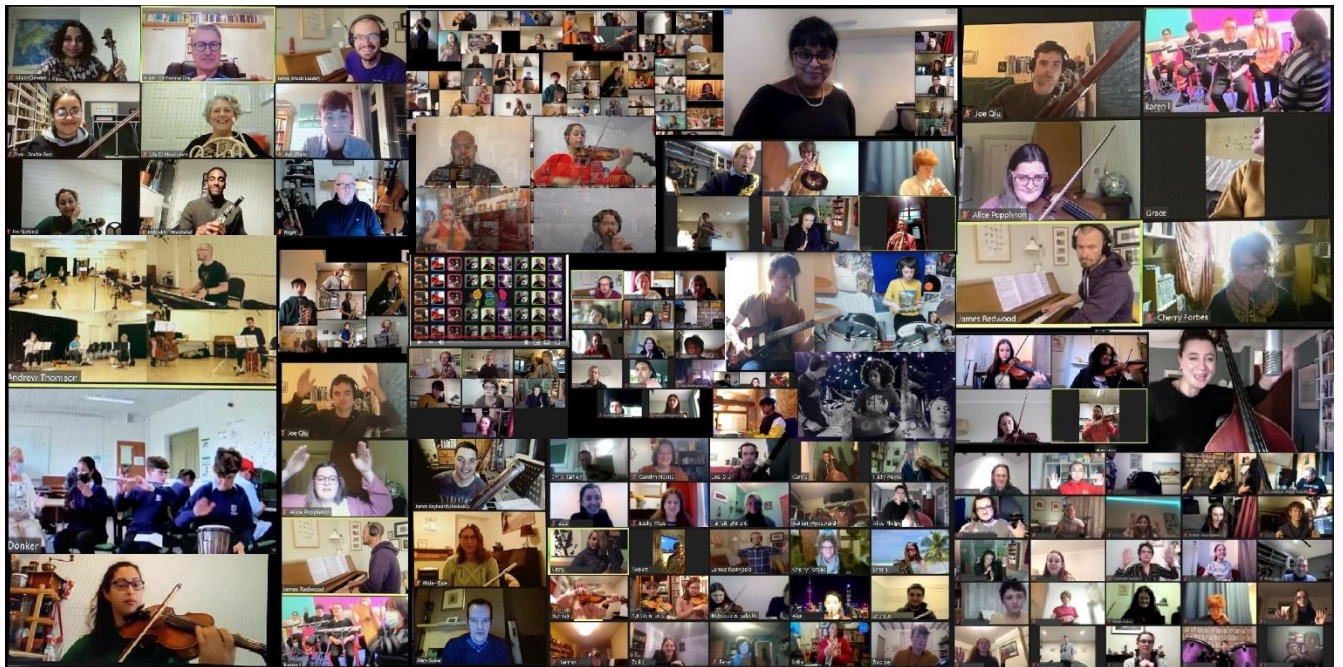


Share Sound ORCHESTRAS *Live*



Virtual inclusive ensembles project Impact Report

Project produced by Orchestras Live in partnership with Cumbria Music Hub, Durham Music Service, Lincolnshire Music Service, Norfolk Music Hub, Inspire Music (Nottinghamshire Music Hub), Suffolk Music Education Hub and Chineke! Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.



The Harold
Hyam Wingate
Foundation



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

Share Sound was conceived in response to a global pandemic. As an organisation with many music education partners, we understood the impact lockdowns would have on young people who were no longer going to be able to meet, to perform or create live music together. We shared concerns about the impact this would have on the mental health of young people and their longer-term musical engagement.

Orchestras Live developed Share Sound to support Music Education Hub partners address this challenge. We devised our first national digital project to enable young musicians to explore the digital creative space for ensemble music-making, composing, and performing with professional orchestras.

It all began with a small idea formed with our long-standing partner Lincolnshire Music Service, who had formed a virtual ensemble shortly after the first lockdown. They wanted to enhance the offer, beyond performing covers of existing music, and develop a new kind of ensemble, one producing original music, multi-genre and composition-led. Through discussions with other Music Hub partners with thriving ensemble programmes, we quickly realised the enormous potential of this idea in supporting them in pivoting their activity to digital.

Share Sound provided a unique opportunity to create new inclusive ensembles which let young people compose, curate, rehearse, perform and record new music digitally. Placing youth voice and co-creation at the heart of the project, we set out to attract a wide range of young musicians including those playing in different genres and from diverse backgrounds who might not previously have been involved in traditional youth ensembles.

The project involved **six music education hub partners, three professional orchestras, six music creators and composers, over 250 young co-creators plus an additional 132 primary school performers, and a professional digital production team**, and culminated in a live broadcast production **viewed by just under 2,000 people**. This was a first for us.

Share Sound brought to the fore Orchestras Live's strategic objectives and partnership principles of inclusivity, co-creation and artistic excellence. We produced a vision for an inclusive ensemble with players of all standards, that could be delivered digitally and, when the regulations allowed, could be blended with live sessions, to run in the 2020-21 academic year.

“ I think that Orchestras Live were able to identify and respond to need at a critical time in the pandemic. To develop the Share Sound project within such a short space of time I believe was down to a few factors which included the high quality partnerships that have evolved between Orchestras Live, Music Service and Hub leads over a course of time, the established relationships and reputation they have with orchestras and music leaders across the country, the experience of delivering a range of great projects within scope, the mutual trust that exists between all of those taking part and, not least, a solutions-focused can-do attitude. ”

Simon Yeo. Cumbria Music Hub

WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO:

Young People

- Sustain ensemble playing during Covid-19 restrictions.
- Attract a diverse range of young musicians, including those with additional needs, who might not have engaged before.
- Support young people's wellbeing and social connections through ensemble activity.
- Represent young people's voice through composing, programming, performance and presentation.

Workforce Development: Orchestras and Music Education Hubs

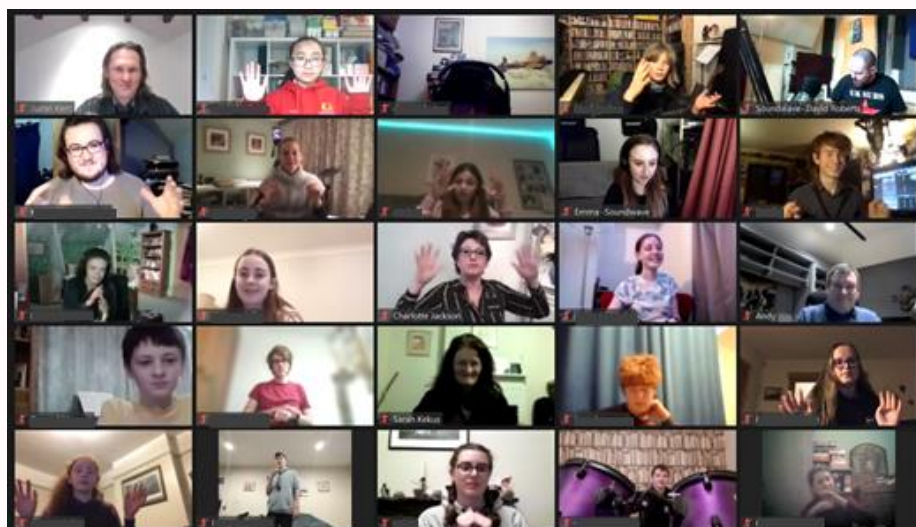
- Test and embed new digital platforms in Music Hub ensemble music-making.
- Develop Music Hub and orchestra practitioner teams through workforce CPD and delivering digitally as an integrated team.
- Establish inclusive multi-genre orchestras, potentially as long-term ensembles for Music Services.

Creativity and Performance

- Develop new co-created pieces of music that are created, performed and presented as digital productions by youth ensembles alongside professional musicians.
- Deliver one new co-created piece of music, performed and presented by all professional musicians delivering the project.
- Produce a large-scale multi-Hub virtual celebration event.

Evaluation and Learning

- Create an area of the OL website dedicated to Share Sound, to support resource sharing across all teams and document the creative process.
- Produce a project evaluation, demonstrating the impact and benefits of inclusive, digital work.



Share
Sound
Cumbria
online
workshop

WHAT WE DID:

Artistic and project delivery

We worked closely with our partner **Music Hubs in Durham and Darlington, Cumbria, Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire** to shape bespoke delivery plans with professional orchestras **Chineke! Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** and the **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**.

Hub managers and tutors recruited and enabled young musicians to take part, facilitating the digital workshops including technical support for the digital productions. A team of music leaders, orchestral players, Music Hub tutors and freelance musicians from other genres supported a series of online creative workshops with the participants in each area.

James Redwood was appointed **Artistic Director** of Share Sound, and led and mentored the artistic teams whilst exploring connections between each Hub area and their creative work. Each Music Hub project had its own identity, structure and timescale and generated an enormous breadth of creative work from the young people.

Each project made a digital production of their work, including new pieces of music created by young people and, in some areas, performances of repertoire they had explored with the orchestras and leaders. James Redwood created the *Share Sound Fantasia* from musical ideas from across the project to unite the six areas in one musical performance that was rooted in the young people's creativity. The *Fantasia* performance video features over 60 orchestral musicians and Hub tutors involved in the project.

All the Hub groups came together for a grand finale in July 2021 alongside a series of live concerts featuring the new pieces.

Learn more about the Share Sound artistic vision from Artistic Director, James Redwood:



Content creation

We employed a Digital Producer to oversee the Hub productions and the virtual Finale broadcast. The Digital Producer also provided useful video resources to support young people with technical tasks of recording audio and video material. Each Hub assembled and edited their own production, with some buying in local expertise to support their team.

Additional digital expertise was engaged including an Audio Producer to ensure consistent audio quality for the productions, and an animator to produce the visuals for *Fantasia*.

The content can be explored through the following links:

Share Sound [Finale Playlist](#)

Share Sound [Bonus Content Playlist](#)

Share Sound [Project Page](#) and [Film](#)

Evaluation

The evaluation process was the most comprehensive we have ever undertaken and provided an opportunity to test longitudinal evaluation, rather than simply post-project evaluation. This dynamic approach to evaluation allowed us to act throughout the project to respond to feedback and make changes and improvements that enhanced participants' overall experience and the overall outcome.

The process included participants, music hub partners and their staff, and the creative delivery teams. We used a range of collection methods including in-the-moment surveys, personal reflection and observation, and informal interviews with participants and the artistic team, some of which were used in a series of 'Tea Break' broadcasts and other social media activity.

As the project was delivered almost entirely online, it was easier to facilitate in-the-moment survey response capture as participants were already in front of a screen and survey links could be distributed immediately via the chat in the Zoom sessions.

The feedback activity was incorporated into the workshop delivery by the Artistic Director and provided in-the-moment reactions that helped the delivery teams more easily modify their approach as the project progressed, rather than having to wait until the end of the project as is often the case.

WHAT WE LEARNT

- A diverse and inclusive approach, involving young people who would have not normally taken part in an orchestral project, produced high quality musical outcomes.

80% of participants said they did something they didn't know they were capable of

The range of music genres and musical styles in the pieces composed by the young people was enabled by the diverse professional teams we engaged. We purposefully set out to work with music leaders, composers and orchestras with diverse musical perspectives and backgrounds.

“ ...because there were so many people with a broad range of genres, they all came together to make one piece and I think that's what made the piece so special because it was a celebration of diversity. ”

Participant

“ ...we each approached the project in very diverse ways and with diverse groups... great to hear each other's music and see the different ensembles and approaches. All inspiring. ”

Cumbria Music Hub



Share Sound Lincolnshire digital production 'First Light'

“ I thought the artistic standards were incredibly high. The recording and audio mixing were unbelievably good in the circumstances. I enjoyed hearing some of the young people introducing their own work. ”

Peer reviewer

88% of participants said the project helped them understand other people's points of view

“ The range and quality of music produced was excellent. There was a great pace to the presentation and the final Fantasia was joyous. ”

Audience feedback

84% of participants said they felt like their contribution mattered

- **The digital format enhanced and levelled the music experience for young people but was challenging to manage effectively.**

Working on Zoom appears to have given a real sense of equality within the groups and there is evidence to suggest that had an impact on the status of participants. It challenged the creative teams to devise new ways of engaging and composing collectively in a digital space. Some things worked, others didn't.

“ We were all the same size, so we all had the same worth. Plus, people could input via Chat which meant that people who might not have had the confidence to speak up in a group could still offer their ideas but in a less exposing way. ”

Artistic Director

Engaging a Digital Producer to manage film production, editing, sound mixing and broadcasting meant that we could ensure a high-quality production for everyone. The learning from this experience for us and our partners has been substantial. We are sharing our experience and knowledge of digital delivery with partners frequently and continuing to learn more and develop our digital work further.

- **Digital delivery methods will enable partners to enhance and extend their offer to young people in the future**

Music Hubs, orchestras and music leaders gained a greater understanding of working digitally and developed new delivery models for their work. The music leader team developed a 'what works digitally' resource to support their future practice. Music Hubs discovered the power of digital to connect with young musicians over wide geographic areas and some are developing a 'blended' offer that will enable them to engage more frequently with young people through a mix of online and live activities.

“

Digital will remain an ongoing aspect of our delivery – whether as online tutorials or workshops as well as using professional performers to enhance our offer.

Lincolnshire Music Service

”

100%

of our music hub partners said they have been able to reach young people they hadn't previously worked with in an ensemble setting

“

I feel the legacy of Share Sound is that we have all explored effective digital learning which can be applied as we move forward, and I know in many areas new projects are emerging as a result. Being involved in a large-scale national project was important and the live sharings were joyous.

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

”

73%

of our partners said their confidence in using digital delivery has increased

- **The project had a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of participants**

There is evidence of the positive impact of the project on the wellbeing of young people and the artistic teams.

“

I feel like lockdown has made us all feel very isolated but coming together in a group just makes you feel like you belong somewhere.

Participant

”

88% of participants said they felt like they could be themselves

“

I have learnt through this project how much I need music to function. Surely I cannot be the only person in this situation, especially with additional needs, so I would be keen to help advocate for a world where music is as readily available as possible to anyone who wants or needs it.

”

OAE Young Artist



Share Sound Durham digital production 'Forged by Fire'

- **Adaptability and peer support enabled musical teams to find practical solutions to issues.**

The project demonstrated the adaptability of composers, Music Hubs, orchestras and musicians, to take to a new medium and deliver high quality work, quickly, in a virtual environment. Doing this whilst experiencing a steep learning curve and ever-changing environment was impressive. It enabled music leaders to work as a team and develop a peer support network and mentoring which is something they wouldn't normally expect on a project.

THE LEGACY

Although Share Sound set out to engage young people digitally, it was always our intention to be able to bring the members of the inclusive ensembles together when restrictions were lifted. The high production values of the co-created pieces have already translated into seven live performances where the young people and professional musicians were able to meet in person as a full ensemble. As we return to meeting and performing together in person, Share Sound will continue to shape future activity:

- Our Music Hub partners are continuing to explore the benefits of digital, offering multi-genre ensembles and giving their young people more opportunities for creative input.
- Collaborative partnerships initiated through Share Sound will continue to develop, including a partnership between Lincolnshire Music Service and Chineke! Orchestra supporting creative composition, and an extension of the partnership between Suffolk special schools and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment to develop parallel inclusive ensembles in Suffolk and London.
- The new co-created pieces are being included in youth orchestra repertoire with more performances planned, and a greater focus by youth ensembles on performing co-created work.
- We will continue to apply our learning and skills to future projects and advocate for blended digital/in-person delivery where this can increase access and inclusion.
- We will continue to champion the diverse talent of the Share Sound Associate Music Leaders discovered through this project.

“

...the only national organisation that could have done all this was Orchestras Live because your organisation would always celebrate the most important element – the children and young people! Amazing! You should all be immensely proud of what you have achieved...

”

Audience feedback from industry partner

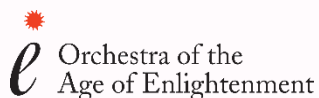
orchestraslive.org.uk/share-sound



Live performance, Share Sound Nottinghamshire © Beth Walsh

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Share Sound was supported by Arts Council England, the Weston Culture Fund (Garfield Weston Foundation), The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation and The Radcliffe Trust. Share Sound Durham was additionally supported by the Scops Arts Trust and the Foyle Foundation.



APPENDIX – PROJECT OVERVIEWS

Cumbria Music Education Hub

Orchestra: Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Associate Music Leader: Yshani Perinpanayagam
Composed and presented music: *Found in Darkness, We Are the Stars*

The creative starting point for the project in Cumbria was based on the County Youth Orchestra's varied repertoire, with the intention to explore cross-genre and fusion writing. With that in mind, Cumbria Music Education Hub and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra brought together a delivery team from a broad range of musical backgrounds with the first planning meeting producing an [eclectic playlist](#) that was shared with participants. The Cumbria project developed an inclusive ensemble, targeting recruitment from the County Youth Orchestra, Cockermouth Music Centre and Soundwave¹ members as well as an open invite to young musicians across the county. With a very strong first creative workshop, the musical direction of the main piece was set by the strength of the ideas from the young people, exploring the concept of emerging from darkness. A *Song of the Week* feature enabled varied musical discussions and with a small group interested in songwriting, they gathered ideas and lyrics that Associate Leader Yshani Perinpanayagam produced as *We are the Stars*, arranged for the RPO musicians to play and the ensemble to sing. The final performance was delayed by pandemic restrictions and the ensemble met in person for the first time in October 2021 for a workshop and performance day.

Durham Music Service (lead partner in Durham & Darlington Music Education Hub)

Orchestra: Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Associate Music Leader: Alice Phelps
Composed and presented music: *Forged by Fire*
Juba Dance from Florence Price's Symphony No. 1.

The Durham project was part of the Virtual Music Centre programme delivered by the Music Service in 2020/21. Participants were from Durham Music Virtual Orchestra and in the autumn term, the orchestra rehearsed Corelli's Christmas Concerto and OAE delivered masterclass coaching on Baroque instruments and techniques. Their performance was produced in house as part of Durham Music Services' online Christmas concert. The Music Service team chose Florence Price's *Juba Dance* from Symphony No. 1 as repertoire to explore, which was produced as a music video. *Juba Dance* was the springboard for the creative process, with Associate Music Leader Alice Phelps creating Juba Jam, a midi track, to support online improvisation. The young people chose a theme of desolation / reconciliation and *Forged by Fire* has a clear programmatic story centred on a Hero character, with conflict ultimately resolved through dance. The young people considered how to write for beginner instrumentalists and created parts for primary school groups to perform with the youth orchestra. OAE delivered a workshop on the piece with each of the 4 primary schools involved. The planned performance on Make Music Day in June 2021, where the ensemble met live for the first time, was adapted due to pandemic restrictions. The orchestra recorded a special livestream performance for the primary schools involved and then performed both pieces to a small live audience at Ushaw College, which was livestreamed to a wider audience.

Lincolnshire Music Service

Orchestra: Chineke! Orchestra
Associate Music Leader: Rosie Bergonzi
Composed and presented music: *First Light*
Dance for *Othello Suite* Samuel Coleridge Taylor.

The young people worked initially with Manchester Video Game Orchestra and recorded and performed [Skyrim as a digital performance](#). The young musicians learnt about composers including Samuel Coleridge Taylor and Florence Price then considered their repertoire choices. They had discussion sessions with Chineke! Orchestra musicians about life as a professional musician and diversity and inclusion more generally. Chineke! Orchestra led sectionals on Coleridge Taylor's *Othello Suite* which the YP have chosen and recorded. The young people were supported by a team of music service tutors and a digital production company. *First Light* was composed over two workshops with the young people supported by James, Rosie, the Chineke musicians and their tutors. In addition, the development of the piece was overseen by a composition 'committee' that the young people formed to refine the piece.

Inspire Music – Nottinghamshire Music Education Hub

Orchestra: Chineke! Orchestra
Associate Music Leader: James B Wilson
Composed and presented music: *Tributaries, Whispers of Hope*

The project focus was purely on exploring and creating new music, capitalising on having a professional composer on the team, through exploring the notion of honouring particular people or things.

James B Wilson's piece *Free-man*, written to honour the activist Dr Paul Stevenson for his part in the Bristol Bus Boycott in 1963, was used to stimulate discussion about starting points for creating new musical material. Ideas emerged and developed into two separate pieces:

- *Tributaries*: fully notated for the entire ensemble, orchestrated by James Redwood.
- *Whispers of Hope*: a collage piece constructed from fragments and motifs recorded by the young people and edited together into a fluid, expressive piece by James Wilson.

These digital productions were combined with other recordings and instrumental repertoire in a live performance by the entire ensemble on stage at the Royal Concert Hall, Nottingham, attended by an invited audience of people connected with the participants. It was the first time the performers met in person after numerous sessions working together online.

Norfolk Music Hub

Orchestra: Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Associate Music Leader: Yshani Perinpanayagam
Composed and presented music: *Phoenix Rising, Bishee Barnabee*

The Norfolk Share Sound Ensemble brought together an exciting mix of traditional orchestral instruments, electric guitars and baritone sax. The dramatic piece created by these young musicians together with the professional team, *Phoenix Rising*, was inspired by the story of the life-cycle of a phoenix, and structured in three distinct notated sections: *Fire, Desolation*, and *Rebirth*. In a parallel strand, Associate Music Leader Yshani Perinpanayagam made a piece from fragments of recorded material contributed by the young musicians, entitled *Bishee Barnabee* – a Norfolk expression for a ladybird.

Suffolk County Music Service

Orchestra: Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
Associate Music Leader: Joe Qiu
Composed and presented music: *Calling Out To You*

Associate Music Leader, Joe Qiu, chose a piece of Baroque repertoire often performed by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE), a movement from the *Concerto a due cori* by Handel, as a starting point for the creative process. Joe and James took Handel's bass line and turned it into the chorus of a song. In response to this chorus, young musicians at three special schools created one new section each, which James arranged for a group of OAE players and an OAE Young Artist to perform alongside the diverse young singers, instrumentalists and percussionists. The final piece, *Calling Out To You*, was recorded and pieced together for the Digital Finale, and performed live when the artistic team visited the schools in person to share and celebrate their work together.