



ORCHESTRAS *Live*



CITY OF
LONDON
SINFONIA

Chelmsford First Time Live:
The Violin
(Chelmsford Remembers Them)
November 2018



Photo © Stuart Bruce

Evaluation Report by Orchestras Live



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

The Violin: Chelmsford First Time Live IV

Between October and November 2018, 98 students at five schools in Chelmsford collaborated with composer John K Miles and City of London Sinfonia (CLS), one of Britain's leading professional chamber orchestras, on this youth-led project co-produced by Orchestras Live, Essex Music Services and Chelmsford City Council.

The concept of 'First Time Live' is to enable young people to have a significant stake in creating an event with a professional orchestra. The Violin (Chelmsford First Time Live IV) built upon the successful initial project held with three Chelmsford schools in early 2016, and subsequent iterations of the project which took place in spring and autumn 2017.

Through a series of workshops, young people from Chelmsford County High Schools for Girls, The Boswells School, Great Baddow High School, Hylands School and The Sandon School developed musical ideas with composer John K Miles. These ideas influenced an orchestral score entitled *The Violin* composed by John, enabling all the young participants to perform alongside the CLS orchestra in a culmination concert at Chelmsford Cathedral on 7 November 2018 as part of the *Chelmsford Remembers Them* anniversary.

The Violin musically describes the story of Private Albert Burchell and his violin travelling to the Front Line in the Great War, surviving battles and ultimately returning home to look forward to future peace. The actual violin owned by Private Burchell was borrowed from the Essex Regiment Museum and performed in the new piece by a young musician from Chelmsford. The concert also included poetry readings by entrants to the 2018 Chelmsford Festival of Ideas' *Poetry Peace* Competition, and CLS performed music from wartime composers including Holst, Vaughan Williams and George Butterworth.

As well as performing, some students introduced the orchestral items and interviewed CLS players during the concert, gaining further music industry experience through working with professional managers and musicians from the orchestra.

This project formed part of Orchestras Live's national programme of youth-led orchestral projects under the title of **First Time Live**, which has seen similar projects delivered by CLS in Harlow, Luton and elsewhere. First Time Live aims to give 10 to 14 year-olds, who have had little access to live orchestral music, a unique opportunity to compose and perform with a professional orchestra as well as helping to produce the entire project.

“

This cherished violin not only came home from the trenches as a soldier's memento, but also survived World War Two when my grandfather lost not one but two homes during the Blitz. My parents, my sister Adele and my children all feel so proud and very honoured that time and money was spent on restoring Albert's violin to be played at such a poignant centenary Remembrance concert. We are so thrilled that this small battered and scratched instrument not only survived, but will be heard again after one hundred years. We are looking forward to honouring his memory with this small but important piece of our country's history.

Alan, Private Burchell's grandson

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PROJECT AIMS

- To provide inspirational experiences of live orchestral music for many young people in Chelmsford.
- To contribute newly created music and orchestral repertoire to a high-profile concert marking the World War 1 centenary.
- To leave a legacy of creative music-making, encouraging uptake into the ongoing pan-school creative youth ensemble.
- To raise the profile and status of music-making amongst young people and their parents/carers.
- To encourage more young people to take up or pursue instrumental music-making at school and, where appropriate, engage with music school and youth ensemble opportunities offered by Essex Music Services.
- To encourage greater communication and collaboration between Chelmsford schools regarding musical opportunities for their students.



Private Burchell's violin

PROJECT THEME



Regarding collaboration, this project was slightly different from previous First Time Live projects, due to the particular sensitivities of the focus on remembrance and the expectations for the final concert.

I therefore used the creative sessions to mirror the process of material generation and connect participants to the repertoire, with a modal approach to melodic composition. This was directly inspired by the Butterworth and Williams.

In the end the commission was a response to this creative process, rather than a direct inclusion of material. The same can be said of the libretto. Although there are words and snippets taken from the participants' work, it is more a summation of the ideas we generated and discussed, rather than direct reference.

The collaborative process was still very organic but was focussed on connecting the commission to the repertoire and subject matter, whilst giving an insight into compositional process. The melody for the third section, 'Homecoming', was originally written in response to work in a hospice where the main topic of conversation was wartime experience.

John K Miles, composer and workshop leader





We are delighted that one of our most interesting museum exhibits is being brought back to life in a way that reminds all of us alive today of the sacrifices made by so many who have fought for our freedom over the years.



Major Peter Williamson, Chairman of Trustees of the Essex Regiment Museum

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Outcomes for young people:

- Enhanced technical skills in instrumental performance.
- Inspiration to take part in creative music-making and continue instrumental music-making.
- Positive attitudes amongst participants about the project and their own role in it.
- Increased awareness/appreciation of orchestral music.
- Increased awareness of careers paths for young people with an aspiration to take up music.

Outcomes for schools, the community and wider partnerships:

- Increased profile for GCSE music and instrumental teaching.
- Increased demand for the legacy ensemble.
- Increased communication and collaboration between schools.
- Classical music and orchestral instruments demystified for parents attending the concert.
- Further development of skills and experience of CLS musicians in their work with diverse young musicians.
- Strengthened partnership between Orchestras Live, City of London Sinfonia, Essex Music Services and Chelmsford City Council.

PARTNERSHIP

This project was produced by Orchestras Live and Essex Music Services in partnership with Essex Music Education Hub, Essex County Cultural Development, Chelmsford City Council and Arts Council England. The total artistic costs of the project amounted to £22,260, which was met by Essex Music Education Hub, Essex Council Cultural Development, Chelmsford City Council and Orchestras Live.



I loved the range of differentiation within the participants, from beginner to grade 7/8. The age range was also nice. Both these factors gave an opportunity for positive peer learning. It was a genuine privilege to be part of such a memorable event, at the heart of a community, with musicians ranging from beginner to top flight professional.



John K Miles, composer and workshop leader

CONCERT PROGRAMME

Welcome, Malcolm Noble from the Civic Society

Vaughan Williams, *The Lark Ascending* (introduced by students from The Boswells School)

Ravel, *Prelude de Tombeau de Couperin* (introduced by students from The Sandon School)

Debussy, *Syrinx* (introduced by students from Great Baddow High School)

Butterworth, *The Banks of Green Willow* (introduced by students from CCHS)

Holst, *Jupiter the Bringer of Jollity* (introduced by students from Hylands School)

Why? Poem written and read by Annie Gill

Elgar, *Sospiri*

The Violin (introduced by John K Miles)

Peace, poem written and read by Joely Lee

Communal act of commemoration (*The Violin* reprise)

PROJECT TEAM

John K Miles – Composer and workshop leader

Fiona Lambert – Director of Participation, City of London Sinfonia

Fiona Johnstone – Participation Projects Manager, City of London Sinfonia

Stuart Bruce – Partnership Manager, Orchestras Live

Peter Lovell – Schools Curriculum Standards & Development Lead Officer, Essex Music Services

Marc De'ath – Cultural Partnerships Co-ordinator, Chelmsford City Council

Chris Lamberti – Director of Music, Chelmsford County High

Rachael Evans – Music Teacher, Great Baddow High School

Sarah Johnson – Music Teacher, The Sandon School

Daniel Hardaker – Music Teacher, Boswells School

Kim Adams-Howell – Head of Music, The Hylands School

FEEDBACK

Feedback from participants

“I really enjoyed the workshops held in our school, particularly the people who came to talk to us such as John and the members from CLS. They were really enthusiastic and amazing musicians, they taught us so much and made the whole experience really enjoyable.”

On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate the concert overall?

9

"I particularly enjoyed the tasks where we had to compose a short piece of music or added words to a melody. Overall, I found the workshops really fun and interactive."

"At first, I thought that it was too advanced for me, however as the workshops went on, I realised that I could play and that it was not as difficult as I thought. I really enjoyed actually playing the pieces because I loved the actual sound of the music coming together."



Photo © Stuart Bruce

Feedback from music teachers

"I felt the students were able to develop their composition skills through understanding the ultimate brief of remembrance. This was a fairly unique project as students typically do not get such a prescribed brief at year 9. It really allowed them to shine as they were quite able performers. It also developed their ensemble skills through playing alongside each other and also working with CLS. My Head Teacher also really loved the evening and has commented in whole school assemblies and at a staff meeting how good it was."
(Chris Lamberti, teacher at Chelmsford County High School for Girls)

Feedback from audiences

"This was a wonderful way to remember those in the First World War, serving and supporting the armed forces and their families left at home. Thanks to all involved."
(Cllr Yvonne Spence, Mayor of Chelmsford)

“This evening was a very beautiful commemoration and particularly poignant to have the violin there and played. John is excellent and The Violin a very effective piece... I really thought it was excellent.”

(Harry McIver, Arts Council England)

Feedback from John K Miles

“Generally the workshop structure worked for me. It’s a model that has evolved over the last few projects, which feels like a good fit for the expected outcomes. There’s always room for extra workshops, especially considering the presentation aspect of the project. The presentations themselves felt fine, but were by necessity of time very light touch.

In terms of process, more time for listening and group discussion would have been beneficial to students and their development of contextual understanding (and enjoyment). In an ideal world it would also have been great to have an all school rehearsal/workshop ahead of the concert day.

Logistically it would have been brilliant to have more notice for confirmation of the project, and to an extent we were playing catch up, particularly with choosing concert repertoire. This did impact on the workshops, but I’m guessing that sometimes there’s no way round these things! The issues around the sensitive subject matter also impacted on repertoire and if we’d been able to plan further in advance, we could have perhaps discussed these issues more deeply at the planning meeting.

All things considered it felt like a highly successful project. I loved the range of differentiation within the participants, from beginner to grade 7/8. The age range was also nice. Both these factors gave an opportunity for positive peer learning.

CLS played brilliantly on the day and I think (hope) we succeeded in organising the forces so that the 13-piece wasn’t overwhelmed by the 100-odd participants! Their presence at the workshops was invaluable and considering the resources felt like the best use of their time.

I hope that young people walk away from these projects feeling inspired, connected to the work, and with an increased confidence to engage with the orchestral sound world and its myriad reference points. It’s particularly great to build continuity with Hubs where there is a tangible and visible pathway for participants to continue their musical journeys effectively post project.”



The performance in Chelmsford Cathedral

Feedback from Essex Music Services (Peter Lovell)

Project objectives achieved	★★★★★
Reached new audiences	YES
Orchestras Live had positive impact on practice	★★★★

“The solo student violinist was selected to be a particularly shy student who had the ability but not the belief in herself – she was very well supported throughout the project, and rose to the occasion superbly on the evening, performing extremely well, and after the concert you could clearly see that she was ‘walking taller’. The sense of achievement that many of the young people spoke about after the event was evidence that this event had impacted on their wellbeing. By its very nature, this project and the event widely engaged the community, and this has been one of the most successful orchestral projects we have ever run for achieving this.”

Feedback from City of London Sinfonia

“I thought it was a very special concert and the culmination of some wonderful work from a lot of people. I loved going in to the schools and seeing the children in context working at the music they had put together. I thought John had a great rapport with the children. It was particularly nice to be so welcomed by the music teachers at the schools and also see them in the concert looking enormously proud of their pupils.”
(CLS musician)

“Fabulous to have the young people introduce the pieces conveying their own feelings about the music.”
(CLS musician)

“I loved working with John K Miles. He has an exceptional rapport with the children and really gets the best from them whatever their musical ability. The piece was skilfully written to incorporate their ideas and to suit this special event. The audience participation in singing the *Homecoming* was a brilliant moment. It felt as though it united the whole community and made a powerful connection to the past and WW1.”
(CLS musician)

“I thought this was a really successful project and the pupils were fantastic, the concert was a really special evening. What a brilliant thing to be a part of and how I would have loved this as a teenager.”
(Fi Johnstone, Participation Projects Manager)

“Aside from some excellent music-making I was particularly impressed with some of the introductions and poetry readings from a group of extremely sensitive and assured young people who found exactly the right tone for the evening.”
(Matthew Swann, Chief Executive)

Feedback from Orchestras Live (Stuart Bruce)

“This was the most complicated First Time Live project we have produced in terms of the range of different partners with their respective requirements, as well as having a reduced budget available to achieve a collaborative process with a large number of participants and an especially high-profile performance. The good will and hard work by the partners over many months ensured numerous hurdles were overcome, and the culmination event was an extremely moving celebration of Chelmsford’s young musicians working in harmony with world class professional artists. The Violin beautifully encapsulated the spirit of contemporary innovation and confidence whilst honouring the sacrifices of a previous generation. It was wonderful that hundreds of people were at the performance to enjoy this unique experience, and was yet another example of the way in which orchestral music can be relevant and inspirational to a broad community.”

LEARNING POINTS

- Aim for more advance confirmation of the project and a greater lead-in time to activity
- Give more clarity on the purpose and content of workshops, with more contribution from the young people in the creative process and the performance
- Aim to have more time for interaction between CLS players and participants
- Ideally have more workshops to support the creative process, including one with all schools together
- Involve a choral director in projects involving participants’ singing
- Apportion adequate time to work and rehearse with participants on presentation
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of the artistic and production partners, including logistics on the concert day
- Review budget management and communication between partners regarding additional costs

LINKS

Orchestras Live www.orchestraslive.org.uk

City of London Sinfonia www.cityoflondonsinfonia.co.uk

Essex Music Hub www.essexmusichub.org.uk

John K Miles www.johnkmiles.com

Find out more about other First Time Live projects via Orchestras Live’s **YouTube** channel www.youtube.com/c/OrchestrasLive

For further information contact Stuart Bruce, Senior Creative Producer
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stuart@orchestraslive.org.uk

Appendix A: The Violin libretto

1. Farewell

We leave behind golden fields flowering,
Lush green grass, swaying gently in the wind.
Waving farewell under bright warm shining sun,
We're on our way,
Sure that we'll be home soon once again.

The seashore is glistening, shimmering, sparkling,
From the reflection of sunbeams.
Sailing away from the white cliffs of home,
Will we ever awake from this deep deep dream?

Listening to the gulls as they fly by,
Looking ahead to where the sea meets bright blue sky,
We're on our way,
Sure that we'll be home soon once again.

The seashore is glistening, shimmering, sparkling,
From the reflection of sunbeams.
Sailing away from the white cliffs of home,
Will we ever awake from this deep deep dream?

No one can tell us what we find there. When we will fight?
We await our fate like leaves on the wind.
We've heard the tales of honour and glory. Day turns to night,
Till tomorrow waiting to see what it brings.

I can hear guns fired with pride,
Thunder that rolls through the sky.
Comrades together side by side
Silent and frozen like ice.

Repeat first three stanzas

2. Battle

Drawing closer the final moments,
We're starting down the barrel of a gun.
Locked and loaded we're going over,
So say your prayers lads get ready to run.

Whistle blowing up to the top we go,
Sprinting forwards fatal to be too slow.
Gas and gunfire filling the field with death,
Soldiers falling, taking their final breath.

Hear the silent scream of violence in the air.

Repeat

3. Homecoming

With the warmest of welcomes, we're home, we're home.
Through the sorrow and the sadness we're home.
We will always remember, and we'll walk by your side,
Marching on, as we bid you goodbye.

Calling out to the people we're home, we're home.
Calling out to our loved ones, we're home.
Singing out with our comrades, 'bout the times that we've shared,
But for some there is silence and prayer.

Now the war is behind us, we're home, we're home!
Rising up out of darkness, we're home.
Giving thanks we're still standing at the end of the road,
Looking up as the future unfolds.

Calling out to the people we're home, we're home.
Calling out to our loved ones, we're home.
Singing out with our comrades, 'bout the times that we've shared,
But for some there is silence and prayer.

Libretto written in response to workshops in Chelmsford secondary schools in 2018
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Appendix B: Schedule of Activity

Date	Activity	Location
Wednesday 19 September 2018	Workshop 1	The Hylands School
	Workshop 1	Chelmsford County High School for Girls
	Workshop 1	Boswells School
Thursday 20 September 2018	Workshop 1	The Sandon School
Monday 24 September 2018	Workshop 1	Great Baddow High School
Wednesday 26 September 2018	Workshop 2	The Sandon School
	Workshop 2	Boswells School
Thursday 27 September 2018	Workshop 2	Chelmsford County High School for Girls
	Workshop 2	The Hylands School
Monday 15 October 2018	Workshop 2	Great Baddow High School
Wednesday 17 October 2018	Workshop 3	Great Baddow High School
	Workshop 3	The Hylands School
	Workshop 3	Boswells School
Thursday 18 October 2018	Workshop 3	The Sandon School
	Workshop 3	Chelmsford County High School for Girls
Monday 29 October 2018	Workshop 4	The Hylands School
	Workshop 4	Chelmsford County High School for Girls
Wednesday 31 October 2018	Workshop 4	Great Baddow High School
	Workshop 4	Boswells School
Monday 5 November 2018	Workshop 4	The Sandon School
Wednesday 7 November 2018	Rehearsals and culmination performance	Chelmsford Cathedral