, means that young musicians don't have to wait for tight slots on when they can possibly play in their local church. Digital organs also have headphones, so they can play at any time of the day without impacting fellow students or family.

#5 Showcase as a technical instrument (good for music geeks!)

The organ, and particularly the digital organ, is quite a beast of an instrument. Our standard Viscount models can have up to 69 stops, 32 pedals and, of course, the main attraction which is the opportunity of up to 4 keyboards!



In our 16+ years of working closely with schools, parents, music teachers, and from the last 7 years of participating in organ outreach programmes and young organist initiatives, we can safely say – the organ is now classified as COOL.

Would you like some up-and-coming young organists to have on your watch list?

Anna Hallett British young organist (Twitter @annagmhallett)

Wenying Wu (Instagram @wenying_wu_organist)
(winner of the 2020 IAO-RCO Organ Playing Competition)

You can also follow a thread of social media posts by searching “#youngorganist” on Twitter and Instagram.

“This is why the organ is called: THE KING OF INSTRUMENTS. The sheer power that can come out of this instrument is bone-rattling... LITERALLY! It fills every part of you when you hear it!”
(young player found on instagram)

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For more than 16 years we've worked with music schools, teachers, students and parents to select the right practice instruments for their needs. We're pleased to have welcomed The Guildhall School of Music, Swansea University, Radley College, and King's College as customers over the years.

While we're best known for the selling and hiring of high-quality digital church organs, you may not know how deeply vested we are in creating more opportunities for young players to enjoy our instruments. We are committed to keeping organ music alive through the next generation of organ players and sponsor various young organist initiatives.

Interested in an organ for your school? Get in touch, we'd love to hear from you. We are all organists ourselves and can walk you through instrument needs, specifications and assist with budget discussions.



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NOT JUST ELEVATOR MUSIC:

Exploring Brazilian sound worlds in the KS3 Classroom

Elevator music? Hold music? Lounge music? These were the musical images which were first conjured when my class of Year 8s heard 'Girl from Ipanema', a song which is, for many, the paradigm of Latin-Jazz fusion. The ubiquity of this music is but one of the reasons why Bossa Nova is a topic worth exploring in the KS3 classroom; its tangible links to daily life provide an excellent launch pad to explore why certain genres of music have acquired particular associations.



Claudia Baum

Teacher of Music,
The Harrodian School

Bossa Nova also provides a natural continuation for schemes of work that most of us have under our belts in one form or another: jazz and samba. Exploring this fusion genre in KS3 also sets pupils up for exploring fusion in KS4. I first encountered Bossa Nova in the curriculum at my previous school, where Girl from Ipanema was used in Year 9 prior to embarking on Esperanza's 'Samba Em Preludio' for the Edexcel GCSE. It was a great way to consolidate those previous units on jazz and samba, whilst paving the way for looking at how these genres interweave, and how certain features of each genre yield to the other to create a different soundscape entirely.

It is worth noting that the Model Music Curriculum has included 'Girl from Ipanema' as suggested repertoire. Reason enough for this might be the sheer joy that comes from hearing the infectious groove of Antônio Carlos Jobim's number, but I think its significance in the KS3 classroom goes beyond this. In a nutshell, this is a genre that can get pupils immersed in both music and context quickly and profoundly. In this article I want to explore some of the musical possibilities that arise from allowing the Girl from Ipanema into the classroom.

Exploring musical context

Bossa Nova provides a rich context for exploring ideas of musical borrowing. It sits at the edge of several musical traditions: the Afro-Brazilian tradition of Samba, the melodic traditions of Choro music, and imported Jazz tradition. The Girl from Ipanema garnered an international following thanks to the collaboration between Jobim, Joao and Astrud Gilberto, and the U.S. saxophonist Stan Getz (Magaldi, 2012). One possible avenue for discussion is exploring how Bossa Nova guitarists have adapted samba rhythms. Bossa Nova guitar and piano accompaniments make use of a rhythm known as the

'partido alto', a groove derived from rhythms typically performed by the tamborim. This can be a great way to get even the least confident students involved in creating variation to their chord progressions, whilst bringing the music, and the concept of musical borrowing, to life in an authentic way. More confident keyboard players will also be able to integrate chord extensions and cross-rhythms to create more elaborate arrangements which draw on other rhythms from the samba batucada (samba percussion ensemble).

In addition to exploring the historical context of the genre, it is also worth interrogating assumptions about this music's function; 21st Century ears might justifiably assume Bossa Nova is a heavily commercialised genre based on where it appears in our daily lives. This can be a great starting point for unpicking some of the elements of the genre. 'Slow tempo' and 'piano dynamics' might provide some initial ideas, but you could take this further, exploring the effect that those dreamy 7th and 9th chords have on the spacious feeling of the music.

Exploring melodic improvisation

Unlike jazz music, where improvisation is largely driven by harmonic changes, styles such as bossa nova and Chôro are focused on melodic improvisation. This is a nice way to level the proverbial playing field: students don't need to know an awful lot about harmony or scales to be able to develop or embellish a melody. 'The Girl from Ipanema' has a narrow range and a lot of repetition, making it accessible to pupils who are not instrumentalists. It also gives a creative freedom to those who learn better by ear. With my classes, we sang through the melody at least three times a lesson so that the basic melodic contour was really embedded in pupils' ears. Then they were off to work out how to play it with minimal technical

supervision. We also listened to several different recordings, to see how 'Girl from Ipanema' has been interpreted by different artists: Astrud Gilberto, Frank Sinatra and Amy Winehouse, among others. These performances offered a great starting point for discussing differences in performance styles in ways that pupils could then draw on in their own arrangements of the song.

Exploring Jazz Harmony

This can be a good way to challenge your instrumentalists, particularly the pianists. Some might come from jazz backgrounds; in which case you might give them just the chord symbols to work out the progression for Girl from Ipanema. Why not challenge them to come up with their own arrangement of Girl from Ipanema using the chord symbols alone? For music readers, asking them to work out the pattern of major and minor 7ths will be a brief introduction to jazz theory.

Bossa Nova is very much a collaborative genre. I encouraged pupils to work in pairs alternating between melody and accompaniment if they did not feel confident to do both. In many ways, this helps to capture the collaborative spirit of the genre.

Conclusion

Exploring Bossa Nova fusion in the KS3 classroom can offer something for everyone. It is a good genre for meeting pupils at their own musical experiences and exploring further from there. It provides a good point from which to explore how different musical cultures can borrow and share with one another. It also provides a suitable level of technical challenge for students to explore improvisation and harmony.

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY

with Richard Llewellyn

MUSIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION



Richard Llewellyn has over thirty years' experience in music education, having worked for sheet music publishers, instrumental manufacturers and several prestigious international music technology companies.

Hopefully, by now we have all recovered (!) from the Annual MTA Conference at The Loughborough Schools Foundation and are still fizzing with thoughts on how to implement them. I do hope you had chance to chat with Rob Connolley and the Music Tech team at Loughborough and were able to pick up a few new ideas.

The end of March saw the annual BETT show (British Education Training & Technology show) with over 30k delegates descending on the ExCeL Centre, London, where for 3 days companies showed off their wares, focusing on how technology can support education.

It was interesting to see the number of companies promoting the use of Virtual Reality. This has certainly grown over the years, as has the size of their stands (which should be a sign of the sales they are making!). It seems to be a combination of the hardware (headsets and hand controllers) coupled with online content. Purchases are also split between hardware sales, and then subscription packages for the content. Currently 95% of the content just covers STEM subjects with very little music. There are immersive VR 'sensory rooms' aimed at SEN/D students, but that's about it. Thankfully, these companies are now asking what content could be useful for teaching music, but music teachers will need good justification (solid learning outcomes) to warrant any purchases. We need to consider why a VR headset might be better than running a video on a whiteboard.

It was interesting to see the same marketing line being used by more than one VR companies that *'The only source of knowledge is experience'* - Albert Einstein. The companies state it is all about 'immersion' (the full experience), which is fine for certain subjects like geography, the sciences and history – but what can it offer music? Please do email me if you have content ideas and I will share them with the main companies.

richard@techmusicd.org.uk

Other things to consider in terms of VR are the IT team and hardware management, training, hardware charging points and storage, hardware cleaning points (cleaning sweaty headsets!) and possible injuries.



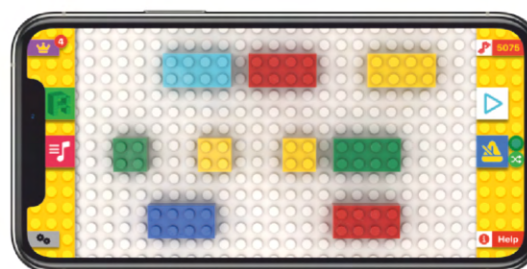
Free Music Tech Resources

Please may I direct you towards the **TIME** (Technology in Music Education UK) website – and FREE Membership. www.timemusicuk.org



By joining for **free**, you will have access to loads of new useful free Music Tech resources. These include downloadable Posters, Articles and Videos. The posters include 'Top Tips from Music Producers' – a set of 3 posters with production tips from famous music producers, as well as inspirational quotes for your students, and some great new posters from RSL (Rockschool) Ltd. on the Microphone, EQ and Mixing Desks.

There are Articles on new products, and several new Videos. To start with, there are 8 short videos on different styles of music: '5 Minute Genres' on Latin, Blues, Hip Hop, Bhangra, Drum & Bass, Dubstep, EDM and Trap. There are also videos on 'Essential Music Technology Terms' – a set of new video resources introducing and explaining a range of essential Music Technology terms, covering topics such as compression, EQ, latency, and quantisation.



Musical LEGO

Now here's a new iOS App that may help as a useful tool for introducing what a loop is or basic composition. It's from a Scottish company called Playable Technology which has Ben Schogler (of 'Skoog' fame) at the helm and is called 'Beat Blocks'. Imagine getting a Lego grid board (baseplate) and positioning several blocks on it. Then you set up your device's camera at the bricks, and when your camera sees a brick, it plays a sound. The different sized bricks are equal to beats and notes, and different coloured bricks are what define the different sounds. There are credits that can be earned that can be swapped for more sounds, samples and special effects. You can also use Duplo bricks for early years.

Become a Better Musician with EarMaster

Whilst at the Music & Drama Education Expo in February, Richard Llewellyn had the chance to interview Niels Bastrup, the Education Adviser for the Danish company, EarMaster.

• Why did you produce EarMaster?

Hans Jakobsen, the Founder and CEO of the company, got the idea for EarMaster back in the '90's while preparing for the admission test to the conservatory. He had a friend come over almost every day to play chords on the piano that he would try to identify by ear. This made him think that there had to be a smarter way to practice aural skills - with the help of technology. A few years later, after taking a degree in Robotics engineering, he created the first version of EarMaster.

• What is EarMaster and who is it for?

Today, EarMaster is an app that works on all common platforms and devices. (iOS, Android, Mac, Windows, and Chromebook) It's both a practice tool and a learning tool for musicianship skills, aural skills, vocal training, and applied music theory. Its unique pitch and rhythm detection makes it able to evaluate your performance in real time and give you instant feedback on your intonation and timing. EarMaster ensures that you don't merely get a theoretical understanding of the musical concepts such as rhythm, harmony, and melody, but are in fact able to sing, play, and identify musical structures by ear as well as from a score. EarMaster covers all levels from Key Stage 1 through conservatoire level, and it has both built in courses and the option of customizing exercises. Our most recent course is called "Aural Trainer for ABRSM" and prepares students for ABRSM's Aural Tests from grade 1 through grade 5. These are part of all ABRSM's practical exams for instruments as well as for singing.

• What is EarMaster Cloud?

EarMaster Cloud is our educational solution, a complete virtual learning environment which is used by schools and music schools at all levels in the UK as well as abroad. It connects students and teachers in the EarMaster app through cloud synchronization. Being connected, the students can practice with exercises assigned by their teacher, and the teacher can see their results and follow their progress. Teachers can put together their own

courses in EarMaster very easily with a built-in workbook editor, or they can use ready-made courses such as the "Aural Trainer for ABRSM."

• What is the latest news regarding EarMaster?

This spring, we are releasing a new course which matches the requirements of the ABRSM Aural tests Grade 1-5. It has hundreds of lessons and many more exercises in melodic and rhythmic sight-reading, clapback, singback, error detection, and identification of musical features such as meter, tonality, articulation, etc.

• How will Students benefit? for example, why is music aural training beneficial?

With EarMaster, students get a practice partner that makes aural training fun and enables them to improve rapidly. Many students appreciate the combination of privacy and support that the app offers. When preparing for exams, EarMaster can make a big difference.

• How will Teachers benefit?

EarMaster is a big help for teachers as well. Apart from providing ready-made course material for each grade, teachers can also see their students' results and follow their progress. They can let students use the app freely at home, or they can decide to create custom assignments for their classes or for individual students. So, it's both a time saver and a very accurate way of reviewing student progress. Another key dimension is that using an app like EarMaster motivates students to work more, to go the extra mile. Today, students use apps for everything, so making sure that they also have a powerful app to train their musical skills at home is fundamental to ensure better learning outcomes.

• Will EarMaster help me to pass my Graded Exams?

Yes – in most music exams, including Trinity and ABRSM, one of the units is an aural test. EarMaster can help the student prepare for those tests as well as for sight-singing or sight-reading tests.



• How much does it cost?

EarMaster is the most affordable app in its class. The educational price per user, whether student or teacher, lies roughly between 50p and £1 per month, depending on the number of users. Schools can buy credits at EarMaster.com for as many users as they need. They can also choose to let the students pay their own subscription for £2.90/mo (annual plan). When students pay their own subscriptions, teacher licenses and the school's cloud account are free of charge. Any questions or inquiries are welcome, simply contact info@earmaster.com.

• Do you offer any free resources or training?

The EarMaster app is free to download and can be found on the App Store, Google Play, as well as on www.earmaster.com. The app has several free exercises e.g., in chord and interval identification. On EarMaster.com, you will also find a comprehensive book on music theory available free of charge: "Understanding Basic Music Theory" (<https://www.earmaster.com/music-theory-online/course-introduction.html>) and our Interval Song Chart (<https://www.earmaster.com/products/free-tools/interval-song-chart-generator.html>) where you can choose your favourite songs for remembering different intervals - for example, the start of Greensleeves for a minor third up - and download or print your own list of songs. We offer a free onboarding session to all schools that start using EarMaster Cloud, and we offer continuous, free, and fast support to music teachers.

MUSICTECH TOP TIPS

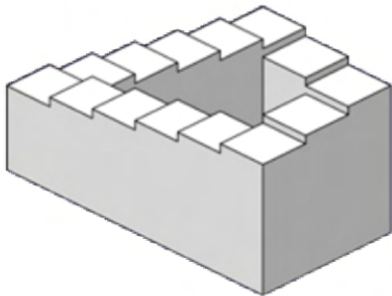
with Dan Fisher-Wienesen, Music Technology Coordinator at Leighton Park School, Reading.

Making Shepard Tones

There are times where you find yourself wanting to add just a little more musical tension when composing for a scene. Maybe more tension? How do we go beyond the natural capabilities of a string player when playing a rising glissando?

One answer is a musical illusion which is exploited by top composers such as Hans Zimmer with his famous long shots in 'Dunkirk', Pink Floyd using this technique in their album for a very tense texture and gaming music for the feeling of never ending paths, famously featured on the stairs of Super Mario 64.

Today I want to share a way this can be shared in the classroom to deploy a sense of stillness, being trapped and 'against the clock' emotion with this compositional technique.

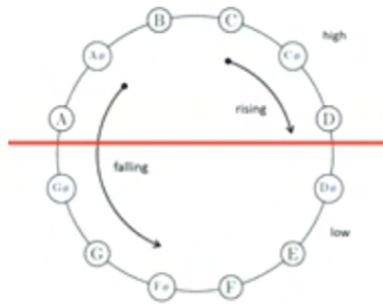


What is Shepard's tone?

This is a musical illusion using a tritone paradox created by our brains focusing on the loudest notes of a scale and with volume automation, the brain switches between regions causing a forever rising effect. The tone was created by composer Alan Hovhaness, who created an illusion of constant movement through music.

Sounds complicated. How can this be done in the classroom?

This can be set up simply by starting the illusion with an electric piano;
Step1 - Pencil in notes of a chromatic scale from C2 to B2
Step2 - Copy and past this region across 2 more tracks and change the Octave of the top line to C3 to B3 and the bottom line from C1 to B1



Step 3 - The final step for the illusion to work; Open up the automation of the scale and have the top Octave to decrease volume from 0db to $-\infty$ The middle Octave Consistently at 0db and, The bottom Octave automates volume from $-\infty$ to 0db.

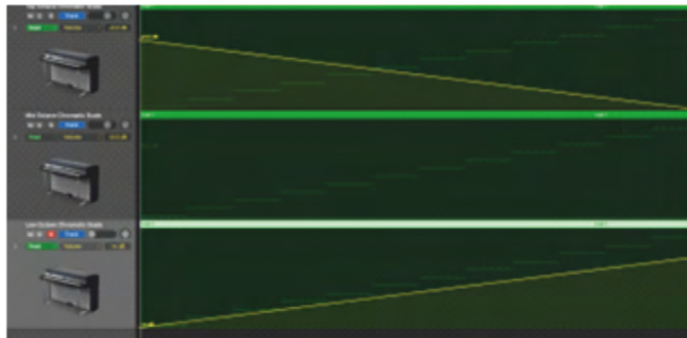
When you celebrate your forever rising tone, try to change the instrumentation to your favourite sounds. (All 3 regions must be the same instrument plugin).

Part 2:
Exploring the 'Zimmer effect'

- 1) Adding atmospheric pad layers as a tonic pedal on C
- 2) Adding a ticking clock sample and heartbeats for more tension
- 3) Sending the tracks to a bus channel and experimenting with reverb, stereo delay, distortion, flanger and Chorus.

Part 3:
Extensions to this exercise! Try to replace the chromatic pencilled in notes to a sustained C pedal with pitch bend midi data over an octave to remove the rhythmic element to this illusion.

Or double up the Shepard tone layers with Silky Strings to blend the parts cinematically. You can also reverse the Scale to create a sense of falling forever.



Objective students gain from this fun illusion activity is layering parts, using volume automation, creative effects and bus effects for a useful suspense skill for professional sound design projects. This can be achieved in all DAWs / apps with basic plugins and is great fun when faced with intense film scenes and sound design to accompany video.

VOICES FOUNDATION AND THE ISM TRUST LAUNCH NEW FREE PRIMARY MUSIC EDUCATION RESOURCE



Edward Appleby
Marketing and Communications
Manager for Voices Foundation

Voices Foundation and the ISM Trust have launched their new Primary Singing Toolkit, a free resource to help primary school teachers develop the skills to run singing lessons in their classroom.

The resource, which was created with the support of the Schools Music Association, is made up of 14 videos and accompanying notes and lesson plans, which come together to offer inspirational and practical singing strategies. It can be found, and downloaded for free, at ismtrust.org/primary-singing-toolkit.

It can be a nerve-wracking experience for a teacher to sing in front of their class, and many primary teachers have had little or no musical training. This is why the Primary Singing Toolkit has been specifically designed to help non-specialist teachers build their confidence when running music lessons, and find their own singing voice at the same time.

The Primary Singing Toolkit leads teachers through seven full music lessons. The videos and lesson plans take a holistic approach to singing, and cover areas such as: call and response, dancing with the song, pitch and composition, healthy singing practices, singing in a round, and much more.

The videos follow Voices Foundation's Musicianship and Choral Directors, Jenny Trattles and Charles MacDougall, in real school classrooms, supporting non-specialist teachers at Winterton Junior School and singing with the children in their classes. They work through a song in bitesize steps, which are easy for teachers to follow and imitate in their own schools.

Voices Foundation has been championing the power and importance of singing for 30 years. This partnership with the ISM Trust is just their latest initiative for helping schools and communities to develop their music education. Manvinder Rattan, Voices Foundation CEO, explains "our

impact measurements indicate that children who sing are happier, and if happier, are likely to have a more fulfilling time at school, in the broadest sense."

Embedding singing into classroom lessons works best when teachers have confidence in their own abilities. With the National Plan for Music Education calling on schools to use singing as a 'golden thread' to run through all primary education, and the National Curriculum in all areas of the UK requiring children to learn to sing and use their voices, there has never been a greater need for teachers to develop that confidence.

As passionate advocates of singing in schools and high quality music education for all, the ISM Trust developed the Primary Singing Toolkit to give music educators an accessible starting point. ISM's Chief Executive, Deborah Annetts, aims for the resource to "help teachers build their confidence to sing with their pupils, support schools to deliver the National Plan in England and be of much use to teachers in all nations of the UK."

A recent webinar, jointly hosted by Voices Foundation and the ISM Trust saw over 140 people sign up to watch Trattles and MacDougall lead a practical demonstration of some of the lessons included in the Primary Singing Toolkit, including conducting a school choir. They were also introduced to the traditional Guyanese sea shanty, 'Essequibo River,' which runs throughout the entire Primary Singing Toolkit.

Discussing the free resource, noted music educator and choral director, Susan Hollingworth, has said: "I would urge all primary schools to download this new resource... This is primary music teaching at its best and a valuable resource has been created for all schools. The ideas demonstrated are an exemplar for further lessons on how to use the singing voice in the classroom."

ismtrust.org/primary-singing-toolkit

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Head of Music, Great Ballard School

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THREE 'WICKED' SONGS INCLUDED IN ABRSM'S NEW SINGING FOR MUSICAL THEATRE ARSM

'Defying Gravity' remains a set work for Pearson Edexcel GCSE Music



Michael McCabe
Executive Producer of Wicked

I'm very proud that Wicked, with music and lyrics by the legendary American composer Stephen Schwartz, continues to welcome and inspire so many music learners at London's Apollo Victoria Theatre.

Schwartz's celebrated songs 'Defying Gravity', 'The Wizard & I' and 'No Good Deed' are all now included in the repertoire of the ABRSM's new performance-focused diploma Singing for Musical Theatre ARSM (Associate of the Royal Schools of Music), for learners beyond Grade 8 level. Candidates will be able to enter for this exam from 1 September 2023.

'Defying Gravity' remains a set work for Pearson Edexcel GCSE Music, and 'Popular' (Grade 8) is already included in the ABRSM Singing syllabus and 'I'm Not That Girl' (Grade 5) and 'Dancing Through Life' (Grade 8) also appear on the ABRSM 'Singing for Musical Theatre' (both Practical and Performance) syllabuses.

In 2022, we launched our acclaimed Wicked Active Learning online education resource on behalf of the London production, enabling teachers and educators to access discounted school class and year group tickets together with free teacher ratios, official workshops (including 'Musical Theatre' and 'Wellbeing'), post-show Q&As, free downloadable lesson plans and classroom resources, as well as free resources to support the organisation of school trips (including risk assessment supporting information and a venue video).

In support of GCSE, AS and A level, technical awards, and ABRSM qualifications, as well as the delivery of your school's music provision, Wicked Active Learning provides music learners with the opportunity to experience, evaluate, and review the live performance, with 17 musicians playing live in the Orchestra Pit, as well as the recorded music of

the show's Grammy® Award-winning Original Broadway Cast Recording, featuring Idina Menzel and Kristin Chenoweth. Wicked Active Learning also provides a free video interview with Stephen Schwartz, discussing his musical themes and inspirations behind many of the score's iconic motifs and melodies, including 'Defying Gravity'.

Amidst its compelling themes of prejudice and propaganda, 'Wicked' provides an enriching live experience for all music learners, and is a must-see for anyone studying 'Defying Gravity' at GCSE.

Head of Music, Great Ballard School

Inspired by "one of the most influential children's stories of all time" (The Times), L. Frank Baum's 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' (1900), and twice voted 'Best Theatre Production for Schools' by teachers at the School Travel Awards, Wicked takes learners on an unforgettable musical journey beyond the famous Yellow Brick Road in a prequel and sequel to Baum's classic tale, exploring themes of self-esteem, identity, victimisation, fake news, peer pressure, ambition, and friendship.

For exclusive benefits, flexible terms, and expert assistance, you can book tickets, workshops, and Q&As with our in-house Wicked Active Learning team on 020 7183 5109 or contact them via email at Hello@WickedActiveLearning.co.uk. School class and year group tickets (in the Stalls or Dress Circle) start from just £17.50.

www.WickedActiveLearning.co.uk

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Compton Publishing.

A Young Persons Guide to Vocal Health Olivia Sparkhall

Drawing on over 20 years of experience as a singing specialist, choir trainer, and vocal pedagogy expert, I have produced a modern, new guide specifically for young singers themselves. It covers aspects of vocal health that might never be broached during singing lessons or choir rehearsals but which, nonetheless, are crucial for young people to understand if they are to maintain healthy speaking and singing voices.

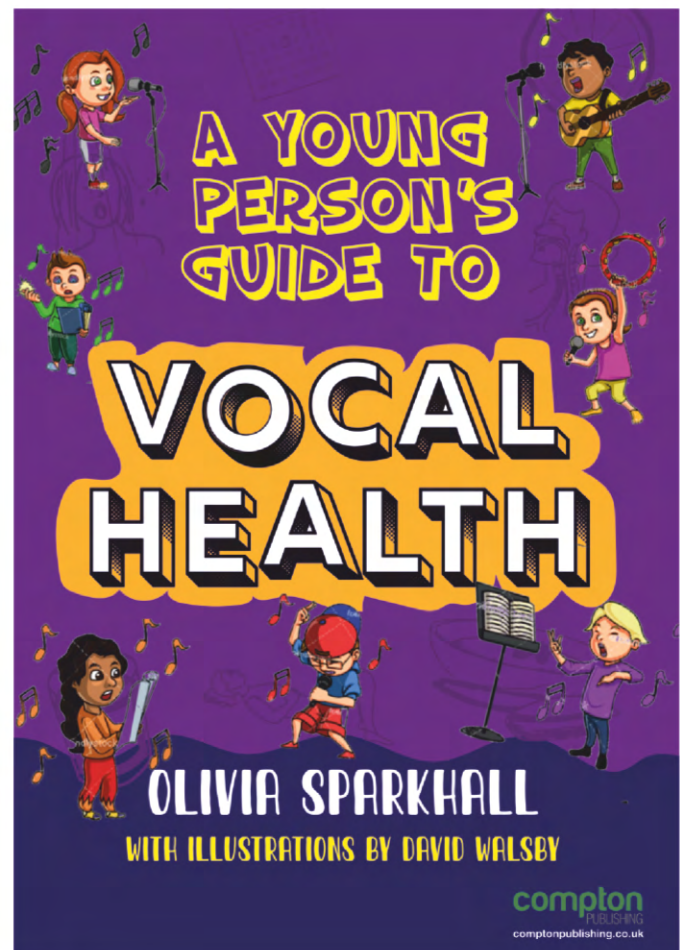
It dispels myths and gives accurate information to its audience without using over-technical language. The topics include staying well and recovering from coughs and colds; allergies and medications; anxiety; eating and drinking; hormones; bad habits, and much more. There's even simple anatomy, exercises, warm-up and cool-down routines, and further reading for those who want to delve into more detail. A Young Person's Guide to Vocal Health is suitable for child choristers and teenage singers alike.

Singing teachers and vocal coaches will also find the book to be a useful reference for accurate, up-to-date information on all aspects of voice health. A Young Person's Guide to Vocal Health is in full colour, with informative diagrams and illustrations to make it clear and easy to understand. The book is split into short chapters, making it easy to locate relevant information, and a comprehensive glossary is included.

An innovative approach?

I consulted children ranging from age 10-18, asking them what they thought a book on vocal health should cover, and sought their feedback on draft pages. Some of the questions they asked are on page vi, and are answered in the book. They were particularly keen that I should colour-code the information, and they pointed out all of the words that needed further explanation. They loved the use of 'sticky notes' and encouraged me to include a glossary.

Available from Compton Publishing:
<https://tinyurl.com/Voice-Health>





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FLANDERS

Club Europe



A concert band and choir from a school in Kent had a wonderful four-day Easter music tour to Flanders. They performed two concerts and enjoyed visits to a chocolaterie, a World War II museum and Gravensteen as well as a canal boat cruise. Here, their Head of Music **Jane Werry** explains why their tour was such a success.

Our snowball has just got a lot bigger again thanks to this tour. It's just so good to be back on tour again!

Lucy, who has been our account manager for many years, knows us well, and I was absolutely happy to take her advice as to where we should go. When we failed to get 40 students, she made it possible for the tour to run with just 30, for which we are very grateful.

We have also worked with Sabine, our operations manager for years; her cheerful efficiency is much appreciated. She took changes on board with speed and grace.

One of the highlights was a church concert where we got a very warm welcome and enthusiastic response from our audience. They gave us squash and biscuits afterwards and

were just lovely. I was a bit worried that we would be stymied by some holes in the band because we only had 30 students on tour, but we managed! There was lots of space and the acoustics were lovely.

Our hostel was PERFECT! 12/10. Such lovely friendly people, who have got the whole thing completely sussed. From the food to the admin (we were given master keys to all students' rooms) to the facilities (amazing outdoor space, plus a fantastic rehearsal space, and a meeting room which we used briefly, and parking for a coach and a Harley) – it was all amazing.

The rehearsal room was big, there were loads of chairs, there were no restrictions on how long we could use it for. Perfect. The staff, the rooms and the food were all absolutely brilliant. I

would recommend this hostel to anyone. The boat trip in Bruges and the Canada-Poland museum were highlights. We were very lucky with the weather. The lady at the Canada-Poland museum was so engaging, and the 'hands-on' box is highly recommended; the kids loved dressing up and handling lots of WW2 artefacts.

Our driver, Allan, was super helpful and very relaxed. Having a grumpy driver can really put a damper on things, but he was brilliant, and even popped in to one of the concerts. The coach was spotless. It'll be Easter again next year for us. I'm thinking Germany or Spain but will be guided by Club Europe's expertise.

Find out more at www.club-europe.co.uk, or email travel@club-europe.co.uk.

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME to the following new teaching members who have joined since the publication of our last magazine:



Harri Care	Music Teacher	Hamstead Hall Academy
Chloe Richardson	Trainee	
Matthew White	Teacher of Music	Nicholas Chamberlaine School
Nathanael Ellum	Second in department Music	The Grange School
Terry Hooper	Director of Performing Arts	Fulbrook
Ciaran Yeo Yeo	Director of Music	St Columbas College
Keith Brown	Housemaster and New Student Coordinator	St Columba's College
Ellen Campbell	Music Teacher	St. Catherine's
Emily Porteous	Graduate	
Emily Adams	Music Administrator	King Edward VI School
Rebekah Frost	Assistant Director of Music	Holme Grange School
Laura Phillips	Piano and Vocal Tutor	
Adam Bell	Head of Arts	Springwell Academy Leeds
Rachel Cansfield	Teaching Assistant/trainee Music teacher	Baycroft School
Chris Keir	Head of Academic Music	Cheltenham Ladies' College
Rebecca Leyton-Smith	Music Teacher	The Peterborough School
John Mountford	Director of Music	King's School Rochester
Georgia Entwisle	Music teacher	St Dunstan's College
Nadia Lasserson	VMT	JAGS, Trinity Laban, Royal College of Music
Katie Taylor	Link Tutor and Music Subject Lead	GORSE SCITT
Estelle Roux	Graduate Music Assistant	Sevenoaks School
William Hyland	Senior Music Teacher	Tanglin Trust School
Richie Baxter	Head of Arts Faculty	Tanglin Trust School
Anna Hill	Teacher of Music	The Roundhill Academy
India Birley	Secondary Music Teacher	Parmiter's School
Tom Brimelow	Director of Music	King's College
Vaishni Patel	PGCE Trainee	
Jacqueline McCarthy	Acting Head of Music	Parkhall Integrated College
Laura Smith	Head of Performing Arts	Brookvale Groby Learning Campus
Nick Meredith	Music Teacher	Wakefield Girls' High School
Anita Coe	Manager, Music and Performing Arts	United Learning
Adam Brown	Teacher of Music	AKS Lytham
Tom Reeve	Graduate Music Assistant	Bishop Wordsworth's School
Robert Abba	Teacher of Music	Loughborough Schools Foundation Music
Rebecca Arnold	Music subject lead	Douaty Martyrs School
Lindsay Benson	Teacher of Music	Ripley St Thomas Church of England Academy
Alison Porter	Music Teacher	Westonbirt Prep School
Yolandy Griffith	Head of Music	Homefield Preparatory School
Tristan Bloska	Teacher of Music	Comberton Village College
Joanne Harvey	Teacher - Music Subject Lead	Muschamp Primary School
Vanessa Wilson-Best	Head of Music SLE	Willingdon Community School
Jon Melville	Peripatetic Music Teacher	
Sheila Smith	Head of Music	Colfe's Junior School
Lucy Eccleshall	Graduate Music Assistant	Sevenoaks School
Nia Moorhouse	Head of Music	Wellington School
Allison Harrison	Music Teacher, Elementary & Middle	Bingham Academy
Huw Jones	Assistant Head & Director of Music	The John Lyon School
Claire Pepler	Director of Music	Dulwich Prep, Cranbrook
Andrew Groom	Head of Prep Music	Kimbolton School
Aidan O'Brien	1st Year - Primary Education Student	University of Northampton
Ellen Tiso	Director of Music (Nursery-Y11), Senior Teacher	Wakefield Independent School
Jack Tait Westwell	Teacher of Music	
Simon Ferris	Director of Music	Bocclair Academy
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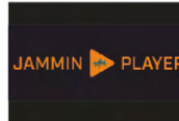
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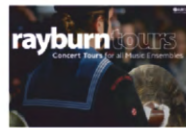
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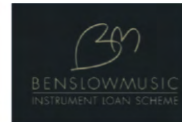
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President / Catherine Barker
President@musicteachers.org

Catherine Barker is the Head of Music and Performing Arts in United Learning, the largest national schools' group. She also leads national performance events and the Singing Champions programme. In this role she is responsible for group-wide strategic projects in music as well as CPD, curriculum and U.T. Music, Drama and ITT programme.



President-Elect / James Manwaring
james.manwaring@me.com

James is Director of Music for Windsor Learning Partnership, a multi-academy trust in Windsor. He teaches students from Years 1-13 and writes at manwaringmusic.blog. He has been nominated 5 times for Music Department of the Year.

TEACHER SUPPORT LEAD



Honorary Secretary / Caroline Robinson
honsec@musicteachers.org

Caroline is Director of Music at Warminster School, Wiltshire. Caroline believes that everyone should feel comfortable to take part in music-making in a vibrant, friendly and inclusive environment. She strives for all concerts to be as glamorous as possible, with quality rather than quantity always being a main feature.



Honorary Treasurer / John Padley
john.padley@qas.org.uk

John is Director of Music at Queen Anne's, Caversham. During his time at Queen Anne's, he has actively encouraged partnerships with local schools and Queen Anne's hosts the Caversham Music Centre run by Berkshire Maestros. Queen Anne's runs regular inset training for Eduqas A Level Music and would be delighted to hear from anyone about this specification.



Past President / Don Gillthorpe
gillthorped@ripley.lancs.sch.uk

Don is Senior Assistant Headteacher at Ripley St Thomas CE Academy in Lancaster, Head of Publications for Sing for Pleasure, and a freelance conductor and composer. Don's specialisms are in choral music, with a particular focus on establishing a singing culture in a secondary school, and boys' changing voices.



Keith Ayling
Media & Publications
keith@musicteachers.org

Keith is a Senior Lecturer at Leeds Conservatoire, TED speaker and has a Masters degree in Songwriting. He speaks nationwide on songwriting and is passionate about encouraging creativity in young people, whatever their background. He was a finalist in the National Association Awards for his work on Ensemble Magazine.



Gill Davies
Conference Administrator
gill@musicteachers.org

As a first study French Horn player, Gill went to Chetham's School of Music and studied music in Cambridge, before forging a career within the travel industry as part of the senior management team for a Marketing and PR agency. For over five years she has also been Secretary of a tourism association.



Sophie Kirk
Administrator & Membership
sophie@musicteachers.org

Sophie has 12 years of classroom music teaching experience across all age ranges (3-18) as well as being an instrumental string teacher and ensemble coach. She is an orchestral player, content contributor for Naxos Education and music administrator at St John's College, Cambridge.

Help strengthen our voice

Committee members serve a term of three years. Positions are advertised when vacant and if necessary, voted on by the membership. In the first instance, please contact either the President or a member of staff for more information.

The President is voted for by the association and stands for two years. There is also a commitment to serve the association before and after the appointment supporting the current role-holder. Our Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary are also active members serving voluntarily.



Mark Aitchison

Mark is Head of Music at Droitwich Spa High School and Sixth Form Centre.

TRAINEES & ECTs



Rebecca Berkley

Rebecca is Associate Professor in Music Education, Institute of Education, University of Reading

HE LEAD



Nicky Bouckley

Nicky is Foundation Director of Music for Loughborough Foundation Schools, overseeing four schools, from nursery to A-level. She has spent many years as examiner and moderator for AQA as well as marking A Level Performance.

CO-OPTED



Emily Crowhurst

Emily is Head of 4-18 Music & Performing Arts at School 21: a pioneering school in Stratford, East London, for children from all backgrounds.

CURRICULUM



Liz Dunbar

Liz is the York Secondary Music Pathfinder lead.

TEACHER SUPPORT



Lewis Edney

Lewis is Director of Music at Bishop Wordsworth's Grammar School, Salisbury. Before teaching he spent 15 years as a professional trombonist and now looks to promote the participation and benefits of performance throughout his work, including building partnerships and relationships.

PARTNERSHIPS



Margaret Edwards

Margaret is currently concluding her PGCE and is about to undergo her NQT years at Bradfield College as a Teacher of Music. Prior to this, Margaret earned a BA and MA in musicology from Durham University. She is a huge advocate for developing choral traditions for young adults in schools.

TRAINEES & ECTs



Tim Garrard (Co-opted)

Tim is the Director of Music at Westminster School and a trustee of Musical Boroughs Trust, (Tri-borough Music Hub). He is a huge advocate of sustained partnership, linking together teachers, pupils, music departments from both the state and independent sectors.

PARTNERSHIPS LEAD



Patrick Johns (Co-opted)

Patrick is a teacher at The Tiffin Girls' School, Kingston, a professional trombone player and a radio producer for BBC Radio 2 (Top Brass, Country Christmas, Jazz Junctions).

PODCAST HOST



David McKee (Co-opted)

David is Director of Music at Cheltenham College. He is a passionate advocate of EDI and of Partnership work, particularly in education.

EDI LEAD



Mark Penrose

Mark is Director of Music at Bilton Grange Prep School, which has recently merged with Rugby School as of January 2020. In addition to classroom teaching and consultancy, Mark has taught on British Kodály courses and delivered training for iGCSE and A Level Music.

PRIMARY & PREP

THE FINAL WORD

DIVERTIMENTO

Op.59



A sideways look at music education from Jonathan Varcoe

Entering the latest age of austerity one cannot help but wonder how long the live music scene can continue. Costs of salaries and the financial burden of putting on concerts causes ticket prices to soar at the time people have less dispensable money to do what they would like. We must do what we can to help enable live music to have a vital presence in our concert halls and other venues.

We cannot expect musicians to reduce their prices – and why should they? A budgeting system might work whereby people could pay by monthly instalments over a period of time. I'm sure there are ideas that can be considered to lessen the burden on people's pockets. In America, I gather that the very rich willingly support artistic ventures with large donations, and that general taxation does not need to prop up the many orchestras and choirs and theatres that abound in the States. Would it were so here, but there is no tradition in the UK for such widespread philanthropy.

A heartening clarion-call appeared in The Times recently by Libby Purves entitled 'School should be something to sing about'. Now traditional worship in the form of morning assemblies takes place only rarely, and hymn singing is virtually dead, the one instrument we all have, our voice, is just waiting to be re-energised and encouraged to make its presence felt. Song does not have to be religious, it can be Flanders and Swann or any worthy pop singer's songs. Singing is good for health, it is good for discipline, it is good for socialising, in fact there is nothing it is bad for.

The independent sector, in particular, has its chapels and organs and regular singing. There are some great choirs working within state schools, and

regional youth choirs perform to high levels, but millions of children do not have the advantage of being shown what real singing can do for them and for their communities.

Interestingly, on the same day as Ms Purves's article was published, another article in the same paper brought news from the Ivors Academy showing that nearly two thirds of this country's most significant contemporary composers were educated in the state sector, among them Sir Harrison Birtwistle and Anna Meredith.

Books:

For interest - some readers may not be aware that author James Runcie has recently had published a book called "The Great Passion" set in Leipzig in 1726. Look it up on Amazon, and all Bach lovers may conjure up a new present to wish for.

I have been rereading a book I picked up at random in a bookshop some time ago by Jonathan Harvey called "Music and Inspiration". This is an incredibly interesting subject and brings together quotations by many composers about how each of them considered why they were inspired to write as they did. If you are a composer yourself it is doubly fascinating. I fear it may be out of print. Amazon is full of novels by another Jonathan Harvey, alas no musical books. If you can, find a secondhand copy.

Finally a thin booklet lurking among my many books lured me into rereading it. "Basic Choirtraining" by Edred Wright was published by the RSCM circa 1955. Eminently readable it is a gem of a guide and highly recommended. Edred Wright was Choirmaster at the RSCM until poached by the Head Master of King's Canterbury to become choir master

there who thus became one of my main mentors throughout my schooldays at King's for which I am ever grateful. A superlative example of a brilliant choir trainer and worth searching for.

A few months ago a stalwart of our Association, **Bill Llewellyn**, died aged 97, after a rich life of teaching and music making. Bill was a magnetic personality who spent much of his working life as assistant director of music then director of music and finally as second master of Charterhouse School. He played a large and influential part in the evolution of the Association in the 1960s. Robert Gower knew Bill better than me and writes that Bill's natural warmth enabled him to connect effortlessly with the young, making him an excellent second master. He had an instinctive knack of knowing how to get a full school chapel singing lustily. Robert says he will miss Bill's musicianship, positivity, cheerfulness and kindness.

The high master of St Paul's invited Bill to appraise me on one occasion. Appraisals are somewhat worrying occasions, but I found the event rather fun as he enthusiastically wanted to know everything about the department. He was surprised that the music school was so inadequate and I believe he wrote a sharp note to the governors to that effect. Sometime afterwards I received a request from the governors to send them a paper outlining my ideas for what the school needed for a music school. The rest is history, but thank you Bill. And from all of us in the MTA, a respectful farewell for a man upon whose shoulders some of us stood as we soldiered on with our careers in music and teaching.

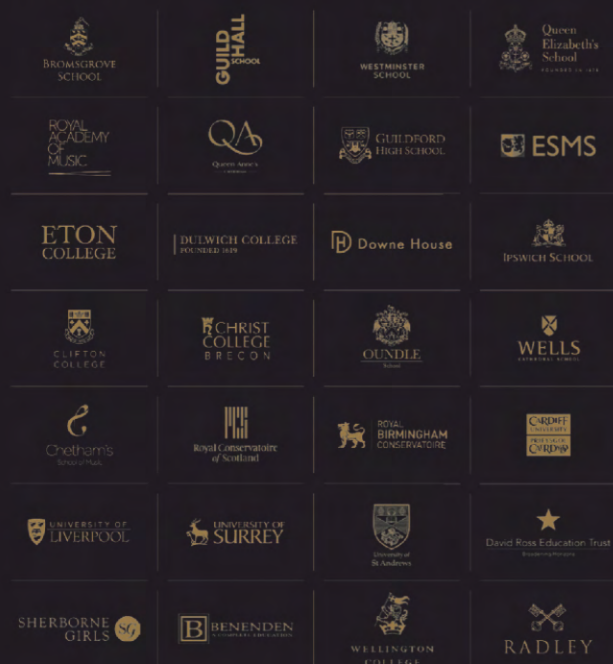


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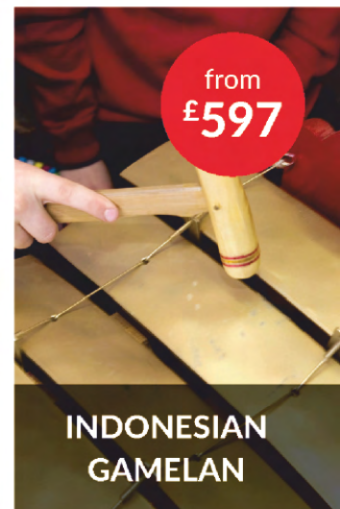
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