



COMMON PURPOSE

Community music grew up as the rebellious sister of formal music education. Now both sides are growing up – negotiating territories and learning to value their differences. **Anita Holford** looks at how music services and community musicians are beginning to focus on their common purpose

Just like punk, community music could not have existed without the cultural forms and structures against which it was rebelling. Formal music education – from the music services connected to local education authorities (see p12) to the conservatoires – and community music, or ‘informal music education’ have had an uneasy relationship from the beginning. There’s some overlap in their spheres of influence, networks and participants, but there have been all sorts of misconceptions on both sides. Community music has often been judged as poor quality, unfocused, and providing no progression routes for those who want to become

more deeply involved. Formal music education has been seen as narrow and exclusive, and out of touch with the reality of young people’s cultural experiences and interests.

The growth in sophistication of the community music sector has meant that many criticisms of it have been addressed, and in many ways the arguments about its value have been won. During this growth, however, formal music education has been floundering because of lack of funding, and its focus has been survival rather than development.

Since 1999, music services have been gradually pulled back from the brink of crisis by

*Young people’s music:
Rhythmix workshops, above
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extra cash from the Music Standards Fund (see p12) – but the deal seems to be that their work must reach a wider range of young people.

A pledge by the government that, “over time”, it will provide opportunities for every primary school child who wants to learn a musical instrument is upping the ante for music services. There’s also the carrot of extra funding for out of school activities from Youth Music but again, the music on offer must reach a wider range of young people, to satisfy Youth Music’s mission to improve access, breadth, coverage and quality of music-making.

There certainly seems to be a willingness to embrace these new opportunities. The opening slot of the recent Federation of Music Services conference, *Engaging with music*, focused on “a joined-up approach between formal and informal, classroom and club, taster and follow-up, education and community, listening, performing, creating, learning and enjoying”; Sound Sense director Kathryn Deane

spoke to the conference on “the role of the community musician”, and there was also a session from Mark Davyd, project director of Rhythmix (see below).

The Department for Education and Skills’s guidance on what makes an effective music service is strewn with references to a broader approach to music making, improving access and inclusion, and extending the range of musical opportunities.

Ideas such as ‘participation’ and ‘access’ are slowly being seen in the mission statements of many music services, and a wider range of genres is being introduced in many schools. The national survey of local education authority (LEA) music services 2002 shows that nearly a third of schools receive activities in the rock and pop genre, and the same proportion in African/Caribbean and Jazz, and no more than two-thirds receive western classical music provision. The instruments learned by most recipients of music services tuition are still largely European classical ones – violin is the most popular – but the guitar is the second

RHYTHMIX – building bridges

“I always come in on Thursdays now because of the music. If it wasn’t happening, then I wouldn’t bother turning up at all.” Rhythmix participant, 2002.

“We’ve not been able to offer any music up until now, due to lack of expertise and resources. A lot of our pupils who find it difficult to focus on something for any length of time have been on task throughout the sessions. They’ve also been calm and well behaved throughout – something that’s not easy to achieve.” Teacher at centre for learning difficulties, Rhythmix 2002.

Four music services that had provided mainly classical instrumental tuition to around 30,000 young people each year began a project in 2000 that was to increase the number of young people that took part in their activities by 67% over the following two years.

Rhythmix was conceived and designed by a consortium of the LEA music services for Brighton and Hove, East Sussex, Medway and Surrey. The heads of service wanted to reach young people who were rejecting their existing activities – particularly those who were disaffected and disadvantaged because of social deprivation or learning difficulties – and believed that the way forward was to work together to offer new areas of work such as rock and pop, world and ethnic music, in new locations such as youth and community centres, in and out of school hours. The facilitators were to

be skilled musicians who would use an informal workshop approach to engage young people and act as role models, and the project would promote the development of partnerships between community music providers and the formal music education sector, encouraging the exchange of viewpoints and skills.

Following consultation with young people as well as youth, probation and social services, the scheme was launched in full in September 2000, and worked with more than 50,000 young people between 2000 and 2002, many of whom had either never taken part in an organised music project or in any school-based music activity before. In April 2001, Rhythmix was appointed to oversee a Youth Music Action Zone for South East England, with funding of £500,000 from Youth Music, £50,000 from South East Arts, and its core funding of £50,000 from the LEA. The project covers a wide range of activities, from taster sessions through creating film sound tracks to creating a carnival. There are gigs at local music venues, workshops at pupil referral units, samba groups in schools, peer mentoring programmes at youth and community centres, performances in churches, courses in band skills, DJ mixing and music

technology in schools and youth clubs, and recording sessions at studios. One of the developments in the second phase was that the most committed and enthusiastic participants could be offered more focused progression routes, developing from basic level to advanced over a period of three 10 week sessions.

Results from the surveys make impressive reading. Participants are enthusiastic and keen to continue, and teachers and support workers say that the project is having an impact on other areas of young people’s development, such as truancy, concentration levels, and self esteem.

The majority of the music work is delivered by six community music groups – Audio Active, Carnival Collective, Project X, RedZebra, Music for Change, and Sound People – involving just over 100 musicians.



LINKS

Contacts and support

Federation of Music Services T: 01747 820042
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fanet.co.uk W: www.federationmusic.org.uk

Gateshead Council Schools Music Service *The Dryden Professional Development Centre, Evistones Road, Gateshead NE9 5UR* T: 0191-433 8685

Music Education Council T: 0161-928 3085 F: 0161-929 9648 E: ahasan@easynet.co.uk

National Association of Music Educators c/o Gordon Lodge, Snitterton Road, Matlock, Derbyshire DE4 3LZ E: hf@artsland.demon.co.uk

National Music Council T: 020 7820 9992 F: 020 7820 9972 E: nationalmusiccouncil@ukonline.co.uk

Rhythmix Mark Davyd, project director, 13 Deanery Road, Stratford, London E15 4LT T: 020 8519 8233 E: mark.davyd@ntlworld.com

Youth Music Makers Network Horace Cardew, head of young people's music, Sound Sense T: 020 8299 1826 E: horace.cardew@soundsense.org

Music Standards Fund – in a beat

The Music Standards Fund was established in 1999 to “halt the decline in music services, support new developments, and provide a period of financial stability”. £150 million was committed for 1999-2002, and a further £60 million a year until 2003/4. Before this, there was no central funding of music in schools – it was down to individual local authorities or local education authorities. Similar developments have been introduced in other countries of the UK.

most popular choice, and the list now includes gamelan, music technology, steel pan and tabla.

Certainly some music services – such as those involved in Rhythmix – are steaming ahead, broadening their provision in terms of genre, instruments and type of opportunity and partnering up with community music organisations to deliver parts of their service.

Gateshead Council Music Service, which won the National Music Council LEA Music Services Awards last year, began to break the mould long ago by being one of the first services to employ a rock guitarist (in fact, two) in 1983. Its provision now encompasses workshops and tuition in rock and pop, early music, music and dance from the Ukraine, Paraguay and India, early years music, folk music. The core workshops and tuition is delivered by an 40-strong in-house team of full time staff, plus “visiting music staff”, or peripatetic teachers, some of whom are from a community music background. The service also works in partnership with the Sage Gateshead (including the Northern Sinfonia and Folkworks) and with Gateshead College music department, which provides students who help with workshops in schools.

John Treherne, head of the service and an early music specialist, explains: “I’ve always believed in a balance of provision, and in reaching a significant number of children – currently we reach 12% of pupils in this area. Each one of the 97 schools in Gateshead – including special schools – has an input and the way we used the Standards Fund money is to provide this for free. A school with 90 children will get a minimum of one hour 15 minutes, but larger comprehensives will get up to 20 hours and they choose from a menu of options including instrumental teaching, workshops, ensemble work.”

But the picture is incredibly varied across the UK. Core funding by local authorities varies – resulting in many services having to charge parents for instrumental tuition. Also, the services themselves are at various stages of development: some are only a few years old,

Music Services – in three bars

What are they?

Music Services are run by local education authorities (LEAs) or local authorities, or are authority-supported independent organisations. They provide four main services for schools in their area: instrumental or vocal tuition outside of the main school curriculum, usually to individual pupils; out of school hours ensembles such as orchestras and choirs; support for classroom music teachers such as INSET training days, advice, resources, instruments; and more recently, project-based activities such as community-based initiatives.

Who do they employ?

There are around 10,700 music teachers working for music services in England, half of them hourly paid, and a further 19% part time staff. Most of those that are full time have Qualified Teacher Status – but this is so for less than half of the part timers and less than a quarter of hourly-paid teachers.

Who do they reach?

On average, 8% of young people in England aged five to 16 receive regular instrumental or vocal tuition via music services: the pattern varies across the country, from 1% of pupils to 18%. A recent Keele University/Roehampton survey suggested that some 40% of those not currently learning a musical instrument would like to do so. Across England, only 1% of pupils attend music services ensembles, though again the figure for some services can be as high as 18%. There’s currently no overall (England, or UK-wide) information about the demographics of pupils that music services work with.

having been re-established with the injection of Standards Fund cash, others are embedded in decades-old infrastructures, and some operate completely independently from the LEA.

Horace Cardew, head of young people’s music at Sound Sense, has been talking to music services as part of Sound Sense’s research into professional development needs among those who make music with young people (see opposite) and it’s clear that the Standards Fund hasn’t provided all the solutions: “Music services are stretched enough already – and sometimes their choice is between providing more and broader activities, or free lessons to those who want them.”

In Gateshead, part of the problem is solved by generating income through consultancy and publishing. Treherne attributes Gateshead’s success to being opportunistic. “You’ve got to take chances. It’s natural to be nervous of the

Youth Music Makers Network – an overture

The Young People's Music team at Sound Sense has been carrying out research into how Music Services, community musicians, and youth and community services (including the new Connexions) receive and share professional development. It is working in two pilot regions of England: East Midlands and the South East. The research will inform the development of a Youth Music Makers Network (YMMN) which will provide information on training and professional development, networking opportunities and contacts, and a forum for addressing relevant issues.

YMMN also encourages partnership working between these three sectors, which have traditionally worked separately by organising events bringing the sectors together to network and discuss relevant issues – events have already been held in Nottingham and Reading, and more are planned for July and September.

Music Services in the pilot region have been surveyed to find detailed information on areas including: their attitudes to accreditation in terms of recruitment, content and cost of INSET (in-service training) sessions, examples of cross sector work, the possibilities for cross sector shared training sessions and suggested common subject areas. This survey is being mirrored by research into community musicians' training routes and community music training provision.

new and untried. It's important to talk to people to make the connections in your community – as we've done with the College and Sage Gateshead."

In *Tuning up: a new look at instrumental music teaching*, Andrew Peggie says that young people need to be offered a range of activities for different purposes: to attract them in the first place, engage them, help them to develop musical judgement and competency, and encourage them to take their interest further, and possibly on to a vocation. Music services may not be able to do this all on their own, and perhaps it is time to "encourage a mixed economy of provision: large and small operations, general and genre-specific, strongly vocational, weakly vocational and open access", reflecting more realistically the way music works. Community music organisations – with their emphases on a range of genres, open access opportunities, and different approaches to learning – are clearly an important part of this mixed economy.

But, Peggie says, it will be important to "avoid a nasty collision" between these different forms of music education delivery. Perhaps what's needed is a new model that is the sum of the best features of community music and traditional music services, an outcome "more fusion than fission". Rhythmix would be one such model.

It's not only the contrasts in culture and approach that make this a tricky tightrope to walk. Differences in the initial and continuing training and development of music services staff and community music professionals mean that the professionals themselves are starting from very different viewpoints, and have little opportunity to share or negotiate them. Ivor Widdison, chair of National Music Council LEA Music Awards scheme panel and editor/director of the Musiced website appreciates the difficulties facing music services in broadening out genres and ways of teaching, and says they can be attributed to two factors. "Firstly, the innate conservatism of many music advisers/teachers and those who trained them originally and secondly, the shortage of trained music teachers, especially in the primary sector."

Training and development certainly holds the key to releasing some of the opportunities and Mark Davyd believes that it's now up to community musicians to meet the formal music sector half way: "There's been a big pendulum swing by music services. They're beginning to accept that quality community music is as effective as formal music education. We now need to give music services confidence in the product we're offering. It's not necessarily about prejudice on music services' part: it's because they have Ofsted inspections! Working together is about both sides trying to get their best practice and quality issues into the equation."

Sound Sense's research, leading to a Youth Music Makers Network, addresses just this point – and, importantly, is about encouraging connections. Says Horace Cardew: "The will is there among music services to broaden their provision, and the Youth Music Makers Network could be a useful tool in this process. It's about encouraging wider partnerships – between music services, youth services, and community music organisations. Each sector has a certain way of working, and we're not trying to change that, but we want to find the common ground."

LINKS

Reading

Tuning up – a new look at instrumental music teaching, Andrew Peggie. Published by Sound Sense £5 from Sound Sense: T: 01449 673990 F: 01449 673994 E: info@soundense.org

National survey of LEA music services 2002. Department for Education and Skills. DfES publications T: 0845 6022260 F: 0845 6033360 Textphone: 0845 6055560 E: dfes@prolog.uk.com Quote ref: NSLMS

DfES website W: www.dfes.gov.uk/musicservices/

Musiced website Site for music teachers and students, supported by Jazz Services, Youth Music and the National Music Council. W: www.musiced.org.uk

