

## **A Reflection on “Triage: Developing A Profile Of Arts Partnership Projects” (Bernard Andrews and Eileen Harris)**

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### **From small beginnings . . .**

Educational projects involving professional musicians and artists have been an important part of community and music education programmes in the UK for over thirty years, covering the spectrum of music from classical, folk, and world musics, to jazz, pop/rock and electro-acoustic composition. Collaborative ventures range from integrated arts’ projects, which were familiar in many schools and colleges in the 1970s and 80s, to projects involving professional musicians, dancers, artists and actors. Many programmes explore mixed media – local cultures and folk legends providing a rich source of material, particularly in the primary school sector.

The term ‘integrated’ covers a range of activities, from those with only tenuous links between subjects to fully integrated projects structured around concrete or abstract themes. Arts integration has sometimes been criticised for its superficial approach to subject-based skill and understanding; clearly, increased time and resources are required to develop more specific individual learning in musical performance, dance, visual art and drama. However, even with limited time, there are benefits in exploring lateral connections between subjects. Thoughtfully structured, such activities need not preclude vertical learning; the educational process can be enriched through making connections between the arts and then building on new areas of experience and understanding.

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### **. . . The vision grows**

As governments have become more aware of the need to encourage “education for life,” so opportunities have been taken to explore arts education partnerships across the spectrum of age, gender, race and ability. Artistic appreciation and understanding develop through active participation in a range of creative and performing activities. Partnerships in arts education, therefore, have a vital role in bringing together school and community, so providing a degree of cohesion within increasingly fragmented societies. A good example of this occurred a few years ago, when players from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra became involved with the Alveley Village Band, forming a long-standing coaching project with an established community orchestra whose members ranged from primary school age to late 70s and 80s. The educational and cultural dimensions of this partnership encompassed a range of performance and compositional activities, including work with the Scottish composer, Judith Weir.

Composition projects are a strong feature of the curriculum in British schools, particularly in the upper stages of secondary education. Sometimes young and established composers work alongside professional musicians and school students, providing models for creative work and encouraging understanding of the processes involved in making and performing a piece of music. Developing an inside view of the compositional process also supports skills in listening, analysis and performance. Where students work with compositional ideas based on a featured work in a concert, their attention in performance can be heightened.

### **Learning from each other**

In 1987, George Odam reported a monologue based on a conversation between a seventeen year old student and his teacher in a west of England school. One of the

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recommendations of the student was that, “Rock musicians should be brought into schools to run workshops” (1987, p. 30)

More recently, Lucy Green (2001) has written of the benefits of emulating informal learning approaches employed by rock musicians within the context of formal education. In the sphere of world musics, Patricia Sheehan Campbell (2001) has referred to the important role of ‘culture-bearers’ in transmitting traditional music. Apart from ethical concerns, there are educational benefits in representing music authentically, though—for example—artists in residence schemes. Partnerships between performers, teachers and students operate on many levels, providing new ways of understanding that in turn can enrich educational thinking and support community interaction.

### **The role of individuals**

In the areas of music listening, composing and performing, the current range of artist-teacher collaboration owes much to the vital input during the 1970s and 80s of such musician-educators as Atarah Ben-Tovim and Richard McNicol (coincidentally, both professional flautists). *Atarah’s Band* was formed in 1975, with the objective of introducing children to classical music and motivating them to learn an instrument. During its existence, the Band played to more than three million children, presenting them with an experience that was likened to “a cross between a symphony concert and a circus, a pantomime and a pop show.” The group toured Britain, broadcast on radio and television, and worked with professional orchestras in a range of venues and formats. Richard McNicol’s pioneering educational work with members of the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) provided a model for many other education and community partnerships, both in the UK and internationally. During the past twenty years, the impact of McNicol’s involvement in large-scale music and community education projects with

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orchestras and schools has been felt in Canada, Jordan, Scandinavia and South America. The current LSO Discovery series reaches 30,000 children each year in British schools, community centres and hospitals. Many British orchestras now have an Education or Outreach Officer who is responsible for coordinating projects in schools and the wider community.

### **The role of institutions**

Institutions of higher education in the UK have played a major part in the development of professional and community partnerships. Dartington College of Arts in the southwest of England was known from the 1970s for its music and community programmes; Bretton Hall College in West Yorkshire similarly engaged visual and dramatic artists, musicians and dancers on various specialist and integrated arts projects during the 1980s and 90s. Bretton Hall's international sculpture park, with works of art by such renowned sculptors as Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore, undoubtedly enriched the experience for participants. Apart from the quality of professional input and exchange, the setting in which collaborative activities take place can provide additional stimulus and help develop deeper understanding of educational processes for all concerned. By organising such programmes in venues other than schools, many of the difficulties associated with an institutional environment can be set aside; school and community thereby become better integrated.

### **The role of governments**

Political and financial support is crucial to increasing participation in vital musical and artistic activities. In this regard, reports such as *All Our Futures* (1999) and

*What's Going On?* (2003) emphasize the important role of the arts in education and society.

The 1948 Declaration of Human Rights reminds us that, “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts.” Arts education partnerships provide a significant way of realising this aspiration, by encouraging individual and community involvement in the arts across perceived boundaries in education and society.

### References

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### **Websites**

Atarah Ben-Tovim: <http://www.atarah.tv/html/Autobiography.asp>

Richard McNicol:

[http://www.rhythmisit.com/en/php/index\\_noflash.php?HM=2&SM=2&CM=13](http://www.rhythmisit.com/en/php/index_noflash.php?HM=2&SM=2&CM=13)

London Symphony Orchestra (LSO): <http://www.lso.co.uk>

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO): <http://www.cbso.co.uk>

Alveley Village Band: <http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Picture/7311/home.html>

### **Other websites**

Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO): <http://www.rsno.org.uk>

Music Network, Ireland (Eire): <http://www.musicnetwork.ie>

Venezuela Youth and Children's Orchestras:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/americas/4457278.stm>

BBC: <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

BBC World Service: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice>

International Society for Music Education (ISME): <http://www.isme.org/>

International Music Council (IMC): <http://www.unesco.org/imc/>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO):

<http://www.unesco.org/>

Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD): <http://www.gsmd.ac.uk>

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

### **Three cameos: Scotland, England and Ireland**

#### 1. Scotland: Royal Scottish National Orchestra (RSNO)

The overall aim of the RSNO's education programme is to introduce classical music in a new and innovative way throughout Scotland, working with all sections of the community, irrespective of age or ability. The underlying philosophy of the programme is informed by a belief that appreciation and understanding of classical music is gained through active participation in music making. Projects are related directly to the RSNO's extensive repertoire, and culminate in concerts attended by students and other interested parties. Particular care is taken to ensure that projects link closely with school curriculum requirements; support is provided to both specialist and non-specialist teachers. The RSNO's Education Department organises masterclasses, orchestral coaching and teacher training sessions as part of its outreach programme.

A diverse range of work is undertaken, spanning the full spectrum of education provision from nursery to upper secondary, special educational needs, and visits to day centres and homes for the elderly. In-depth composition projects are a strong feature of school-based work, particularly in the upper stages of secondary education.

#### 2. England: City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)

The CBSO's education programme covers a wide range of activities. Recent projects included a composition masterclass for post-16 students, a choral workshop, performance surgeries and a music business seminar. Professional collaboration

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extends also to projects involving Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Symphony Hall and the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Summer schools provide a valuable opportunity to extend the partnerships beyond the confines of the school day.

Much of the education outreach work of the CBSO is with Birmingham schools and communities, although recent programmes involve the wider geography of the West Midlands. Current interest in the work of CS Lewis, due in part to the release of the film of 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' in December 2005, was anticipated in 2002-2003 by a music theatre project for schools in Worcester based on the book. CBSO outreach has also included jazz projects with Worcestershire schools.

### 3. Ireland (Eire): Music Network

Music Network is the Irish national music development organisation, established in 1986 by the Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) to develop classical, traditional and jazz music throughout Ireland. For many people in Eire, access to live music is limited by such factors as geographical location, economic or educational disadvantage, disability, age, or lack of any previous musical experience. Music Network aims to address any difficulties arising from limited access to music by working in partnership with locally based organisations to make high quality live music accessible to all sectors of the community. Collaborative activities involving various partnerships are seen as a key element in the creation of a relevant and sustainable music programme.

The key objectives of the organisation are:

- To develop the provision of live music and the appreciation of music in local communities

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- To provide opportunities for Irish musicians and composers to reach a wider audience
- To present Irish and international artists of the highest calibre in local venues nationwide
- To explore new models for local musical development
- To encourage the formation of cooperative and broadly based initiatives in partnership with other agencies and/or locally-based organisations

In December 1999, Music Network, in association with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD), London, commenced a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for musicians and facilitators working in 'unconventional' performance environments - such as schools, community or healthcare settings. The focus of such collaboration is on developing the creative and improvisational skills of musicians to assist them in their work with children, adults and those confined for reasons of age or ill health. In addition, the collaboration enables exploration of innovative forms of arts practice and creative involvement within the arts world and wider community. The programme also allows the participants to explore and develop their own communication and leadership skills, both of which are crucial to the successful implementation of projects in education and healthcare.

Music Network is an independent organisation, constituted as a limited company and having registered charity status in Ireland. The Irish Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon) and a broad range of sources, including the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, fund the Organisation. Additional funds are provided through a Corporate Friends Scheme and other grant giving bodies, government departments and earned income.

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**Three cameos – adapted from:**

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*Residencies*").

Venezuelan Youth and Children's Orchestras

1975 witnessed the birth of Venezuela's Youth and Children's Orchestras – a project that provides young people with an opportunity to be trained in classical music. The venture has been very successful, with 250,000 young musicians currently enrolled on the programme; 23 other countries in the region have inaugurated similar programmes. For significant numbers of young people, this has provided an opportunity to move out of poverty and, in many cases, away from lives of crime, violence and drugs, thus improving individuals' quality of life and even their life-span. The British conductor, Sir Simon Rattle, has referred to the Venezuelan youth orchestra programme as the most important work in classical music in the world.

**Source:** 'Outlook' (2005). BBC World Service report, Monday 19 December.