



March 2023 Newsletter

Roundup from

Phil Castang

Chair's welcome

For many reasons 2022 was a disappointing year...

...full of promise, it had all the hallmarks of being a renaissance year, with new plans, new ways of working and a growing optimism that we were over the worst of it. Just as we dared to feel settled the world reminded us that the good times were not yet ready to return. Putin decided 2022 was the perfect time to start a war, fossil fuel prices exploded, fanning inflation, and waking a workforce that feels undervalued and overworked. Let's not even mention BREXIT and Covid!

It was Benjamin Franklin that said, "*nothing is certain except death and taxes*". My version of this quote would be, "*nothing is certain except change, so get used to it*".

Although change can be scary, accepting it's inevitable and being prepared is all we can do.

Being '*ahead of the curve*', sounds like awful business jargon, like '*blue sky thinking*', but it is absolutely '*mission critical*' in a complex and fast changing environment. Being behind the curve is not just bad business, it carries a huge reputational risk.

MEC's 2023 seminar programme is all about planning for change and making sure that we can stay ahead of the curve. Join us to learn from colleagues working across the music ecosystem.

Phil Castang, Chair, MEC

Become a MEC

Member for free

Seminar tickets

MEC Seminar Series 2023

MEC's 2023 Seminar Series is asking challenging questions about the wider music education landscape including the changing roles of our concert venues, professional ensembles, community music organisations and HE institutions as well as looking at emerging practice in singing for mental health and disabled-led organisations.

Seminars take place online via Zoom and are free for Members. For non-Members the cost is £15 per seminar, for student Members it is £7.50. Free access to these Seminars alone makes it worth the cost of Membership which is just £30 for an individual. To become a Member visit this page on our website:

<https://www.musiceducationcouncil.org.uk/join-us>

MEC's 2023 Seminar Series is asking challenging questions about the wider music education landscape...



Membership Offer

MEC Seminar: The changing role of...

Thu, 11 May | Webinar

 +1 more

Reserve tickets



Membership Offer

MEC Seminar: Higher Education...

Thu, 15 Jun | Webinar



Reserve tickets



Membership Offer

MEC Seminar: Community musi...

Thu, 13 Jul | Webinar



Reserve tickets

We have already hosted our first online seminar of the year. **'The future of our venues'** was the topic for discussion among a panel of those leading ambitious programmes within some of the nation's venues. Panelists were:

- Samir Savant, CEO at St George's Bristol
- Wendy Smith, Creative Director, Sage Gateshead
- Clara Cullen, Music Venue Trust
- Chris Proctor, Head of Programme, B:Music Symphony Hall, Birmingham

A video of a shortened version of the seminar is available on our website.

<https://www.musiceducationcouncil.org.uk/seminarsrec>

The changing role of the ensemble

11th May 10.00 am

What is the role of the modern performance ensemble within the community. Many professional ensembles have been redefining their role within the community. What do their strategies look like and how are they changing/evolving? What's their approach to partnership working? Join the MEC panel representing ensembles (orchestras, choirs, bands) staging boundary changing modern performances.

Higher Education and excellence

15th June 10.00 am

What do we mean by excellence? How do we value creativity in the same space as virtuosity and excellence in the same space as participation?

The 360-portfolio career for musicians has changed dramatically in the last 5-10 years. Are we preparing young musicians for the world of work that awaits them? Join the MEC panel of experts and course leaders from various academic institutions including conservatoires, universities, and music academies.

Community music in hard times**13th July 10.00 am**

The role of community music for these times - when times are hard, how does music help to support communities and individuals? How are Community Music Organisations contributing to the inclusion agenda? Join the MEC panel to explore the frontline of community music.

Singing & mental health**14th September 10.00 am**

In this seminar we will look at the points of intersection between vocal leadership practice and clinical research, and between participation for general wellbeing and interventions for diagnosed mental health issues. Join the MEC panel of vocal leaders involved in cutting-edge research.

Disability taking the lead**9th November 10.00 am**

Priority areas, discussion points, agenda and speakers to be decided by disabled musicians and disabled-led groups. Details TBC.

Hello from Scotland

The beginning of the year can be experienced in various ways. It can be a time mainly with miserable weather, recovering from the effects of overindulgence and Festive expenditure, or it is the month to celebrate Burns and being the start of a new year, we can look forward positively in the hope of overcoming the challenges brought about by the past two years of COVID related issues and which have had such a detrimental effect on music and music education. There is no doubt that as last year drew to a close, there were signs that the resilience of organisations and individuals involved with MEPG was beginning to bear fruit with more musical activity and events taking place.

We had a positive start to the year in having an online meeting with Shirley-Anne Somerville the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills and Neil Gray the culture minister. They reiterated the government's manifesto commitment to music education and will continue to work with MEPG to get a long-term sustainable future for music education in Scotland.

However, we also have to recognise the current financial situation facing national and local governments. We are monitoring the discussions taking place on budget planning for the next financial year and will take every opportunity to ensure the 'wins' of the past year are not lost.

Looking to the future we are very excited about the second year of the Scottish Young Musicians Competitions (<https://www.scottishyoungmusicians.com/>) which will take place in the RCS on the 21st May and our We Make Music Singing Day taking place in Dundee on the 7th June.

'New year - a new chapter, new verse, or just the same old story? Ultimately, we write it. The choice is ours' (Alex Morrith)

Mae Murray
Secretariat MPEG

Wales Update

The Welsh National Plan for Music Education is now underway in schools in Wales. The National Music Service or Gwasanaeth Cerdd Cenedlaethol Cymru began work with music services across Wales in summer 2022 by bringing teachers together to explore the new plan and how it would be delivered. Autumn term 2022 saw the roll out of the primary strand of the plan – First Experiences, alongside the purchase of instrument sets which were distributed across Wales. Gwasanaeth Cerdd Cenedlaethol Cymru has also partnered with Charanga to create a Welsh platform for teachers in Wales to use in the classroom. Currently activity includes planning for the Music Pathways strand which will support progression routes in music, planning for forum meetings across Wales to connect music services and organisations in local areas, and the roll out of a survey to support development of music provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs and / or disabilities.

<https://www.gwasanaethcerdd.cymru>

Anthem. Cronfa Gerdd Cymru is also providing support through its funding programme Atsain which supports organisations to address barriers to music for young people in Wales. In 2022 Atsain funded 27 organisations across Wales delivering projects for children and young people from 3 to 25. Anthem has also worked with young people in Wales to develop the Porth Anthem Gateway – an online portal helping to build a better understanding of how the music industry works and creating pathways to future careers in music for young people in Wales.

www.anthem.wales

<https://gateway.anthem.wales/>

Rhian Hutchings

PrifWeithredwr/Chief Executive Officer

Anthem. Cronfa Gerdd Cymru/ Anthem. Music Fund Wales

Music on the Up in Northern Ireland

Music Service delivery in NI is in a really positive space, with our core tuition in schools and our whole-class instrumental and vocal programmes operating well above pre-covid levels. Our orchestras, bands and ensembles are nearly there but not quite. They were hit hard with reduced numbers due to social distancing, however the demand is there and we are rebuilding steadily. Overall, it's a really positive and encouraging picture here with some exciting potential future change that will benefit for all.

The infographic shows some fabulous delivery in 2021 – 2022.



<https://musicservice.eani.org.uk/about-us>

Darren Canmore

Head EA Music Service

Hubs in focus

In conversation with 3 Music Education Hubs

*Music Education
Hub update*

With Music Hubs waiting for the publication of the investment process for funding beyond September 2024 Richard Jones, MEC Trustee chatted with three music hub leads at either end of the country for their thoughts. The full discussion can be found on MEC's blog here: <https://www.musiceducationcouncil.org.uk/post/hubs-in-focus>



Helen Reid is Music Hub Lead for Sound Foundation Somerset the Music Hub for Somerset. SFS commissions work from a number of delivery partners including the Music Service. **David Francis** is Lead Officer for Music Partnership North which is the Music Hub for Northumberland and Newcastle. MPN works also works with a number of partner organisations across a core city and a very rural county.

Lewis Gibbs is Music Education Hub Lead for the Devon and Torbay Music Hubs. Excluding the 'Yorkshires' and 'Lincolnshires', Devon is the second largest county by area in England and, like Somerset, is a commissioning hub but does not have a teaching music service per se.

Over the years Music Hubs have striven to open up access to all children. What are you doing to ensure you are an inclusive hub?

Helen: A new draft SEND Strategy for Somerset has been produced after extensive consultation, including families, and the Hub has used this to inform its Inclusive Music Strategy. The Hub has also fed back comments, for example, that it would like music/creativity discussed as part of early EHCP discussions and is awaiting the outcome. It is our intention to forge stronger links with SENCOs and where possible to amend delivery to focus on SEND pupils in the first instance.

David: Having gone through the excellent Changing Tracks training from Hertfordshire Music Hub, we've drawn up an EDI Action Plan and are working to improve inclusion at all levels - recruitment, staff training and support, governance and of course in the work that we do with children and young people, to ensure that everyone can access high quality musical education and experiences.

Lewis: Inclusion is a huge topic and, quite rightly, impacts on every area of provision. There is a lot of expertise in the South West, which we are able to exploit. One of our team has recently completed the Inclusive Practitioner CME qualification through Bristol Beacon, and will soon become our Inclusion Lead. We work closely with Daisi, part of the Alliance for a Musically Inclusive England (AMIE), on workforce development and strategy. We also have some wonderful partner organisations, such as The Turning Tides Project, who work particularly with young people with autism and disability labels.

Recently, we have worked with colleagues from within the local authority to provide an opportunity for physically disabled children and young people within mainstream education to try a range of musical activities and instruments. Follow up sessions with the Hub team will provide the opportunity for those that want to pursue this further, with advice and support on adaptive instruments and technology where required.

Like all Music Education Hubs, we're on an inclusion journey, but there are many reasons to be positive.

With the publication of NPME 2 last summer there have been lots of concerns raised about the future and at the same time you've had to continue to deliver. What opportunities and threats do you see in the investment process for NMPE2?

Helen: For me it's the uncertainty of not knowing what the prescribed geographies might be and it is difficult to see many opportunities, but closer partnership working with other Hubs resulting from new formal arrangements and a pooling of expertise could be an opportunity.

David: It's similar in the Northeast. There's an opportunity to build on existing partnerships with other hubs, services and cultural partners in our region which we hope will improve the musical activities and opportunities available to children and young people.

There are a number of concerns which we have discussed at Board level, the main one being the impact of having to collaborate from a structural point of view with another LA.

- Annual grant funding would not be under the control of the LA; the funding for Somerset CYP would still be there but this budget would sit elsewhere and be managed by another organisation;
- There would be a potential greater risk to the Music Service and other external partners, including small local charities, of securing this grant for delivery from whoever was the HLO, especially if they decided to use alternative delivery organisations;
- The Hub Lead post would be within scope for TUPE with the risk that it would not be required after transfer.
- Loss of grant to LA for other central functions.

David: If Arts Council England's 'prescribed geographies' cover too large an area, there are some concerns that centralised hub activities might be difficult for everyone to access and if hubs are too large there is a potential risk that hub structures become an administrative

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function, rather than resulting in an improved or enhanced experiences for children and young people.

“The investment process continues to be a huge distraction for Hubs...”

Lewis: I could go on about this for a long time, but I’m not going to! The short answer is that the investment process continues to be a huge distraction for Hubs, with an unhelpful drip feed of information from DfE/ACE leading to uncertainty and anxiety across the sector. We cover the largest geographical area of any Hub and already work very strategically, so I am optimistic that we will be able to continue as we are. That said, we have excellent relationships with neighbouring Hubs and, if we are affected, we will make it work.

NPME2 has a particular emphasis on schools with the responsibility for SMEPS now firmly in their court. Do you think your relationships with schools will change under NPME2

Helen: I think that, through the range of delivery partners in Somerset, we have a good relationship with our schools, but we are keen to give even greater focus to supporting our schools in the NPME2 so relationships could strengthen.

David: This will depend slightly on the size of hubs going forward. Hubs covering larger geographical areas might struggle to maintain the good relationships that existing hubs and services have built up with schools. That said, discussing the NPME 2 and Model Music Curriculum has been an excellent opportunity to create time and space to talk to schools about their music provision.

Lewis: NPME2 is hugely aspirational about what schools should be doing, as it should be in my opinion. While it is well documented that this is non-statutory guidance, the conversations that we are having with schools are very positive – they want to make it work, and they want our help to make that happen. In a recent survey, 90% of the maintained schools and academies that we engage with evaluated the support they receive from the Hub as good or outstanding, and I don’t see that changing.

Latest Hub News

Since this article was written, announcements have been made by Arts Council England regarding the proposed new geographic areas for the Music Hub Investment Programme. These proposals have been shaped by feedback from their January consultation.

[Read the updated rationale >](#)

[Download a spreadsheet of the proposals >](#)

[View a map of the proposed Music Hub areas >](#)

[View a map of current Music Education Hubs >](#)

And more information is available here about the investment programme, what’s happened so far, and what’s next.

[Arts Council - Music Hub Investment Programme](#)

You can provide feedback on these proposals via a survey which is open until **Friday 31 March**. [Find the survey here.](#)

News

New Partnership with MUSIC:ED

The Music Education Council is delighted to announce a new media partnership with the MUSIC:ED website. Phil Castang Chair said, “the scope of the MUSIC:ED website mirrors MEC’s primary focus which is essentially exploring the role of music in society and its value in the broadest sense.”

Ian Clethero, publisher of MUSIC:ED, said “We are delighted that MUSIC:ED will be supporting MEC by providing content for the newsletter, and through MEC’s involvement in our new online community. We look forward to building the partnership over the coming year”. <https://musiceducation.global>

[Nominations open for Youth Music Awards 2023](#)

[Black Lives in Music recognised as leader in innovation](#)

[UK Music sets out eight-point blueprint supporting jobs and growth](#)

The annual RPS awards

Described by BBC Radio 3 as 'the BAFTAs of classical music' and The Sunday Times as 'the biggest night in UK classical music', the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards are classical music’s annual good news story, shining much-needed light on inspirational individuals, groups and initiatives whose music has lifted hearts and minds across the nation.

Winners announced here:

https://royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk/awards/rps_music_awards/latest-winners

JOHN GILHOOLY’S 2023 RPS AWARDS SPEECH

An urgent message about the reach and resonance of classical music has been made at the 2023 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards on 1 March 2023. Below is a link to the complete transcript of the opening speech made by RPS Chairman John Gilhooly, conveying the urgent concerns and convictions of the music profession following Arts Council England’s funding review.

Specifically on music education John stated, “*We need to put our hearts and souls into England’s refreshed National Plan for Music Education and similar plans in Scotland and Wales. Although many schools, music education hubs and national youth music organisations do fantastic work (among them, Awards for Young Musicians, nominated tonight as a new NPO), the days of free music education for all children throughout their schooling are largely gone, and investment in the whole system in real terms is at an all-time low. Numbers of students taking GCSE and A-Level music exams have dipped, but those taking grade exams have increased. This would indicate that those who can afford to go private are making their own arrangements. Music is becoming the preserve of the middle classes, exactly the opposite of what Let’s Create is meant to achieve*”.

https://royalphilharmonicsociety.org.uk/awards/rps_music_awards/john-gilhoolys-2023-rps-awards-speech

Upcoming Events

[OFSTED Update on music in schools: Music Mark \(27th March, Online\)](#)

[Bett UK \(29-31 March, London\)](#)

[Spring into Dalcroze 2023 \(2-5 April, Manchester\)](#)

[Aurora and the Magical Toy Box: Creative music-making in the classroom: Music Mark \(24th April, Online\)](#)

[The changing role of the Ensemble: MEC Seminar Series \(11th May, Online\)](#)

[Higher Education and excellence: MEC Seminar Series \(15th June, Online\)](#)

[Association of Teachers of Singing Conference \(3-4 June, London\)](#)

[CUMIN Contemporary Urban Music for Inclusion Network Conference \(30 June, London\)](#)

Music Education Council

Gateshead International Business Centre
Mulgrave Terrace
Gateshead, NE8 1AN

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www.musiceducationcouncil.org.uk

