

Ploszajski Lynch Consulting Ltd.



FIRST TIME LIVE - YOUTH *EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY* AUGUST 2014



ORCHESTRAS *Live*

Introduction

- 1) **Project background:** Research by the Association of British Orchestras suggests that as many as 60% of young people in England have never experienced a live orchestral concert. Whilst many of the UK's professional orchestras include schools concerts as part of their annual programmes, most do not tour these programmes beyond their home base. Furthermore, there are very varying levels of participation and active engagement to make the concert experience engaging and long-lasting.
- 2) *'First Time Live - Youth'* sought to address this by delivering a project that confronted the barriers that prevent young people attending orchestral concerts. By involving young people in the promotion and organisation of the events, it sought to impart an insight into the presentation of orchestral music, to create a legacy of commitment and enthusiasm to engage with concerts in the future.
- 3) Using a musical repertoire chosen in part by the young people themselves, the project aimed to dispel misconceptions about orchestral music, bringing about positive attitudinal change amongst the young audiences, to ensure their first-time concert experience has long-term impact.
- 4) In 2013 and 2014, the project brought twenty inspiring, high-quality orchestral concerts to nearly 12,000 young people aged between 10 and 14 years, living in ten locations in England that fall in the bottom 20% for arts engagement. All the concerts involved young people in the selection of some of the repertoire, performing in and presenting the concert.
- 5) This report comprises a summary of the full evaluation report on the project.

Project partners

- 6) **Orchestras Live** is a national music charity that brings orchestral music to thousands of people in under-served areas of England. It provided the overall management and co-ordination of the project through a specially recruited project manager and its existing staff.
- 7) The project featured two world-class orchestras, the **City of London Sinfonia** and the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**, both of whom have a strong track record of delivering projects for young people.
- 8) Two **Music Leaders** (Tim Steiner and John K Miles) were commissioned to engage with young people in each project locality to involve them in the organisation and presentation of the concerts.
- 9) In each area the **local authority music services** and/or **Music Education Hubs** helped with the promotion and organisation of the project.
- 10) **Makewaves** helped to deliver interactive online resources and project information, which enabled young people and their schools to learn and share across the network.
- 11) **Module Media:** Module Media created the tour branding and designed and built the *'First Time Live - Youth'* website.

- 12) ***Clearhead Media and Remedy Sound:*** Clearhead Media provided technical support and training for the Young Producers at each concert venue in the first year of the project. Remedy Sound performed this role in the second year of the project.
- 13) Funding for the project was contributed by Orchestras Live and local authorities in most of the ten participating localities, with further income raised by Orchestras Live from ***Arts Council England***, the ***Garfield Weston Foundation***, the ***D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust***, the ***Kirby Laing Foundation***, the ***Liz and Terry Bramall Foundation*** and ***ABP Grimsby and Immingham***.

Project aims

- 14) ***Aims:*** The '*First Time Live - Youth*' project aimed to:
- a) Enable better access to high quality musical work for young people, many of whom are not engaged in the arts and who live in culturally underserved areas.
 - b) Deliver a consistent experience that is relevant to and informed by its audience, with a view to making the live concert experience as impactful as possible.
 - c) Establish and sustain relationships between promoters, orchestras, the new music education hubs and audiences, in order that orchestral touring and audiences can grow and thrive in the target areas.
 - d) Help inform and influence the way that live orchestral music is programmed and presented to young people.



The Hull concert at the City Halls

Project format

- 15) The project involved:

- a) A tour of large-scale concerts featuring a programme of pieces designed to be relevant to and inspirational for, the audiences of young people, by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to young people in Hull, Scunthorpe, Grimsby and Doncaster and of medium-scale chamber orchestra concerts by City of London Sinfonia to young people in Luton, Harlow, Thurrock, March, Peterborough and Mansfield.
- b) An integral programme of three workshops and a concert rehearsal in each locality, facilitated by Music Leaders to enable young people (Young Producers) to engage directly with orchestral musicians and contribute to the programming and production of the concerts, and to act as ambassadors for the concerts.
- c) A partnership with Makewaves, the leading network platform available to the target age group, to deliver interactive online resources that enable the young people and their schools to learn and to share across the touring network.
- d) Lasting relationships and collaborations forged between participating orchestras, schools, amateurs, venues, the relevant Music Education Hubs and other participants and organisations, with a view to the development of further concerts for young people and the development of younger audiences for orchestral concerts in the future.

Meeting project aims

16) ***Introduction:*** The extent to which the project met its aims was evaluated as follows:

17) ***To enable better access to high quality musical work for young people, many of whom are not engaged in the arts and who live in culturally underserved areas:***

- a) The project achieved significant ‘reach’ in all localities, with almost 11,833 young people from 178 schools attended 20 concerts in ten culturally under-represented.
- b) Extrapolation from the post-concert survey suggests that 10,050 (around 85% of the total) were attending an orchestral concert for the first time.



Tim Steiner running one of the Scunthorpe workshop sessions

- c) The response of a senior local politician is typical of the appreciation of project participants and audiences to the presence of world class musicians in areas where such opportunities are very limited.

‘Let me say I was delighted to attend the First Time Live concert and Danum’s young presenters and the musicians were absolute stars. I believe it was a coup for Doncaster to have such a world-renowned orchestra actually performing at CAST. Both the orchestra and conductor, along with Danum’s young people, demonstrated that all types of music can be appreciated by differing age groups, when put over in such an innovative and brilliant way’.
Source: Cllr. Ros Jones, Mayor of Doncaster

- d) The inspirational effects that the orchestras had, on the Young Producers in particular, is abundantly evident from the responses

- ‘I liked the fact that I actually had lots to do and I was actually needed for once. It made me feel terrific, thank you’.
- ‘I think it opens your eyes to the hidden world of classical music because you think it’s just these isolated orchestras performing for people when it’s not’.
- ‘The opportunity to be in the same room as the RPO is just brilliant and an awesome atmosphere’.

Source: Young Producers interviews

18) *To deliver a consistent experience that is relevant to and informed by its audience, with a view to making the live concert experience as impactful as possible:*

- a) The relevance of the concert experience to the participants is evidenced by the enthusiastic responses from teachers and audience members.

‘It just felt like it wasn’t something we were ‘allowed’ to experience but we were the ones creating the experience’.
Source: March Young Producer feedback:

- b) The short-term impact of the project on the majority of the young people involved is clearly positive, but there is abundant evidence of longer-term benefits from the year one project locations, with several of the young producers inspired to go on to further music-related studies or vocational courses.

‘The children were very impressed and gave standing ovations - which took us teachers by surprise. I think this demonstrates the strength of their feelings towards the concert. They chatted about it for days afterwards too’.
Source: Teachers post-project questionnaire

- a) The choice of part of the musical repertoire at the concerts by the Young Producers on behalf of their peers was an excellent way of ensuring that the programme was ‘relevant to and informed by its audience’.

‘I liked it when one of the little boys from one of the schools said ‘that was the best thing ever’ and they all thanked all of us for doing the show’.
Source: Grimsby Young Producer feedback:



A Young Producer introducing the music in Doncaster

19) ***To establish and sustain relationships between promoters, orchestras, the new music education hubs and audiences, in order that orchestral touring and audiences can grow and thrive in the target areas:***

- a) Orchestras Live has been actively engaging the Music Hubs in developing legacy projects and programmes are currently being pursued. In addition to this formal engagement, however, it is clear that many of the schools that participated in the 2013 phase of the project have subsequently experienced positive musical developments as a direct result of their involvement.

'First Time Live - Youth is already inspiring a range of legacy projects. Additional work for young people, directly inspired by the project, is planned in Harlow, Peterborough, Fenland and Thurrock. In Luton, John K. Miles is leading a series of workshops with groups of young musicians at 19 Primary schools, creating a song and an instrumental piece based on the theme of Carnival. In July 2014 up to 500 of the young participants performed in concerts with City of London Sinfonia and many more young people took part through live streaming of the concerts' .Source: Orchestras Live

- b) Project participants have clearly been inspired to want to develop their involvement with music, including its influence on career choices.

'I've learnt that I definitely want to be a music teacher , because the [project] experience has shown me how really accessible music is to children, no matter what age and I want to support and encourage that'.
Source: Doncaster Young Producer feedback:

20) ***To help inform and influence the way that live orchestral music is programmed and presented to young people:***

- a) Most of the music teachers who responded to the post-project questionnaire were very enthusiastic about the innovative ways in which the project engaged the audiences.

‘The children thoroughly enjoyed it and several were perched on the edge of their seats for the whole of the time, fascinated by watching the musicians in action! I had lots of positive comments from the children afterwards who were filled with enthusiasm... "best afternoon ever"; "that bassoon is sick!" (apparently in this context being sick is good!); "how do they make all those different sounds...amazing"; being some of the comments from the most reluctant musicians in the class. It is so unusual for our children to be able to hear live orchestral music. I hope it will be possible to arrange something like this again, to be held in Doncaster, in the near future’.

Source: Post-concert feedback from Sunnyfields Primary School, Doncaster

- b) The involvement of the Young Producers in introducing the music and interviewing members of the orchestra broke down the traditional barriers between performers and audience.

‘The interviews with members of the orchestra are another important way of dismantling the traditional barriers between the performers and an audience. This aspect should be expanded upon in the next phase of the project’.

Source: Post-project interview with John K. Miles

- c) The idea of an evening concert for parents and/or the general public has some merit in taking the project to an even wider audience in culturally under-represented areas.

‘We thought it might have been good to have an evening concert open to the public to show them how able students are in Doncaster and how they can do all this, rather than just showing primary school students. I think especially in Doncaster, there will be a lot of adults who haven’t seen an orchestra before, so it would have been good to open it up to the public and see what they thought, and to show that young people in Doncaster are capable of doing wonderful things like this’.

Source: Doncaster teachers’ feedback

- d) The creation of a Twitter feed for the project in 2014 was a hugely successful innovation that tapped into a communications and information exchange medium which is popular with the target age range. Twitter activity (direct and indirect) reached over 400,000 people during the period of the concerts.
- e) Feedback from Orchestras Live indicates that the lessons learned from the project are already having a profound effect on their planning and practice for presenting orchestral music to young people.

‘The project also achieved the aim of positively influencing different orchestras’ approaches to providing a first experience of orchestral music to young people which has moved the industry on. Encouraging all orchestra staff to work together and across departments was a rare opportunity for such important CPD’.

Source: Orchestras Live from Project Partners De-brief Meeting:

Source: Royal Philharmonic Orchestra from Project Partners De-brief Meeting:
'Running *First Time Live* over two years and four locations, the RPO was able to refine and develop best practice, not only amongst the orchestral players, but through the professional development this afforded the orchestra management as well. The Orchestra really enjoyed it, especially the second time and it is the closest all the players have been to a Resound project'.

Meeting project objectives

21) ***Introduction:*** The extent to which the project met its aims was evaluated as follows:

22) ***To reach 13,880 young people in 10 locations through concerts and activity:***

- a) ***To achieve an average attendance of 985 primarily Key Stage 3 pupils at each of 8 large-scale concerts and supporting activity in 4 different locations.***
- b) ***To achieve an average attendance of 500 primarily Key Stage 3 pupils at each of 12 mid-scale concerts and supporting activity in 6 different locations.***

23) ***Evaluation:*** Examination of the evidence identified the following:

- a) 11,833 young people from 178 schools attended 20 concerts in ten locations in the course of the project (85.6% of the target figure).
- b) The average attendance figure for the eight large concerts in four locations in the course of the project was 796 (80.8% of the target figure).
- c) The average attendance figure for the 12 mid-scale concerts in six locations in the course of the project was 456 (91.2% of the target figure).

24) ***For all activity to take place in areas of low cultural engagement:***

- a) Based the 'Active People' survey, the percentage of adults in each project locality who attended or participated in an arts event in the previous 12 months is as follows (national average 44.25%):
 - Hull: 35.71%
 - North Lincolnshire: 35.59%
 - Luton: 35.02%
 - Harlow: 36.60%
 - Fenland (March): 34.74%
 - Peterborough: 35.59%
 - Thurrock: 34.05%
 - Doncaster: 31.33%
 - North-East Lincolnshire: 32.45%
 - Mansfield: 34.27%
- b) As one measure of cultural engagement the following percentages of project participants had never previously attended an orchestral concert:
 - Hull: 82%
 - North Lincolnshire: 91%
 - Luton: 70%
 - Harlow: 100%

- Fenland (March): 80%
- Peterborough: 80%
- Thurrock: 90%
- Doncaster: 85%
- Grimsby: 90%
- Mansfield: 80%

25) ***To reach at least 3,200 young people from C2DE households by targeting schools with a high proportion of students coming from these social grades, making up at least 58% of the total participants.***

a) According to the 2011 Census, the percentage of the resident population from C2DE households in each project locality is as follows and averaged 58% in line with the target figure (national average 48%):

- Hull: 66%
- North Lincolnshire: 58%
- Luton: 54%
- Harlow: 54%
- Fenland (March): 60%
- Peterborough: 53%
- Thurrock: 53%
- Doncaster: 60% %
- North-East Lincolnshire: 60%
- Mansfield: 59%

b) Based upon the above percentages, the number of pupils from C2DE households attending in each locality is listed below and totals 6,910 (86.4% of the target):

- Hull: 1,201
- North Lincolnshire: 956
- Luton: 378
- Harlow: 345
- Fenland (March): 386
- Peterborough: 945
- Thurrock: 443
- Doncaster: 691
- Grimsby: 1,049
- Mansfield: 516

26) ***To disseminate examples of best practice across the sector to better inform future orchestral provision for children and young people:*** Information on the project was disseminated at the Orchestras Live conference held at Kings Place in November 2013, as well as in some of its e-bulletins. There is also the likelihood of an OL presentation at the Association of British Orchestras national conference in spring 2015.

Summary and conclusions

- 27) **Measurable achievements:** Project evaluation by definition requires a detached and objective approach to ensure that a balanced assessment is presented. One consequence of this is the reliance on an examination of aims and objectives, outputs and outcomes, raw statistics and numerical headcounts. This evaluation report on the project has duly focused on these measures and has concluded that the project has been a conspicuous success.
- a) 11,833 young people from 178 schools attended 20 concerts in ten culturally under-represented areas.
 - b) Based on an extrapolation of post-concert questionnaire responses, 10,050 (around 85% of the total) had never attended an orchestral concert before.
 - c) An estimated 6,910 of those attending the concerts were drawn from C2DE households.
 - d) 209 Young Producers were engaged at a series of workshops, composing and performing original music and developing organisational, technical and presentational skills. The impact of the Young Producers role was profoundly positive, enhancing self-esteem and self-confidence as well as imparting specific technical and social skills.
 - e) Feedback from schools indicated that collectively only 15% of their students had ever been to an orchestral concert before, but that afterwards more than 75% intend to go to another orchestral concert in the future.
 - f) The work delivered through the projects has been truly ground-breaking in its approach to the promotion and presentation of orchestral music to a very non-traditional audience base.



John K Miles running a workshop session in Luton

- 28) ***Intangible benefits:*** However, to focus solely on conventional measures of success would be to miss the real essence of the project and to assess its real impact it is important to include other less immediately tangible achievements:
- a) Several of the Young Producers in Hull had a range of moderate or specific learning difficulties and some behavioural issues, yet all of them became totally immersed in the project, even picking up ideas for future career paths and as one teacher noted ‘I think this project may be a turning point for him’.
 - b) The pride and sense of achievement exhibited by the Young Producers in overcoming performance nerves and presenting the concerts to their peers, palpably ignited their self-confidence.
 - c) The look of rapt enjoyment on the faces of audience members during the concert performances and the excited buzz of conversation at the end of the events was a clear indication of how positively stimulated they were.
 - d) The genuine enjoyment of the professional musicians and their willingness to embrace the ideas of the Young Producers for on-stage interviews and audience engagement, created a strong sense of their commitment to the concept of the project.
- 29) There are no objective measures of the effectiveness of the achievements above, but highlighting them does at least reflect the true ethos of the project and supplement its more immediately measurable achievements.

Longer-term effects

- 30) The legacy programme already initiated by Orchestras Live in several project venues will help to secure the legacy of the ‘*First Time Live - Youth*’ and will create tangible opportunities for engaging young people in the longer term.
- 31) ‘*First Time Live - Youth*’ has also enabled Orchestras Live to establish new partnerships with several Music Hubs and other local partners which are set to deliver further strategic projects with professional orchestras.
- 32) The involvement of Young Producers and the concert audiences in lively and engaging orchestral performances confounded young people’s preconceptions and generated a huge groundswell of enthusiasm. If the schools’ post-concert survey responses are anything to go by, attendance at future orchestral performances can be expected from the vast majority and by engaging such a young audience, this will hopefully create the habit of a lifetime.
- 33) The impact of the project on the ways in which orchestral music is promoted and presented to young people will also be profound. Both orchestras involved in ‘*First Time Live - Youth*’ have refined their thinking on best practice and this is already being reflected in their respective approaches to project delivery.

Conclusions

- 34) The evaluation of *'First Time Live - Youth'* has concluded that the project has achieved some impressive results. Applying the lessons learnt from the work will enable the roll-out of legacy activities to build upon the initial successes, to achieve lasting benefits and significantly influence best practice in audience development going forward.
- 35) The benefit of the project being a touring format, as opposed to a one-off event, was that there were opportunities to develop and hone the approach in the course of the project. Both orchestras agreed that the ability over many events to develop a successful template which can be adapted to suit the strengths of the local community, schools and partners, was key in the project's success. However, the sheer scale and ambition of the project would not have been possible without such a large Strategic Touring grant.