

Strengthening Music in Society: The way forward for UK Conservatoires

Conference report

Strengthening Music in Society was a conference held on 16 December 2021, hosted and convened by the Institute for Social Impact Research in the Performing Arts at Guildhall School of Music & Drama in association with Conservatoires UK (CUK), the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) and the Society for Education and Music Psychology Research (SEMPRE).

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INTRODUCTION

[Strengthening Music in Society](#) was a conference held on 16 December 2021, hosted and convened by the Institute for Social Impact Research in the Performing Arts at Guildhall School of Music & Drama in association with Conservatoires UK ([CUK](#)), the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen ([AEC](#)) and the Society for Education and Music Psychology Research ([SEMPRE](#)).

Presented by Jess Gillam, MBE, award-winning saxophonist, broadcaster and Guildhall School alumna, this was the first opportunity for those working in the music sector across the UK to collaboratively unpack and respond to a major [AEC-inspired paper](#) (One that marked the culmination of their four-year project "Strengthening Music in Society" (2017-21). Lead author on the paper was Professor Helena Gaunt, Principal of the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, and another UK-based author was Professor Celia Duffy of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, alongside five international co-authors.

The conference brought together a diverse range of key stakeholders from across the UK sector concerned to bring about positive change in the context of the social changes occurring as a result of COVID-19, and Brexit, and in response to global social justice movements such as the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements. We aimed to ask fundamental questions about conservatoires' purpose and identity, to take stock and to set new progressive and inclusive directions, which support performance excellence and the relevance and impact of the sector's work within 21st century society.

As well as staff and student representation from each UK Conservatoire, delegates included representatives from key organisations within the UK classical music industry, the UK music education sector, research organisations and special interest groups. A full list of organisations represented is given in the appendix.

The conference started with a livestreamed public plenary session, followed by a range of "delegate only" moderated discussion groups operating under the Chatham House Rule, picking up key themes from the plenary presentations and making recommendations for action.

This report contains an executive summary of main themes and recommendations, followed by more detailed summaries of each presentation and discussion group. The report has been sent to all delegates, with an invitation to share more widely both within their institutions and professional networks as a stimulus to organisational and sectoral development. It is also published on the Guildhall School [website](#).

The report was drafted under the overall editorship of John Sloboda (Guildhall School of Music & Drama) and Helena Gaunt (Royal Welsh Conservatoire of Music & Drama). Contributors to the different sections are listed after the executive summary, and the editors would like to thank all contributors for thought-provoking and practically oriented provocations. Additional thanks is given in the appendix. All correspondence about this report should be sent to Rachel Kellett at rachel.kellett@gsmd.ac.uk in the first instance.

April 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Keynote address:

The UK conservatoire sector needs a revised contemporary foundation to underpin stronger partnership between students, teachers, researchers, the professional music industry and wider music education, through which to craft future practice both in initial and continuing training, and in institutional leadership within the community. This is an enduring need in the face of growing socio-economic inequalities and global challenges, sharpened by recent events such as the pandemic, Brexit, and the Black Lives Matter movement. It calls for strengthening existing ways and evolving new ways of curating and creating music and engaging young and emerging professional musicians in big societal issues through their artistry, in a time of unpredictable and insecure professional futures.

The paradigm of “Musicians as Makers in Society” offers a means of bridging artistic and social elements in music making. Recognising the abiding centrality of deep artistry and craft, this paradigm offers a means of bringing that artistry into dialogue with musicians’ wider motivations as human beings and their responsibilities to broader society. This is seen as a partnership of values rather than an oppositional either-or. It calls for a widening of the understandings of excellence and how that can be measured and assessed. Alongside musical dimensions such as sound quality, technical skill and imagination, it becomes critical to include aspects of social awareness and interaction, for example relating to the ethics of care, tolerance, generosity and nimbleness. Some of these criteria will be contextualised in ways that require assessment outside the “closed doors” of an institution. The paradigm also calls for a wider public projection of excellence in terms of a range of achievements of alumni beyond the traditional “glittering prizes”.

This paradigm encourages a rebalancing of what may easily be perceived to be competing priorities:

- between canonic repertoires and making new work;
- between embodied music making face to face and digital interactions;
- between artistic imagination, artistic processes and social imagination or cultural entrepreneurship;
- between individual and ensemble craft;
- and between craft apprenticeship and self-directed and collaborative learning in diverse contexts.

There is exemplary good practice emerging in the professional classical music world, and conservatoires are involved in this, demonstrating that musicians can be makers in society in rich and multi-layered ways without abandoning their core artistry. But there is more to do, both around core aspects of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, and in how institutions work to develop their presence in society and connections with communities.

Invited individual responses:

Students are key stakeholders in conservatoires, and while the UK sector has made a good start in embedding student voice within the various decision-making bodies there is still a lot to be done. For instance, strategies and policies to support students of colour still need to be proven in practice, positively transforming the everyday experience of students. Further progress in the inclusion of student voice and experience is likely to involve difficult conversations about hierarchies and power relationships within institutions, and to demand greater integrity in engaging with student feedback, going beyond motivations to improve “league table” position.

Teachers and pedagogues have time-honoured means of developing students' capacities to listen to their own performances in order to identify and craft micro details in their performance which can deliver the high-quality outcomes of control and precision that the industry expects. But there are wider aspects of listening that encompass perspectives outside the closed system of teachers, experts and professionals. Do we, for instance, assist students to listen to and understand their audiences as well as they might, and to see them not simply as recipients but as active participants in "musicking", potentially even co-creators?

Researchers have an important role in subjecting propositions such as outlined in the keynote address to empirical scrutiny, using appropriate theoretical and methodological tools. If the competing priorities are continua, rather than an "either-or", research can investigate what the enablers and barriers are for movement along each continuum. Research can also map the multiple stakeholders and articulate their relationships to each other. Earlier research into diversity in UK Music Higher Education (2008) can be used as a benchmark. Disability and socio-economic status were then key indicators. How much has changed in the intervening 13 years?

Some **employers** are moving away from traditional "fixed ensemble" structures, to a more fluid workforce where diversity of perspectives, ideas and experience contributes more to the creative process than polished finely-honed, perfectly executed reproductions of established repertoire. Standard auditions are supplemented by statements about musicians' artistic ideas, influences, and aspirations, and can lead to rejection of "industry stars" who are highly accomplished but unable to work in an open, explorative way. Conservatoires are not yet consistently equipping their students for such roles and so such employers are stepping in to devise and offer their own training.

The **industry** is supported by major venues where the international market in concert promotion operates. Conservatoires have focused their training on equipping musicians to compete within this market. However a sometimes forgotten strand is a strong UK tradition of community engagement going back to Holst, Vaughan Williams, Britten and others where amateurs have worked alongside professionals, not only in big cities but in rural areas. This was matched by a strong state-supported access to training for young people from working-class backgrounds. In aiming to rebuild some of these important ideals, professional orchestras are increasingly relocating their operations away from city centres and into local communities. CPD for these new contexts is an obvious area for collaboration between conservatoires and the wider industry.

Advocating to **government and policymakers** means winning the argument for the music industry being a national asset. When government accepts this, as it did for the technology sector, systemic benefits flow. We can learn from the football industry about how what can be seen as an elite pursuit can nevertheless attract systematic government support through strategic embedding in local communities who champion them. This includes properly funding a "talent pipeline" for the training of talented local youngsters. Mapping the benefits of music in society and identifying skills gaps which should be filled to deliver these benefits is a collaborative task for conservatoires, the education sector and the music industry.

Collective responses from delegate working groups:

Under-18 music provision is key to improving access and inclusion and should be front and centre of conservatoire strategy. As gatekeepers to the profession, conservatoires can be central to a sectoral reflection on what constitutes quality and potential in contemporary society and consequently adapt recruitment and audition processes to reflect that. This reflection can shift balance between traditional requirements of professional orchestras and

the emerging requirements of the more community-engaged portfolio careers that most graduates now need to embrace. The sector can positively move together by increasingly treating under-18s as “artists of the NOW” rather than “Musicians of the future”. There are growing examples of good practice of harnessing youth voice, youth programming, peer-to-peer mentoring schemes, and artistic activities with more porous boundaries involving pre- and post-HE musicians alongside conservatoire students. Conservatoires are well placed to lead on this, and also on bringing together organisations from across the sector, jointly advocating to government for funding schemes and initiatives that encourage greater diversity in the “talent pipeline”.

For conservatoires to fulfil their growing potential in **community, partnership and co-creation**, there is more to do in celebrating existing (often exemplary) knowledge exchange and public engagement activities more successfully. Within the conservatoire sector, this can involve deeper inter-institutional sharing of best practice, and developing of sectoral marketing and branding strategies which do not place these locally-focused achievements on a lower rung than the traditional international-facing indicators. In collaboration with their community partners, there are opportunities for stronger articulation and promotion shared goals and values. Reflecting the voices of participants from less affluent or marginalised communities, can assist the sense that conservatoires are spaces “for them”. There is a need to build sustainability and longevity into partnerships, which are sometimes too reliant on staff on precarious short-term contracts. While valuing the agility and creativity that a younger workforce can bring to the table, it is important to see this work as of equal parity of esteem within staffing structures. Community-facing work is an invaluable way for all students to broaden their sense of what professionalism as a musician looks like, and help them develop skills and cultural responsiveness now required to succeed in the music industry. There is an opportunity for a greater cross section of staff to be more actively engaged in this work, to support a deeper dialogue between senior management of conservatoires and their industry partners to identify and develop best practice.

Research can inform several processes of change within conservatoires. Research into institutional culture change and leadership can inform understanding of the gaps between institutional rhetoric and practice on the one hand, and practice on the ground and in the teaching room. Culture change in conservatoires, where most staff are on fractional contracts, requires a deeper understanding of how leadership can best work in this context. At the broadest level this means mechanisms for giving all staff a sense of inclusion – and as part of that devising processes of CPD that may be welcomed by hourly paid teachers. Research can systematically document what is already happening in conservatoires, and identify misperceptions and barriers to acceptance among both students and staff. In all of this, collaborative inter-institutional research could balance the more competitive approaches that the research funding system rewards. The CUK Research Forum could play a catalysing role in discovering potentials for and co-ordinating collaborative research.

Continuing professional development for mid-career musicians can assist them to move forwards in the current climate where there is still an unspoken belief that a multi-faceted career counts for less than a “straight-ahead” classical musician. That belief may incline mid-career musicians seeking broader development to look outside the conservatoire, believing they have reached the ceiling of the skills development that conservatoires can offer. In fact, conservatoire training beyond craft skill is now much greater than in the past, and includes professional skills, psychological and physical self-care, work in schools and community, music therapy etc. - with students needing to gain the necessary skills to achieve excellence in whichever situation they are working: ‘situational excellence’. Conservatoires could consider the creation of Fellowships for mid-career musicians, opening up the institution to enable them to be in deeper dialogue with a wide range of practitioners, and offering the possibility of courses co-designed with industry, including opportunities for different music traditions to work together; training in

communication; musical responsiveness and improvisation etc. A need was seen for the creation of a single collaborative space for people to engage at partnership level: between conservatoires, umbrella organisations e.g. Incorporated Society of Musicians, Help Musicians, Musicians Union, Conservatoires UK, Association of British Orchestras, Sound Connections, etc. The broader the network, the more opportunities there are to bring in people from different musics, to enable musicians to find their tribe/network, and to make a virtue of the diversity and complexity of the industry.

The discussions on **diverse programming and audiences and decolonising the curriculum** noted the centrality of the classical canon and its related pedagogy in the current conservatoire curriculum, and argued for a realignment in which existing repertoires and approaches were enriched by a wider variety of music and pedagogical styles, with empathy proposed as a key tool for listening and dialogue in order to face and work through inevitable resistances. Improvisation provides a potential bridge between musical cultures. This realignment requires more professional development and more diverse hiring practices for staff, taking into account not only gender and ethnicity but neurodiversity and other cross sections of society. To connect with more diverse audiences requires conservatoires to transcend embedded power hierarchies. Some of this work can be slow as it requires building mutual empathy, and it may be necessary for conservatoires to be open to radical approaches to see faster change. Should “conservatories” think about themselves more as “innovatories”?

The **one-to-one lesson** is rightly considered to be an essential core of conservatoire training, but this core element may not have kept pace with the changed context now subject to government regulation about what constitutes the “value” of a degree-level programme of study. There is a shift within higher education to a student-centred approach, which has complex implications for a more traditional “master-apprentice” approach. Pre-HE expectations of students may also inhibit progress towards the development of independent and collaborative learning skills, a more equal relationship between teacher and pupil, and the acceptance of a wider variety of work aspirations than the solo concert performer, with its limited notions of “excellence” and “success”. Repositioning of musician as ‘maker’ might productively break away from a limiting position of ‘musician as product’ to a more autonomous ‘musician as producer/creator/facilitator’. There is a desire for more training and support for teaching staff; for easier sharing and more open discussion of one-to-one teaching practices and pedagogies; and of the importance of ensuring that teachers are well-supported in their role as guiding, facilitating, and enabling their students’ learning and development as highly-skilled professional musicians with agency, autonomy, and authority.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMME

PUBLIC PLENARY

Opening keynote address:	Helena Gaunt, Principal of the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama	Page 8
Responses with perspectives from across the sector:		
The student perspective:	Ankna Arockiam, PhD candidate at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and founder of Shared Narratives.	Page 16
The pedagogic perspective:	Diana Salazar, Director of Programmes at the Royal College of Music.	Page 20
The research perspective:	Graham Welch, UCL Institute of Education Established Chair of Music Education.	Page 24
The employer perspective:	Linda Begbie, Development Director, Manchester Collective (submitted in writing).	Page 28
The industry perspective:	Gillian Moore, CBE, Director of Music, Southbank Centre.	Page 33
The government and policy perspective:	James Njoku-Goodwin, CEO, UK Music.	Page 37

DISCUSSION GROUPS

Groups were led and summarised by staff and student members of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama as representatives of the host institution. The discussions operated under Chatham House Rules

Under-18 provision:	Summarised by Maia Mackney and Nikki Shepperd.	Page 40
Conservatoires in context: community, partnership & co-creation:	Summarised by Matthew King and Toby Young.	Page 41
Research:	Summarised by Cormac Newark and John Sloboda.	Page 43
Continuing Professional Development for mid-career musicians:	Summarised by Ann Sloboda and Jane Williams.	Page 44
Diverse programming and audiences and decolonising the curriculum:	Summarised by Sandeep Gurrapadi, Alessandro Mazzola, Preetha Narayanan and Nazli Tabatabai-Khatambakhsh.	Page 46
The one-to-one lesson and pedagogy in context:	Summarised by Tony Castro and Armin Zanner.	Page 48

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

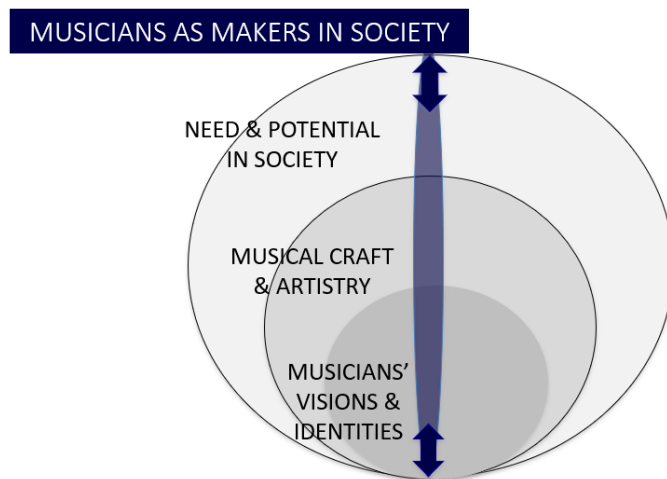
These are edited versions drawn from transcripts of the presentations. The full presentations, including audio-visual aids, may be viewed [here](#).

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Helena Gaunt, Principal of the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama

My key hope for the day is that collectively we work to evolve a foundation for stronger partnership between conservative students, teachers, researchers, leaders and industry in terms of future practise. This practice includes initial professional training, innovation for the industry, ongoing professional development for practitioners, and developing music institutions' capacities as pacemakers or to quote Raymond Williams, the great Welsh theorist, "resources of hope for our local and global communities".

The paradigm of *Musicians as Makers in Society* may help to underpin this foundation.



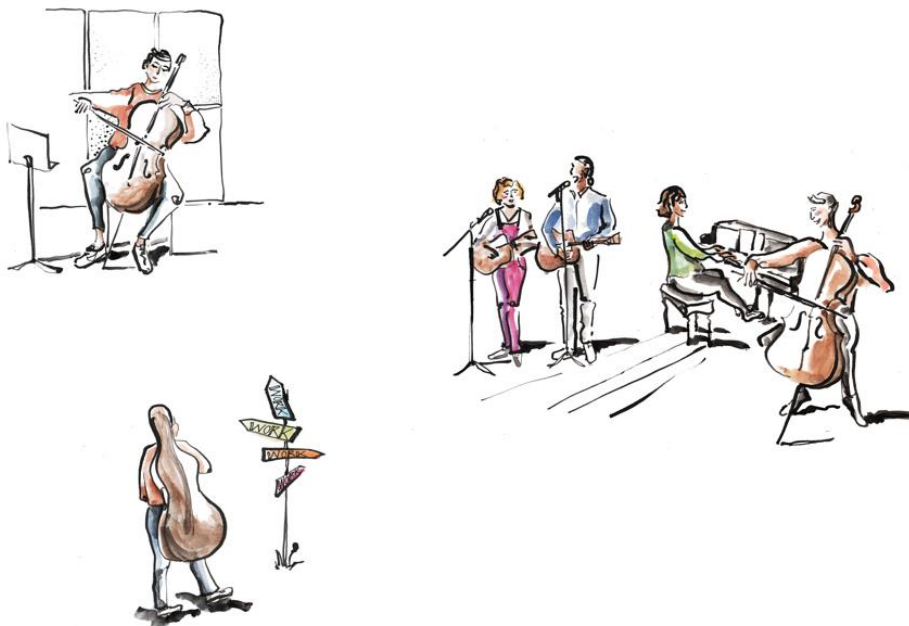
This is a paradigm for conservatoire education that I've put forward together with colleagues from across Europe as the culmination of the European Association of Conservatoire Projects Strengthening Music in Society, which was funded by Creative Europe. As set out in the [journal paper](#) published earlier this year, our aim has been to offer a fresh way of conceiving the foundation for specialist music education, one that engages with the turbulence and rapid change characterising the music industry and our wider societies, and one that strengthens the voice of specialists in music education in the midst of growing socio-economic inequalities and global challenges. *Musicians as Makers in Society* looks to the future of professional music practises, and to what may now be needed to support both emerging and established professional musician in taking an active part in strengthening music in society.

We are in a time of huge potential and need for music making in contemporary society. COVID-19 is highlighting the imperatives of cultural democracy and transforming the ways in which we can engage with music digitally. But we have also seen the work of professional music, musicians and arts organisations come under intense pressure. Many musicians have really suffered. Many have not survived in the profession. For those of us working in conservatoires, the seismic implications range from how we respond to new ways of curating

and creating music making, to how we engage young musicians in big societal issues through their artistry. How do we prepare professional musicians for unpredictable, insecure yet creative futures?

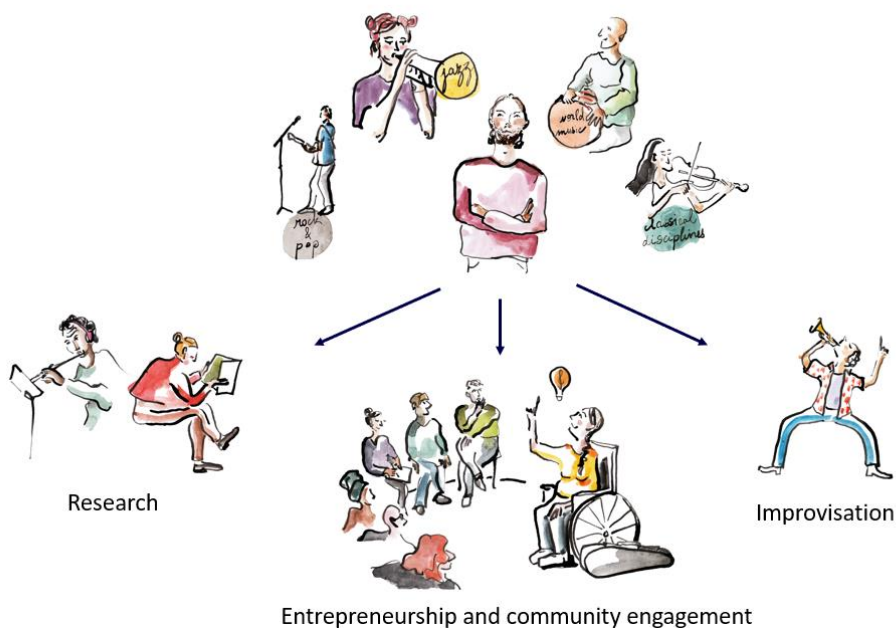
These implications aren't simply a reflection of the pandemic. They connect to longstanding questions about the philosophical foundation for this work and the paradigm of training that we put into practise. Arguably UK conservatoires contain some of the more forward facing institutions within the AEC membership, which of course, also extends beyond Europe. Much has been moving forward over the last 30 years, not least because UK music organisations have been pushing boundaries. But are these changes sufficiently delivering what is needed, particularly now in the context of Brexit, Black Lives Matter, climate change and growing socio-economic divides?

Here are a few vignettes by way of provocation and reminder:



(Illustrations: Valentine Gigandet)

Picture Nina, a talented classical cellist working intensively on core repertoires, winning prizes but secretly also participating in bands, fusion and folk outside of the conservatoire. Reluctant to mention this to her teachers, Nina leads several lives driven by a generally unspoken belief that a multifaceted career counts for less than being a “straight-ahead” classical musician. She struggles to find her own integrity and to feel confident about the professional path.



(Illustrations: Valentine Gigandet)

Picture Peter, who looks after the degree programme portfolio in a conservatoire offering several different music disciplines. Each programme has a rich but overwhelmingly packed curriculum into which over the last years elements have been added, such as research, entrepreneurship, improvisation, community engagement. It's all there, but it's a baffling array with little interaction between subjects. Students definitely gain knowledge and skills, but often miss experience of integrating them in practise. What's more, a number of instrumental and vocal teachers dismiss the relevance of these courses, preferring that students simply practise. How should Peter respond?



(Illustrations: Valentine Gigandet)

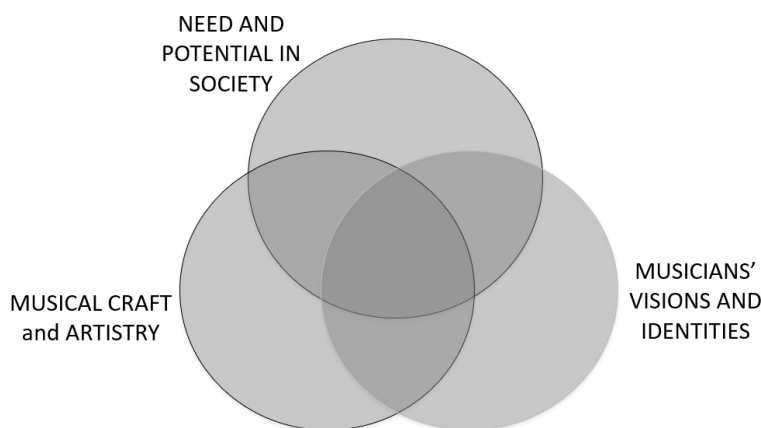
And lastly, picture Anna, a conservatoire leader struggling to advocate for artistic education at the highest levels and to demonstrate her institution's value and societal relevance in political circles. Perceptions of irrelevance, elitism, lack of diversity, equality and inclusion are being voiced more loudly, both internally and in wider communities. Where to focus in leading change?

My guess is that most of us in UK conservatoires will recognise at least some of these vignettes. So the aim of proposing a fresh conceptual paradigm, *Musicians as Makers in Society* is precisely to support positive systemic change and to address some underlying key agendas:

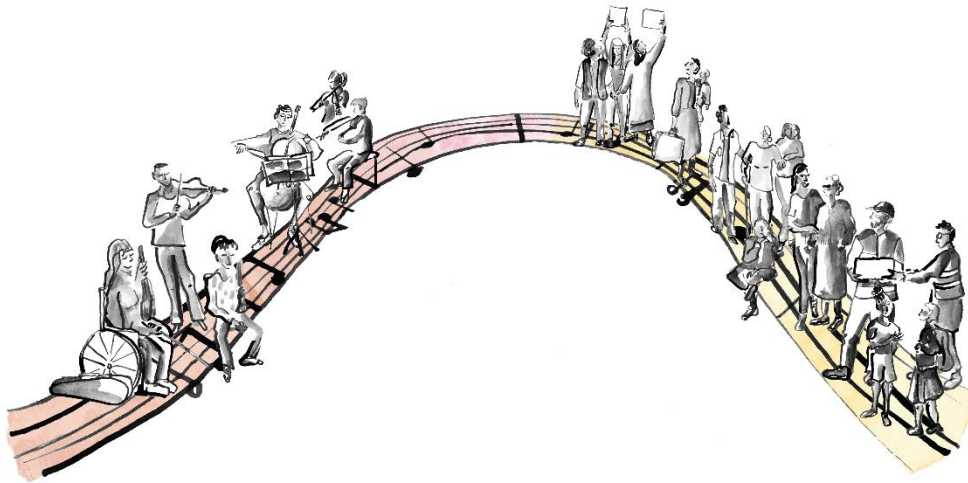
- First for moving future-focussed education into the core of training rather than sitting on the periphery;
- Second, for removing barriers to access and widening participation;
- Thirdly for connecting dynamically and reciprocally with local communities and wider society;
- Fourth for deepening advocacy to engage stakeholders in the relevance of conservatoires locally and globally;
- And fifth, for being in service of renewing that extraordinary potential of music making in our societies and the place of professional musicians within that.

I'll unpack this paradigm in two parts: first about musicians in society, and second about musicians as makers.

Musicians in society. This is a paradigm that fundamentally bridges artistic and social elements in music making. It connects the musician's identity and vision of society with their craft skills and artistic practise. It recognises that musicians must be immersed in that artistry, but it brings this into dialogue both with their motivations as human beings and with practical experiences of engaging with people and communities.



This means connecting values and priorities that have previously all too often been perceived to conflict with one another: on the one hand priorities such as artistic autonomy and craft expertise, and on the other hand social and societal aspects of music making. This could concern connecting with a range of different audiences or going further to - for example - proactively address inequalities, loneliness and isolation, or to explore major societal challenges such as migration, climate change, conflict, and violence. We propose that the interdependence and reciprocity of these priorities, artistic and social, is essential.



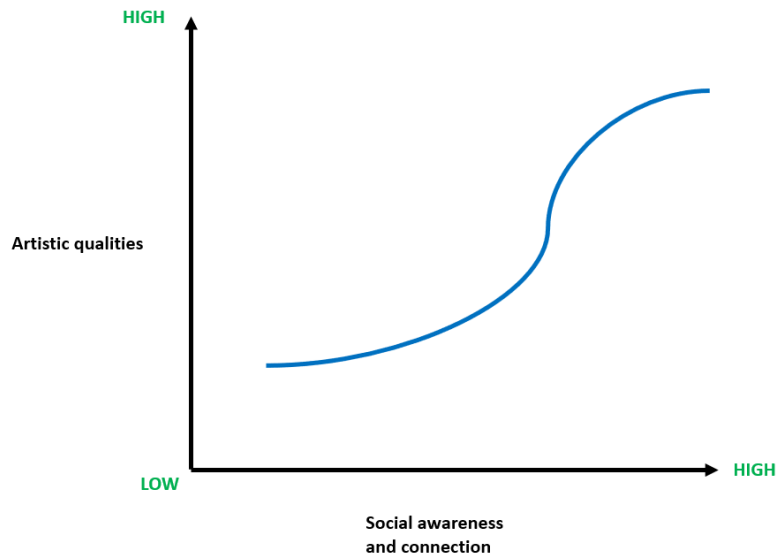
(Illustration: Valentine Gigandet)

What lies behind the concept of musicians as makers in society is a shift to a position of partnering values between these priorities. Musicians in society draws on a concept that was originally proposed by Christopher Small (1998), the concept of *Musicking*. Musicking fundamentally stresses music as an active and interactional phenomenon situated in society rather than an abstract idea. Small writes:

“To Musick is to take part in any capacity in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composition) or by dancing”

Small contrasts this idea with a trend in western societies, which he identifies as valuing the artefacts of music, the scores, the recordings and so on over the acts of creating, listening and responding to music. Musicking refocuses attention to the social, interactive and actively participatory nature of music making in diverse contexts, but deconstructs dialectical opposition between the values of social interaction and the values of abstract art. It creates shared ground between musicians, artistry and social interaction. In many ways, this feels like common sense and we may not need to adopt Small’s particular terminology. But the fundamental issues of being both fully engaged with artistic concerns and with societal issues, embracing the creative tensions between them, are essential.

Dimensions of excellence. This discussion raises critical questions about how different elements of music making can be valued and balanced in conservatoires. Dual axes of artistic and social concern are brought into dialogue, offering multiple possible outcomes in terms of excellence.



Musicians as Makers in society has clear implications for excellence, how it's measured, how excellence is to be understood musically and or socially, and indeed where and how complex interactions between artistic and social dimensions can be assessed. Alongside musical dimensions such as sound quality, technical skill and imagination, it becomes critical to include aspects of social awareness and interaction, for example, relating to the ethics of care, tolerance, generosity and nimbleness. And so, for the interaction of artistic and social dimensions to be assessed, work needs to take place in the real world. Assessment behind the closed door of a studio or exclusively within the institutional community has limitations. Contextualised criteria for excellence are indeed starting to be proposed in conservatoires, perhaps particularly in jazz and pop programmes.

But there is more work to do in addition to student assessment, there are also issues about how institutions choose to project excellence publicly on websites and so. A traditional approach has often been to celebrate success by lionising artists with exceptional international profiles performance, even though this reflects a relatively narrow portion of that spectrum of music achievement. Are institutions likely to want to relinquish this expression of excellence? There are challenges and risks in expanding the continuum of possibilities on show.

Musicians as makers. *Musicians as Makers in Society* aims to embrace creative tensions between artistic and social dimensions of music making, rather than allowing them to be perceived as conflicting priorities. I want to dig a little deeper into the term making. Making explicitly involves creative work, prioritises active interpretation, curation and creation of performance. Making also recognises social orientation in musical craft as makers in society, with musicians bringing fresh creative approaches to specific situations in context. This is about more than being creative in aesthetic ways. Making cannot be detached from the world. On the contrary, it embraces social situations, which also means that it embraces the political and moral implications of being a professional musician. In practise, making opens up diverse ways of programming or, for example, of incorporating improvisatory aspects of performance alongside compose music. Equally, it opens up different ways of engaging with audiences and participants of collaborating or co-creating with them, as well as with other artists. What follows from this stance of making is an understanding of a number of further polarities relevant both to professional music and conservatoire practise that equally need to be calibrated in terms of a creative continuum and partnering values between competing priorities, for example;

- Between canonic repertoires and making new work;

- Between embodied music making face to face and digital interactions;
- Between artistic imagination, artistic process and social imagination or cultural entrepreneurship;
- Between individual and ensemble craft;
- And between craft apprenticeship through one to one work with expert teachers and self-directed and collaborative learning in diverse contexts.

Emerging practises are growing in sophistication, as is their ability to embrace the complexities and creative tensions that these contribute to. There are many existing examples of professional musicians finding powerful and innovative forms of practise from the company *Bold Tendencies* and its *Multi-Story Orchestra* in an inner city car park to Manchester Collective's *Dark Days Luminous Nights* for Whitmore's projects with dementia, *Music for Life* through Nicola Benedetti Foundation working to inspire and develop young string players. Conservatoires are already involved in some of these. The imaginative potential musically and socially is unlimited. Indeed, the paradigm of making in society also hints towards further potential orientations. For example, being a maker *for* society or even a maker *of* society.

I want to highlight one example from a sister arts school where the concept of making is clearly established and which I think neatly illustrates the potential of this paradigm. It's called the *Real Elephant Collective*, an initiative led by a design graduate from the Royal Welsh Conservatoire.

A collection of 100 elephant sculptures, is travelling the world in a series of exhibitions free to the public. As it does so, the elephants call on people to reflect on living well and in harmony with the nature around them. The sculptures are life-sized and each modelled on a living elephant in the wild.

These are sculptures that have been created deep in the jungles of Tamil Nadu by indigenous communities made from *Lantana Camara*, an invasive wild plant. The elephants were imagined in response to pressing local environmental issues. There are many resonances in this project with the paradigm of maker in society, and its underpinning principle of partnering values. The starting point is not simply to develop an audience around a piece of art. Rather, it began with a designer wanting to engage with an issue in their local society and wanting to work holistically with this as an artist. Instead of assuming opposition between artistic and social values or between traditional craft skills and making new work, the project brings these together. Artistic imagination in a particular societal context has sparked the idea, the project has then been conceived by an artist with the deep skills and craft knowledge of theatre design. The artist's eye and attention to detail in modelling the elephants on individual animals and in shaping each likeness to an existing elephant has been essential. There is also profound social imagination involved in the project's conception. The desire to be close to the animals and to learn from them to bring them to greater awareness in a local population. The choice of material for the sculptures is imaginative, and there is imagination too in the cultural entrepreneurship, enabling the elephants to travel in order to raise awareness of environmental issues and to raise money

Those elephant sculptures are sold as they tour, and the project is doing well financially. There is yet another dimension of partnering values at play. Instead of seeing opposition between artistic expertise and making work inclusively, the project connects these values. Alongside an internationally trained artist, the project has gathered a local team of craftspeople to build the elephants, and the making process has created significant employment within that community.

This example illustrates just one version of integrated artistic and social imagination. Musicians clearly can be makers in society in rich and multi-layered ways without

abandoning that core artistry. They can engage and are engaging with societal issues locally and globally, leading with their artistic craft and heritage to co-create relevant the new modes of performance and participation in music making. Yo-Yo Ma is, of course, a longstanding example, as a world class player. We are not talking about replacing an old artistry with a new one, but rather about broadening artistry to be intimately entwined with societal context, issues and potential.

So what are the implications? The call of the paper we have published is a call to take ownership of the paradigm as musicians, as makers in society, to give confidence in supporting artists of the future and in renewing conservatoire practise together with the professional industries as a part of a collective movement towards strengthening music in society.



(Illustrations: Valentine Gigandet)

Moving forward, there's a lot to discuss, not least around core aspects of curriculum, assessment and pedagogy, and equally in terms of how institutions work to develop their presence in society and connexions with communities. Some of the implications, I think, also relate fundamentally to a growing imperative that I see for us in conservatoires to work together with industry in more strongly collaborative and forward facing ways. I know that many of the topics that I could elaborate further will come up in some of the responses. I look forward to this discussion and to what we can make for the future.

RESPONSES

THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Ankna Arockiam, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and founder of Shared Narratives

This very insightful paper is definitely a good starting point. Many of these things have already been thought about within the Conservatoire sector, but this paper is definitely one of the kind of pushes that we need. Stating the obvious, students do make up the majority of the conservatoire community and are also part of the wider society. We tend to forget this when we are wanting to spread more music, more awareness or embed ourselves more. Students are key stakeholders. Discussions have been held about increasing student representation and student voice at conservatoires. In the UK we are leading in this idea and practise of embedding the student voice within the various decision making bodies. However, we are lacking in this area, and there is still a lot more to be done. The student voice is integral for development of any sort within conservatoires, and we should never forget that.

But as a student looking at this paper, I would like to pose more questions today, reflecting on the six mobilising lines of development for the curriculum paradigm shift, which are in Helena's paper. This is a shift that we know is inevitable. It is happening and there is a lot to unpack.

The **first** of these lines is cultural heritage and making new work, connecting in society. The paper discusses the final recital element of student life at conservatoire, which in some ways seems out of date and out of touch with what's happening within the wider society outside the conservatoire walls. However, there are definitely recitals where students have programmed their repertoire in a way that showcases not only their skill set, but also is beginning to give an insight into their personalities and their identities and celebrating their identities

What does it truly mean to decolonise the curriculum. What does it entail? Decolonising the curriculum does not mean only changing what we teach, it is way deeper than that. It means supporting students of colour. It means supporting by providing training, by making sure that we understand this is going to be hard work. Questions will be asked and there are going to be uncomfortable conversations. But we should be ready for that and work incredibly hard to be able to make sure that the community within the conservatoire is welcoming to it. Robin Attan and Margaret Walker in their 2019 paper discuss decolonising music pedagogy. But pedagogy has two meanings. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the act or the intention of decolonising. Such pedagogy is used in university music programmes, but it can also point to the development of pedagogies that have the potential to do decolonising work through their application in practical music courses. We need to be constantly reminded that decolonisation is a process and not a product. To make new work, to be makers of music and society, we need to know the society. We in the conservatories need to come down from our ivory towers and engage with the wider society, and not only because we need to secure more government funding, but to actually make an impact, a very meaningful impact. And when we start embedding the music in society, we won't need to talk about making new work. This will be an organic result of all of this.

Recently, I was asked to make a list of music by composers of colour to build a repertoire for some music exam boards. And I asked for the deadline for this job, and I was told, two weeks. And then I responded saying that, to be fair, the deadline should have been centuries ago, years ago, but here we are. We're still moving forward. That's good.

The **second** of the paper's lines is embodied craft and digital innovations. Some buzzwords about embracing digital teaching and learning seem to express more of a necessity rather than choice. While we have realised that online and digital education is clearly important to higher music education, we still have to adopt this in a better way. The role of digital technology has changed immensely even since last year. But how have we given enough care and thought to students and the staff in that perspective? How have the experiences of students these past couple of years made an impact on their education? Access to performing arts is still challenging, and when we add the digital element to it, are we talking about issues such as digital poverty? How have students felt about their online lessons, about having other people such as their course mates and teachers in their personal space? Of course, some people thrived in the comfort of their own homes. But it most certainly has hindered progress for others, not forgetting the international students who are paying thousands of pounds to access this education. Due to COVID-19 and other reasons such as lack of housing and financial circumstances this has made an impact, so we should reflect on that.

The **third** line is research and social and cultural entrepreneurship. The paper proposes that we have a great opportunity to connect students to their artistic identities, and we need to find how best we can create these connections. My own research looks at musical, cultural and social identities of young Indians who are learning Western classical music, and it's very interesting to see how these identities are formed. But an important fact about identity is that it is constantly changing and adapting based on our experiences, the people we meet, the music we listen to, the performances we watch, etc. Students are curious. We are here to learn. And higher education music institutions need to read together, and early on need to create these spaces where students learn research skills and are comfortable enough to explore their own identities and are keen to research more.

This brings me to academia, which I'm sure Graham Welch will talk about in detail. A recent analysis has shown that out of nearly 20,000 doctoral positions awarded over the past three years, only 245 were to black students. This is only in England, but it is a number that we need to keep in mind and think about. I am the co-founder of Shared Narratives, which is a platform for researchers of colour within the performing arts sector. We have so far held two conferences. Both have been online, and during the sharing and the discussions in these conferences, it was very evident that there is definitely a lack of space for people or researchers of colour within the performing arts sector. Added to this, Helena's presentation talked about climate change, immigration, oppression, social change, etc. Students are aware of this, but in some ways when they walk into the conservatoire, all of this stops being relevant in some cases, and we need to make sure that there is that pathway so that we are reflecting what's happening in the wider community and society. We also need to openly talk about what are the political implications, etc. and not shy away from these difficult discussions, because this definitely makes an impact directly on students' experience. So please connect with students, take the time to do so and listen, not just closely, but also broadly.

The **fourth** line is about individual craft and ensemble work. As mentioned earlier, students' musical, cultural and social identities develop and grow further in conservatoire and educational establishments. Conservatoires have students from around the world. My conservatoire has students from over 50 countries, so you can see that the student community is already a melting pot of cultures, forming new communities, new collaborations, new connections. As the major stakeholders in conservatoires students are thus a reflection of these melting pots of cultures, languages, communities, music, dance, ideologies, etc. Are we doing enough to reflect these cultures? Are we celebrating these cultures enough? Are we acknowledging the differences, working and collaborating with other musicians and performing artists? This is one of the most meaningful experiences for students. It most certainly was for me. The development of these skills is key not only for

music, but also transferable to other walks of life, and actually life itself. How can we do more in supporting students to have this safe space for artistic development? Students need to be given the safe space to explore, to learn from each other in an open and welcoming environment.

The fifth line is reflection and reflexivity. To quote the Black British Network, *“To build a better system we must deconstruct the existing framework and understand where it has failed the black community, only then can we have a reflective response as opposed to a reactive response; and use the learning we extract from each meeting to build a better framework/eco system within our organisations and society.”*

I think it's something really important when we talk about a reflective response and a reactive response. What does that mean in the conservatoire sector? Students are encouraged to reflect on their development, their art, their music, their performance. We had a discussion recently about safe spaces in conservatoires and noted, for example, that for a student of colour there is that additional barrier that the colour of your skin places, apart from just accessing performing arts or music education. But to think about the students with their different unique identities, forming the strong, colourful tapestry even of a collective identity of a conservatoire, and how beautiful is that?

The **sixth** line is expertise and inclusion. After movements such as MeToo and Black Lives Matter, which took the world by storm, we have been working to create an inclusive conservatoire sector. However, to be honest, we still have issues around this. For example, we celebrate Black Lives Matter only during October, when it's Black History Month, and then we're scrambling around to find creators of colour to come and speak about their work or share their work or talk to our students in October. No! Do that throughout the year! Getting feedback from students is another key conservatoire or higher education music trait. My personal response is to ask why are we doing it? What is the intention behind getting feedback? Is it to get better rankings in the world? Or is it because we score better NSS (National Student Survey) results? Why are we doing it? I think the intention behind getting student feedback is key. It needs to be an honest intention and it has to be done with integrity.

Since Black Lives Matter, of course, equality, diversity and inclusion has become a key focus in conservatoires, which is brilliant. It should have happened years ago, but never mind. We're here. But where are we going from here? We have brilliant anti-racism action plans. We have strategies. We are employing people. We are doing things, but it's still not enough because it's just not to have it on paper so we can say, “look, we're doing all of this”. This needs to be in our actions in everyday life at the conservatoires. A very important project that AEC is undertaking focuses on power relations in higher music education. I think it is a very important issue that isn't being discussed openly at conservatoires because we're scared, and I think we need to start doing that. We need to start having difficult conversations. I think that is one of the key takeaways from my presentation: it is difficult, but we need to do it if we want to move forward, if we want to make art more relevant.

We talk about widening access or outreach programmes. I find these terms slightly problematic. It makes it seem like things that we should do on the side - just extra things that we should do in the conservatoire to appear relevant. But I think that should be embedded in the core element of conservatoire training, the core working in the everyday life of the conservatoires. I'd just like to quote from some recent research by Graham Smillie, who discusses widening access programmes at conservatoires:

“So while it could be argued that a conservatoire's own unique brand of contextualised admissions and practical approach allows participation in higher education to be more embodied and less focussed on prior academic success, there are still hidden truths within the field that distinguish those who belong and those who do not.” [Smillie, G., 2020. Pre-

tertiary transitions in the performing arts: A qualitative study of the tensions and hierarchies in widening access to a conservatoire's cultural systems.. Ph.D. Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the University of St Andrews.]

Again, a very important point to reflect on.

One of the many highlights of the paper for me is the word contemporary. We often talk about students being the future of performing arts, but we tend to lose focus about the students that are currently in our buildings. They are the torchbearers in the societies currently. How are their lives being enriched by being at conservatoires? The report ends on a positive note one of hope, imagination and innovation. It is true that individual voices can sometimes just become noise, and policymakers and those in power can play off individuals against each other. But let's hope not to do that. The reason I use "we" and "our" is because this is something we can all achieve. The tasks are too great and the mission is too important to just be left to a few individuals. But together we will be able to succeed. To end, I, for one, strongly believe in working together. The one thing that music and performing arts has taught me is empathy, and I will never undermine the power of empathy. It is what the world needs. More of this power can be translated into actions, actions that will break the systemic cages of conservatoires and the wider society, so that we are able to step out and breathe in all the creative freedom. It may be an unknown future, but if we succeed, it surely will be a safe space for all.

THE PEDAGOGIC PERSPECTIVE

Diana Salazar, Royal College of Music

Not everyone here will have studied, worked or even visited a conservatoire. So I'm going to start by describing why I think conservatoires are very special environments for developing musical potential. At conservatoires, as we select only those musicians showing the greatest potential. Our incoming students are dedicated creative young musicians who have already invested many thousands of hours in their passion on entry. We welcome them into an artistic environment where they can immerse themselves in music making together, and we ensure that students maximise their development through intensive learning experiences. Often, teaching is on a one-to-one basis delivered by leading professional musicians in ideal facilities for practise and performance. So the conservatoire is a rich melting pot of exceptional musical ability, ambition and artistic aspiration, and our defined focus on nurturing instrumental, vocal or composition specialists at the very highest level leads to outstanding results and musical craft and artistry. For evidence of this, we only need look at the long history of conservatoires as producing some of the world's most outstanding musicians.

I'm really proud to work in this kind of inspirational community of learning, but arguably the strengths of this distinctive learning ecology can also lead to its blind spots.

So I want to start with the idea of listening. At conservatoires our students learn to listen in deep and meaningful ways; to their teacher, to professionals in their area, to their peers, and, perhaps most importantly, to themselves. Intensive quality-orientated listening to the music and the musicians around them is essential for the development of individual musical goals and self-awareness. This kind of listening enables conservatoire musicians to become really adept at identifying micro details in their practice and understanding high-quality outcomes in performance. It facilitates control, precision and familiarity with certain expectations in the profession.

Our musicians need this type of listening, but if we step back, we see that this type of intensive focussed listening is often situated in a relatively closed system with an inward gaze on the classical music 'arena' of teachers, experts and professionals. But, in reality, no musician exists in a vacuum - and the conservatoire's 'core', the arena of teachers, professionals and peers is quite an artificial construct. Outside this controlled sphere there are myriad other fields that can and should shape the professional musician and training at the most basic level. Even the most successful concert musician needs an audience. So where does our understanding of audiences sit in a conservatoire ecology? And are we teaching our students to listen enough?

Outside the conservatoire arena, I'm going to move to one of my favourite quotes from Pierre Boulez:

"Creativity is a form of generosity, albeit often mixed with egocentricism. Without this generosity, one is not creative"

I'm going to come back to the idea of generosity via a couple of important questions. When we reflect on the educational principles of conservatoires today, we need to ask some big questions and my two big questions are:

- What is the purpose of conservatoires today?
- And who are conservatoires for?

With regards to that second question, I really hope the answer isn't 'for us' or for even 'for musicians' or even 'for our students'. Instead, I'm really hopeful that the answer to that

question reflects the conservatoire's interconnectedness with wider society and - with Boulez - the spirit of generosity.

Our conservatoires play a vital role in shaping the future of music, and I would hope that we nurture the brightest new talents not simply to play for themselves or for their teachers, or even for a competition panel, but to transform people's lives for the better through their creativity. I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the outwards-facing orientation of these statements. We want our students to connect meaningfully with audiences through the medium of sound; to see others not as passive recipients but as active participants in 'musicking', potentially even co-creators.

All around us, there's change in the world. The last 18 months have taught us how radical and how unexpected that change can be. Looking further back in time, we know that our students live, study and work in a very different musical world to that which existed at the founding of the RCM in 1883. Over nearly 140 years, we've seen changes in technology leading to new forms of technologically mediated performance, including recording, broadcast surround sound now virtual reality. We've seen significant change in music as a discipline, including the emergence of fields like performance science, film music, music and gender, music and race; fields which inform what and how we perform. We've also seen new approaches to developing new knowledge and insights in our discipline, for instance, through practise research, ethnography, and action research. We see new ideas and approaches in education, including higher education. We've seen 140 years of new music since the founding of the college. That's a lot of new music. We've seen significant stylistic shifts in art, music, composition, notation, performance practises and the sites for musical performance. And as highlighted in the paper, we've seen the growth of a diverse ecology of music and society overall.

We can't ignore that classical musicians co-exist and increasingly co-depend on other musical genres and art forms from across the globe. Classical music is not '*the music*', nor should it be. In short, music has changed and continues to change.

But how has our pedagogy evolved to reflect this radically changed cultural, social and technological environment? What do conservatoires conserve and where do they innovate? The proposal in this article to "dissolve polarisation between artistic and social domains, and to promote flow between artistic purpose, musical and professional expertise, and societal need/engagement" sounds simple enough, but we cannot ignore how ingrained certain attitudes, values and hierarchies are in the conservatoire environment. For many, the move from quality-orientated listening to a more radical form of listening - one that connects with fields beyond this conservatoire arena - can be a difficult and uncomfortable journey. Re-orientating our pedagogy outwards can leave us feeling vulnerable, exposed, even under threat. The flow between domains that the article speaks of can lead to even the most experienced conservatoire teachers feeling in limbo, in an undefined and messy field where the greatest risk is that artistic quality suffers. As institutions, it is our responsibility to help students and staff navigate this uncertain terrain in full confidence that artistic quality will not be compromised.

The paper challenges us to reflect on ways in which we can bring diversifying markers of professional success into the conservatoire. And there are very good reasons to develop a broader view of what success means in musical training and the profession. To do so, it's helpful to unpack. What do we actually mean by the 'profession' in today's society? Is the classical music profession limited to the concert hall? If we are truly professionally-informed then our models of professionalism need to reflect the diversity of practices in the cultural industries today, not simply one established tier. We need greater acknowledgement of the contextual dimensions for excellence. The concert pianist may excel in their Wigmore Hall debut, but what does a truly excellent performance in a care home look like? And do our students have the necessary skills and understanding to achieve this excellence in whatever domain they're working?

What I would like to see is **situational excellence**. This recognises the myriad different skills that are activated in different performance settings in order to produce the most meaningful relationships. This dynamic approach to musical excellence continues to recognise traditional forms, while also embracing coexistence in a non-hierarchical framework with a wealth of other equally important performance contexts. We can and should celebrate this multiplicity. Just as an international competition is something to celebrate, so too is the development of a new experimental concert series or a musical project with a care home.

Digital artistry is essential and should no longer be viewed as the poor relation of live performance. Digital artistry extends far beyond basic digital skills. How can musicians harness the potential of live streaming, recording, virtual reality and other new performance innovations to communicate with their audiences? We need students who have the confidence to move seamlessly between live and digital performance context. Digital is now part of the fabric of society, so to distance ourselves from the affordances of technology will only lead to distancing from our audiences and wider society.

So the challenge we face is to both conserve and innovate. Innovation in this context is messy work, and it can initially be perceived as in opposition to the conservatoire's core purpose of developing musical excellence. We need to change that narrative. We can and should bring more diverse musical work into the core of what we do and celebrate this. This inevitably means disrupting traditional structures, but crucially, not removing them. We should think about whether our teachers have the confidence and experience to embrace the partnership of values that's talked about in this article. We need to use dialogue to break down silos inside and beyond the conservatoire. We also need to articulate and reinforce situational excellence through our programme frameworks and our assessment design. Credit weighting and assessment generates hierarchy. Let's try and rethink our assessments.

We also need to think about creative emergence. How can we incorporate the blank canvases of composing, improvising, devising, remixing, curating into our curriculum alongside the exploration of established musical objects and models? And we also need to recognise that pre-higher education work is vital to all of us. This may be slow and non-linear (i.e. messy) work, but it is vital now to ask these questions and develop solutions.

So moving forwards, I'd like to think of our future directions as encompassing three Cs that are three values that might underpin the conservatoire curriculum of the future. Firstly, **courageous** artists, our students have the courage in the future to challenge entrenched attitudes and hierarchies. Even when these views are reinforced by authority figures, our students embrace the blank page as an opportunity to develop their own identity. But we can't expect students to do this on their own. The conservatoires need to provide an encouraging environment for diverse forms of music. Makings are celebrated as equal, and risk-taking is rewarded. So let's think about this as a **compassionate** conservatoire. In the future, our students and staff are adept at seeing beyond their musical self and beyond their immediate musical surroundings, moving between reduced listening and a more radical form of listening that embraces how external communities listen to and engage with conservatoire practises. Finally, let us think about beyond the concept of a **collaborative** community. Our students recognise the creative potential of collaboration and dialogue across a range of contexts. The traditional model of the lone genius is replaced by a dialogical approach that connects with the concerns and the needs of today's society. Transactional relationships between student and teacher, performer and audience, composer and ensemble are developed into co-presence, co-learning and co-creation. A porous conservatoire environment provides a framework to nurture and sustain these relationships.

I'd like to draw attention to some of the statistics that were recently published in the [ABRSM Making Music](#) report. And I'd like to think about the urgency of the situation we face. We see

increased barriers to accessing music, to accessing the conservatoire, to students realising their potential. So what are we doing to address this? It is everyone's responsibility in the conservatoire to help improve access and to safeguard the future of our art form.

In closing, what should we be doing as conservatoires? **First** and foremost, we should be listening more. We should be listening to others inside our conservatoires, but especially to those outside our usual musical arena. Conservatoires must intensify their efforts to become more attuned to the wider, diverse musical world around their institutions. **Secondly**, in a challenging environment for the arts, rigid hierarchies of musical excellence can often lead to distance and division. Whether you are an internationally leading concert pianist, a first year conservatoire student or a local music teacher, issues of access and progression in classical music impact all of us. We are all equally important in the vital work to advocate for the value of music. And **finally**, let's try to reimagine the excellence narrative for today by revisiting our definitions of the profession, professional practise excellence itself and our reference points for students. Let's think about what we need to develop our staff to help them with this reimagining, and let's think about diversifying our role models to help address hierarchies through this artistic and social purpose. The two domains do not need to be in opposition, and this applies for tradition and innovation at all levels of our conservatoire from junior departments right through to doctoral level.

THE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Graham Welch, University College London Institute of Education

I rather like the idea of musicians as makers in society in this position paper [published in *Frontiers in Psychology*, August 2021], thinking about the education of the next generation of professional musicians and how higher music education institutions—including Conservatoires—engage in this wider society. And this very sensible question that's been raised: Is it possible to have artistry and citizenship? We have art for art's sake, as well as art for some kind of social purpose. So, the hypothesis amongst a range of different elements in this theoretical paper is to apply Christopher Small's notion of Musicking – that is 'to music' as a verb, action which is informed, amongst other things, by critical reflection and reflexivity – to understand music making that is both individual and ensemble and which relates both to the music 'canon' and also to new music. And, as Helena Gaunt shared with us, her paper suggests that there are three components and their intersections – three essential domains about (a) the needs and potential that exist in society, (b) musical craft and artistry that are being promoted in a higher education setting, as well as (c) the people themselves, the musicians' visions and the identities that they bring. The proposal is that we see the musician as a maker *in* society, *for* society, and also *of* society. Within the article there are particular examples related to cultural heritage, as well as the making of new musical works, embodied craft and digital innovation, as well as research and social cultural entrepreneurship. The article seeks to develop a hypothesis that is based on a critical reflection of evidence drawn from a very wide range of literatures and disciplines.

And that has prompted some thoughts about research. First, will the theoretical position stand up to subsequent empirical scrutiny, given that these elements have not been set alongside each other before in such a framework? Then, if one accepts the framework, this raises the question as to what are the elements and how they might work together. What will count as evidence of empirical scrutiny, and is anything missing? In terms of the research process, what are the ontological and epistemological perspectives informing each of those particular elements? Whose definitions are we using, and what is the stance of the researcher who is investigating these elements? And also, what methodologies might be appropriate, assuming that we've sorted out the ontological and epistemological aspects?

Another question from a research perspective is whether these elements are continua, so that you could see them perhaps as developing from left to right – less to more evidenced? Is it possible to conceive that people are in different places at the moment? And, if so, what are the barriers and enablers for movement positively along each of these continua? Are there particular things that can support or hinder the shaping, the movement along the continua? Also, in terms of a current profile, where are the organisations, where are the individuals within the organisations at the moment? There are a variety of possible stakeholders and relationships between them, as well as relationships between the theoretical elements.

I'm quite keen that, when we begin research, we try to unpack the research landscape. This includes looking at biographies, the histories of the organisations and also their starting points, as well as the variety of contexts within which this argued for change might happen. So, in my presentation I've noted some of the possible kind of stakeholders (higher education students, tutors and administrators, industry and employers, higher education organisations and government, and wider society – people, groups, musicians, musics) and sought to articulate some of the relationships, as well as reminding ourselves about these possible continua. One of the things that then occurred to me from a research perspective is: Is this like a prism? If you hold the prism up to the light and you spin it around, we get different colours coming off of it. But nevertheless, it is holistic in nature, complete in itself.

Consequently, we can't talk about any of these individual stakeholders without looking at their relationships with the others, and also where they are on those particular continua.

More than a decade ago, I worked with colleagues across the sector looking at the teaching and learning of music in higher education (Welch, Duffy, Whyton & Potter, 2008). Subsequently, we pulled several of these elements together in an edited book on advanced musical performance (Papageorgi & Welch, 2014). Our research findings from over 200 participants across four higher education institutions were that both diversity and commonality across musical genres were evidenced, such as in the musicians' learning and identity. There were overlaps, but there were quite distinct things as well. There were definitely different developmental profiles, evident for classical, and other-than-classical musicians (Scottish traditional music, jazz, and rock and pop). Gender differences were also evidenced.

We also noted that relatively few young people opt to study music at higher education level, despite the range of experiences and engagement that young people have with music, estimated in various studies up to and including adolescence, for example, of four hours a day. We also noted that only a small proportion of musics in the wider society were available for study in higher education institutions, and that Western classical music dominated; that's been a theme echoed by colleagues earlier this morning. And so, one of my questions was, what is the current situation? Here we are, over a decade on from the original research. What has changed from those things that we found in our research into teaching and learning in higher education over a decade ago?

Recently, I've worked with Helen Phelan of the Irish World Academy, asking people across different artistic disciplines to reflect about being an artist working in academia (Phelan & Welch, 2021). I was particularly struck by a chapter by Elliot and Silverman (2021) in which they make the point that creativity, and the creative educator, involves actual subversive activity. Part of the challenge set by Helena Gaunt and colleagues is that we're asking our students to engage in a social activity, or social outreach, to have a social dimension in their music studies. This may or may not be discomforting to themselves and to wider society, and I think we have to be prepared for that. Christopher Frayling (2021) in the same book noted that the artist as a researcher continues to be a relatively new phenomenon, and it's good to see that so many of the participants today, and the speakers, have this dual role. Also, last week we saw the launch in the United States of a 'NeuroArts Blueprint' (2021) for an international arts, health, and wellbeing network, an initiative from the Aspen Institute and Johns Hopkins School of Medicine with the Centre for Applied Neuroaesthetics. The authors have five core recommendations in talking about strengthening the research foundation of what they call neuro arts, being the way that the arts might be more closely integrated into human health and well-being. The authors suggest that we need to honour and support the many arts practices that promote health and well-being, expand and enrich educational career pathways, and also advocate for sustainable funding and effective policy.

One of their research issues—which chimes with today's theme—was building capacity in leadership and communication strategies. If we want to bring about a change in the way that Conservatoires see themselves, then building capacity and self-reflection is going to be critical to that. One of my doctoral students, Eunice Tang, is currently looking at aspects of disability in higher education and music. She found that the proportion of students in the higher education statistics who are self-reporting themselves as having a disability seems to be increasing as a proportion of the cohort over the last six years. But of course, we don't know what that means in terms of the severity of the disability, nor in terms of what the impact might be having in terms of their musical learning and development, nor what their sense is of being included. I'm mentioning this because, although we're talking about Conservatoires engaging in in the possibilities of social change, there is also an internal as well as an external agenda.

When we look at this proposed paradigm shift, we assume that it's going to include students with a reported disability. And the percentages of students who have a disability, year by year comparing music with all other subjects, is on a rising trend. But I wondered why, from a research perspective, this seems to be greater in music. Is it because more of the students feel more comfortable about reporting their disability within the Conservatoire culture, and the higher education music culture? Do they have different biographies? Perhaps also they are more aware of their disability because of the context within which they're working. Is the Conservatoire, the higher education music department, something different from other kinds of departments in a multi-faculty university setting?

I'm picking up Diana's Salazar's reference to the recent ABRSM 'Making Music' report (2021). People from wealthier households are almost one and a half times more likely to learn a musical instrument. Young people are finding different ways to make music. 34% percent wanted to make music on their own in some way, and a significant minority use a tablet or phone. Talking to music teachers, they feel that the cost of lessons is a barrier for learners. There's an economic challenge facing all of us if we are engaged in promoting music and music education that will feed through to the Conservatoires. The kinds of profiles of the people that are recruited perhaps are already biased by what's going on elsewhere in terms of music and music education in the wider society. There are some other elements: 70% of music teachers only teach for part of a week; 53% percent teach in a variety of settings. And 90% report that they use some kind of digital technology now as part of their practice, which I'm sure is a sea change over the last decade.

So, what is the current profile of undergraduate musicians in Conservatoires and music departments? What's happening to them before they arrive? What are the current career destinations for graduate musicians compared to hypothesised 'ideal' future careers – and also compared to what this theoretical paper by Helena and her colleagues suggest? Anthony Carnevale, who was education and employment adviser to three US Presidents, made an analysis of the working lives data across the whole of the United States, and concluded that we can expect to have six different jobs, sometimes six different careers, or six different jobs in the same career setting. As part of this review of where the conservatives are, are we taking that possible career profile into account?

Who are the clients for these new music graduates? Are we looking at the disadvantaged – those on the margins of society, young or old, other ages? Are we taking a lifespan perspective and thinking about how we might prepare these musicians as makers? Are we asking them to think about working with people that are unwell, whether physically or mentally, or people that are recently displaced or refugees? Are we thinking about their work in music with individuals, groups or organisations? And, going back to the disability agenda, are we looking at their clients being neurotypical, or more neurodiverse? Are we looking at development *in* music as well as *through* music? Do all lives matter, or just some? Are we looking at other higher education students and how Conservatoires might benefit from other areas in which undergraduate students function?

What are the implications for course design at undergraduate and graduate level? How do we fit all these new desired elements into conventional course lengths? What if we can't? What does that mean about the radical change and transformation that Helena Gaunt and colleagues are proposing? Who are the enabling partners in the wider communities for such a revised programme, outside the higher education institutions? And what counts as students' and their clients' sense of agency, assuming that that is important? How do we enable people to feel that they are empowered to bring about changes in their own lives and the lives of others? If Conservatoires require a paradigm shift, are they the most appropriate agency to bring this about? It's a legitimate research question. And if yes, how might that happen. Is it through partnerships? Should we have case studies? Should we have nested

cases within particular organisations? Is there just one solution, or are there likely to be a plurality in this paradigm shift? And should the sector create an asset map of current strengths and locations so that there is a sense of building a network of what might be possible, as well as understanding what might be possible within a particular local context?

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Linda Begbie, December 2021

Dear Readers

Manchester Collective had intended to present a response to the paper *'Musicians as Makers in Society...'* at the Guildhall School conference on 16th December 2021. As circumstances have changed, and a new wave of the coronavirus pandemic is sadly taking hold, we are grateful to John Sloboda and his team for allowing us to offer you a written version of our thoughts.

I had intended to show you a short video excerpt before speaking. If you can, I'd love for you to still see this. You can link to it [here](#) or if you are not reading digitally, I will paste the link at the end of this text. It's relevant because it encapsulates so much of our approach and – in a way – provides an artistic, non-conceptual response to the ideas presented in Helena Gaunt's paper. The video shows a moment from our project *Dark Days, Luminous Nights*. It may look like a film with a musical soundtrack, but it isn't. The music was the starting point. This is an original, creative project that was led by musicians.

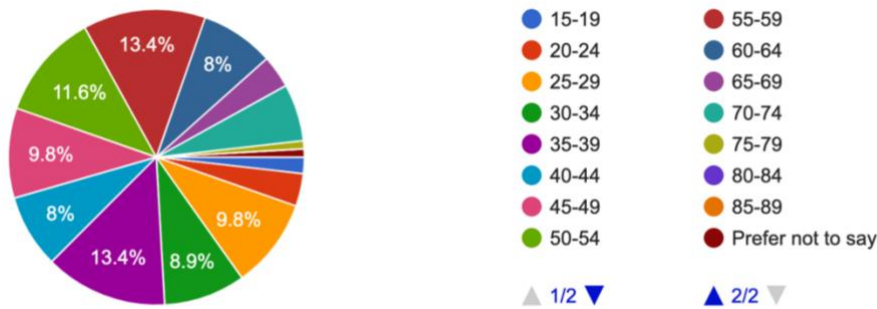
Do you remember the catastrophic shock we were all trying to process as the spring of 2020 rolled into summer? Freelance friends and colleagues who lost their livelihoods overnight. No energetic contact. A brutal full stop to our means of expression. Like everybody, we were going through the disorientating, shared experience of togetherness and separation. We were forced to live locally. The change was so quick and so radical and there was a feeling of scrabbling. Musicians were jumping on to Zoom, do you remember? We found digital streaming oddly cold and unsatisfying, and this rush made us ask questions. As musicians, what does it really mean for us to connect with others? What kind of experiences do we want to create for people? If we must incorporate a digital element into our practice, then how do we make that art in its own right?

From early on we could see that the pandemic was exposing painful social inequalities. In our city it was unveiling pockets of chronic, entrenched deprivation. We needed our music to feel human and real and unpolished. Whatever artistic beauty we created, it needed to acknowledge dark and uncomfortable truths. We worked with a photographer and filmmaker who knows the physical, human, and historic geography of Greater Manchester extremely well. We collaborated with the dancer Blackhaine who is embedded in the city's underground culture. We asked them if they would respond to our music which we recorded not as live but – employing leading sound engineers and using state-of-the-art technology – in a way that could be as immersive and visceral as possible.

The result was an experience that could transport audiences in the way art should. [Dark Days, Luminous Nights](#) is a flexible, travelling exhibition that can scale up or down. Using recorded music, film and photography, it is an hour long show that can run through the day and night and which people can safely attend in bubbles. Or it can grow outwards to



become a live concert with a paired digital backdrop. We premiered it in June and tickets sold so quickly we added extra days to the run. The chart below shows the age range of audiences attending. The myth that classical music is 'only for old people' is just that, a myth. How we communicate it, is everything. As John Stewart Mill famously said, truths that are simply repeated without being questioned, become dogma.



I'm using this anecdote as a way of saying that yes, we absolutely **do** believe that musicians are makers in society. We believe that musicians, their audiences and their communities, are a living, organic whole. It's incumbent on us to reach out and find resonance, not passively deliver our work. We **do not** believe that entrepreneurship and artistry are mutually exclusive, and it is very clear to us that – with some urgency – we **must now** be empowering musicians by equipping them with the craft, the mindset, and the confidence to engage with their contemporary world.



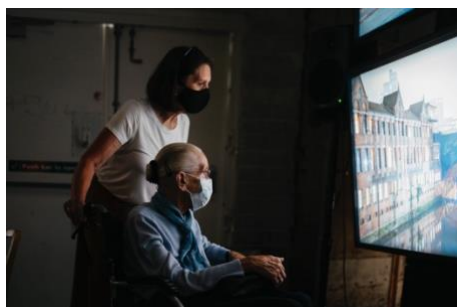
Attendee watching the film.



Promotional poster.



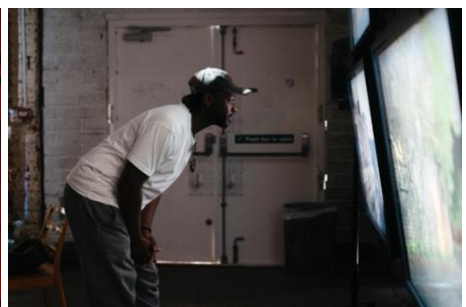
The White Hotel (club venue), Salford



Audience members looking at photography.



Entrance to The White Hotel.



One of our supported Northern Voices artists looking at photography after the music and film.



We were asked to speak at the Guildhall conference not just as musicians but as an **employer** of musicians. Manchester Collective is often referred to as ‘a new kind of arts organisation’ and ‘an ensemble fit for the 21st century’. **What does that mean?**

We don’t have a fixed ensemble structure and that is a conscious intention. If you want to innovate or evolve an art form, we think it’s important to move away from historical structures – to some extent at least. We have a core management team of five, plus our Music Director and a part time voluntary administrator. We then employ somewhere between 80/100 freelance artists and creatives each season. Here are some of them:



Nicholas Trygstad, cello (Principal, Hallé) and Ruth Gibson, viola (Castalian Quartet, Aurora Orchestra)



Pekka Kuusisto, violinist, joining the Collective in 2022 as part of new partnership with Norwegian Chamber Orchestra



Camae Ayewa, aka Moor Mother, New York based rapper, poet and activist, commissioned to write a work for string quartet and spoken word



Edmund Finnis, composer of *The Centre is Everywhere*, titular track of our debut album



Hannah Peel, electronic artist and composer of *NEON* premiered by us at Kings Place in 2021



Abel Selaocoe, cellist, singer, composer, and curator of our shows *Sirocco* (2019) and *The Oracle* (2021)



Beibei Wang, percussionist in recent tour *Heavy Metal*



Ben Nobuto, composer of *Serenity 2.0*, premiered in our show *Heavy Metal*



Alex Jakeman, flute (Principal, BBC Philharmonic) and Nathaniel Boyd (Albion Quartet) in our show *Voice of the Whale*



Chris Watson, BAFTA-winning field recordist for David Attenborough’s *Life* and *Frozen Planet* series. Commissioned to produce a natural world soundtrack to lay over our forthcoming performance of Michael Gordon’s *Weather*



Donald Grant, violinist (Elias String Quartet) and leader in string chamber music (RNCM) here performing a duet with our sound engineer Joe Reiser

This is just a tiny snapshot of our current work, but you can see immediately that it’s eclectic. Diversity of perspectives, of ideas and experiences, fuels our creative output. One thing we are **not** looking for when we recruit musicians, is polished, finely-honed, perfectly executed reproductions of standard repertoire. In fact – I think it’s fair to say – that we find the cult of perfection in classical music at best, boring and at worst, destructive.



This year we launched our own training initiative. We opened it to string players – at any stage of their career – based in the north of England. 67 high quality applicants competed for 13 places. Unlike the traditional audition system, we weighted applicants 50% on instrumental performance and 50% on a statement about their artistic ideas, influences and aspirations. We recognise that rapidly put together, accurately delivered performances may be necessary for orchestras that demand musicians go into concert with little-to-no rehearsal time, but it does not work for us. Indeed, we have actively rejected industry ‘stars’ who are highly accomplished but unable to work in an open, explorative way.

Manchester Collective does not exclusively perform new, experimental music. We frequently weave baroque, classical, romantic and folk repertoire into our shows. Non-siloed programming is part of our mission to break down barriers and stereotypes that put us in danger of becoming culturally irrelevant. Let me be clear, we are not dumbing down. We employ some of this country’s finest classical musicians. With them we perform in the Wigmore Hall, the Southbank Centre, at the Proms or in BBC broadcasts. But we also take them outside of the concert hall – to former mills, social clubs, warehouse spaces – where we expect them to play the same repertoire with equal quality and commitment.

To deliver our programmes we insist on a minimum of three full rehearsal days so there is sufficient space to test and refine. **The musicians we employ need a strongly developed craft.** They must have mastery of their instrument, but we need them to understand that ‘technique’ means a whole, dynamic system of instrument, body, and mind. To work with us, musicians are going to require a robust questioning and community problem-solving approach, to be able to flexibly adapt to different repertoire and acoustic environments. If they’re just brilliantly replicating how a guru teacher has instructed them to play, they’re really going to struggle. Rather than technique in the traditional sense, we might call this **agency**.

It sounds obvious but **we need conservatoire graduates to have all the fundamental musical building blocks solidly in place.** Like a tree with a healthy root system that enables its branches to be strong and malleable. We’re concerned that conservatoire training is still too heavily repertoire led, with students being made to serve the curriculum needs rather than their own. We often encounter young musicians in ensemble projects they’re not ready for. From our perspective as an employer, it would be more helpful if conservatoire graduates had an average-to-good lived experience of repertoire, but an excellent-to-outstanding grasp of rhythm, intonation, listening, improvisation, singing, verbal and physical communication... stagecraft... interaction with audiences. We see pockets of incredibly innovative work happening in conservatoire education but it’s far from culturally embedded. Traditional orchestral players still dominate instrumental teaching, many of whom have inherited and are perpetuating the guru model of training. As a result, we often see students caught in a tension between ‘the old and the new’ in a way that’s confusing and unhelpful for them. Moreover, significant damage to conservatoire students’ confidence to try, fail, and try again – to develop their own artistic voice – is still too widespread. We can think of no other contemporary, creative art form in which this would be accepted practice.



This leads me to perhaps the most important thing we're looking for and that is, **mindset**. We operate a collaborative approach to working – the fellow traveller model in this conference's headline paper. We think that **artist development should be life-long**. It's sustained by a genuine sense of enquiry that should be nurtured and well-grounded at undergraduate level – just as a visual artist will undertake a foundation year to embed creative thinking before deciding any subsequent pathway. We believe that artistic growth happens when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, to go to places that feel uncomfortable and unfamiliar. This requires a working culture of support, inclusion, and suspension of ego. We expect all musicians we employ – whether soloists or ensemble players – to speak up and offer their ideas. They'll be listened to, and we expect them to listen to others. A hyper competitive environment with a culture of perfection, inhibition and shaming is completely un conducive to creative, collaborative work. Without hesitation, we call it out for the destructive effects it has, not only on musicians but also on audiences and artists from other genres, who too often feel alienated and excluded by the classical music sector. In our contemporary world, this way of working is inexcusable. It is, quite simply, out of date.

When we read this paper, we were relieved. We felt things had shifted. We were excited to imagine how incredibly rich and exciting this art we love, and have dedicated our lives to, could become. There was suddenly a possibility that classical music, if it radicalised its training and approach in this way, could in fact become one of **the** most innovative and powerful art forms in our whole cultural ecology. But then we were told – 'it's just aspirational'. It's a long way from how things are. And at Manchester Collective that worries us. So much so that we are now actively developing the Manchester Collective Academy to provide an alternative training pathway.

There is an urgency to this. In no scenario should every musician have to follow our approach – indeed, we encourage them to discover their own! But one thing is clear to us: it is ethically wrong to be routinely training so many young instrumentalists for an orchestral world where the level of industry demand is simply not there. Not only that, but in doing so actually depleting the very things they unquestionably **will** need to sustain an artistic career – confidence, self-agency, professional agility, broad social/cultural engagement, and lateral application. The paper is a good starting point. But we need courage, and action. We very much hope the conversations that take place because of this conference can drive forward radical, positive change. Thanks for reading. Let's do this...

Here's a short appendix:

- (i) **Link to Dark Days, Luminous Nights excerpt:** <https://youtu.be/taAUE5GxnJg>
- (ii) **Testimony from experienced principal orchestral player who works with the Collective:** *'I feel I can really contribute here. I have a feeling of ownership, of genuinely being part of a creative process. I would go as far as saying that the traditional conducting style is abusive. We're told what to do all the time and are often undermined. The only professional development I've been offered as an orchestral player is the option of taking a First Aid course. With the Collective I've continued learning... I've been exposed to repertoire I would never have discovered, and it's been interesting to learn that not all music functions in the same way. You make music less defined by genre, and that means I've developed different skills. Working with electronic artists has been mind-blowing!'*
- (iii) **Testimony from experienced chamber musician who works with the Collective:** *'I've often worked with contemporary classical repertoire, but I was out of my comfort zone here. It's been like an extension of my training – you tap into an energy that should surround **all** music making. You allow people to feel what they really feel. There feels like less division between performers and listeners, it's made me think about the way my own ensemble presents things. I love the way you mix venues, talk to people, and even the way musicians sit and relax after the gig – you feel part of the audience rather than separate to it.'*

THE INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Gillian Moore, The Southbank Centre

I'm offering a different perspective from the industry. I'm going to be a bit personal, a bit historic, possibly even a bit anecdotal, but I hope you'll forgive me as I come from a different angle. So a bit of personal history, which I hope is relevant. And we all have our personal histories to bring to today. I was born in the East End of Glasgow, and when I was 18 months old, we, my family were sent out to a shiny new, council estate in the middle of green fields in Renfrewshire as part of what was called the Glasgow overspill. Then my sisters came along and we moved into a bigger flat in a brutalist concrete estate. And when I was 10, we moved to an ex-mining town in Lanarkshire, of which the main cultural output was Orange bands and marches every other Saturday.

But the defining feature of my childhood was culture and specifically music. In parenthesis, it's only recently that I've come to acknowledge that the Orange marches were also part of culture, even as my distaste for the sectarianism that went with them persists. My mum took me to orchestral concerts from the age of six, at home, church and at school. There was singing and piano playing. There was a merciless ritual at family gatherings where each had to do their turn, regardless of skill levels, which varied wildly, believe me! In time, my dad with his light church choir tenor voice joined the SNO chorus and sang Mahler Eight with Pierre Boulez at the Proms in London, amongst many other things. We heard tales about great aunts and uncles, people from the East End who toured the world in the 1930s and 40s with the hugely popular Glasgow Orpheus Choir, an amateur ensemble for working people who were kind of rock stars of their day. Although I was the first person in my family ever to have any kind of professional role in the arts, my father (who's now in a nursing home and music is just about the only thing that communicates with him) used to say, I don't get this thing about classical music being elitist. We were singing Schubert songs in our council houses. Music in my family was part of the everyday. It was ordinary, but with a bit of magic.

Things get even more magic for me when I went to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, to the Saturday junior department aged 13. I've got a picture in my mind of a group of my friends hanging out on the steps of the old Victorian building in St George's Place like we did every Saturday. All of us were from very similar backgrounds to mine. Yes, we were all white, and we were all council estate school kids. One of those people on the steps became a successful violinist and is now director of that very same junior conservatoire. One became the principal cello of one of the world's leading chamber orchestras. Another became the director of culture for the city of Glasgow. I have to apologise if all this sounds a bit sentimental. I know that I and my friends are the lucky product of the post-war settlement, which gave us the Education Act, the National Health Service, the Edinburgh Festival and the Southbank Centre, where I now work.

I'm less confident that a girl from my background could now make the journey that I did. I grew up with opportunities in my community with music – teaching in my state schools, with county youth orchestras and scholarships to the junior conservatoire. We know that the statistics for music conservatoires now have a marked and disproportionately high proportion of privately educated students and do not in any way reflect the diversity of our society. That is, of course, reflected in the industry. I'm not pointing the finger at conservatoires particularly.

More directly perhaps pertinent to today's conference, I think it's important that I grew up in an active musical environment among amateurs who sometimes bumped up against the professionals, but mostly just did what they did at their own level for their own purposes. Helena Gaunt's paper puts forward the idea that music is an active, participatory endeavour that everybody can be involved in and should be involved in. And that our professional

musicians should and could be trained to play an active, creative role in a musical society. In fact it could be convincingly argued that this is the principle and practice on which British art music was reinvented in the early 20th century. Diana Salazar just said that artistic and social practice should not be in opposition, and luckily I can back that up with some history. Just at the time when the German scholar Oscar Schmitz penned this stinging description of England, "Das land ohne music", the land without music, Vaughan Williams and his friend Gustav Holst, who met at the Royal College of Music, of course, were committing themselves to finding a new language in English music, as well as recording, preserving, encouraging and shining a spotlight on the musical traditions of ordinary people, what we might call folk music. They defined themselves by a progressive view of what a composer's role in society should be. "Artists should be the servant of the state" was the rather unexpectedly socialist declaration from the patrician Vaughan Williams, and he and his friend Holst spent a lifetime encouraging participation in music making, from Vaughan Williams' writing of the English hymnal, a great quality piece of musicology, and invitation for mass participation in music making, to running community music festivals - and later in life helping set up the Arts Council and the National Youth Orchestra; to Holst's directing of workers' choirs and being music director of Morley College in South London, just around the corner from the South Bank.

This tradition continued into the next generations. Holst's daughter Imogen, Michael Tippett, who took on Gustav Holst's job at Morley College. Benjamin Britten, who said in his 1964 Aspen speech that he wasn't interested in the view of posterity of his music, but he wanted his music to be of use in the here and now and the community in which he lived and worked, and subsequently Peter Maxwell Davies setting up a festival and writing music for and about his adopted community in Orkney. Judith Weir, who, when she accepted the role of Master of the Queen's music a few years ago, said that she'd be travelling the country, encouraging amateur music making and working in schools, and indeed she has. And James McMillan's inspiring Cumnock Tryst Festival, which brings world class music making into his ex-mining town hometown of Cumnock in Ayrshire. I had the privilege of visiting the festival for the first time this year, and I can vouch for the fact that it really matters to people of all ages in the town. They take part in it, they care about it.

From Vaughan Williams and Holst to Judith Weir to James McMillan, these artists are what Helena describes as makers in society or citizen artists in other parlance. And it's a tradition of which I think we can be proud and we need to keep learning from. Although the great majority of public funding in the arts in the UK goes to support professional artists, the origin of the Arts Council of England was in CEMA, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, set up during World War Two to encourage amateur activity, as well as funding professional musicians to perform to servicemen and women, and to encourage music, dance and drama and communities. There are wonderful descriptions of Imogen Holst, who was employed as a CEMA "Music Traveller" in rural communities in the West country, leading music sessions with evacuee mother and baby groups and wounded servicemen and others. In her autobiography, she brilliantly describes the look of wide-eyed astonishment as a women's institute group in a village hall plucked harmonies out of the air, having insisted previously that they couldn't sing at all.

The founding of the Arts Council after the war coming out of CEMA was, of course, a great thing. But Anthony Everitt in his book "Joining In" argued that this was the moment perhaps when the balance shifted too much away from participatory music making. Amateur music making, he says, disappeared from view as it became less and less important to commentators and critics. And. It would be perverse to argue against the funding of professional artists. It's vital that we can all experience the thrill of performances by people who spend their lives dedicated to music. And it's also vital that that young people can see the possibility of making a living in the arts. But it's also vital that everybody has the opportunity to join music making for their own enjoyment and fulfilment at whatever level, like my family, and to be those active listeners for our professional musicians.

Some signs are encouraging. Just pre-pandemic, I think it was in 2017, there was a survey. The adult participation in choirs in the UK was at an all-time high, around 2.5 million, and the recently published Arts Council England's 10 year strategy to cover the years 2020 to 2030, called Let's Create encouragingly, appears to have reached back for inspiration to its wartime roots, encouraging active creative participation in the arts by everyone alongside supporting arts professionals. The first desired outcome of the Arts Council strategy is entitled Creative People, and it suggests that everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life. And the second is entitled Cultural Communities with the intention that villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture. This is heady stuff. It's music to my ears, if you like. I think Imogen Holst would have approved too, I'm sure.

Of course, this is being discussed today. It presents a clear challenge for our training institutions. It seems that musical training needs to be and continues to be about acquiring the highest level of skills at the same time as equipping musicians to be part of a musically active society. When I started working in the 1980s at the London Sinfonietta, working with creative music making in schools and prisons with composers and performers, there was a moment of radical thinking and determined action from ensembles, orchestras, individual musicians working with people and communities, creating music from scratch, a free and generous approach. The host institution of today's conference, the Guildhall School, was a kind of nerve centre of all of this. In some ways, I'm afraid to say looking at it from my perspective, I think things seem to have reversed. School music is squeezed. It's so hard to find time for creative music workshops. What orchestras are offering is often a more conservative model, and what music curriculum remains in schools is less concerned with creativity and is more formulaic.

All of our conservatoires now offer some training and special courses for musicians, which help them play an active role in the community. But my unscientific sense as an observer is that there's been little real shift over four decades in the status of this approach and that it can be in conflict with the market for conservatoires, an international market exactly parallel with the international market in concert promotion in which I work every day. And this perhaps demands a more readily comprehensible and less progressive idea of what musical excellence is. And I think there's a tension there. Again from my perspective in the industry, musicians, perhaps less than any other profession, have opportunities for professional development. Once they're out there in the workplace, this is a great lack, and one key role that conservatoires could play is providing more continuing professional development for professional industry for professional musicians, although I know some of this is happening already. This is an area in which the industry and conservatoires could work very fruitfully together to provide to develop skills, to equip musicians to play this active and creative role in our changing and diverse society.

But one clear and obvious way in which professional musicians can re-find this place in society is to think less about what has previously been called outreach, and to actually place themselves physically and long term in places where they can make a real difference. I work in a wonderful and glamorous palace of culture, The Royal Festival Hall, built in 1951 for the Festival of Britain as a transparent people's palace with the intention of welcoming everybody in, its very architecture, symbolising democracy, inclusivity and optimism. But don't underestimate how much hard work needs to go in all the time to make people really feel that they're truly welcome, even in a space like that. I'm excited by the idea the orchestras and ensembles can take themselves out of well-provided-for city centres and base themselves where people live and work and learn. Future Lab Bremen in Germany is a great example of this. About 12 years ago, a leading chamber orchestra, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie based itself in a school and an area of low socioeconomic profile rehearsing, planning, teaching, eating lunch together, involving the students and their families and all aspects of an orchestra's life, just as the orchestra is involved in the school's

life. The Southbank resident Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment has recently moved into Acland Burghley School in North London and is just there alongside student teachers and parents. The Royal Philharmonic Society has just closed its central London offices and moved to the heart of a community in the London borough of Brent. The aim is like in my childhood. Music will become part of the everyday lives of people ordinary, but with a bit or quite a lot of magic.

THE GOVERNMENT/POLICY PERSPECTIVE

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, UK Music.

Before starting this job with UK Music, I worked in government for a couple of years. The job of UK Music is to do lots of the engagement and public affairs lobbying with government. So while I can't offer the government position or perspective, we do have that engagement with government and engaging with those perspectives on a policy level. Helena's paper as the foundation for this discussion is absolutely fascinating; in particular, the difference between the idea of musicians as makers for, makers in, and makers of, society because they're all incredibly nuanced with very critical differences. I think it's a really fascinating foundation for this discussion about a new paradigm for music education. It plays into this wider question of the value and the relevance of music in society and how we can interact with government and how we interact with the broader public.

I wanted to start off with those three vignettes that Helena included in her paper because I think they're actually fascinating. The first one, Nina, the talented player who plays in bands outside of the conservatoire environment but keeps it secret because of this idea that a multi-strand career is frowned upon. Now, Nina seems to be an exemplary student who should be encouraged with that sort of career. Her teachers may well be encouraging, but it's this unspoken belief that's making her operate in secret, and is making her feel like she shouldn't be encouraged to take up that sort of multi-disciplinary career; and it really underlines the fact that it's great that we're talking about this new paradigm. It's great that we're having these discussions in these forums. But it shouldn't be an academic discussion. It needs to be something that's really communicated to students and given to students to make sure that they understand and feel confident in taking these sort of things forward.

The second paradigm, the idea of the conservatoire that has locked certain elements into its curriculum, but with very little interaction between those subjects, and some teachers even dismissing the relevance of some of those modules. This second vignette makes a really important point. It's not just enough to have modules, have elements of the curriculum that reflect these modern working practises and industry demands. You need to be integrating them. They need to be contextualised. And they also need to have buy-in across the whole institution, especially the staff. It's not good enough to have modules that are reflective of industry practises and where working environments are if you don't have the buy-in of the staff, if you don't have the buy-in of the entire organisation. So when we're having this discussion about new paradigms and new paradigm shifts, it's really important we're driving this across the sector, also driving that across organisations making sure it is really reflected at all levels of higher music education institutions.

The last vignette Helena floated, is for me is the key one, and it goes to the question of how do we demonstrate our relevance as a sector? At UK Music, we find ourselves doing lots around Brexit, COVID, particularly with everything going on now, with lots of music education. But one of the most important things we're engaged in is what I describe as winning the argument for the music industry being a national asset. We can learn from other sectors, I'll give tech as an example. In 2010, the new government decided that in the next decade tech was going to be where the where this country really was going to be demonstrating its value, and punching above its weight. When government accepted that all sorts of things started happening to the tech sector: the Home Office looking at tech visas; the Education Department looking at coding in the curriculum; tax breaks for tech companies. Once government and the public appreciate and understand something as being a national strategic priority, all this starts to happen, it makes it much easier to really get these asks and objectives and aims across.

So winning the argument for the music industry being a key strategic priority for the UK is incredibly important and it really lays the foundation of the discussion we're having about music education. One of the things we recently did at UK Music was some polling of the public. I think as a sector, we're very used to surveying and polling. Our consumers are punters, people that go to our concerts, people that go to our conservatoires and institutions, and people we normally engage with. We've not been so used to asking the man or woman on the street who may not be a music lover, who may have never come to a concert. What do they think of our sector? It was incredibly encouraging and fascinating. 57% of adults said music helped them cope with lockdown. 59% of the public said music had helped their mental health and well-being this year. 71% said listening to music makes them more productive. Three quarters said music was important to their quality of life. We calculated that as a country, the UK listens to 60 billion hours of music each year. A million people took up a musical instrument during lockdown, and when you look at these figures, it really underlines how important the sector is not just to us in the sector, but to the public as a whole, and it's winning an argument for the music industry. It's got huge economic impacts. Obviously the COVID years have been pretty difficult for the sector as a whole. In a normal year, we generate about five to eight billion pounds in the economy. We normally support 200,000 jobs, and that's not even including the wider supply chain. So we have a huge economic and social impact. UK Music is currently looking at the impacts on mental health and wellbeing and the positive role that music can have to improve and boost people's mental health and wellbeing, and the role music can play in care and healthcare settings. There's a huge importance of the music industry on social grounds, on economic grounds, and on public grounds. It's something the public sees as a societal good. They value it. Making sure we can continue to demonstrate that relevance as Helena has done in her presentation is incredibly important. Therefore, this brings up a further question of what's the relevance of higher music educational institutions; conservatoires, further and higher education? What's their relevance to the modern woman on the street?

An example I'd like to cite is football. Football is more expensive than classical music and lots of other forms of music. If you look at the current salary levels of footballers, as some people could say, it seems like something that is played by millionaires, completely out of touch. But it is also a sport for the masses. It's seen as something that's extremely important for the country. It's part of our identity and it's in touch with and relevant to local communities across the country. Now why do they seem more relevant and more in touch than we are as a sector sometimes? In a really clever and smart strategic way football clubs embed themselves in local communities, embed themselves in the local area. They have links with schools, with clubs, with hospitals, with local authorities. They engage with young people from an incredibly early age, and they're seen as lynchpins of the local community, and as a result, that community has bought into them from the start.

Do we in the music industry need to do more of the same? I know lots of organisations and institutions do lots of work in the community already. Do we need to do more? And related to this is this question of what role conservatoires should play at other stages of the pipeline? A conservatoire takes a talented 18 year old and spends three or four years making them ready to be a professional musician. Conservatoires also have a responsibility to engage at earlier levels, at primary school or secondary school. Conservatoires also rely on a strong and vibrant talent pipeline. They don't exist in a vacuum. Many do lots of this, but is there more that conservatoires need to be doing at early ages and also at later stages. One of the discussions we're going to be having later is about the under-18 provision and what sort of role conservatoires have in supporting and boosting that. I'm currently involved in the formation of the new National Plan for Music Education, and one of the points that is coming through quite strongly is that this isn't just something for schools. What is the role that industry or higher and further education settings can play? I know when it comes to publication, that one of the things that government definitely wants to see much more of how can conservatoires and other institutions, the wider industry and the wider sector, play that

positive role in music education, and make sure that they are supporting it at all ends of the pipeline? What can the music industry be doing better to nurture innovation, to nurture education? There are a lot of questions about skills mapping – where skills gaps are, what we need more of. Often the data is quite patchy. We are looking at skills mapping, building greater links between industry and the education sector, and progression. How do you go from one stage to another? I'm involved in lots of organisations, and it's fascinating to see all those organisations asking the same questions, whether it's a conservatoire, whether it's an orchestra, whether it's a venue, looking at the talent pipeline, looking at how diverse it is, looking at how innovative it is, and everyone seems to have the same challenges, but all at different points in the pipeline.

There's a fundamental question at play when we have these thoughts, and that is - what is the purpose of a musical education? Is a musical education important because young people should have access to culture? Is it important because we think we need a more musically literate workforce? Is it important because we think that high quality music education has wider potential benefits than just the music sector? And from that, what actually is the purpose of a higher music educational institution? Helena brings out beautifully in her paper that the tension between artistic excellence and engagement in society is profound. Of course, it's not a binary choice, but it's there, and it motivates the conversation that we're having about this.

The final question I want to end on is what does success look like? I was in a call a couple of weeks ago with a principal of an American conservatoire, talking about the work they were doing mapping the successes of some of their alumni in the world outside music. One example is a graduate who ended up being Joe Biden's economic adviser. You'd think that was very far away from being a music graduate. While going to a conservatoire, this person didn't become a professional. They still made a huge contribution to society out of the education they had as a musician. It helped them and enabled them. I was a music graduate and I end up going off and working in politics. Lots of people said to me, you were a music student, a music producer. What has that done to help you get into politics? They don't seem related at all! Actually as a discipline there are wider benefits of music education. For many, a sound musical grounding is going to help you become a professional musician in the industry. But it might help you go and work in a completely different sector. Surely a conservatoire should be proud of someone who goes through their system and then goes on to do something non-musical, but still succeeds partly because of the grounding they had. But we also shouldn't forget that we contribute to society through music. There are so many benefits from the music industry, economic, social and health well-being. And that ties back to the idea that Helena offered of musicians as makers in, makers for, and makers of society.

DISCUSSION GROUP SUMMARIES

UNDER 18 MUSIC PROVISION

The under 18 music provision breakout group discussed how developments in current pre-HE training and education could best enhance diversity and access for young musicians to the profession and how conservatoires could better support this. There were four main areas of focus during the discussions:

- Barriers to Engagement: Diversity, access and inclusion
- What conservatoires can do to support progression & what can the UK learn from international practice
- The identity of the young portfolio musician
- 'Musicians of the Future' vs 'Artists of the Now'

Delegates discussed how the reality of progression pathways and talent pipelines for young people are that they are long and require significant investment; support from conservatoires is needed earlier on in a young person's life. Conservatoires' role could be as lead or a coalescing body advocating across the sector, and to the government, that this challenge needs to be recognised and supported through large-scale funding schemes and initiatives that support an earlier talent pipeline. Conservatoires were described as gatekeepers to musical careers and that assessment of what constitutes quality and potential needs to be re-thought, with an adapted audition process that reflect this. The experience of auditioning for conservatoires can be challenging and off-putting, especially for those who haven't gone through junior conservatoires or orchestral routes. Under 18 conservatoire provision and engagement was felt to be key to improving access and inclusion and subsequently ought to be placed front and centre of the conservatoire's strategy. Delegates described how the pedagogy of conservatoire curriculum should enable students to be out in communities more often in order that they are better able to understand and be connected to community arts practice. With socially engaged practice becoming increasingly important to a portfolio artist, it should be placed front and centre of the curriculum. Valuing pedagogy was an area delegates felt other countries, for instance Finland and USA, have had better success with. The UK conservatoire sector was felt to be at the behest of the unequal way the orchestral sector operates and that this should be challenged. Situational excellence was felt to be hierarchical, there was felt to be a need to continue to embrace traditional forms but within a non-hierarchical framework where other styles and genres could be embraced. It was felt that improvements to inclusion and access could be achieved through peer-to-peer mentoring schemes, mechanisms for harnessing youth voice, youth programming, supporting young people to feel 'at home' in the building and improving training for artists as teachers. 'Tomorrows Warriors' were frequently cited as an exemplar practice which supports the talent pipeline from primary school through to the industry (13 to 25) and that conservatoires would be well placed to partner with organisations operating this model of engagement with more porous boundaries both pre- and post-HE. NYO and 'Orchestras for All' were also cited as examples of good practice, which encourage young people to be 'artists of the NOW' and not 'musicians of the future' and have both a youth board and young musicians on their board of trustees.

Finally, delegates discussed the importance of a young person's musical identity and the impact of being a 'portfolio musician' on their sense of their artistic self. Young musicians are expected to be musician, entrepreneur, improviser, researcher and community engager. Whilst they sometimes experience each of these roles in their curriculum, they are not always adept at integrating this into their artistic practice. To help to reconcile this challenge it was felt that conservatoires ought to support this holistic approach to a portfolio musician's career at pre-HE level.

CONSERVATOIRES IN CONTEXT: COMMUNITY, PARTNERSHIP & CO-CREATION

The 'Conservatoires in Context' breakout group considered the role of Higher Music Education Institutions (HMEIs) in developing reciprocal relationships with community and industry groups, thinking particularly about pathways to meaningful engagement with partners, and ways to channel opportunities and learning from this work back into curriculum development. There were four main areas of focus during the discussion:

- Finding conservatoire-wide ways of celebrating and disseminating existing knowledge exchange and public engagement activities more successfully
- Promoting equitable and long-lasting engagement activities that seek to embed shared artistic practices within community settings and prioritise funding strategies and leadership models that ensures resilience and sustainability.
- Developing a culture amongst both students and staff that celebrates local and community work as holding equal artistic value to high-level, international projects.
- Engendering a deeper dialogue between conservatoires and the music profession, both to celebrate the developments made within HMEIs and understand better the challenges and needs within the industry that still need to be tackled.

Delegates began by considering what excellence looks like in this sphere, and what parameters we use to evaluate success of community-focussed initiatives. There was an observation that 'quality' is often associated with 'International' in institutional rubric, while 'local' is associated with 'amateur'; a binary that is often reinforced by HMEI marketing and branding strategies, as well as sometimes by senior members of staff. Delegates felt that notions of excellence and engagement are too frequently separated within the compartmentalised structures of many HMEIs and working to communicate develop an outward looking culture across all areas of the conservatoire is vital to our institutional durability. There was an agreement that many exemplary best-practice projects are already being undertaken by HMEIs, and that finding ways of sharing these between institutions would be beneficial in demonstrating some of the forms that successful shared partnerships might take: perhaps through a regular cross-conservatoire space (e.g. a forum or resource facilitated through CUK) to share best practice community-focussed and community-led initiatives.

It was emphasised that developing partnerships with a diverse range of collaborating institutions is essential in establishing a range of coherent and legacy-focussed work and seeking to build-in opportunities for participant agency to manifest within project planning is vital in safeguarding equity between partners. Delegates observed the necessity to facilitate dialogues with partners from less affluent or marginalised communities in a continuing and evolving way, inviting them regularly into conservatoires spaces and engendering a sense that these are spaces 'for them'. Delegates agreed that many HMEIs struggle to be transparent about their goals and values within community contexts, and these need to be articulated better. Sustainability of projects was also designated as a priority, with delegates agreeing that successful community engagement work should ideally: i) have an in-built longevity or legacy, ii) ensure the development of high-quality artistic outputs, and iii) offer on-going progression opportunities for participants from both HMEI and community groups.

It was perceived that community-focussed projects are often driven by younger members of the workforce who are typically on precarious short-term contracts not conducive to this sort of sustainability. In these cases, continuation strategies and funding need to be built into project planning at the earliest possible stage, although it was noted that there is a challenge in retaining the necessary responsiveness and agility of this work when it becomes too formalised. Work needs to be done to ensure institutions have pathways to sustain

innovation that do not 'get in the way' or slow down this work. Delegates also noted that often there is not a parity of esteem within departments, with younger members of staff being seen as 'wasting their time' on this work rather than future leaders. More active leadership from Heads of Departments would help to engender a better parity of esteem and bridge the different generational attitudes around community activities.

Delegates felt that it was vital that training and partnership development activities are developed with students, and that a notion of community is deeply embedded in all aspects of curriculum rather than siloed in a specific course or department. Community-facing work is an invaluable way for students to broaden their sense of what professionalism as a musician looks like and is a vital resource for developing the necessary skills and cultural responsiveness required to succeed in the music industry, with delegates pointed to the idea of 'situational excellence' as an important framework for evaluating these skills. Delegates felt strongly that an awareness of audience needs must become a more central component in our musical training, suggesting that too much conservatoire training is exclusively focussed on performance and not enough on skills like curation, project development and communication. Delegates observed that the values of equality at the heart of partnership-building are seen by some as in tension with traditional competitive values of the industry, and spaces for more collaborative and collegiate interaction between students, staff and external partners – for instance through training sessions and regular spaces for peer discussion – might help alleviate this tension. Finally, delegates suggested that this work would be supported by a re-evaluation of the student recruitment process to ensure future generations of students have the necessary potential and interest in societal engagement as well as instrumental excellence.

Finally, delegates suggested that there is a disconnect between what we do and the perception of what we do within the industry, with professional institutions often unaware of what is going on in conservatoires, and how far HMEIs have developed in their outlook and work. This is partly to blame for internal resistance to change, as many hourly-paid staff members are often also members of these industry bodies (e.g. professional orchestras). Delegates thought the process of communication was two-fold: firstly that HMEIs facilitate deeper dialogue between conservatoires and the profession at a senior level to connect current thinking; and secondly that staff from across conservatoires need to be more actively engaged as co-creators in this work, to develop ownership over these partnerships and inspire a desire to share and develop this work in their other professional work.

RESEARCH

Culture-change

Research into culture-change within organisations could be useful. There is a gap between Institutional rhetoric (in which most of what has been proposed by speakers would be accepted) and practice on the ground (in the teaching room) where acceptance is patchy.

Leadership

Culture-change requires effective leadership, and there is an existing research literature on leadership in large organisations, including higher education. This research shows that for staff to accept change they need to feel an integral part of the organisation. That can involve transforming the spaces and environment in which staff work. However, most existing research is on organisations with a full-time workforce. The preponderance of fractional staff in conservatoires creates different challenges which research could usefully address.

CPD for part-time tutors

The relationship of a student to the principal-study teacher is so critical that sometimes students don't hear any other voices, or are not ready to listen to others. But the working contracts of most teachers don't permit a wider involvement in organisational conversations, and that also means we don't find out which of them would *like* to be involved. Deep and sustainable culture-change needs the full engagement and contribution of fractional staff. Research can contribute to understanding the barriers to such wider engagement and also best practice in devising processes of CPD that can be delivered to, and welcomed by, hourly-paid teachers. The recent move online of many of our delivery mechanisms could offer pointers to how to deliver CPD in time-efficient ways for busy people. Is there a role for CUK in devising a handbook for part-time teachers?

Capturing what is already happening

What happens to students when they are exposed to a wider range of voices? A lot is happening in conservatoires, can we capture some of this in a systematic way? Some students feel that widening their activity from pure performance will damage their career prospects. This is most often not true. Research could help identify the extent of these misperceptions and how they are best overcome. Can research help to re-conceptualise pedagogic approaches to put the portfolio career at the centre, rather than the traditional concert-performer model? What micro-practices do we see that prevent change and what can we do about these? Research that identifies the different existing perspectives within institutions and their stakeholders could be a first step to mapping out routes to change.

Collaborative research

What are the best routes to devising and supporting research of most benefit to the system as a whole, bearing in mind that researchers and research institutions are not immune to competitiveness? Could the CUK Research Forum play a catalysing role in discovering and co-ordinating research projects that involve collaboration across institutions/organisations?

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR MID-CAREER MUSICIANS

- *What key training and knowledge is required to ensure that professional musicians at all stages of their careers can be best supported to embrace a diversifying set of contexts and opportunities?*
- *How can conservatoires and the wider industry best collaborate on this?*

Key training and knowledge

Delegates discussed how conservatoires must equip their students with the tools and skills to develop their careers creatively, building their capacity to (re)invent themselves on leaving training, and throughout their careers.

Key training and knowledge at conservatoires beyond craft skill is now much greater than in the past, and includes professional skills, psychological and physical self-care, work in schools and community, music therapy etc - with students needing to gain the necessary skills to achieve excellence in whichever situation they are working: 'situational excellence'. Conservatoires must connect up the curriculum modules, and ensure buy-in from staff across the whole institution, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level: there may be work to do to help professors engage more widely with the institution.

Musicians graduating from conservatoire can feel that they have already reached the ceiling of their 'career development' in conservatoire – or that their important learning in this area is happening outside the conservatoire. They may also experience conflict in seeing themselves as entrepreneurs, or in exploring their own creativity in the development of their (likely, portfolio) career.

Conservatoires must take steps to open up new avenues of thought, and broaden students' understanding of professional life, setting realistic expectations about what the industry is really like. This could include presenting role model stories to inspire, and small examples of practical steps that can be taken, eg how to put on a concert - musicians don't need much to give them the confidence to make changes or to try something different. *Musicians do want to develop creatively – that's the nature of being a musician – however the language can be off-putting: it can feel insulting to ask people to develop. Instead, put in place tools to enable musicians to access their creativity in order to pursue career fulfilment (asking themselves questions such as: Where have you got to? Where do you want to get to? How can you seek out new opportunities? What do you need to earn to support your lifestyle?).*

A huge positive about the conservatoire environment is that while at conservatoire you have the opportunity to tap into many different viewpoints and expertise – this is essential, given that the music industry is dozens of cottage industries! Musicians need to build skills to be able to continue their exploration, beyond conservatoire. The more revenue streams are opened up, the easier it is for musicians to risk taking steps to try to new things.

Mid-career musicians

Among mid-career musicians, a recent research project showed that frustration was a big issue: none felt equipped from their college education, and many struggled to move forward, with problems in the areas of self-efficacy, confidence and the culture of perfectionism in conservatoire. There is particular anxiety about how to move forward in the current climate. Mid-career musicians in a salaried position can also feel trapped in a 'fur-lined rut'. Delegates spoke of a perception of a 'professional musician as being on a narrow path', with the usually unspoken belief that a multi-faceted career 'counts for less than being a straight-ahead classical musician'. There is also a perception that you are a failure if you move out of performing.

There is a need for Continuing Professional Development across a varied range of topics, with financial resources attached as access to funding is a significant challenge for many. Conservatoires could consider the creation of Fellowships for mid-career musicians, opening up the institution to enable them to be in dialogue with a wide range of people, and offering the possibility of courses co-designed with industry, including opportunities for different music traditions to work together; training in communication; musical responsiveness and improvisation etc.

Collaboration between conservatoires and the music industry

It is essential to make links between industry and education, with work being done on skills mapping. The music sector must demonstrate our relevance to society, and the huge national economic and social impact of music (including in healthcare, musicians in local communities etc) – winning the argument for the music industry being a key national asset will feed into increased government funding and support, including in education. (We should also look at what we can take from other industries: eg football clubs embed themselves in communities, engaging with schools and young people.)

The discussion group's key recommendation in this area is the creation of a single collaborative space for people to engage at partnership level: between conservatoires, umbrella organisations eg ISM, Help Musicians, MU, CUK, ABO, Sound Connections, etc etc. The broader the network, the more opportunities there are to bring in people from different musics, to enable musicians to find their tribe/network, and to help overcome the diversity and complexity of the industry.

DIVERSE PROGRAMMING AND AUDIENCES AND DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM (TWO GROUPS)

What specific leadership can conservatoires offer in working to diversify repertoire (including decolonising the canon), programmes and audience make-up, both internally and across the wider classical music sector?

For this topic, there were two discussion groups, as the number of delegates interested in this question was so great.

The common themes that the two groups discussed were:

- *Ways in which the canon and traditional conservatoire pedagogy is embedded in the curriculum and conservatoire culture and ways that this can be disrupted;*
- *The key role of teaching staff in not just diversifying repertoire and decolonising the canon, but reflecting wider society within the conservatoire;*
- *The role of the conservatoire in diversifying audiences through community outreach and their position within their geographical community.*

The groups discussed the centrality of the classical canon and pedagogy in conservatoire music curriculum and the importance of approaching 'decolonising' as a process through which systemic structures can gradually be uprooted. There have been assumptions that students from backgrounds other than White/Western ethnic groups might 'prefer' or be more comfortable with music which relates to their ethnic or cultural background and furthermore, that they may be unable to connect with and communicate the essential meaning or emotion of western classical music.

This raised complex questions about background and identity and the relationship between these factors and curriculum choices; the dominance of this particular style of classical music pedagogy was seen as problematic, though its removal was not being argued for – rather the groups advocated for a wider variety of music and pedagogical approaches to be valued and included. In this process, empathy was proposed as a key tool for listening, especially when faced with inevitable anger or resistance. There can be fear and resistance to losing 'culture' particularly in the Western Classical world but willingness to have dialogue, hold paradoxes and conflicting views in an honest and aware space would potentially have a positive impact. This shift was thought to be best created through a two-way direction, both top down and bottom up.

The groups then discussed the need for more professional development and diverse hiring practices for staff members that took into account not only factors such as gender and ethnicity but also neurodiverse members, and other cross sections of society. Teachers also needed to be equipped to work with diverse repertoire. This could take place through teaching teams, where several teachers work together to deliver several areas of student interest. Students could also have more agency of their learning by bringing repertoire of choice and having more access to diverse repertoire and resources, which may spur change to curriculum requirements. Delegates discussed the importance of drawing from other musical cultures and languages, i.e. seeing how improvisation can serve as a bridge between cultures and open avenues of creativity, discovering joint and universal elements of expression.

For 'audiences', the group discussed socio-economic factors, issues of class and various outreach efforts. It was through this discussion that the group came to question whether conservatoires should instead be labelled as innovatoires – due to their need to constantly innovate. Ultimately, the delegates concluded that the conservatoire needed to be willing to work outside of silos to transcend embedded powers and hierarchies. This could be through

slow change with conversations held through empathy; however, it also seems necessary to be open to radical approaches to see faster change.

THE ONE-TO-ONE LESSON AND PEDAGOGY IN CONTEXT

The one-to-one lesson breakout group considered how conservatoires might develop more inclusive pedagogies, particularly in relation to individual lesson provision (which is rightly seen as the essential core of conservatoire training), and enhance the training and support provided to individual tutors, to better reflect the changing social landscape and current issues facing the industry.

Delegates considered the extent to which the one-to-one lesson has kept pace with or adjusted to the changed context of modern conservatoires, now subject to government regulation regarding standards, notions of 'excellence', 'quality', and what constitutes the 'value' of a degree-level programme of study. The general shift within higher education towards more student centred approaches to teaching and learning has complex implications for conservatoire pedagogies that rely on a more traditional 'master-apprentice' approach. Useful comparisons were made with one-to-one doctoral supervision, particularly as this involved students having multiple supervisors. Delegates recognised that the opportunity for students to focus closely on developing their Principal Study skills to a professional level remains the primary incentive for students participating in the conservatoire learning experience. Delegates considered the extent to which students' learning experience pre-conservatoire had informed their expectations, assumptions, and behaviours, including the 'expert-novice' relationships embedded by previous instrument/voice teachers, and the potential difficulties for students adjusting to, and professorial staff enabling, a 'new' more equal relationship at conservatoire level. Delegates acknowledged there had been some progress, citing examples including some relaxation of the traditional separation between Principal Study lessons and broader 'academic studies'; emerging increased opportunities for interdisciplinary learning; and better understanding of the need for pedagogic reflection and adjustment.

Delegates discussed the merits and limitations of a focus on performance examinations and recitals, and the implications this has for curricular flexibility and supporting individual creativity and developmental autonomy. The group considered working towards specified learning outcomes perhaps more limiting than enabling, and broadly agreed on the merits of enabling students to develop independent learning skills while also having some agency regarding how and where those learning outcomes might be evidenced. There was a shared concern about the potential risks of overusing 'excellence' as a goal and related perception of 'failure' in achieving outcomes other than solo concert performer, and widespread recognition of the reality that most conservatoire music graduates will work in a variety of areas other than as a solo concert performer. Similarly, delegates reflected on the extent to which the grade exam system embedded certain approaches, assumptions, and measures of 'success'. Final recitals do potentially offer valuable learning experiences for students, particularly in terms of their emerging entrepreneurial and creative identities, but delegates agreed the merits of a broader definition of recital, potentially shared with other musicians rather than exclusively 'solo'.

Delegates reflected very positively on the 'musician as maker' thrust of the morning's presentations, both as a valuable outcome and as an engaging way of approaching the student learning experience. Colleagues discussed how a repositioning of musician as 'maker' might productively break away from a limiting position of 'musician as product' to a more autonomous 'musician as producer/creator/facilitator'.

A repeated refrain throughout delegates' deliberations related to a desire for more training and support for teaching staff; for easier sharing and more open discussion of one-to-one teaching practices and pedagogies; and of the importance of ensuring that teachers are well-supported in their role as guiding, facilitating, and enabling their student's learning and development as highly-skilled professional musicians with agency, autonomy, and authority.

APPENDIX

Delegates

Organisations represented by delegates at the Strengthening Music in Society conference:

ABRSM, Association of British Orchestras, Benslow Music Instrument Loan Scheme, Black Lives in Music, Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Help Musicians UK (HMUK), IMZ Academy, Incorporated Society of Musicians, Leeds Conservatoire, London Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Collective, Music Education Council, Music Education Research Journal, Musicians' Union, National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain, National Open Youth Orchestra, National Opera Studio, National Youth Choirs of Great Britain, National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, Orchestras for All, Red Note Ensemble, Royal Academy of Music, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Royal College of Music, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Royal Irish Academy of Music, Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Opera House, Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Sibelius Academy University of the Arts Helsinki, Social Impact of Music Making (SIMM), Sound Connections, Southbank Centre, Southbank Sinfonia, The Aloud Charity, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, UK Music, Universities UK, University College London, University of Liverpool, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, VOCES8 Foundation, Wigmore Hall

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