

New Connections

Evaluation Report



New Connections Culmination Concert

Written by

**Kirsty Halliday
Red Sands Arts Management
September 2023**

Table of Contents

	Page
1 Project Overview	1
1.1 Project aims	1
1.2 Who took part in New Connections?	1
1.3 Project outputs – what was delivered?	2
2 Evaluation	3
2.1 Evaluation aims	3
2.2 Evaluation methods	3
3 Findings	4
3.1 Community co-creation: the development of partnerships	4
3.2 Community co-creation: the co-creation of new music	6
3.3 Community co-creation: the impact on participants	11
3.4 Community co-creation: the culmination concert	16
3.5 Community co-creation: what are the key elements of effective co-creative practice in a musical context?	19
3.6 Student skills development	25
3.7 Stakeholder reflections on the project’s design and delivery model	34
4 Conclusions	36
4.1 Community co-creation	36
4.2 Student skills development	38
4.3 The project’s design and delivery model	39
5 Recommendations and considerations for phase 2 of New Connections	41
5.1 Community partnerships	41
5.2 Student skills development	42
5.3 Project design and management	44
Appendix 1 Review of existing literature on community co-creation and collaboration	45
Appendix 2 Evaluation participants	48

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1 Project overview

New Connections was a pilot Knowledge Exchange project designed and delivered in partnership by Orchestras Live and Leeds Conservatoire in spring-summer 2023, as part of a three-year partnership. The project was funded via the Research England (UKRI) Knowledge Exchange programme in support of societal benefit or economic recovery post the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.1 Project aims

New Connections was designed to explore how, through partnership and co-design, the Conservatoire can engage with community groups and trial new ways of creating relevant orchestral experiences while supporting students to develop their creative skills as they enter the profession and build links in their local communities.

The project set out to achieve the following aims.

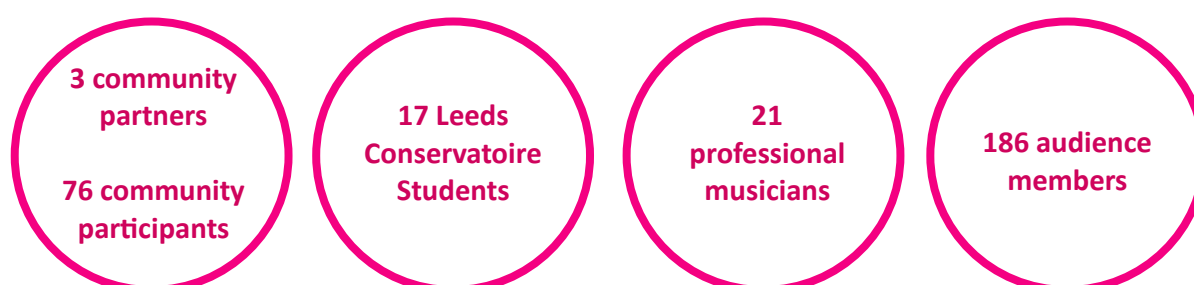
Community co-creation:

- enable the development of new partnerships between community groups and Leeds Conservatoire;
- provide community participants with the opportunity to co-create new music with professional musicians and students;
- provide community participants with the opportunity to perform their music with a professional orchestra in a celebratory public performance;
- evaluate the impact taking part had on community participants and gain an understanding of the key drivers that underpinned the impact;
- explore the key elements of effective co-creative practice in a musical context.

Student skills development:

- support participating students to gain an understanding of the skills needed to effectively co-create music with community participants;
- provide opportunities for students to put into practice the skills they were developing;
- support students to reflect on their skills development and its impact on their employability.

1.2 Who took part in New Connections?



The project was designed and delivered in partnership between Leeds Conservatoire and Orchestras Live, with the project management/producer role shared by Caroline Hallam, Project Manager – Partnerships at Leeds Conservatoire, and Becky West, Regional Producer – North at Orchestras Live.

Artistic direction was led by James Redwood, music leader and composer, and Amina Hussain, music therapist and Principal Flute at Manchester Camerata.

Manchester Camerata musicians Janet Fulton, percussion, and Áine Molines, flute, supported the community workshops. Ben Hudson, bassoon, and Ryan Breen, tuba, took part in the community consultation session and one of the student skills workshops at the start of the project.

The **community partners** were:

- Burley & Woodhead CofE Primary School – a rural primary school in Burley-in-Wharfedale, a village situated to the North West of Leeds. Their Year 5 class took part in New Connections
- Meeting Point – a project delivered by Christ Church Armley Community Projects. Based in Armley, Leeds, Meeting Point provides practical and emotional support for refugees and asylum seekers. Members of their women’s group, who meet weekly on Wednesday afternoons, took part in New Connections.
- Made With Music – a Leeds charity, providing accessible live music for families. Two of their groups were involved in New Connections. Sunshine & Smiles, a music group for young people with Down Syndrome and their parents, and a choir delivered in partnership with Yorkshire Regional Perinatal Mental Health Service.

17 students from Leeds Conservatoire were involved in several strands of the project, as detailed in section 3.6, p.23. Four of the students were involved in creative project delivery with community partners.

Manchester Camerata were the professional orchestral partner.

The culmination concert in June was attended by participants and their family and friends, an invited audience and members of the public.

1.3 Project outputs – what was delivered?



Outlines of the community co-creation and student skills development activities that were delivered can be found in sections 3.2, p.6, and 3.6, p.23.

The final concert, on 23rd June, featured a varied programme, including new music created during the project, performed by Manchester Camerata, Leeds Conservatoire's New Music Ensemble and community participants.

2 Evaluation

This evaluation was carried out by Kirsty Halliday of Red Sand Arts Management, a cultural producer with 19 years' experience designing, delivering and evaluating community engagement projects for a range of clients in the cultural, education and third sectors.

2.1 Evaluation aims

The aims of the evaluation were to measure achievements against the project aims outlined in section 1.2, and to:

- Contribute to Leeds Conservatoire's curriculum development review and contribute to the Conservatoire's Artistic Citizenship and skills for the future thinking;
- Evidence the value of a community-focused approach to co-creation;
- Provide recommendations to help shape year two of the partnership programme.

A light-touch review of existing research around community co-creation and collaboration also took place. An outline can be found in Appendix 1.

2.2 Evaluation methods

A range of evaluation methods and tools were used, including:

- A self-assessed skills audit for students taking part in the community workshops, completed at the beginning and end of the project;
- Feedback forms for students taking part in the initial skills workshops;
- Reflective journals that students were encouraged to complete after each community workshop, plus a final reflective journal summary form;
- Feedback surveys for community participants, audience members and members of Leeds Conservatoire New Music Ensemble;
- Focus group discussions at the end of the project with the lead project artists, participating students and community group leads;
- A discussion with Caroline Hallam, Leeds Conservatoire, and Becky West, Orchestras Live.

In total, 80 people have contributed to the evaluation. A breakdown can be found in Appendix 2.

3 Findings

3.1 Community Co-Creation: the development of partnerships with Leeds Conservatoire

New Connections successfully established partnerships between Leeds Conservatoire and three new community partners: Meeting Point, Burley & Woodhead CofE Primary School and Made With Music.

3.1.1 How were partners identified?

Partners were identified through discussions between Caroline Hallam, Project Manager – Partnerships, tutors on the Conservatoire’s Community Music module and Karen Gourlay, Head of Leeds Junior Conservatoire. They explored how New Connections could provide a vehicle for establishing new partnerships and/or deepening relationships with existing partners.

A connection was made with Meeting Point after tutors noted that students taking the Community Music module had enquired about the possibility of working with refugees and asylum seekers.

The Music Coordinator at Burley & Woodhead Primary School had partnered with the Junior Conservatoire at her previous school and was keen to establish a partnership with Burley & Woodhead. New Connections provided the opportunity to establish this partnership.

Made With Music had recently approached Karen Gourlay, interested in exploring the potential to establish an inclusive ensemble as part of the Junior Conservatoire offer. They were also interested in offering development opportunities to students, with the aim of building capacity in the local community music sector. New Connections offered opportunities to start exploring these ideas.

As well as establishing three new partnerships, the initial research stage also opened conversations with other community groups and schools. There’s potential to explore these new relationships further, through future iterations of New Connections and/or connections with the Conservatoire’s wider offer.

3.1.2 Timeline of establishing partnerships

The timing and duration of New Connections was constrained by the conditions of the funding programme under which the project was delivered. This meant there was a two-month window in which to establish the community partnerships, ahead of the initial consultation session with project artists and participating students in early March. The partnership with Burley & Woodhead Primary was not finalised until early April, meaning they didn’t attend the consultation session.

The community partner leads all gave very positive feedback on New Connections as a whole but noted that the establishment of the project felt rushed. They felt there was a

lack of clarity at the outset around the multiple strands of the programme and their respective aims and objectives, and the roles of all the partners involved. One commented: “Being able to publish the different aims of the project at the outset – without it being too dense – would be useful so we could all be really clear about the different things the project was trying to accommodate.”

Leeds Conservatoire acknowledged it would be useful to have more time to identify and explore potential partnerships in the lead up to future projects. This would allow for more discussion around community partners’ organisational objectives and how the project might help meet them, alongside the aims for the project, and add further value.

It would also allow more opportunities to co-design each group’s engagement with the project, working with group leaders. The project team acknowledged that time constraints meant they had to make some decisions, for example the number and duration of workshop sessions. Community group leads reflected that co-design can be particularly effective in one-to-one partnerships. But they felt bringing multiple partners together to collaborate on co-designing a project can prove more difficult, given the different needs and aims of partner organisations, and the time and resources they have available.

3.1.3 Connections between community partners

The three community partners all met for the first time on the day of the culmination concert and all commented on how much they enjoyed seeing connections being made between their participants.

“I loved the interactions between the young people – it was beautiful to see.”

“One of the things that didn’t become apparent to me until we were all there together was the global aspect, linking these three different groups of people. We came together in isolation and there’s only so much we can do in the confines of a concert hall.”

They all said they would have been interested in exploring potential links between their groups in advance of the final concert, building on the project’s theme of new connections.

This would enable partners and their participants the opportunity to get to know each other and explore how they could potentially link up, both within and outside the project.

Their suggestions as to how this could happen included a Zoom call with community group leads, video messages introducing each of the groups (with a note regarding the sensitivity of sharing images and footage of more vulnerable participants) and a joint rehearsal in the lead up to the performance.

In discussions following the concert, school staff mentioned they were interested in introducing Makaton signing, after pupils asked about it after seeing it used in the concert. Made With Music have offered to help with identifying signs to accompany song lyrics, meaning a connection between the two groups will continue.

3.1.4 Legacy

In focus group discussions at the end of the project, artists and project managers reflected on the importance of considering the legacy of projects involving community partners.

All acknowledged that many pilot projects are built around shorter-term engagement, often due to funding constraints. However, all felt it's still important to consider the potential for continued development of the relationships with community partners and their participants once the initial pilot ends. This was felt to be particularly important when participants have been brought together as a group specifically for the project in question, as with the Meeting Point Women's Group in this project.

The three community partners involved in New Connections have all expressed an interest in working with Leeds Conservatoire and Orchestras Live again in the future. Project managers noted that the potential to further develop these partnerships should form part of the thinking for the next phase of the project.

3.2 Community Co-Creation: the co-creation of new music

The following community co-creation activities took place.

- An initial consultation session in March with students and music leaders.
- Each community group took part in four workshop sessions, led by James or Amina with support from Janet Fulton and Áine Molines and the Leeds Conservatoire students.
- Burley & Woodhead Primary School also held a rehearsal session in the final week of the project, led by Leeds Conservatoire students.

A tailored approach was taken with each of the community groups, taking into account the resources available, the structure and dynamics of the groups and participants' abilities and previous musical experience. This resulted in different levels of co-creation, reflected in each groups' contribution to the culmination concert.

3.2.1 Burley & Woodhead CofE Primary School

New Connections involved the Year 5 class at Burley & Woodhead Primary. 28 children took part. Sessions were led by James Redwood, with support from Áine Molines and the four participating students.



Burley & Woodhead Primary School Rehearsal

Factors influencing the approach included:

- The project team were working in a structured, formal learning environment, with hands-on support from the class teacher;
- Participating pupils all know each other well and are used to collaborating together;
- The school's use of dialogic talking, which encourages pupils to reason, discuss, speculate, argue and explain, rather than simply give the expected answers. This means pupils are used to collaboratively exploring relatively complex themes, putting forward ideas and making space for their peers' ideas and opinions;
- Pupils had previous experience of singing and playing music together.

These combined factors made it possible to create a relatively complex piece of new music in a short time.

The children created a new song 'New Connections', themed around electrical circuits and the fact connections makes us stronger. It has a relatively complex structure and multiple vocal lines. The children wrote the lyrics and contributed melodic ideas and suggestions for dynamics. The song was then arranged for the orchestra by James and performed by the children and the orchestra in the culmination concert. The children were conducted during the performance by Caroline Hallam of Leeds Conservatoire, and two of the participating students.

3.2.2 Made With Music – Sunshine and Smiles

New Connections involved the Saturday morning music group Made With Music regularly deliver with young people and their parents from Sunshine and Smiles (a social group organised by Leeds Down Syndrome Network). Nine young people with Down Syndrome aged 12-16 and 16 parents took part. Two of the sessions were led by James Redwood, and two by Made With Music, with support from Janet Fulton and two of the participating students.

Factors influencing the approach included:

- The project team were working in an informal but structured environment, with a lot of input and support from the two experienced music leaders who lead the group;
- Participants all know each other well and are a friendly and supportive social group;
- The group normally meets on a monthly basis – the timeframe of the project meant they were asked to meet twice in both May and June;
- Sessions normally last 90 minutes. For New Connections, the group met for two hours for two of the project sessions;
- Consistency, familiarity, structure and routine are very important for these young people. Change and new experiences can be challenging;
- The group are used to improvising and jamming together, using tuned and untuned percussion and iPads, within the structure of familiar songs and pieces of music created by Made with Music. They don't have experience of writing songs together, or performing in public.

Group leaders were mindful that this project was introducing a lot of new experiences – working with new people (which had previously proved challenging for some participants), more frequent and longer sessions, performing in public in an unfamiliar venue and performing with an orchestra.

As a result, and in discussions with James, they agreed it was important that the musical content should be built around pieces the group were familiar with. Rather than creating new pieces, James arranged two pieces created by Made With Music and favourites with the group – an instrumental jam, structured to include group music making and improvised solos, and a song, Magical Moon. Its simple, repeated melody lines and lyrics make it easy for participants to ‘copy’ the leader performing the song.

In the concert, young people from Sunshine & Smiles performed with the orchestra, the participating students and project artists, with improvised percussion and iPad solos built into the instrumental piece. This meant the young people had their own voice within the performance, mirroring what they do in their regular sessions and therefore supporting their confidence, and brought to life by the orchestra.

The song was performed by the orchestra and Kathryn Sturman, from Made With Music, with participants, students, project artists and audience members joining in.



Made With Music Workshop

3.2.3 Meeting Point

New Connections engaged Meeting Point’s Women’s Group. 23 women took part, all of whom are refugees or asylum seekers. Sessions were led by Amina Hussain, supported by Áine Molines and two of the participating students.

Factors influencing the approach included:

- The project team were working in an informal, relatively unstructured environment, with some support from volunteers and Meeting Point staff. This support was predominantly in translating and making sure the women understood what was happening, and in providing childcare for the women’s children, who were in another room but often came into the music sessions;
- While the group meet every Wednesday afternoon, attendance and participant numbers fluctuate, due to the challenging personal circumstances of the women who

attend and the informal nature of the group. This meant that some participants only attended one or two sessions, and the group size and dynamic was different each week. It also meant that the women who took part in New Connections were not already firmly established as a group, although there were strong connections between smaller groups of participants;

- Some members of the group had previously taken part in a singing project, but they had no previous experience of making and creating music together;
- The women are from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, with multiple different languages and a range of cultural sensitivities the project team needed to be mindful of;
- Some women had a strong preference for making music while others were more interested in song-writing.

The above factors combined to create a challenging environment in which to co-create new music in such a short timeframe. However, two new pieces were created.

Dancing, Singing, Clapping is a vocal and percussion call and response piece that developed from one participant's enthusiastic drumming. The project artists took that as the starting point and worked with the group to create a structured piece that they performed in the final concert, with Manchester Camerata players joining the percussion responses with hand-held and body percussion.

Around a third of the group also worked with the artists to create Joining Together, a simple song with one repeated verse. The lyrics took as their starting point the group's motto of 'Come and receive, come and connect, come and give' and reflected the women's sense of understanding, acceptance, connection and coming together in celebration. The song was arranged by Christian Blandford, one of the participating students, and performed in the final concert by the women who wrote the song and Chloe Rigby, one of the participating students, accompanied by the orchestra with Christian on piano. The song lyrics were translated into Farsi and Kurdish and projected on stage, so the women's family members in the audience could understand what was being sung.



Meeting Point Workshop

3.2.4 Community participants' ownership of the music created

In conversations with the community group leaders, and in feedback from participants, it's clear all three groups feel a strong sense of ownership of the pieces they created and

performed in the concert. The factors that influenced this sense of ownership are explored in more detail in 3.5, p.18.

Burley & Woodhead Primary School:

The children from Burley & Woodhead have performed their song for the rest of the school, and staff are planning on teaching it to the whole school at the start of the Autumn term 'as an anthem to new beginnings'.

As noted in 3.3.2, p.10, several of the children fed back that they felt included because their ideas were listened to, they were encouraged to ask questions and they felt everyone in the class made a contribution to the song.

School staff reflected: "The children own that song, definitely. They identify that it's their song that they wrote together. [*when working on the lyrics and melody*] we could make decisions that didn't necessarily impact the whole piece but the children now identify 'that's my bit!'"

Made With Music – Sunshine & Smiles:

While Made With Music's participants' contribution centred around the adaptation of music the group were already familiar with, group leaders noted that the process of selecting and adapting pieces was very much a collaboration between themselves and James.

"Creatively we felt there was contribution from us – it's really important for our group that we're able to make decisions and we definitely felt our voice was heard."

Meeting Point:

The women from Meeting Point have taught their song to other group members, and now sing it together on a regular basis, with the group leader noting: "They love it that they can sing what you helped create without accompaniment!"

Feedback from the women in the weeks following the concert included:

"The words that were put into the music were just how we feel about our group. It was so genuine and I won't ever forget it all."

"For weeks, the words keep going around in my head and making me feel happy."



3.3 Community Co-Creation: the impact on participants

3.3.1 How did participants rate their experience?

Participants were asked to rate their experience of taking part in New Connections in anonymous, accessible surveys, completed immediately after the culmination concert. 46% of participants completed a survey.

They were asked to rate how much they agreed with the following statements, using a sliding scale, where 0 = not at all and 10 = completely. They gave average scores of:

- 10 out of 10 for 'I had a good time'
- 10 out of 10 for 'I would take part in something like this again'
- 9.5 out of 10 for 'It made me feel welcome and included'
- 9.4 out of 10 for 'It helped me feel part of the community'
- 9.3 out of 10 for 'It made me feel more confident about doing new things'
- 9.2 out of 10 for 'It had a positive impact on my mental wellbeing'
- 8.9 out of 10 for 'I did something I didn't know I was capable of'

When asked to rate their overall experience of the project, 93.3% selected 'very good' and 6.7% 'good'. There were no neutral or negative scores. **This, combined with the consistently high ratings for the statements above, indicates that New Connections was very successful in providing a positive experience for community participants.**

Participants were asked to describe their experience of the project in three words. Their responses, as seen in this word cloud, were overwhelmingly positive. With the exception of 'hard' (which was accompanied by 'fun' and 'amazing' by the participant in question, suggesting they'd enjoyed the experience but some elements had challenged them). The prominence of words including 'fun', 'amazing' and 'exciting' **reinforces the fact that New Connections provided a fun, engaging, enriching experience that provided positive outcomes for participants.**



3.3.2 Inclusion and a sense of belonging

Participants were invited to explain how the project made them feel included and how it helped them feel part of their community.

Some of the school children reflected on the process of creating new music, noting **the importance of being encouraged to contribute ideas and seeing their ideas included in the final piece.** Their comments included:

“When I gave ideas they were included”

“I thought that I was a great contributor and that I made a difference to the song.”

“I felt included because they were letting me ask questions which I usually don’t get to do with other visitors”

Other participants reflected on the culmination concert, commenting on the **positive experience of coming together and performing with other groups, the new songs created by participants and the safe, inclusive environment created:**

“I felt like every group was included and unified :) ” “It made me feel a part of everything”

“I felt included because we all sang as a group with other groups as well”

“We sing together as a group and I felt really included”

“Songs were inclusive and lyrics were meaningful” “I felt included and safe.”

3.3.3 Mental wellbeing

Participants were invited to explain how they felt taking part had impacted their mental wellbeing. The following common themes emerged.

Enjoying coming together and performing with other people:

“I love doing things that involve music and with my class.”

“New people and people make me feel really good. This was great.”

“We were brought together to sing our hearts out.”

A sense of achievement and confidence in their abilities:

“I’m now a lot happier and believe I can do a lot more than I thought.”

“It made me feel confident to get up and do my best.”

“It made me think I should do it again and start an instrument.”

“It was fun and exciting and made me believe”

The way performing made them feel:

“It feels good playing with an orchestra.” “I feel inspired and I want to do it again :)”

“It made me feel energised.” “It was really relaxing, loved it!”

“I paused and enjoyed fun with my son.” ““Made me feel a part of something SPECIAL :)”

“I loved playing the iPad and dancing to all the lovely music.”

“Beautiful evening. Connected by the ❤️!”

The opportunity to perform in front of family members:

“I loved this opportunity to make our parents proud”

“It was so special to be part of it, to have my family there to see me doing something special.”

3.3.4 The experience of performing with a professional orchestra

Several participants commented on the experience of performing with and watching a professional orchestra, both in their feedback forms and in feedback received by group leaders following the concert. Their comments included:

“Orchestra were great and inclusive”

“It was the first time that I have been in an orchestras live in the UK. Everything went so good and I had a beautiful time”

“L is living on cloud 9 and high as a kite. He’s going through every video [captured by parents during the concert] dancing and singing every song. Planning a trip to see the Camerata orchestra now! You have fulfilled one of L’s dreams to be with an orchestra!! He’s spent years watching them on his iPad! My dream too, to be beside all those amazing people and instruments too. Thanks so much.”

“There are no words to describe the experience of playing live with an orchestra - it is a memory that I will never forget.”

“It was inspiring to watch how the instruments all fit together in an orchestra. I play trumpet and if I work hard enough at it, maybe one day I will play with an orchestra.”

“It felt amazing that the orchestra had learnt our song and were playing it to accompany us. It gave us so much energy and made us feel electric. It was like we had our own personal orchestra.”

This was echoed in feedback from one of the music leaders who worked on the project, who said: “The joy on the school children’s faces when they walked into the room was wonderful to see. They were so delighted to be there in such close proximity to an orchestra; the chance to walk through those doors and work in that way with a professional ensemble was amazing.”

This indicates that the involvement of a professional orchestra significantly enhanced and deepened the positive impact for participants.

3.4.2 Reflections from community group leaders

The community group leaders reflected on the impact on their participants in a focus group discussion three weeks after the concert. **Their feedback indicates that while there are common outcomes across all three groups (such as increased confidence and improvement in communication and team-working skills), the tailored approaches created for each group by the project team also enabled outcomes specific to that group of participants.**

Burley & Woodhead Primary School:

- The school delivers the curriculum through six 'Me' areas: global me, learning me, safe me, collaborative me, creative me and healthy me. **School staff felt New Connections touched on all of these.**
- Through the collaborative song-writing process, **staff observed pupils making big strides in terms of their ability to communicate, lead with ideas, orchestrate ideas, negotiate and back down when they needed to.**
- **Staff have also observed a change in pupils' motivation for learning an instrument and performing,** noting "There's a big difference between playing because your parents say you should learn an instrument, and buzzing off playing with other people and identifying as a musician." Four children who didn't previously identify as musicians have since performed at a musical soiree held at the school.

Made With Music:

- Group leaders were pleasantly surprised at **how well their group responded to new leaders**, noting: "To have five new people come in and for everyone to just get on with it and actively enjoy performing was a real thrill for us to see as it's taken a long time to get to that point."
- The Sunshine & Smiles group is very much about the **whole family engaging as a unit. Made With Music felt New Connections reinforced that**, and this was appreciated by the parents who took part, who loved performing alongside their children.
- Group leaders noticed **an increase in confidence for all participants**, and noted that **individuals also learned new personal skills**, including listening to others, taking instructions from new people, sharing instruments and sharing turns to improvise.

Meeting Point:

- The group leader was very positive about the groups' enthusiasm and the way individual participants threw themselves into the workshops and the performance. She noted the women can often feel anxious doing anything in public, and can feel very vulnerable due to their personal circumstances. She feels strongly that **taking part has helped the women feel more confident** (using words including 'courageous' and 'brave').
- An entirely unexpected outcome was that some of the women have asked if they can do a pop-up performance of their song around the piano in Leeds station concourse. **This indicates their newfound confidence, alongside perhaps a sense of belonging in the city they now call home.**

- The group leader highlighted the impact New Connections had in terms of bringing the women together as a group. She noted that even though there are good connections within the group, members tend to sit with people who speak their language. Since taking part, there's been a ripple effect of people making a concerted effort to communicate with people they might not previously have spoken to. **New connections have been made between women from different communities, adding another dimension to the project's impact.**
- **Some group members have become more confident in speaking English and improved their English skills** as a result of song-writing and singing in English.
- Some women have told the group leader they **feel more respected** as a result of taking part, especially within their families. One said "my children are so proud of me and they don't say that to me very often, so it felt so good"

The group leader noted that, three weeks after the concert, the women were still talking enthusiastically about their experience. **Their comments reinforce that New Connections had a significant impact in terms of their confidence and self-belief, as well as in helping the women form new connections within the group:**

"This was the best experience we've had to sing and it was so good to be creative and work with professionals who joined us at the Women's Group. They were all so kind and supportive, I feel like they helped me to feel more confident to be in front of other."

"Amina was so kind and talented, she helped me believe in myself. Everyone was right there alongside us. I can't imagine a better project."

"You made me feel special for believing in me and giving me some new experiences and skills. I will always treasure you all."

"This project really helped me feel a part of something big, thank you. It was so special to be part of it, to have my family there to see me doing something special. I have new friends and I have a wonderful experience, thank you."



New Connections Culmination Concert

3.4 Community Co-Creation: culmination concert

New Connections culminated in a concert in The Venue, Leeds Conservatoire's main performance venue.

Manchester Camerata were joined by members of the conservatoire's New Music Collective ensemble, made up of students. They performed a varied programme including works by Béla Bartók, Marc Mellits, Georges Bizet, Damien Harron and Anna Meredith, alongside the new pieces created by project participants, who joined the orchestra on stage to perform. As well as performing their own pieces, members of the Made With Music and Meeting Point groups were also invited to dance on stage to Bizet's Habanera. (This was prompted by Made With Music incorporating this in their sessions with the Sunshine & Smiles group, as a break from music making.)

The concert opened with 'Music Brings Us Together', a song arranged by James Redwood that all three community groups had learned. James, who compered the concert, taught the audience the lyrics, Makaton signs and body percussion sections and they were invited to join in with the ensemble and participants.

3.4.1 The participant experience

Participants' reflections on the concert are included in section 3.3, p.10.

3.4.2 The audience experience

The concert attracted a mixed audience, made up of friends and family of community participants, an invited audience and members of the public. All audience members were invited to complete an anonymous feedback survey at the end of the concert; 15% completed a survey.

29% of respondents had never attended a live orchestral concert before, 17% last attended more than three years ago and 14% in the last two to three years. Of the remaining respondents, 4% had last attended an orchestral concert in the last one to two years and 33% in the last six months. This relatively high proportion of regular attendees reflects the fact that just over a quarter of the audience were invited guests from the orchestral sector and Leeds Conservatoire. It also perhaps reflects that participants' family members, who made up the bulk of the rest of the audience, were focused on meeting participants following the concert, rather than completing surveys. **These figures indicate that the concert was successful in attracting an audience with a range of previous experience of live orchestral performance.**

Audience members were asked to rate how much they agreed with the following statements, using a sliding scale, where 0 = not at all and 10 = completely. Their ratings were largely positive, with average scores of:

- **8.9** out of **10** for 'I had a good time'
- **8.9** out of **10** for 'It provides an important addition to the cultural life of the area'
- **8.9** out of **10** for 'It had a positive impact on my mental wellbeing'

- **8.9** out of **10** for 'It made me feel proud of my community'
- **8.8** out of **10** for 'I would come to something like this again'

Of the seven audience members who had never previously attended an orchestral performance, five scored the highest rating for all questions. The others scored between 0.1 and 1.2 out of 10. **This indicates that the concert was largely successful in providing a positive first experience of live professional orchestral performance.**

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with **people commenting on the quality of the performance, its inclusive nature and audience members' enjoyment in seeing the connections between community participants, the professional musicians and the audience.** Comments included:

"So much more than I expected. So thankful my child got to be a part of something so beautiful."

"Such a wonderful exciting example of working together, celebrating difference, drawing out the hidden in children, seeing real connection between musicians and participating groups and audience."

"Wowwwwwww. What a fantastic concert. It's my first experience with such type. I'm very proud that exist such creative and big hearted people - musicians."

"Lovely to see lots of people from different places, and different ages, finding pleasure in music together"

The only negative comments came from three parents of children from Burley & Woodhead Primary, two of whom had never attended an orchestral performance before and didn't enjoy the repertoire. The third commented:

"Broken Lines was not appropriate for a children's concert and it was clear that a lot of the audience switched off - too long and intense. Burley and Woodhead had to sit too long before taking part - despite the fact that the other groups were allowed to get up and dance and join in. This felt unfair. We did enjoy some of the fun and lively pieces of music. The orchestra were excellent. Couldn't understand what the significance of the Romanian folk songs was to the event."



Burley & Woodhead Primary School Concert Rehearsal

[illegible]

3.4.3 Reflections from community group leaders

“They were blown away by the fact that all these professional people were there to make our song come to life.”

“Talk about cultural capital – this is cultural capital on steroids!”

3.4.4 Reflections from artists and participating students

18

that it was a relaxed performance, with participants able to get up on stage, and that the programme was introduced and explained by a compere. **They agreed it was a very positive way to bring the project to a close, and noted the positive interactions between participants from the three groups.**

Both groups felt the inclusion of the conservatoire's New Music Collective, playing alongside Manchester Camerata, and some of their repertoire meant the programme was perhaps longer and slightly more challenging for new audiences than it might have been.

Students reflected on whether the project's theme of New Connections might have been exploited more in the curation of the orchestral pieces.

Artists noted that the invitation for participants to dance both reduced the amount of time for which younger participants had to sit still and added **another opportunity for creative interaction**, in that participants (and project artists and students, who danced with them) were listening to the orchestra and responding creatively through movement.

Members of the conservatoire's New Music Collective, when asked to reflect on their experience of the concert and their personal highlights, commented on the combination of the more traditional orchestral repertoire with the new co-created pieces and the involvement of community participants in the performance:

"I think the element that made it a great concert was having high quality music and musicians alongside the community outreach work."

"Everyone was very involved in the performance, the co-created music was brilliantly arranged and it was really joyful seeing some of the groups dancing along to the music we were playing, I thought that was a really good idea."

3.5 Community Co-Creation: what are the key elements of effective co-creative practice in a musical context?

In focus group discussion with community group leads and artists, several key elements were highlighted as being effective in enabling co-creation.

3.5.1 Building positive relationships

Building positive relationships – between music leaders and participants, between music leaders and community group leaders, and between participants – is a cornerstone of effective co-creation.

Artists and community group leads all reflected on the importance of a friendly and collaborative approach and the development of open, honest relationships. Without the establishment of positive relationships from the outset, some of the other elements of effective co-creation become difficult to achieve.

Comments from community group leads included:

“They built the trust in a phenomenal way, which is so important for engagement.”

“A lot of it’s down to the people running the project and they were just wonderful – those human relationships come into play in any sort of collaboration and are key to success.”

Supporting participants to build relationships with other members of the group, using icebreakers and activities that encourage and support them to collaborate, is particularly important when working with groups that have been brought together for the project in question.

This was the case with the Meeting Point Women’s Group – while there were pre-existing connections and friendships between small groups of individuals, the group who came together for New Connections had not previously worked together. As noted in 3.3, the group leader felt the way in which New Connections meant people from different communities connected brought a whole new dimension to the project and its impact.

3.5.2 Creating a supportive environment

Starting from a base of positive relationships, it’s also vital to create a supportive environment, where all participants feel able to put forward ideas, ask questions, offer feedback and challenge assumptions. This is particularly important when working with more vulnerable or less confident participants, who might not be used to putting themselves and their ideas forward.

The importance of creating the right environment for collaboration was noted by both community group leads and artists. One community lead noted: “What I really loved was how supportive the musicians were – phenomenal. And the group knew that and really appreciated it. They didn’t feel at all that they were being coerced – they felt they were being supported to do what they wanted.”

Artists reflected on the importance of creating a nurturing environment, where participants feel cared for and are consistently encouraged and supported, with one commenting: “You get the best out of people when you really take care of them and I think we modelled that as much as possible within the constraints of the project. We got an extraordinary amount out of people in a really short space of time.”

3.5.3 Creating space and flexibility to explore participant ideas

Once you’ve created an environment where participants feel able and willing to contribute ideas, **it’s important to build flexibility into the structure of activities and workshops, so there’s room to follow and explore participants’ ideas.**

Artists noted that often during co-creation activities, a participant can make a suggestion that changes the direction of the activity, opens up a new path to explore and potentially leads to the creation of a new piece of music. If the activity’s structure is too rigid to allow the space for this to happen, participants can feel discouraged and become disengaged.

Coupled with this, artists also noted **it's important as a music leader to understand that you can, and often do, learn from participants**. One commented "Every person you encounter opens you up to a different, new experience" and another reflected that this learning happens when you create the space to follow participants' ideas: "If you're going to be willing for the community to teach you then you've got to be willing to change course."

An example of this in action in this project came in the form of the drumming piece created by the women in the Meeting Point group. Its starting point came from one participant picking up a drum and beginning to play – while that might not have been what the music leaders planned at that point in the session, they went with the idea and encouraged others to join in. The result was a dynamic piece that the participants performed with energy and enthusiasm during the final concert, stemming from their ownership of and pride in the music they'd created.

Artists also noted that **effective co-creation involves genuine exchange of ideas between music leaders and participants**. One commented: "I love the exchange element of this work. We're not coming in saying 'we're amazing and you're privileged to work with us', it's more us being able to say 'I was so inspired by your song that I wrote this interlude – what do you think?'"

3.5.4 Lightness of touch and instilling a sense of fun

Lightness of touch and instilling a sense of fun can be highly effective in engaging participants in learning and creating.

This approach, and its effectiveness, was evident in workshops with all three participant groups in New Connections. While mindful of the end goal, of creating new pieces of music, music leaders all skilfully introduced a sense of fun and adventure. Sessions were full of laughter, and song writing and music making activities were introduced and delivered in a way that made them exciting and enjoyable. **This enabled the establishment of positive relationships; the creation of an engaging, collaborative environment; learning and development opportunities for participants; and the space for exploration of participants' ideas.** A member of staff from Burley & Woodhead Primary noted: "The whole project had lightness and a sense of adventure that was really important in helping collaboration across the classroom."



Burley & Woodhead Primary School Workshops. Credit: Becky West

3.5.5 Incorporating elements participants are familiar with

Introducing elements participants are already familiar with, such as familiar songs, pieces of music, games or prompts/instructions, can serve multiple purposes.

They can be effective in engaging participants who were initially reluctant to join in, and in breaking down any barriers participants might perceive between them/their lives and the music leaders. School staff at Burley & Woodhead Primary recalled the moment when Áine played the theme from the Hobbit film in a workshop. “I saw wonder on the face of one of the boys sitting next to her. It was like an epiphany and he was turning to friends and gesturing, as if to say “I know this, we all know this song! We’re all part of her gang!””

They can also be effective in providing the structure and consistency that’s key to enabling some participants to engage, for example young people with learning difficulties. This was modelled very well in the approach taken with the Sunshine & Smiles group. Made With Music leaders noted: “The musicians we worked with took on stuff we’d normally do in our sessions and were really good at using the instructions, prompts and signs we’d normally use, which made it easier for the young people to take instructions.”

3.5.6 Learning from and involving community group leads

Community group leaders usually know their participants well. They understand their needs, abilities, interests, aspirations and any cultural sensitivities that should be considered; know what previous experience they’ve had of activities; and know what support they might need to participate as fully as possible. This is all vital information for music leaders, in helping them create the best environment for co-creation, and in reflecting on and refining activities throughout the project, to ensure participants’ needs continue to be met.

Involving community group leads can also enable knowledge exchange and skills development for everyone involved. For example, artists and project managers noted they’d gained valuable insight into accessibility, in terms of communication and the adaptation of activities, from working with Made With Music.

It’s therefore important that opportunities for conversations between the project team and community group leads are built in to co-creation projects. Ideally this would include consultation in the initial planning stages, so group leaders can feed into the design of the project and its activities, and involving group leaders in post-workshop debrief discussions throughout the project’s duration.

The timing constraints of this project (as detailed in section 3.1.2, p.4) meant community group leaders’ involvement was primarily in the delivery phase, as opposed to the initial project design. However, the involvement of leaders from Made With Music and Meeting Point in a consultation session held as part of the students’ introduction to the project gave students and music leaders some insight into their groups’ abilities, needs and interests.

Leaders of all three groups appreciated being involved in post-workshop discussions, and music leaders acknowledged how useful their input was. In the case of Made With Music (who had previously worked with James Redwood, who led their sessions), both they and

James acknowledged that their existing relationship made it possible for them to have significant input in the design and delivery of workshops. This was felt to be particularly important given there were at times six leaders involved in their workshops, with Made With Music, two project artists and two students.

3.5.7 Duration of the project – allowing enough time for co-creation

Effective co-creation takes time – to build relationships, to create the right environment, to explore ideas and to involve participants in as many key creative decisions as possible. These elements combine to give participants ownership of the music they create.

Artists and participating students expressed some frustration at only having four sessions with each of the community groups, due to the time constraints of the project's funding. While they acknowledged that the groups achieved a lot in a relatively short space of time, and that the project achieved positive outcomes for participants, they were concerned that some creative decisions had to be taken with little or no participant input. For example, they felt participants had limited or no input into the arrangement and orchestration of their pieces for the final performance, and that this could have resulted in them feeling disconnected from their music when hearing it performed by an orchestra.

As noted in section 3.2, p.6, a different approach to co-creation was taken with each of the community groups. Artists and students felt that having more time with the Made With Music and Meeting Point groups could have resulted in the co-creation of more new music.

It's therefore important that as much time as possible is allowed for co-creation when designing projects, taking into consideration the resources, structure, needs and abilities of the groups taking part.

It's worth noting that these concerns were not echoed by community group leads, with the school noting that the duration of the project was ideal for them, in that it could be delivered within a half term. Made With Music acknowledged the decision to adapt existing music, rather than creating new pieces, was in part due to the duration of the project but also due to their participants' needs. Meeting Point felt an incredible amount was achieved in a short space of time.



Meeting Point Workshop

3.5.8 Key skills and attributes for music leaders working in community co-creation

Project artists were asked to reflect, in a focus group discussion at the end of the project, on the key skills and attributes that enable effective co-creation in community settings.

In a wide-ranging discussion, where it was acknowledged that this is a vast area to explore, the following **key skills groups** were identified:

- **Musical skills**, including performance (instrumental and/or vocal, with a note that being able to play a harmony instrument, such as piano/keyboard or guitar, allows you to respond to and incorporate participant ideas quickly when co-creating a melody), composition and improvisation.
- **Communication skills**, with the ability to listen highlighted as being equally, if not more, important as the ability to speak in public, present ideas and communicate a clear framework for the task in hand.
- **Group management skills**, including the ability to organise people in a room, build and manage the group's energy levels, and get participants to focus on the task in hand.
- **Planning skills**, including the ability to create contingency plans for when activities or workshops take an unexpected turn.
- **Time management skills**, including the ability to build in time to decompress and reflect, particularly when switching between different elements of the type of portfolio career that's typical for many professional musicians today.
- **Observational skills**, including the ability to observe when participants might need additional or different support in order to join in, and – importantly - being able to learn on the job, from observing participants and observing the practice of other music leaders and community group leads.
- **Reflective skills**, including the ability to apply insight and join the dots, and being able to reflect on a workshop or activity and assess what went well and what you might do differently in future.

Artists identified the following **key attributes** as being important for musicians working in community settings:

- **Confidence**, both in yourself and as a musician.
- **Being an enabler** - supporting and encouraging people to put forward their ideas and helping them bring them to fruition.
- **Flexibility** and the ability to improvise and change direction in response to a dynamic, changing situation.
- **A love of music** and the desire to share and communicate through the medium you love. One artist noted "Whatever level we were working at on this project, that's what we were all doing."
- **A love of people** and the desire for every participant to have a positive experience. One artist noted: "You need to love people too, because it's *hard* sometimes in these situations and you need to have the ability to treat everyone with as much equality as possible, within the realms of the situation and your abilities."
- **An understanding of and confidence in your personality and delivery style** was noted as being incredibly valuable when working in the community, with the acknowledgement that this can take time to develop.

- **An understanding that when creating music with non-professionals, while everyone won't be performing to the same standard as professional musicians, the co-creation process and its outputs can still be of a very high quality.** Artists noted that an expectation of high standards is rooted in certain aspects of classical music education. And that it's important, when working with non-professionals, to be able to let go of certain elements of that. It's important to be able to relax and know that it's OK that not everything will be performed at an operatic or orchestral standard. And that this doesn't mean the project or performance are of low quality.

It was noted that these skills and attributes take time to develop, and that an effective music leader is constantly learning and developing their practice.

Artists also identified that it's useful and important for musicians working in the community to have a basic understanding of safeguarding for different age groups. They also felt it's important for early career musicians to be provided with information on public liability insurance and other areas to consider if operating as a freelancer.

3.6 Student Skills Development

3.6.1 Student Skills Development – project aims

New Connections had the following aims, in relation to student skills development:

- support participating students to gain an understanding of the skills needed to effectively co-create music with community participants;
- provide opportunities for students to put into practice the skills they were developing;
- support students to reflect on their skills development and its impact on their employability.

3.6.2 Students Skills Development – who took part?

17 Leeds Conservatoire students accessed skills development opportunities throughout the project:

- **Six** students initially signed up to take part in the project and attended the initial skills workshops in March. Four went on to take part in the co-creation workshops with community partners; one attended two sessions with a perinatal mental health family choir, delivered by Made With Music; the sixth student withdrew from the project following the initial skills workshops.
- A further **four** students took part in the Orchestras Live Skills Lab in April.
- **Seven** members of the conservatoire's New Music Collective ensemble took part in a side-by-side rehearsal with Manchester Camerata, and performed alongside them in the culmination concert.

3.6.3 Student Skills Development Outputs – what was delivered?

30 student skills development activities took place:

- Three skills workshops in March for participating students, led by the project's lead artists (focused on an overview of co-creation, workshop leading techniques and co-designing a creative project), plus accompanying resource sheets, created by the artists.
- A consultation session with the community group leads, the project's lead artists and producers, participating students and two Manchester Camerata musicians.
- An Orchestras Live Skills Lab: Music Inspired by Place – 28th April, led by professional singer-songwriter and music leader Abimaro Gunnell and composer Michael Betteridge, focused on how a place can inspire collaborative music-making. This was an open access event, attended by participating students, other students from Leeds Conservatoire and freelance music leaders as part of Orchestras Live's Trainee Music Leader partnership with Spitalfields Music.
- Four workshops with each of the participating community groups in May and June, with pre- and post-workshop discussions with music leaders, participating students, community group leads and a member of the project management team. All four students took part in workshops at Burley & Woodhead School, two took part in sessions with Made With Music's Sunshine & Smiles group and two with the Meeting Point Women's Group.
- Two sessions with Made With Music's perinatal mental health family choir.
- Each student taking part in the community workshops was offered two mentoring sessions with James or Amina and took part in a final group reflection session with James and Amina, following the concert.
- Participating students led a rehearsal with Burley & Woodhead Primary School, supported by Caroline Hallam of Leeds Conservatoire.
- Members of Leeds Conservatoire's New Music Ensemble and project students took part in the side-by-side rehearsal and performance with Manchester Camerata.

In total, there were **80 individual skills development engagements** for Leeds Conservatoire students, plus additional informal mentoring discussions with the students who took part in the community workshops.



Leeds Conservatoire Student Skills Workshop. Credit: Becky West

3.6.4 Student Skills Development – students’ reflections

a. Initial Skills workshops:

Students taking part in the three skills workshops at the start of the project were asked to provide feedback, via an online form. They rated the workshops highly, giving average scores of:

- **4.5** out of **5** for ‘**how much did you enjoy the sessions?**’
- **4.5** out of **5** for ‘**how relevant was it to you as a musician?**’
- **4.25** out of **5** for ‘**how much do you feel you learned?**’

When asked ‘what are the two most surprising or useful things you will take away from these sessions?’, they mentioned being introduced to:

- musical activities and games
- adaptability tools
- concepts around music therapy
- compositional ideas

Their comments included:

“I learned how if you put your mind to it you can have some helpful input into the session, even if you have no experience in the area.”

“Found it surprisingly quick that I was made to feel comfortable with a bunch of essentially strangers, very quick to be made at ease with each other, and has given me tricks and tactics to help others get to know each other as quickly as we all did too.”

When asked if there was anything they found challenging about the sessions, comments included:

“The improv was tricky at first but that was more of a confidence issue and not having a harmony instrument as my principle study.”

“Sometimes it was hard for me to open up creatively.”

“If it wasn't challenging I don't think it would really be collaborative spontaneous composition. Collaborative spontaneous composition is always a bit challenging, that's the beauty of it. I wouldn't have it any other way.”

Their high scores and comments **indicate that the workshops were successful in introducing students to a range of tools, techniques and games used in co-creation in community settings, and to some of the skills and attributes required to be an effective music leader.**

b. Student skills audits:

Students taking part in the community co-creation projects were asked to complete a skills audit form at the beginning and end of the project, outlining key skills and capabilities defined by the project management team (which broadly mirrored the list outlined by project artists, see 3.5.8, p.22). The form asked them to outline previous experience in a range of areas e.g. teaching, and to rate their confidence in a range of skills e.g. public speaking, listening, creating space for people to contribute ideas, planning activities and sessions etc.

The skills audits completed at the start of the project showed the students came to the project with different levels of experience:

- They all had previous experience of teaching, with two having worked in schools
- Two had experience of working in a community setting
- They all had experience of collaborating creatively with other musicians
- All but one had some experience of collaborating creatively with non-professionals
- All but one had some composition experience

Two of the students had taken the Community Music module in their second year and were planning on continuing in their third year.

As with levels of previous experience, the student's ratings of their confidence in different skills areas showed mixed confidence levels coming into the project. The areas where they were least confident, across the board, were:

- Presentation skills/public speaking
- Ability to adapt communication style for different audiences
- Creating space for people to contribute ideas
- Planning activities according to participants' needs/interests
- Making contingency plans

Only one student completed the skills audit at the end of the project. This demonstrated several areas in which their confidence had increased as a result of taking part, including:

- Listening
- Ability to adapt communication style for different audiences
- Ability to adapt activities for different ability levels
- Ability to incorporate ideas from participants during a session/activity
- Planning sessions/lessons/activities

c. Reflections during and after the community co-creation projects:

A reflective journal form was set up, with sections on each of the skills areas outlined in the audit, and examples of how those skills might be called on in community workshops.

Students were encouraged to complete the journal after each workshop, for their own personal reflection, and were asked to submit a final reflective form at the end of the

project, summarising what they'd learned. It's not known whether students used the reflective journals during the project, although they were prompted to do so on a regular basis.

None of the participating students submitted a final reflective form. The majority of students' reflections on their learning, for the purpose of this evaluation, therefore came from a focus group discussion two weeks after the culmination concert.

It should be noted that at the time of the focus group, there was an expectation that the students would all complete the skills audit and final reflection forms, so the discussion focused around their experience of the project and a broad discussion around skills development, rather than drilling down into specific skills sets with each individual student.

The following points emerged in the focus group discussion.

Initial skills workshops:

- All students felt the initial skills workshops in March were a useful broad introduction to the sort of activities that can be useful in community settings.
- However, they all felt the workshops could have been more useful had they and the artists been able to meet the community group leads in advance. This would have enabled the artists to focus on the specific activities, skills and attributes that could be effective in engaging the three different participant groups. It would also have enabled the students to tailor the questions they asked the artists and community group leads, and develop a fuller understanding of the environments they'd be working in.

Project structure and how it supported skills development:

- Students felt that the fact there were only four sessions with each group, all with the end goal of co-creating pieces that could be performed in the final concert, meant there wasn't necessarily the time or space for them to slowly build up skills, reflect on them, then put them into practice. This was mirrored in discussions with the artists (see 3.5.7, p.21).
- Students reflected they were unsure of their role in the co-creation sessions, noting they were both participants, there to learn, and music leaders, supporting session delivery. This was mirrored by artists. Both parties felt greater clarity around the students' role would have helped manage their expectations – some expressed disappointment at not having more opportunity to lead activities or elements of the final performance.
- Students felt they learned the most when given the occasional opportunity to lead activities and put the skills they'd been observing and developing into practice.
- The students involved in workshops with the Made With Music Sunshine & Smiles group felt there was progression in that they went from observing activities in the first session and gradually built up to leading some activities in the final sessions.
- One observed they felt they learned more in the sessions at Burley & Woodhead School, as they were more structured, whereas the project team had to take a more flexible approach in the Meeting Point sessions, where they were responding to the changing dynamics of the group each week.

- One student noted they felt there was an expectation that they would already have the observational/reflective skills in place that would enable them to observe the professional music leaders and automatically pick up on what they could/should do if they were leading the activities themselves. They made it clear they didn't feel it was a bad thing, if their role was more to observe, as opposed to actively leading activities, but felt this could have been made clearer, to manage expectations from the outset.
- There was a 2-month gap between the initial skills workshops and delivery of the first co-creation workshops, due to Easter holidays and partner availability. This left a substantial amount of time between students learning about the co-creation process and being able to observe it in practice in community settings.
- All students appreciated the opportunity to lead the final rehearsal session at Burley & Woodhead Primary, and agreed it went well. However, they would have appreciated more time to prepare for the session, with input from the project artists, so they could assign clear roles and agree who was leading each activity in advance. They also noted it would have been useful for the project artists to be present, to provide feedback at the end of the session.
- All students highly valued the opportunities to talk to the project artists, in formal mentoring sessions, pre- and post-session discussions and more informal chats, for example in the car on the way to and from sessions. They appreciated the opportunity to discuss not just the project, but also more wide-ranging discussions around developing a career as a music leader. They felt the project artists took the time to get to know them as individuals, and really valued this, with one commenting: "You're going into quite a vulnerable place – doing things you haven't done before – so it's important to have someone there in a leadership role who knows more about you as a person and can adapt how they involve you in the session accordingly".
- Students also appreciated having one of the project managers/producers present in the post-session debrief discussions, and the fact they circulated notes afterwards.
- Students noted that the timing of the project meant they were all taking part in end-of-year assessments, including Finals for two of them. They felt this led to additional pressure and conflicting priorities, which impacted their ability to engage fully in the project at times.
- One of the students greatly appreciated the opportunity to orchestrate the song created by the Meeting Point group (they're majoring in composition for film).
- While students struggled to identify specific skills they'd developed through taking part, all felt the project was a valuable experience, in terms of building their confidence, providing insight into working in a range of community settings and having the opportunity to work alongside and learn from experienced music leaders.



Made With Music Workshop

Employability and future careers:

When asked to reflect on whether taking part in New Connections had influenced their thinking about future career plans, all agreed it had opened their eyes to the possibility of working in community settings.

One reflected they were unaware that this kind of work existed as a career option (interestingly, they were one of the students who had taken the Community Music module) and they're now exploring how they can make it part of their career going forward.

Another reflected they'd be interested in more structured teaching work, for example in formal education settings, as opposed to community co-creation, as they don't feel they have the personal attributes and confidence to lead co-creation activities in the community.

Another, who graduated following the project, said they would never have considered working in community music-leading if it hadn't been for this opportunity and they're now applying for community-focused roles.

The final student reflected that while they're unlikely to focus on community music-making in their future career, the project has given them the confidence to say yes to more new opportunities in the future.

The students' reflections indicate the project offered valuable learning opportunities, via the skills workshops and the opportunity to work alongside and observe experienced music leaders. However, they felt its duration and structure did not create many opportunities for them to put their learning into practice.

The fact they struggled to identify which skills they'd learned is perhaps linked to them being used to a formal education environment with clear learning frameworks, regular assessments and structured feedback that enable them to map learning progress and achievements.

d. New Music Collective student feedback:

The conservatoire students who rehearsed and performed alongside Manchester Camerata, as members of the New Music Collective, were asked to complete surveys reflecting on their experience. Two students completed surveys, with their results summarised below:

- Neither had any prior experience of community projects;
- Both strongly agreed that taking part helped them feel part of the community;
- One rated the experience of working with Manchester Camerata as excellent, noting "the Camerata musicians I performed with treated me very much as an equal and I learnt a lot from playing alongside them." The second student gave a more neutral score, noting: "It was very inspiring to watch the Camerata play, although it didn't feel like we were involved with them even in rehearsals altogether, so we didn't get to meet them or feel a part of their performance as much, though a great opportunity to witness a rehearsal."

- One strongly agreed they would like to take part in a project like this again. The other didn't respond to that question;

When asked in what ways taking part had been useful for their own professional development, and whether it had influenced their thinking in relation to community-based co-creation, one commented: "Playing side by side with Manchester Camerata taught me a lot with regards to phrasing and lyrical playing. Making even something seemingly 'simple' to play, sound amazing. And being introduced to the possibilities of collaborations between professional orchestras and community groups. [...] Professional orchestral playing is not a career I've seen as 'for me' or considered as normally I find it more stressful than enjoyable. This concert has changed that for me as I can see myself playing in more orchestras that have a community focus."

The second student noted: "I'd love to be more involved with community music which this experience has confirmed, I would have loved to get to be more involved with the groups themselves too, the songs altogether and with dancing were a highlight. [...] I feel I've got a bit more of an insight in how these projects are lead and managed and know some people I could contact to ask more about."

Their feedback indicates that taking part was a valuable learning experience, with students gaining insight into both professional orchestra practice and the potential for creative collaboration between orchestras and community participants.

3.6.5 Student Skills Development – artists' reflections

In a focus group discussion with the project artists, they were asked to reflect on the key drivers they'd observed during the project that effectively developed students' skills. The following points emerged during the discussion.

- Mirroring the students' feedback, artists felt it would have been useful for them to have met the community group leads ahead of the initial skills workshops, so they could have tailored the exercises around the settings the students would be working in, then invited the community group leads to brief the students.
- Linked to the above, artists reflected on whether it would have been beneficial for students to be able to observe sessions prior to taking part in the community workshops that were focused on co-creating new music.
- With only four sessions with each group, and very different group dynamics and approaches, artists felt it was difficult to make space for the students to lead activities, particularly with the pressure of knowing new music had to be co-created for the final concert. However, they noted there's significant value in simply experiencing and observing this kind of work; what it is and what it can be.
- Linked to the above, and mirroring feedback from the community group leads, artists felt the project was trying to achieve a lot in a short space of time. They felt the removal of one or more elements, for example the final concert, would allow more time for knowledge exchange and skills development, whilst acknowledging the importance of the concert in terms of the impact on participants and the fact it provided a clearly defined end goal for the project.

- Artists also felt it would be important for future projects to consider the capacity within community partners students are placed with. They acknowledged it's useful for students to experience/observe work in different settings but that some settings can be more challenging to work in, especially within a restrictive timeframe, which can impact the time and space available for knowledge exchange and creating opportunities for students to lead.
- Artists noted it could be useful for future projects to create resources that demonstrate the breadth of work that exists in community engagement in the orchestral sector, for example a video or videos of orchestras working in different settings. They felt this could help students get more out of the initial skills workshops, in that they might be able to imagine how they'd use the exercises they were being taught in different settings.
- Another resource suggested by artists was an outline of the skills sets that are helpful for musicians working in the community.
- Artists felt students all developed their reflective skills through taking part, noting that they asked insightful, pertinent questions before and after sessions that demonstrated they were reflecting on participants' needs and abilities, and how best to support their music making. Artists felt there was space within the project's structure, through mentoring sessions, informal discussions and students' participation in post-session debriefs with community leads, to support the development of these skills.
- Linked to the above, artists highlighted the importance of having a mentor, with one commenting: "In an ideal world, everyone would have access to a mentor. In terms of students and projects like this, having someone to offload to, to understand, to talk about a situation you found uncomfortable, challenging, triggering or joyful is very helpful." This mirrors the students' feedback on how valuable they found their 1:1 time with the project artists.
- The importance of building positive, supportive relationships within the project team was highlighted, with one noting: "An inherent part of this work is that your aim is to create a safe space for your participants but that also applies to everyone working alongside you." Artists felt the project created opportunities for these relationships to develop.
- Artists were unanimous in praising students for the intelligence, thoughtfulness, enthusiasm and energy they brought to the project. They also praised the commitment students made to the project, noting it was particularly commendable given the project took place at the end of the academic year, when all participating students had assessments and exams.



Leeds Conservatoire Students delivering
Burley & Woodhead Primary School Rehearsal

Artists' feedback mirrors that of the participating students. They felt the project offered valuable opportunities for students to observe co-creative practice in a range of settings, and for them to reflect on what they'd observed. But the differing needs and resources of the participating groups and the project's structure and duration meant there were limited opportunities for the students to put their learning into practice by leading activities.

3.7 Stakeholder reflections on the project's design and delivery model

Artists, students, community partners and the project management team were asked to reflect on the project's design and delivery model in focus group discussions at the end of the project. The following key themes emerged from discussions, some of which have already been touched on.

3.7.1 Project timing and duration

Stakeholder reflections on the constraints of the timing and duration of the project have been outlined in the following sections:

- 3.1.2 - Timeline of establishing partnerships (community group leads and project managers' reflections), p.4
- 3.5.7 - Duration of the project – allowing enough time for co-creation, p.21
- 3.6.4 - Student skills development – students' reflections; section c, p.27
- 3.6.5 – Student skills development – artists' reflections, p.30

3.7.2 Roles and responsibilities

New Connections was a relatively complex project, involving and serving multiple partners and stakeholders, including:

- Leeds Conservatoire
- Orchestras Live
- Manchester Camerata
- Three community partners and their participants
- Leeds Conservatoire students who took part in the co-creation projects
- Member of Leeds Conservatoire's New Music Collective ensemble

All stakeholders reflected this at times led to lack of clarity around the rationale and aims for each group's involvement, and around roles and responsibilities.

- Artists and students noted that the project managers were very supportive throughout the project and that requests for information or suggestions regarding the project were heard and acted upon. However, they felt that the fact the project management role had to be shared between Leeds Conservatoire and Orchestras Live, with input from Manchester Camerata in the lead up to the concert, at times led to confusion around who to contact with questions, and who was leading on different elements of the project.
- Students' reflections on their role in the community co-creation sessions are included in 3.6.4, p.27.

- Students said they were unclear as to why Manchester Camerata were involved in the final performance, and felt the pressure to co-create pieces that then had to be arranged for professional orchestra created an imbalance between process and product. Manchester Camerata's role in the project, and Orchestras Live's delivery model, had been outlined to students in the initial skills workshops but this was perhaps forgotten because of the gap between initial workshops and project delivery.
- Artists reflected on the fact that, due to availability and the speed at which the project was set up, the two music leaders who provided a supporting role in the community co-creation workshops were not present at the initial skills workshops and community consultation session. Both were present at the final concert, but were performing with Manchester Camerata, as opposed to being in a supporting role with the participants they'd worked with. While they acknowledged it was very positive for participants to see the musicians they'd worked with performing in a professional ensemble, all felt it would have been useful for them to be there as music leaders, rather than performers, and for them to have been involved in the project from the initial skills workshops onwards, to enable consistency in the project's artistic team throughout.

3.7.3 Communication

Linked to the fact there were multiple stakeholders involved, all parties felt project communication was at times overwhelming and confusing.

- Artists and students felt that multiple email chains involving lots of people sometimes led to confusion around who they should respond to and which versions of documents they should be referring to.
- Project managers acknowledged that some communication could perhaps have been streamlined, and that this will be considered in the design of future projects. They also noted it's a key learning point for students embarking on portfolio careers as musicians that there's an expectation you'll effectively manage communication and ensure you're clear on what's expected of you.
- Made With Music noted that to prepare their participants for new situations, they require detailed information as far in advance as possible, and in an accessible format. For example, visual guides to venues they're unfamiliar with. They reflected it would be useful for future projects to have this information prepared in advance. Both Orchestras Live and Leeds Conservatoire acknowledged they learned a great deal from Made With Music in this area, and have shared their access materials with colleagues as an example of best practice. Both organisations are reviewing their approach to access information as a result.
- Community group leads noted that while they felt project communication overall was highly effective and well organised, it would have been useful to discuss preferred communication methods at the outset, e.g. to help manage project communications around part-time working hours.

4 Conclusions

4.1 Community Co-Creation

4.1.1 Partnership development

New Connections succeeded in establishing new partnerships between Leeds Conservatoire and three community partners, all of whom have expressed an interest in working together again in the future. It was also the first partnership project between Leeds Conservatoire and Orchestras Live.

During the development phase of the project, connections were also made with other community groups and schools. There's potential to explore these new relationships further, through future iterations of New Connections and/or connections with the Conservatoire's wider offer.

4.1.2 The co-creation of new music

New Connections succeeded in enabling the co-creation of new music with community participants. And participants felt ownership of and pride in the music they created and performed.

Three new pieces of music were co-created by the project's artistic team and participants from two groups. These were orchestrated for and performed by Manchester Camerata, Leeds Conservatoire's New Music Collective and community participants in a concert at the end of the project.

The third group's involvement in the concert centred around pieces of music they were already familiar with, rather than the co-creation of new music. These pieces were arranged for and performed by the professional ensemble, with participants performing alongside them.



New Connections Culmination Concert

4.1.3 The impact on participants

New Connections succeeded in delivering a fun, engaging, enriching experience that provided a range of positive outcomes for participants, including:

- A sense of belonging to and connection with their local community
- Enjoyment in coming together and performing with other people
- A sense of achievement and increased confidence in their abilities
- The opportunity to perform in front of family members and friends and share a positive experience with them
- The development of creative, musical and communication skills
- Increased motivation for playing and performing music
- Adapting to new situations and new people
- The formation of new, positive relationships with other members of their group

The opportunity to perform with a professional orchestra, in a professional performance venue, significantly enhanced and deepened the positive impact on participants.

4.1.4 Culmination concert

The project's culmination concert succeeded in attracting an audience with a wide range of previous experience of live orchestral performance.

The concert was largely successful in delivering a positive first experience of live professional orchestral performance for audience members attending for the first time. A small minority of audience members did not enjoy the repertoire and felt the concert was too long.

Feedback from a significant majority of audience members highlighted that the concert provided a positive, celebratory experience.

Project artists and participating students agreed the concert was a joyful celebration of participants' achievements and enabled positive connections between participants from the different groups. They also felt the eclectic programme provided a good introduction to a range of orchestral music.

4.1.5 Key elements of effective co-creative practice

Project artists and community group leads identified several key elements as being effective in enabling co-creation, including:

- The establishment of positive relationships
- Creating a supportive, open environment
- Creating space and flexibility to explore participants' ideas
- Enabling genuine exchange of ideas between music leaders and participants
- Lightness of touch and instilling a sense of fun
- Using elements participants are familiar with
- Learning from and involving community group leads
- Allowing enough time for genuine co-creation

4.2 Student Skills Development

4.2.1 Supporting students to gain an understanding of the skills needed to effectively co-create music with community participants

Skills workshops delivered for participating students at the start of the project succeeded in introducing students to a range of tools, techniques and games used in co-creation in community settings, and to some of the skills and attributes required to be an effective music leader. They were rated highly by all who took part.

Students also greatly valued the opportunity to work alongside and observe professional music leaders in the community co-creation sessions, and to discuss their practice and reflect on the project in 1:1 mentoring sessions and informal discussions. The importance and value of these discussions was also highlighted by project artists.

4.2.2 Providing opportunities for students to put into practice the skills they were developing

New Connections was less successful in achieving this outcome. Students felt that the duration and structure of the project, and the nature of the groups they were working with, meant there were limited opportunities for them to put their learning into practice. This was mirrored in feedback from project artists.

They appreciated the opportunity to lead a rehearsal with pupils from Burley & Woodhead School but felt they would have benefited from more time to prepare and from the presence of the project's lead artists, to provide support and feedback.

4.2.3 Supporting students to reflect on their skills development and its impact on their employability

New Connections was less successful in supporting students to reflect on the specific skills they were learning and developing. It did, however, succeed in supporting them to reflect on how their participation in the project might impact their employability.

Participating students all felt the project was a valuable experience, in terms of building their confidence, providing insight into working in a range of community settings and having the opportunity to work alongside and learn from experienced music leaders.

However, they struggled to identify and articulate which skills they'd developed. They would perhaps have benefited from a more structured approach to reflecting on skills development throughout the project. For example, focusing part of the post-workshop debrief sessions on an analysis of the skills they'd observed and put into practice.

All students reflected on the project's impact on their thinking about their future careers. Two are actively exploring how to build community co-creation into their careers; another has expressed an interest in working in more formal, structured music education in future; and the final student, while they don't see community music making as a core element of their future career, acknowledged that the project has given them the confidence to say yes

to more new opportunities in the future. This indicates that the project succeeded in introducing them to the potential of a career involving community music.

Students who performed with the conservatoire's New Music Collective in the final concert have expressed an interest in exploring opportunities to get involved in community co-creation, having witnessed the impact on participants and the potential for collaboration between professional orchestras and community groups. This indicates that, while they were only involved in the performance element of the project, this provided a valuable introduction to the potential for community co-creation in their future careers.

4.3 The project's design and delivery model

4.3.1 Project timing and duration

Stakeholders felt a longer lead time for the development of community partnerships would have enabled:

- More time to explore community partners' objectives and how the project could help meet them, and more partner involvement in the design of project activities;
- Artists to liaise with community group leads ahead of the initial student skills workshops, to enable a more tailored approach to designing workshop content;
- All partners to be fully briefed in advance of and present at the consultation session with the project team and students, allowing for more nuanced, targeted discussions around their participants' needs.

Stakeholders all agreed the timing of the project was not ideal for participating students as they were all undergoing end-of-year assessments throughout the delivery period, meaning additional pressure and conflicting priorities for their time and energy.

4.3.2 Roles and responsibilities

Stakeholders all noted New Connections set out to achieve multiple different aims for several groups of stakeholders, with several reflecting that this meant the project was perhaps trying to achieve too much, for too many stakeholders, in a relatively short amount of time.

They felt this at times led to lack of clarity around the rationale and aims for each group of stakeholders' involvement, and around roles and responsibilities, with key points including:

- The fact that the project management role was shared meant stakeholders were sometimes unsure of who was leading on different elements of the project and who to contact with questions.
- Students were unsure of their role in the co-creation sessions, noting they were both participants, there to learn, and music leaders, supporting session delivery (but very much in a supporting role, as opposed to leading activities). Greater clarity on their role at the outset would have helped manage their expectations regarding how much active music leading they would do, as opposed to supporting the project artists.

- Students felt unclear as to why Manchester Camerata were involved in the final performance, although this had been explained at the beginning of the project. Both students and artists were unclear as to why the conservatoire's New Music Collective were involved in the final performance, side-by-side with the professional orchestra.
- Artists noted the importance of having consistency in the project's team throughout, with the same artists involved in the initial skills sessions, community group consultation, co-creation workshops and in a supporting role for participants in the final performance.
- Community group leads were unsure of the aims of some of the project's multiple elements. They would have appreciated a clear outline of all project aims and objectives, and what it was aiming to accommodate and achieve at the outset.

4.3.3 Communication

Communication was predominantly via email, with multiple people involved in email chains. This sometimes led to confusion around who people should respond to and which versions of documents they should be referring to.

Community partners felt it would have been useful to have the access information required by their participants prepared in advance, and that it would have been helpful to have discussed their own communication preferences at the start of the project.

4.3.4 Legacy

Project managers and artists noted the importance of considering the legacy of projects involving community partners. For example, considering how participants might be supported to continue making music together once the project ends. This was felt to be particularly important when participants have been brought together as a group specifically for the project in question.



Burley & Woodhead Primary School Rehearsal

5 Recommendations and considerations for Phase 2 of New Connections

5.1 Community Partnerships

New Connections successfully established three new community partnerships. Consideration should be given to the potential for further development of the partnerships established in this pilot phase.

Options to consider include:

- **Working with the same partners on another, similar co-creation project.** Positive relationships have already been established and Leeds Conservatoire and Orchestras Live now have an understanding of the resources available in each setting and of the needs, abilities and interests of each group of participants. This model would enable further exploration of the partners' organisational objectives and how the project could help meet them; working with partners to co-design their elements of the project, including the potential to adopt different approaches in phase 2; and exploring the potential for building connections between partners and their participants through the project, so they could continue developing relationships and explore opportunities to work together. It would also potentially create more opportunities for knowledge exchange and skills development, with the project team and community group leaders learning from each other. However, it would limit opportunities to develop more new partnerships through this programme.
- **Exploring pathways for pilot project partners to link into Leeds Conservatoire's wider programme,** for example through co-designing placements for students taking the Community Music module, or linking in with the Junior Conservatoire music education programme for children and young people. This model would see New Connections becoming a vehicle for establishing new community partnerships, as an entry point to a longer-term involvement with the conservatoire and its wider offering. Existing relationships could be sustained and developed, alongside the development of new community partnerships for a phase 2 co-creation project.

Should the decision be taken to develop new community partnerships for Phase 2, project managers should consider:

- **The resources available, the structure of the group and the needs and abilities of participants, in deciding whether it's a suitable environment for a short-term student skills development project.** i.e. is it an environment where students will be able to build up to independently leading sessions/activities? Artists, students and project managers all noted in focus group discussions that a school often provides a structured, well-resourced environment where it's possible to effectively co-create new music in a relatively short time period. Schools are also well connected in their communities, with other schools and community organisations, potentially creating opportunities to work with a school and some of their established partners.

- **Building in time for partners to be more involved in co-designing their groups' participation in the project**, including briefing artists and students prior to workshops starting.
- **Building in time to allow for exploration of partners' organisational aims and objectives and how the project might best meet them, and for knowledge exchange**, with the project team learning from community group leaders and vice-versa.
- **Whether all partners would have the same level of involvement**. For example, one or more partners could be involved in co-creation workshops, others could offer observation opportunities for students, others could be involved in the final concert as performers, without having taken part in co-creation workshops.
- **Potential legacy plans for each partner**. This could include opportunities to get involved in the conservatoire's wider programme, take part in a further phase of the project and/or the development of relationships between participating organisations.

5.2 Student skills development

In the design of the student skills development elements of phase 2 of New Connections, project managers should consider how best to:

- **Provide students with as much information as possible as part of the recruitment process, enabling them to understand the opportunities available, the roles of all partners involved and the rationale and aims for their involvement, and what would be expected of them if they secure a place on the project**. This could be achieved through written resources and/or through offering one or more information and skills sessions as part of the recruitment process. This could open the opportunity out to more students and give them the chance to learn new skills while learning about the project's ambitions and commitments, and gaining an insight into how projects of this nature are developed. Students who continued to be interested after these workshops would be encouraged to apply for the full project.
- **Enable students to experience both a range of different styles of music leading, and music leading in a range of community settings**. Some of this could be enabled via the introduction of more Skills Lab sessions and/or opportunities to observe co-creation workshops in different settings.
- **Provide students with the opportunity to build skills gradually then put these skills into practice within community settings**. For example, through initial skills workshops followed by the chance to observe sessions, reflect on the sessions with the music leaders involved, then work with music leaders and/or producers to design and lead activities in community settings.
- **Support students to reflect on the skills they're developing throughout the project**. A more structured, formal reflective framework would enable students to identify which skills they've observed, and reflect on how they might incorporate them into their own practice, within both the project and the wider context of developing their careers.

Suggestions include focusing part of the debrief discussions following co-creation workshops on the specific skills observed/deployed during the session, with summary notes circulated by a member of the project team; and/or providing a framework for mentoring sessions with project artists, with a section focusing on specific skills. With the latter suggestion, it would be important to retain space in the mentoring sessions for broader reflection and discussion.

- **Create opportunities for project artists and students to get to know each other, to enable the development of positive, open, supportive relationships.** Mentoring sessions, post-workshop debriefs and informal chats, for example when travelling to community settings, were all highlighted by artists and students as being invaluable in this regard.
- **Ensure students complete reflective and evaluation paperwork, to enable measurement of their skills development.** As New Connections was offered as an extra-curricular activity, and the project ended following the end of the academic year, there were challenges in encouraging students to complete the end of project skills audits and reflective forms. One suggestion would be to offer the opportunity as part of the curriculum, for example within the Community Music module, where students could be required to complete paperwork as part of a formal assessment. However, this would restrict the opportunity to students taking that module.
- **Help students gain an understanding of the broad range of skills and attributes required to build a career as a freelance musician.** For example time management, project management and planning skills, plus an overview of areas including safeguarding, insurance and negotiating contracts and schedules. This could be done via the creation of a toolkit, skills workshops and/or focused sessions with project artists or project managers/producers.
- **Involve one or more of the conservatoire's ensembles in the project.** This could take the same approach as phase one, involving them in the culmination concert alongside a professional orchestra, and/or opportunities for them to get involved at an earlier stage. For example, an ensemble could be created specifically for the project, working with community groups on the creation and orchestration of their music. This would enable more skills development opportunities for ensemble members and the potential for a professional ensemble to perform side-by-side with them in the final concert, offering insight into professional orchestral performance.



Meeting Point Workshop

5.3 Project design and management

When designing the next phase of the project, project managers should consider:

- **The potential to build in more research and development time, before launching the recruitment process for students.** This would allow more time to:
 - explore different models and establish a clear focus for the project;
 - develop community partnerships, and co-design each partners' involvement in the project, with community group leaders working alongside project managers and artists;
 - identify clear aims and objectives for each element of the project, so they can be communicated to all stakeholders at the outset; and
 - confirm as many dates as possible, to enable confirmation of artists' availability for all stages of the project, to ensure consistency in the project team throughout; and to support students in planning their involvement in the project around academic and other commitments.
- **The timing of the project**, bearing in mind students' academic commitments and the availability of all partners and key personnel.
- **The duration of the project**, with the aim of ensuring there's sufficient time to:
 - Enable students to build skills, put them into practice and reflect on their learning and its impact on their future employability;
 - Give community participants the time and space they need to co-create, with as much autonomy and ownership as possible.
- **The structure of the project team and how best to ensure clear delineation and communication of the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved.** Considerations should include the structures of both the project management and artistic teams.
- **How best to ensure clear, effective communication throughout the project.** For example, via the use of a platform such as Microsoft Teams, where channels could be established for each element of the project, meaning all messages and documents would be in one place. Linked to this is consideration around creating an access rider, including a section on communication needs and preferences, to be completed by all stakeholders at the start of the project.



Made With Music Workshop

Appendix 1

A review of existing literature on community co-creation and collaboration

While a comprehensive literature review was beyond the scope of this evaluation, the review carried out indicates that there is a limited amount of published research on community co-creation and collaboration in a musical context, particularly in the area of community co-creation with professional orchestral musicians.

The following list summarises the research deemed most relevant, in relation to the co-creation models explored in New Connections. For the purpose of this evaluation, research on the pedagogy of co-creation in the classroom and on co-creation in music therapy settings has been excluded.

1 Musical co-creation with communities:

When Co-Creation meets Art for Social Change: the Street Beats Band, Carpenter, J - chapter in *Co-Creation in Theory and Practice* (pp.173-188), 2020

Abstract: This chapter explores the interface between the concept of Co-Creation and the 'Art for Social Change' movement, taking the case of the Street Beats Band, a community-based percussion band in Vancouver, Canada. Local community members in the band collaborated with professional musicians, to perform a commissioned work at an International Contemporary Music Festival, on 'found object' percussion instruments that had been curated by members of Vancouver's 'binner' community. The chapter illustrates that a Co-Creative process such as the Street Beats Band can empower and build community, as well as confront conventional thinking and trouble received narratives and expectations. [...]. The chapter also highlights the potential tensions and dilemmas that are embedded within a Co-Creation process, due to different visions, interests and inevitable power hierarchies. These issues should be acknowledged, addressed and negotiated by those involved, for Co-Creation to achieve its potential.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351756463_When_Co-Creation_meets_Art_for_Social_Change_the_Street_Beats_Band

Activating a music festival: Extending musical practices by composing with communities, McMichael, A; *International Journal of Community Music*, Vol 16:1, 2023

Abstract: This article explores the motivations, approaches and results that occurred when six composers/musicians devised works of experimental music that involved community participants over six years at the annual classical Tyalgum Music Festival in regional Australia. The main aim of this study was to investigate how this music was shaped by community participation in its creation and performance.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371556535_Activating_a_music_festival_Extending_musical_practices_by_composing_with_communities

Defining and assessing co-artistic co-creation: The Traction Proposal, Matamala, A and Soler-Vilageliu, O – 2021

Abstract. This article presents research developed within the framework of the European project TRACTION, which aims to co-create operas in three different environments incorporating technological elements and with the ultimate objective of generating a social transformation [...] The work contributes to the debate on the concept of co-creation through a thematic analysis of the definitions provided by the different interviewees. Central topics in the thematic analysis of the definitions are: collaboration, participant profile and role, goal and value, origin and development, and ethical and social aspects.

<https://co-art.eu/content/files/Defining-and-assessing-artistic-co-creation-the-Traction-proposal.pdf>

Co Art – reimagining opera with communities and technology: Linked to the above paper, the Co-Art website summarises the Traction project, with links to videos and papers exploring the co-creation process and its impact. <https://co-art.eu/why-co-create-opera>

Resources on the site include the book 'Co-creating opera: Guidance from the Traction project', with a chapter on co-creation:

<https://arestlessart.files.wordpress.com/2023/03/230227-traction-co-creating-opera.pdf>

Opera, devising and community: A creative and pedagogical methodology -Harries, G; *International Journal of Community Music, Vol 13:3, 2020*

Abstract: *Create An Opera!* was a fortnightly devising workshop led by the author at Theatre Delicatessen studios in London in 2017–20. It was free to the general public and attracted participants including both experienced and inexperienced performance practitioners. It aimed to create a safe, inclusive environment for experimentation in writing, composition and collaborative performance. [...] Inspired by the ethos of devised theatre, the workshops created a space for participants to be involved in both creative and performance aspects, working individually and collaboratively. This article presents the pedagogical and creative methodologies informing the delivery of the workshops, focusing on inclusion, collaboration and independent creativity.

https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/ijcm_00027_1

A Space for Making: Collaborative composition as social participation – Hart, A and Williams, A – *Organised Sound, Vol., 26 (2), 2021*

Abstract: Music composition is traditionally regarded as an act of individual creation and expression, but can be approached, through the aid of digital platforms, as an activity that encourages learning through social participation. This article describes the development of a tablet-based app, Paynter, intended as a digital graphic interface for group collaborative composition and its experimental use in a primary school in Salford, UK, alongside musicians from the BBC Philharmonic orchestra. The app created a framework for a negotiated language of symbols used by two groups of students at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to tell stories through sound and music. Its functionality enabled compositional thinking to emerge

collectively from groups with relatively little exposure to the idea of composing and little knowledge of traditional notational or digital sequencing technologies. The research is grounded in a theoretical context of constructivist approaches to education.

2 Musical co-creation and wellbeing:

Exploring Wellbeing and Creativity Through Collaborative Composition as Part of Hull 2017 City of Culture, Waddington-Jones, C; King, A; Burnard, P – *Frontiers in Psychology* 2019

Abstract: Several studies have highlighted the positive effects of group music-making and have suggested that it may be the creative and social aspects of such activities, which have a positive effect on participants' wellbeing. Collaborative composition offers strong examples of both aspects as participants work together to create new material. However, although it seems likely that participants' influence over and ownership of the creative material contributes to these positive effects, studies have yet to examine these elements in detail. [...] The specific nature of collaborative composition is considered in comparison with other forms of group musical engagement. [...] Analysis of workshop videos and interviews with composers identified various facilitation skills employed by the composers to establish safe creative space and to encourage participants to engage in the process of collaborative composition.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00548/full>

In the Moment with Music: An Exploration of the Embodied and Sensory Experiences of People Living with Dementia During Improvised Music-Making - Dowlen, R; Keady, J; Milligan, C; Swarbrick, C; Ponsillo, N; Geddes, L; Riley, B - *Ageing and Society*, 2021, 1–23.

Abstract: The term 'in the moment' has received growing interest in the context of music programmes for people living with dementia, with music therapists, family carers, health-care professionals and people living with dementia themselves reporting the value of framing musical experiences in the 'here and now'. Although this term is being used more frequently within the literature, there has yet to be a formal examination of such 'in the moment' musical experiences and how they might benefit a person living with dementia. [...] Four thematic observations were developed which captured 'in the moment' musical experiences: *Sharing a life story through music*, *Musical agency 'in the moment'*, *Feeling connected 'in the moment'* and *Musical ripples into everyday life*. These findings showcase the creativity and musical abilities of people living with dementia whilst affirming music as a medium to connect people living with dementia with their own life story, other people and the environments in which music-making takes place.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ageing-and-society/article/in-the-moment-with-music-an-exploration-of-the-embodied-and-sensory-experiences-of-people-living-with-dementia-during-improvised-musicmaking/3A2AD776F64CCBC9393A566A491A1AB8>

3 Co-creation in a broader cultural context

Future Trends: Reasons to co-create – Kaszynska, P; Anzel, A; Rolls, C – *published as part of the Future Trends series, a Warwick UK Cities of Culture project by the University of Warwick, 2023*

Abstract: Co-creating is difficult, so why do it? Co-creation is a popular term, but the outcomes of co-creative practices and the reasons for doing it—the justifying whys—are poorly understood. This is a problem because, arguably, the value of co-creation cannot be understood independently of the reasons for which people co-create. We suggest that the value of co-creation is best understood in terms of what makes co-creation meaningful to those who participate and that it is best evaluated in accordance with the objectives reflecting these reasons: – the whys of co-creation described in this paper.

<https://www.culturehive.co.uk/resources/future-trends-reasons-to-co-create/>

Considering co-creation – Heart of Glass and Battersea Arts Centre, 2022

Abstract: Discover what co-creation means, how it can help you actively listen to and collaborate with the local community and form new partnerships as well as helpful insight on putting it into practice.

<https://www.culturehive.co.uk/resources/considering-co-creation/>

Appendix 2

Evaluation participants

80 people have contributed to this evaluation:

- 35 Community participants (46% of participants) completed evaluation surveys
- 4 community group leaders took part in a focus group discussion at the end of the project
- 4 project artists took part in a focus group discussion at the end of the project
- 5 Leeds Conservatoire students completed skills audits at the start of the project and evaluation surveys following the initial skills workshops; 4 of these students took part in a focus group discussion at the end of the project
- 2 project managers took part in a focus group discussion at the end of the project
- 2 members of Leeds Conservatoire's New Music Collective ensemble completed evaluation surveys
- 28 audience members (15% of the audience at the culmination concert) completed evaluation surveys