
Music for a changing world

The point about music is what it gets used for. And with the spotlight continuing to shine on all things community, people are 'discovering' more ways of using music than ever before: government, funders, movers and shakers in health, social welfare, lifelong learning and community development have been doing more than just casting sly glances community music's way.

It's all wrapped up in the theme of social inclusion. But community musicians need not fear the new terminology, which is the same old thing with a different spin. Where "democratisation of culture" used to be the rallying cry for community arts workers, they're now just as likely to say that their work "contributes to the development of a healthy, inclusive, and empowered society".

There's never been a better time to make an impact with community music. But exactly what will community music be in the 21st century, and how can community musicians develop their skills to meet the challenges? Where will the work be coming from over the next five years, and who will be funding it? What will that mean for how musicians need to reflect on the value of their work?

Sound Sense is answering these questions with a major three-day national event in June, exploring how community musicians can grasp the opportunities. Anita Holford lifts the lid on *Music for a changing world*, and puts it all into context with a report from the front line – just one example of the issues and opportunities that arise when music tackles social inclusion.

NO-ONE KNOWS precisely how many children are out of school at any one time because of truancy or exclusion. But each year at least one million children truant, over 100,000 children are excluded temporarily and some 13,000 are excluded permanently, reported the government's social exclusion unit in 1998.

This is, literally, social exclusion – a drain on resources, a disruption in the school, but above all a waste of young people's potential. Community Music East (CME) has worked extensively with socially excluded people ranging from people with physical and sensory disabilities and learning difficulties through to prisoners and the unemployed. For the past two years it has been involved in an innovative project with school refusers in rural East Anglia.

The Kerrison back-to-school project offers school non-attenders a bridge back into the education system. It is a collaboration between the Ormiston Children and Families Trust, a charity concerned with the practical assistance of families in need in East Anglia, the Visiting Teacher Service of Norfolk's Local Education Authority, and the Kerrison Trust, which provides facilities and resources to support the educational and pastoral needs of school non-attenders in north Suffolk and south Norfolk.

Since March 1997 young people who don't attend school (for reasons such as illness, behaviour which has been deemed 'inappropriate', or emotional problems relating to abuse, bereavement or depression) have been visiting Kerrison for information technology and craft activities, to make use of the gym and sports field, and in the case of year 11 pupils to attend a Life Skills and Communication Skills course or study for GCSEs. And, since 1998 and following a pilot, CME has run a music programme within the project.



Attentive non-attenders: CME's work brings young people back on line

The programme provides opportunities for the young people to participate in music by learning to write, play and record original popular music. The aim is for the participants to develop ability, self-confidence, knowledge and experience which will assist their future educational and vocational achievements, and encourage social participation.

The pilot project consisted of 12 weekly sessions, with CME tutors bringing a selection of instruments and equipment to Kerrison. Year 11 students (most with little, if any, experience of music making)

Equipping yourself for a changing world

Music for a changing world is the 2000 event for people involved in community music across the UK. It is for anyone who is helping to create music with people, including:

- musicians
- administrators
- local authority arts officers
- community and education
- music officers
- those working with disabled people
- music tutors
- people working with the elderly
- outreach workers
- youth and community workers
- those working with music in health
- social services sectors . . .

At **Music for a changing world** you'll be able to explore the issues that are important to you, share experiences and information, and pick up useful and practical knowledge that'll help you with your work, and help you to find work.

As government policies move closer and closer to the ethos of community music, **Music for a changing world** will help musicians and those working with them to find their way through the maze, improve their chances of finding work, and get money for it.

Pick and mix — an event to suit everyone

Building on the success of Sound Sense's last two conferences, CUT & BLEND and *Evolving Links*, the event is shaped to give attendees a chance to be as involved as they like. You can take part in peer group sessions and practical workshops, participate in the debates and discussions, and pick up and share skills and knowledge in whichever way suits you best.

Exploring cutting edge issues As well as looking at social inclusion and how it relates to community music, **Music for a changing world** focuses on the financial and structural support available to community musicians and their benefits and downsides, plus how to go about getting work and funding. Sessions on practice principles and professional development explore ways of working in the new social context.

Pauline Tambling, Executive Director of Research and Planning at the Arts Council of England will be delivering the key-note speech *Whose tune are we dancing to?* followed by discussion afterwards, and there will be plenty of other debate-fuelling presentations and discussions including Arts in Health in the Tyne and Wear Health Action Zone, and The New Opportunities Fund — money for music projects.

Peer group sessions focus on specific topics which are relevant to people's work, with session leaders who will give useful insights and practical information. Proposed topics currently include:

- Out of school hours music making
- Making friends with the alien: creating partnerships across sectors
- Finding a common language: extending your professional vocabulary
- Music Technology including the internet
- Practice Development — sharing common practice principles
- Funding routes — money within reach?
- Working in Hospices
- Learning the lingo — how to make your grant application have impact and much more to come.

Session leaders planned include representatives from The National Foundation of Youth Music, Pioneer Health Centre,

The National Federation of City Farms, Yorkshire Youth and Music, Spare Tyre Theatre Company, and Folkworks.

Opportunities to network, socialise and relax There are time-tabled 'time out' slots where delegates can arrange an impromptu seminar or just socialise and relax. The event is open to everyone, not just community musicians, so there's the chance to meet a range of people who could help you in your work — and it's all under one roof.

Live music-making And of course there will be plenty of live music-making, including practical workshops that'll equip musicians with tips and help for their own work, a gig, and an interactive evening performance in a folk-club format which you can sit back and enjoy or join in and enjoy even more.

Talk to us!

Sound Sense is still adding more sessions to the lists, so now's your chance to let them know what *you* want discussed. Is there a topic you really want to talk about, a problem you want to address, or an area you want to develop? Would you like a session based around a particular genre, area you work in, or social grouping you work with? Give us a call or drop us a line with any ideas you have:

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● Where's it at?

Music for a changing world takes place at Halifax Hall, Sheffield (right) situated in a leafy suburb less than two miles from the city centre and within easy reach of the station by taxi or bus.

● What's the accommodation like?

Well, there's no jacuzzi, but delegates can choose from single standard bedrooms – with washbasins, shared bathroom and kitchen facilities – and single ensuite rooms with their own tea and coffee making facilities.

● And for disabled people?

There are bedrooms specially adapted for wheelchair users, all conference areas are accessible for wheelchair users, and enablers/companions for



people with special needs or disabilities are welcome free of charge. Sound Sense aims to make the event as accessible as possible for everyone with special needs.

● Can I bring the kids? There's a family-friendly policy too: talk to them about your needs and they'll do their

best to help. There are a few bedrooms which can accommodate a cot or camp bed for children on site. Family sized bedrooms are available nearby, and alternative accommodation can be found at local B&Bs.

● Yes, yes, yes. But when is it? Registration begins at 2pm on

Friday 16 June 2000, and the event ends at midday on Sunday 18 June.

Get away from it all and join in the community music event of the year – you can book now using the enclosed booking form.

Further details will be issued in a leaflet, published during April, and in the next issue of *Sounding Board*.

were invited to join the sessions, and to suggest what they would like to do with the resources – they decided they wanted to work towards recording an audiotape of cover versions of existing songs and new music written by the group.

But what is central to the approach is the development of an effective model of evaluation of the results which will inform future work and help others. Says Ben Higham, Director of Community Music East: "In our experience, it's important to incorporate active evaluation into the practical work. In this way, you're able to create a culture of enquiry that's stimulating and informative for everyone involved. The young people are better able to assess their own achievements and personal growth, as well as particular and transferable skills."

The approach emphasised the importance of a relaxed atmosphere, freedom of choice, and respect for the individual. One of the tutors commented: "It's the difference between doing stuff *with* people rather than *for* them. When you're doing things for people, you're laying yourself open to them pulling away from you. Particularly if they're marginalised anyway."

Staff from the Kerrison project and the Visiting Teacher Service noted a wide range of benefits. They felt that working in the collaborative group context had helped the students "lose this feeling of being exposed and failing" that they'd often experienced at school and noted that the process of making their own music had overcome individual differences and re-

sulted in something that "feels like their own territory." They also found that the project assisted in the socialising of previously isolated youngsters, and helped the students orient themselves towards the future by involving community musicians who were seen as representing people from the big wide world. One commented that it had been "a real bridging activity."

But evaluation is important as much for the participants as for the organisations involved. Interviews with students after the end of the pilot showed that the majority were excited by the prospect of making music, and valued the experience for a variety of reasons. "They didn't treat us like kids, it was a good laugh". "It gave me experience", "We became a lot closer when we had to sit there as a group and talk and discuss what to do". "After doing this music thing I think I'm more confident". "It's fun to play in a group, to work together at something."

The research and evaluation collated for the project so far in the tutors' journals, session records, and interviews with the students, points to a significant success. This is due in no small part to the student-centred approach and the very particular benefits that music-making can deliver. CME believes that demand for this type of project is growing. Says Higham: "The problems of exclusion are clearly growing and, at least now, there's a significant intention from the government that the issue should be tackled effectively. There are increasing opportunities and demands for community musicians in this area and so we must be able to effectively evaluate

the benefits and outcomes of our methods and approaches."

This becomes particularly important when you realise just how cross-cutting the work is. The range of funders gives an indication: the closest the finances get to an 'arts' partner is money from Yamaha Kemble (UK) Ltd. Rather than looking to Arts Council's New Audiences whatever, or RAB's regional lottery initiatives, the main programme has attracted funding from a wide range of Trusts: Equitable Charitable Trust, Adnams Charitable Trust, Paul Bassham Charitable Trust, Gilchrist Educational Trust and from Marks & Spencer. And of course the major partners are again not arts organisations, but Norfolk and Suffolk County Council education departments. Community music in this changing world is not just parts of the arts infrastructure, but crucially plays a legitimate part in (and legitimately claims funding from) the whole of the voluntary sector too.

That's not to say that music-making should be shaped to fit in with government policies – but it's crucial that community music is recognised and valued for its social effects and inclusive nature, in addition to its importance as a fundamental means of creative expression.

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