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A CREATIVE MUSIC PROJECT WITH

Britten Sinfonia
and the men
and staff of
HMP Whitemoor

EVALUATION



T U N I N G U P



HM Prison &
Probation Service

HMP Whitemoor
Reducing risk Together

Preventing victims by changing lives

 **Britten
Sinfonia**



Lemos & Crane

ORCHESTRAS *Live*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The partners in *Tuning Up* were HMP Whitemoor, Britten Sinfonia, Orchestras Live and Lemos&Crane. The funding was provided by Arts Council England and Orchestras Live.

We would like to thank particularly Sarah Rennix and Megan de Garis of Britten Sinfonia, Phil Bramham, Jeannette Bramham, Craig Nethercott and Will Styles of HMP Whitemoor, Jan Ford of Orchestras Live, Jason Rowland and the Britten Sinfonia musicians who participated (listed below), but above all our heartfelt thanks to all the staff and residents of HMP Whitemoor who made us so welcome and made the experience so exceptionally positive for us, as we hope it was for them.

The Britten Sinfonia musicians participating were:

Jason Rowland – facilitator and percussion

Paul Archibald – trumpet

John K. Miles – saxophone

Dawn Hardwick – piano

Oliver Pashley – clarinet

Matthew Gunner – French horn

Tuning Up evaluation report written by Gerard Lemos and produced by Lemos&Crane, January 2019. Design by Tom Keates

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SUMMARY

“ That was an absolutely fantastic afternoon. The atmosphere in the hall was pure, living and breathing Rehabilitative Culture. Everywhere I have been today prisoners (even some of our more difficult to engage men) have been asking me when we are going to do it again and whether or not we can start our own orchestra, band, rap crew and singing groups. It's all had an utterly brilliant impact around the site. It's one of those rare awesome days I will always remember.

Will Styles, Governor, HMP Whitemoor

Aims of Tuning Up

1. To engage 30 HMP Whitemoor residents in six immersive music workshops, working with facilitator and musician Jason Rowland and Britten Sinfonia musicians taking music from a Britten Sinfonia concert as a starting point.
2. Broadcast a Britten Sinfonia concert featuring orchestral repertoire, George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, to men at HMP Whitemoor (a long-stay, high-security prison) as an introduction to unfamiliar music and musical forms and as a way of engaging interest in the workshops and eventual performance and recording.
3. Perform a concert of new work created by participants in workshops to their peers, as well as to staff and members of the public, both on the day and through showcasing the recording of the music made to a public audience at a Britten Sinfonia performance.
4. Make a recording of the event available to the residents in the prison and via them to their friends and family.
5. Explore the potential for ongoing music instrument teaching in prison by education staff.

The partners' hypothesis was that *Tuning Up* in all its aspects would increase interest among the participants in prison in unfamiliar musical forms from the orchestral repertory. The focus on orchestral repertory rather than more familiar musical forms like rap, R&B or hip hop was with the objective that engagement with classical music would be unapologetically educational, stretching and aspirational. We also wanted to develop musical enthusiasm, commitment, skills and interest in future development of their musical interests and skills. In addition to these musical benefits, we also hoped for other personal and socially beneficial outcomes including increasing confidence and self-esteem, improved mental health and coping mechanisms for prison life during a long sentence, better communication and collaborative skills and empathy among residents and between residents and staff and a sense of achievement in their own eyes and in the eyes of family, friends, other residents and prison staff. We also hoped there would be benefits for prison life generally: more co-operative residents with new interests, better social skills, more positive relationships with staff and other residents as well as higher levels of staff motivation and engagement with creating and enhancing a more rehabilitative culture.

Our ambition was that the programme would also be personally and musically developmental for the musicians, enhancing their creative skills with a community and in a setting that was new for most of them. We also hoped that over the long-term programmes such as this could contribute to changing public perception of offenders' skills and abilities and engender more understanding of prisons, those living in them and their lives.

Some participants who signed up had qualifications in music production or have been playing an instrument for a long time, but the large majority were new to musical instruments, music making and performing for a large audience.

Feedback

The overwhelming feedback from men who participated, staff involved, staff and visitors who attended the final performance was extremely positive. Descriptions included: 'awesome', 'inspiring', 'moving', and 'mind-blowing', 'uplifting' and 'wonderful'.

The project aimed to introduce participants to classical repertory through watching a concert and harnessing it as a musical inspiration. Although there was some unsurprising initial scepticism from potential participants about classical music, the experience of working with Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* in workshops, as a starting point for new compositions and in performance was deemed highly rewarding by participants. They particularly valued the opportunity to bring together the classical and jazz traditions with their own musical tastes of hip hop, rap and reggae among others. The process of musical hybridisation was experienced as extremely creative and enriching, as well as powerfully symbolic of the benefits of working collaboratively with difference to produce original and evolved results; a particularly important message for involuntary residents of a prison who will be there for a long time among a community they didn't choose.

The interactive music-making and creative composition in workshops received highly positive reviews from participants. The workshops both consumed their intense attention and gave them substantial benefits in musical education in a timescale of six workshops. They thought the workshops and the project as a whole would be short and uneventful, pleasant enough, but without lasting effects or benefits. The scale and musical quality of what was achieved in a short, intense time was a welcome surprise, though occasionally nerve-wracking. They were also delighted that members of staff participated as equals in these workshops.

There were some important lessons about deploying musicians effectively, in groups rather than singly, and the types of instruments and musicians that were the most beneficial. Wind instruments represented the greatest challenge for novices and could be off-putting. The overall commitment to creating an orchestra of more than 50 players, residents, staff and professional musicians, was strongly endorsed. The big, orchestral sound combined with the originality of the music created at the final performance was perceived by participants and the audience as an extraordinary achievement.

As well as the voluble appreciation of the audience of more than 80 people, made up mostly of other residents, but also staff and a small number of invited visitors, by what they heard and saw at the performance, the sense of pride and achievement in being part of a large-scale performance to a substantial audience for the participants, both residents and staff, was also palpable and memorable.

The professional recording of the music at the concert means that CDs and a podcast will be made available to friends and family members of residents, something the participants particularly welcomed; also to the wider public from Britten Sinfonia, Orchestras Live and Lemos&Crane.

Outcomes

Alongside the achievements of musical education and pride in a successful, large-scale orchestral performance, some of the tangible non-musical outcomes of *Tuning Up*, were stronger relationships between residents and other residents; improved relationships with staff, especially those staff who participated in the project; reductions in feelings of anxiety and improvement in wellbeing among participants with mental health problems, including those who had committed very serious crimes like murder and particularly those whose problems meant they often found day-to-day relationships with other residents and staff extremely challenging. Some participants reported an enhanced sense of purpose for the future, which is particularly important for those serving long and sometimes depressing sentences, as are all the men in HMP Whitemoor.

The musicians also reported that the project had allayed their anxieties about working in prisons. These were not only about personal safety, but also about whether the project would produce a worthwhile musical output, or whether the barriers between orchestral musicians and men serving long sentences in prisons who had no previous interest in orchestral repertory would prove insurmountable. The musicians were

pleasantly surprised by the quality of the result, the enthusiasm of the participants, the audience and the commitment of the prison leadership. They also noted that the project was profoundly personally and creatively satisfying for them, using descriptions like ‘incredibly moving’. The organisers, facilitator and musicians from Britten Sinfonia, as well as being gifted musicians, used musical and other skills to make an outstanding contribution to the education and wellbeing of the participants and to the evolving life and culture of the prison as a whole. That suggests other orchestras could certainly do likewise, but also implies that this is an exceptional group of people who may also not be so easy to replicate.

The emphasis in prisons, including long-stay prisons, is more and more on building a rehabilitative culture, not just on old-fashioned system of containment and control. This is an aspiration to a big shift in culture within organisational environments where old habits die hard. Projects like this, in the view of the leadership of HMP Whitemoor, can make a big contribution to that ambitious endeavour. The podcasts and dissemination of the music made at HMP Whitemoor will also hopefully make a small contribution to changing public perceptions for the better about prisons and prisoners – what goes on that is positive and what residents in prison can achieve notwithstanding the constraints of their situation, as well as the benefits that projects like *Tuning Up* can bring in wellbeing and rehabilitation.

Next steps

Satisfaction with the success of this project, which exceeded expectations musically and socially, has cultivated enthusiasm in the prison’s leadership and among the partner organisations to embed musical activities, many of which already exist in the prison, more comprehensively into the life and activities of HMP Whitemoor. Musical activities are a good in themselves, but also a strategic commitment to the rehabilitative endeavour of the prison and building a culture of ongoing wellbeing for the residents. HMP Whitemoor is creating and strengthening commitments to teaching musical instruments in the prison, involving the Music Hubs if possible, including encouraging residents to buy musical instruments on which to learn and practice. There are also plans to encourage some more experienced musicians among the residents to become musical mentors, with the help of coaching and facilitation from Britten Sinfonia or others. The prison is establishing a choir led by a prison officer supported by Britten Sinfonia. The prison has also acquired its own recording equipment for use on the successors to this project, as well as for other music education activities within the prison.

The partners in this project are also planning a vocal concert for early summer 2019 and a weekend music festival for autumn 2019, funds permitting. It is hoped to involve not only residents, staff and Britten Sinfonia musicians as in this first experimental phase of *Tuning Up*, but also family and friends of residents and members of the local community around HMP Whitemoor. These plans are greatly in excess of the original hoped for aims and ambitions of the project which were more than achieved with a very modest financial investment by Arts Council England of about £14,000.

Lessons learnt summary

1. Introducing orchestral repertory, if done in an interactive way that sustains engagement, can have considerable educational and wellbeing benefits for men in prison, perhaps especially those serving long sentences.
2. Orchestras have many resources, including recorded material and the ability to train and coach musical mentors, to contribute to musical activities in prisons.
3. Orchestral repertory is best taken on enthusiastically when fusion with other more familiar musical genres is encouraged. The focus is less on 'pure' repertory and more on quality of original composition and excellence in orchestral performance.
4. Larger-scale musical projects that involve staff as well as residents have considerable potential to break down hierarchical barriers and to strengthen relations of trust between residents and staff.
5. Musicians are best deployed in small groups with larger groups of residents, rather than working individually with groups of residents.
6. The big orchestra effect is an essential component in the sense of achievement garnered from a project like this. Size matters. Jam sessions in small groups performed for a few other men in the prison are simply not as interesting, exciting, satisfying or beneficial to the residents, staff or to the prison as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

The genesis of *Tuning Up* goes back to 2015. Lemos&Crane has a longstanding programme of work on improving long-term outcomes for offenders in prisons (The Good Prison). While there are many small specialist arts and criminal justice organisations working in prisons, one aspiration of the Good Prison programme was to involve larger, more mainstream arts organisations in working in prisons, including orchestras. We shared our ambitions with Orchestras Live who became enthusiastic partners. The potential benefits of a partnership between orchestras and prisons were manifold:

1. Increasing the resources and opportunities for prisons and their residents in an underdeveloped area of educational, therapeutic and rehabilitative work.
2. Encourage collaboration among prisoners and between prisoners and staff - socially, musically and metaphorically.
3. Developmental creative opportunities for professional musicians.
4. New creative partnerships; new compositions; new performances; new venues and new audiences.
5. Embedding a stretching and challenging interest in orchestral music in a new audience with little experience of classical music.

Orchestras Live and Lemos&Crane jointly organised and hosted a seminar in 2015 for orchestras and senior prison staff. One of the prison representatives present was Craig Nethercott from HMP Whitemoor. He was enthusiastic about developing a project with an orchestra at HMP Whitemoor, a long stay, highly secure prison for men serving long sentences for serious offences. As HMP Whitemoor is in March, near Cambridge, we were pleased that Britten Sinfonia, based in the east of England, were keen to participate and develop the partnership. Funding from Arts Council England was eventually secured. Orchestras Live also contributed financially and in many other creative ways and Lemos&Crane undertook this evaluation pro bono.

The *Tuning Up* project itself

In May 2018 87 HMP Whitemoor residents (all men serving long sentences) viewed a screening of Britten Sinfonia's concert of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, which had been filmed at The Apex in Bury St Edmunds. The screening was a precursor to a music-making project led by Britten Sinfonia. After the screening the men were encouraged to sign up for *Tuning Up*. Following the screening, 30 of the men signed up to take part in a programme of workshops with a musical facilitator and professional musicians from Britten Sinfonia. The intention was to explore live classical music and how it can be fused with a range of other genres with a view to making and performing new compositions created by the participants.

Aims of *Tuning Up*

The detailed aims of *Tuning Up* were:

1. To engage 30 HMP Whitemoor residents in six immersive music workshops, working with facilitator and musician Jason Rowland and Britten Sinfonia musicians taking music from a Britten Sinfonia concert as a starting point.
2. Broadcast a Britten Sinfonia concert featuring orchestral repertoire to men at HMP Whitemoor as a means of introduction to unfamiliar music and musical forms and as a way of engaging interest in the workshops and eventual performance.
3. Perform a concert of new work created by participants in workshops to their peers, as well as to members of the public, both on the day and through showcasing the recording of the music made to a public audience at a Britten Sinfonia performance.
4. Make a recording of the event available to the residents in the prison and via them to their family and friends.
5. Explore the potential for ongoing music instrument teaching in prison by education staff.

Our hypotheses were that *Tuning Up* in all its aspects would increase interest among the participants in prison in unfamiliar musical forms from the orchestral repertoire. We also wanted to develop musical enthusiasm, commitment, skills and interest for future development of their musical skills. In addition to these musical benefits, we also hoped for other personal and socially beneficial outcomes including increasing confidence and self-esteem, improved mental health and coping mechanisms for prison life, better communication and collaborative skills and empathy among residents and between residents and staff and a sense of achievement in their own eyes and in the eyes of family, friends, other residents and prison staff. We also hoped there would be benefits for prison life generally: more co-operative residents with better social skills, more positive relationships and new interests and higher levels of staff motivation and engagement with creating and enhancing a more rehabilitative culture.

Our ambition was that the programme would also be personally and musically developmental for the musicians, enhancing their creative skills with a community and in a setting that was new for most of them. We also hoped that over the long term

programmes such as this could contribute to changing public perception of offenders' skills and abilities and engender more understanding of prisons, those living in them and their lives.

Some participants who signed up had qualifications in music production or have been playing an instrument for a long time, but the majority were new to musical instruments and music making.

“ I used to play drums at say Christmas time when you used to get Quality Streets when they used to come in the metal tins and create a bit of racket that was it, but no I’ve never played drums before...I hopped on the drums and was playing a little beat to myself and [Jason] just stopped and said ‘play that, play that again.’ I just started going (drum beat) and it went from there. Then he started putting everything together.

Participant

“ I’ve never played keyboard even once in my life. It was just something different, we learned something over the course of six weeks and it turns out absolutely amazing.

Participant

“ I played a little keyboard at school.

Participant

***“ Played guitar mostly privately.
No other real music experience.***

Participant

A small number of participants were experienced musicians or singers, such as this one.

“ I have written and performed music for a long time. When I was outside I used to... MC but when I came to prison I changed my focus to writing songs with a positive meaning.

Participant

None of the participants were familiar with orchestral repertory or with Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.

The participants in the workshops were split into two groups of 15 and each group took part in three two-hour music making sessions, delivered by leader Jason Rowland and six Britten Sinfonia musicians in rotation. Members of prison staff also participated in the workshops. After the workshops the pieces composed were performed at a concert by an orchestra of about 50 musicians including Britten Sinfonia players, prison staff and residents. Although supported and led by Jason and the musicians,

the musical ideas all came from the participants. About 80 people were in the audience for the concert in one of the larger prison workshops: other residents of the prison, members of prison staff and a small group of invited external guests.

A professional audio recording of this concert was made and will feature on a special Britten Sinfonia podcast which will also include interviews with staff and participants. Our hope is that the general public can learn more about the project. The recording will also be shared with residents' friends and family via web links and a specially recorded CD, as well as to the wider prison community.

Approach to evaluation

This evaluation report sets out the experiences for the residents and staff of HMP Whitemoor and the musicians of Britten Sinfonia who participated, as well as the benefits for the prison as a whole. The report also considers in-depth what worked well and what could have been improved and sets out lessons learnt and next steps. Our evaluation methods included feedback questionnaires from participants and musicians, longer in-depth interviews, a focus group with residents who participated, feedback collected from the audience by peer supporters among the residents and a detailed, structured review meeting of the partners, plus the facilitator and one of the musicians.

PART 1.

PARTICIPANTS’ EXPERIENCE AND BENEFITS

The overwhelming feedback from the participants was very positive as these comments from participants illustrate.

“ The best project in ages that I’ve been involved in.

Participant

“ I felt I had a purpose when I was playing with the band.

Participant

“ I enjoyed it. Thank you for the opportunity. I would like to be a mentor if an opportunity arose.

Participant

Members of prison staff who participated in the workshops and the final performance were also very positive.

“ ...was the best day I’ve ever had...wish it could’ve lasted longer.

Staff participant

“ It can only be good... after all we are all people doing what we love [music].

Staff participant

And these enthusiastic comments came from staff members who were in the audience for the final performance.

“ The Sinfonia event was amazing. Can't wait for them to return.

Staff member

“ What a great day. Everyone felt it went really well and it encourages positivity inside prison. When we all come together anything is possible.

Staff member

“ It broke down barriers...over a long period of time it helps.

Staff member

These resident participants comment on the good feelings engendered by having external visitors and staff in the audience for the performance.

“ It was a great thing... people who came in were good to us, which we appreciated.

Participant

“ It was fantastic and the people that came in and staff were inspiring. Thank you.

Participant

This participant saw the *Tuning Up* project as a learning opportunity from which he benefitted.

“ I thought it was a really worthwhile course which I really enjoyed. I find Whitemoor a friendly prison with helpful staff.

Participant

This person comments on the positive feelings of performing with professional musicians, how helpful that was for feeling good generally and how memorable that made the whole experience.

“ We sounded professional... I felt good that day... I won't forget it.

Participant

This participant wanted the project to go on longer, common feedback with successful programmes of this kind: there is often a certain regret when they end; a feeling of coming down off a high. He also hopes that similar activities will be organised in the future.

“ I would have loved it to be a longer course so that we could have created something even better but hopefully that will happen if this moves forward.

Participant

This participant wants to make music every day.

“ *Imagine what we could do if we could do it day after day.*

Participant

Introducing classical music repertory

One goal of the project was to introduce the men participating to classical music, both as an inspiration and mixing it with other musical genres, as Sarah Rennix comments:

“ *It seemed an exciting opportunity to take classical music to an audience who may not have experienced that much of it before, and to see how they would react to it, and to the players.*

Sarah Rennix, Britten Sinfonia

This musician notes that participants were sceptical about working with orchestral repertory.

“ *Without doubt, some were sceptical or disinterested to begin with. They were keen to participate in a music project, but said at the outset they would have preferred rap or reggae.*

Dawn Hardwick, piano

This response from participants confirm Dawn's impressions.

“ *I was intrigued by it. I didn't like the classical piece... that piece was boring.*

Participant

This member of staff also thinks that some participants are put off simply by the word 'orchestral'.

“ *The word 'orchestra' put off a lot of people...but many residents here have talent in music.*

Staff member

Of course, as this musician notes, it may be that indifference to classical music among those in prison may not just be about taste and background. It may also stem from an indifference on the part of orchestras to engaging with prisons and the men and women in them. Other types of musical ensembles such as brass bands have hitherto shown a rather greater enthusiasm than orchestras for working in prisons.

“ *I think this is vital work to do for an orchestra. Although prisons can be a potentially challenging environment to be in, the participants should be given access to quality music making and be encouraged to explore their own creativity. My own experience of music in prisons stems from my upbringing in brass bands and performing within*

the community is at the heart of most bands. Visits to local prisons were part of the musical calendar but this sadly seems to be rare when it comes to professional musical activities.

Paul Archibald, trumpet

Sarah Rennix explained how she responded to scepticism about classical music from some of those who attended the initial screening of *Rhapsody in Blue*. Her approach, which was clearly beneficial, was neither to abandon the idea of orchestral repertory nor to exclude the stated musical interests of the potential participants. She recognised that musical interests were not just a simple matter of taste, but intimately bound up with how people see themselves.

“ I stood up after the film and it was quite a debate. I did my best to say it was a mutual learning experience. We are not coming here to plug classical music. Music for most people is their identity. It’s what they grew up with; their culture, so they were saying ‘do we get to be ourselves ...or are you just going to tell us about what you think we like’. I spent a long time trying to say, ‘we’re not 2D people. We also have varied tastes in all sorts of different music and we’re happy to incorporate the genres you’re interested in’..... I think that is why some of them did not come [to the workshops after the screening]. They were worried we were just going to come in and say, ‘You have to do this. This is classical music. You’ve got to like it or go.’ But the ones who questioned me and listened to my response were kind of glad. ‘Can I do reggae?’ and I said, ‘yes’. ‘Can we write music?’ [I said], ‘Yes, OK’ and they said, ‘You had better stick to that!’

Sarah Rennix, Britten Sinfonia

Persistence and a clear commitment to the project’s unashamed educational ambitions to introduce new repertory and to build musical skills was clearly necessary.

“ [In] one conversation: it was just me and a couple of the residents: ‘We don’t really like classical music, do you like classical music?’ I said ‘yes I do. It was part of my heritage growing up’. [They replied] ‘We want to do rap; we just want to do rap’ and I said, ‘look you’ve got to respect our music as our identity and we will respect yours, but we are not just going to do rap.’ So, there was a debate and argument about that, ‘I said, no, we will be doing classical. We will be including *Rhapsody in Blue*’, and it did take a while.

Sarah Rennix, Britten Sinfonia

It had always been our intention to take the piece from the repertoire as a starting point and to introduce and fuse other musical forms into the pieces composed and performed by the participants. For most of the participants that was unexpected and welcome. Scepticism about orchestral repertoire was partly, of course, a matter of taste, but may also reflect associations with superiority and snobbery and the understandable feeling on the part of some people in prisons (and others on the outside) that their interests and identities are looked down upon and considered to be less valuable, or even worthless. Negotiating that emotional landscape in a way that both understood and responded to these concerns by validating participants' musical tastes and interests was clearly key to the positive engagement of participants and the benefits of music-making. The project demonstrated that it was possible to provide positive validation of personal interests and tastes while also pursuing the educational goal of introducing participants to new repertoire. Participants were introduced to classical music (albeit with strong jazz influences), but they were also encouraged to bring their own musical heritage and interests to the event. Working with a skilled facilitator and talented and experienced musicians, the men started to see both the appeal of classical music and the possibility of interesting musical fusions and creative ideas.

“ I hoped that we would create new music by fusing several different styles and give a high-class performance. Having worked in prisons before, there is generally always a perception of what classical music is and it’s really good to be able to break these thoughts down.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Phil Bramham, himself a talented musician, was an active champion of *Tuning Up* in HMP Whitemoor without whom the project would undoubtedly not have overcome the inevitable logistical and security difficulties of working in a long-stay prison. He commented that the best advertisement for classical music may be the music itself. Talking about classical music in the absence of any or much experience is, in itself, not likely to overcome indifference or scepticism, whereas first-hand experience of the music being played in the room might do the trick.

“ There is an easier way of achieving this though. You achieved it when you asked Oliver [clarinet] to play [the opening solo of Rhapsody in Blue]. No words are needed. There is a piece of classical repertoire which is immediately put in ...They were amazed by what was done; they were amazed by the instrument; they were amazed by the musician; they were amazed by the excerpt from the repertoire – so instantly, without having to have a discussion or an argument, we were able to get that by showcasing some particular parts. I think that is a useful lesson and one for us not to forget.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Speaking about his expectations beforehand, this musician, in agreeing to participate in the project, was very committed to working with different musical genres but wondered how interested the participants would be in classical music and, perhaps more seriously, whether the result might be musically incoherent.

“ Before the project began, I was worried about how all the varied musical interests/voices/styles would be combined, and making everything feel like it was being equally heard. I was also worried about the finished product not feeling like a cohesive whole, like we were just mashing lots of things together and hoping for the best. I was worried that the prisoners wouldn’t show any interest in styles of music that they weren’t familiar with (e.g. classical). Above all, I wanted a mutual respect and understanding. The best case scenario would be sparking an interest or curiosity in music, an appreciation that all musical styles feed into each other, that it’s not just individual bubbles that never interact.

Oliver Pashley, clarinet

These two musicians reflected on the same process of working with participants on creation by hybridity and fusions of musical forms.

“ At first they seemed slightly hesitant with regard to the more ‘classical’ of the music content. Pretty soon they realised their own musical ideas could be heard alongside this, and the fusion of the two was something a lot of them hadn’t experienced before.

Dawn Hardwick, piano

“ After the session my expectations changed in that it was evident how much the men were getting from the experience by taking ownership of one form of music and making it their own. I no longer felt the [need] for them to experience only the original.

Matthew Gunner, French horn

This participant comments on the enjoyment and benefits of being introduced to new genres of music, which were previously unfamiliar to him and perhaps were seen as intimidating or too stretching - or just boring:

“ People before only thought only about hip-hop sounds... we made something very different.

Participant

Since one of the objectives of the project was to introduce people to the classical repertory and enhance their enjoyment of that repertory, the comment above is

an important confirmation, particularly considering many residents' scepticism at the outset.

Jason notes that the foundations of the work created in *Rhapsody in Blue* never disappeared from view.

“ There was a real feeling that you could hear some of the *Rhapsody in Blue* in there - so I think what was really important for me was that we didn't just go 'here is the theme of *Rhapsody in Blue*. Let's put a beat behind it.' It was almost - not hiding them in there - but making them believable. The themes were in there but we weren't shoving them in people's faces. They took as much attention in the tracks as the urban music did. That's why they came together so well I think, because it was just two or three styles. In actual fact, we were aiming for hip hop, classical; something like death metal in there and country.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Experience of the screening at the initial session

The means by which participants were introduced to classical music was through a specially recorded screening of Britten Sinfonia playing *Rhapsody in Blue*. Sarah Rennix questions whether we needed an expensive, purpose-made recording for this screening. Could we instead have used a pre-existing recording of a Britten Sinfonia performance?

“ It's great to have a screening and I totally understand the process of it opening up the audience to it but the BBC have already done the Proms for years and there is a huge variety of proms being done - tango this year, Indian stuff last year – so if we could do some sort of screening [of a prom] for free... exciting, big audience and really great camera angles and everything compared to what we could afford.

Sarah Rennix, Britten Sinfonia

Jason Rowland notes that asking participants to watch a long performance might not sustain their interest. Something shorter might work better:

“ They said that the piece was too long and overworked and I wondered ... whether you edit something down so there are almost highlights of the concert... they thought it was the longest piece in the world.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Similar sentiments about the screening came from these two participants, commenting not on their own experience but that of others:

“ That was a disaster for everyone to tell the truth, because none of us could relate to like classical music at the time coming from different backgrounds and I think a lot of us were put off by the actual first piece, but then we came along after and it turned out great.

Participant

“ Some people walked out.

Participant

Phil Bramham comments that sitting watching a long orchestral performance is an unusual experience for men in prisons (as well as many other people!) and some of them became restless. He also notes that the passive nature of watching a screening is in stark contrast to the highly interactive experience of the music making workshops that were to follow. This passive experience might have given potential participants a false impression about the nature of the project and how it was going to develop.

“ Ultimately getting a group of men in a room like that and holding their attention for anything more than 20 minutes is hard work, so we had some disrespect and disruption during that screening which was difficult to manage. Subsequent to that, the difference between that initial screening to what we actually did was quite poles apart really.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

This participant suggests that a piece being played by a live band may have attracted a warmer response than a screening.

“ If there'd been a live band that would've been different... a demonstration, not a screening.

Participant

Sarah Rennix notes that some participants were disappointed there was no music making in the initial session as well as the screening.

“ They were all like, ‘we thought you were going to play with us.’ I was like ‘Not today.’ They were like, ‘Oh’.

Sarah Rennix, Britten Sinfonia

Having a music-making workshop in the same session as the initial screening would also have reinforced the important message that we would be working with orchestral repertoire, but the intention was to mix and fuse it with other genres with which they would be more familiar and perhaps more comfortable. Jason Rowland describes how he would run such a taster session.

“ The screening was great but I think what probably should have happened is having myself and a couple of players. We have an hour or whatever. It is: ‘Let’s just do a quick workshop and show exactly what we can do’. You can do a taster so that people give me a music style, reggae. Right, ‘Can you give me an orchestral line up of that?’ that’s how it works...Then they have a more informed choice [when] signing on because they know it is orchestral but what we are going to do is mix the two...Within that initial session you could take a similar approach where you take a piece, a pastoral piece, and kind of just morph it into these various styles, perhaps based on that repertoire, so you see the unity of common ground between those musicians.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Bridge-building between musical genres is also an important metaphor for bringing diverse groups of people together in a prison environment. This is a very important requirement of keeping prisons calm and well-managed. The residents are thrown together involuntarily but they must build bridges to learn to live in harmony and the staff must help them to do that. This is a significant aspect and benefit of collaborative music-making activities.

Some residents who came to the initial screening declined to join the workshops, perhaps because they didn't like the type of music or they felt the workshops would be too passive after the screening. Some then attended the final performance and found that the music and the atmosphere was not at all what they had expected. Having seen the final performance, they regretted not signing up for the programme of workshops.

“ When we had the initial screening we had about 87 people in that room who saw that screening. A lot at that point were interested prior to seeing it. After seeing it they took their name off, didn’t turn up, weren’t interested. And they felt there was a big disconnect between what they saw there and what was actually done in the final concert, so we lost quite a few people due to that.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

One of the participants who did join the programme also noted the difference between the initial screening and the rest of the project.

“ The difference between what we saw then and what we performed was really big.

Participant

Feedback about the workshops

The feedback about the music-making workshops was overwhelmingly highly positive and enthusiastic, in particular the interactive experience, which is far preferable to the passivity of just watching or listening, as this participant notes.

“ I enjoyed myself... it wasn't boring...I was interacting with everyone there.

Participant

This participant was impressed by the speed at which the music-making gathered pace and notes that this was borne out of the fact that he was a musical novice.

“ Not having any experience of music I was surprised how it took off... I hadn't expected it to be as good as it was.

Participant

This participant commented on the wider benefits of building relationships between residents and staff who also participated in the workshops.

“ It helped relationships with staff who were involved.

Participant

Phil makes the same point in more detail and notes how one particular encounter between a vulnerable prisoner and a prison officer would have caught the attention of other prison staff.

“ Some of the uniform staff, they work with the residents day in day out. They are the ones who see them 24/7. They are not like me, or any of the other staff that might be there who only see them in snippets. When M got up to sing you would have felt the crowd's reaction, 'So this is a prison officer, someone I have worked with previously', but the courage for her to get up there in front of other peers and the prisoners... she is in charge of was great, but for her to support and help C [as well], getting him up there and supporting him. That caused a lot of discussion among the prison officer group.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

And this participant comments on the benefits of mixing with other residents for raising his general feelings of wellbeing about the difficult experience of a long sentence in prison. Although prisons have hundreds of residents, long-stay residents can sometimes feel they are confined to a small group of other men on their wing, which can feel claustrophobic, and rarely meet new people or those from other wings.

“ I came out feeling more confident about being in prison... I got to mix with different people on the wings.

Participant

The workshops eventually had 30 participants from among the residents in prison. For each of the five workshops, they split into two groups of 15, each group working with a different single musician. The facilitator worked between the two groups and ensured that the material composed and written was notated. This was understandably stretching for Jason as facilitator.

“It was more work than I have ever done on a project in that setting because only having one musician who changed every time meant that we had to write something. I then had to go home at night and notate it for the next day.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

In hindsight, only having one musician in a group of 15 was not ideal for the musician, the participants or the facilitator.

“If you had two or three regular musicians on the project, from my point of view it makes it easier. I also think that if Alan [bass player] was on it working on the rhythm section, then he could progress with them. He was only in for one day and then they never saw him until the concert. I thought actually it worked great when you were playing with the drummer and you could have developed that over the next session [but] the next session it was somebody different. I totally think that we should be having lots of different musicians, but I wonder whether three musicians on a project or a number of musicians who can help and assist [would be useful].

Jason Rowland, facilitator

This musician, the electric bassist, notes the lack of continuity from the musician's perspective if they only participate in one workshop.

“My session was quite early, second session, I think. So, at that point I did not feel what have I missed out? Because we were just starting off and then I went away thinking what on earth have they been up to? What am I coming back to? I just had a very small window of what the possibilities were going to be.

Alan Gibson, electric bass

Jason also notes the importance of the choice of instruments played by the musicians. Some participants were absolute beginners. Instruments which could be easily tried and experimented with may be preferable for them to those which would be beyond novices without a great deal of time to practice.

“ If I am working like this it would normally be great to have wind, brass and strings or rhythm section. Three would be great. On this project I think we have to be realistic about what the residents can play in the limited time they have got. Strings, I think, were amazing. I think brass is amazing. I think we missed a trick not taking a marimba in because all the keyboard players could have had a go on marimba, which then brings another orchestral instrument in....or xylophone, but just something that adds another orchestral element to it....Once we have developed all the material it is easy for them or nicer for me to sit and go, ‘Right, I can now go and arrange it for 8 musicians’.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Jason notes the particular difficulties of wind instruments for musical novices.

“ Being realistic about the instruments that participants could learn over those days, I would still really question wind instruments. I have never done projects where people just pick up a wind instrument, never played it before and get something quite decent out of it...Brass is achievable, strings are achievable and percussion. In terms of orchestral instruments, wind is always a really tricky one.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Phil also comments that knowing the choice of instruments in advance would have influenced which residents were encouraged to participate in advance of the project.

“ I’ve got to be honest. I had no idea what these workshops were going to be like and, now I know what it’s like, I would have worked...to get the right instruments. We definitely would have got a percussionist...We have all these drummers [among the residents] who are trying to teach themselves drumming and we need a percussionist to come and sit with them.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Jason notes that 15 is the maximum size for a workshop group, even if they eventually join together with other groups to form a bigger band.

“ The two groups all worked separately and never played together at any time ...you can’t have any more than 15. There is a balance between how much you are trying to teach someone. I’m thinking about one of the guitarists. I was very aware that he was really struggling, but actually

there were 14 people in the room who I had to keep moving on. Any more than that [and] you are just going to increase that problem....I would stick with two groups.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Bringing a group of men together in a high-security environment potentially raises concern for the prison and they therefore need to be sure in advance that they have carefully managed the risks of problems within or between groups of men.

“What happened before those two groups got together was a psychology security analysis to make sure they got the group as right as it could be and there were not going to be any clashes. It gave us the opportunity to make it more inclusive, because if Mr Smith was not getting on with Mr Jones we would have them in 2 separate groups rather than [saying], ‘No, you are not doing it.’

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

The difficulties and time it takes to move men around the prison as well as the limited availability of space meant that the project was all planned to take place in one large room with groups working in different parts of the room. From Jason's point of view, that was not ideal. Access to breakout rooms for group work would be preferable.

“One of the issues I had in the workshop [is that] normally I would have three or four breakout spaces where if you had three musicians, ‘Right, strings off you go, brass off you go, wind off you go’....I think the first time when Paul came in and he took all the brass out, everyone who worked with him had that absolute experience of working with him as a professional musician and, ‘Right, that’s him sorted, we can sort what’s going on here now.’ If we had the three sections we would get massively improved results.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Phil notes that having breakout rooms is possible, but needs careful planning in advance in a prison context, both from the perspective of the availability of space as well as the need to monitor where the men are and what they are doing with security and behaviour management concerns in mind.

“It can be planned for. When we have the initial discussions in advance it might be possible... It didn’t come up until the third or fourth session when Paul Archibald turned up and said he wanted to work in a different room and then we were able to make it happen in one of our store rooms. Lovely acoustics actually.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Concert performance

The residents of the prison who participated in the workshops and then the performance were delighted by the experience, sometimes almost overwhelmed.

“ *The performance was wicked.* ”

Participant

“ *A truly life changing experience that has opened up my mind!* ”

Participant

“ *Everyone was giving us a standing ovation, clapping. There was a lot of people for this small prison...I thought, ‘Are we really that good?’...Take it how you will, it was a really nice day and everyone was just so upbeat...Something I’ve never experienced before...Everyone was so happy about what had happened and whether it can happen again... Those little moments take you away from the prison setting. You need those to shine, escape from this environment. You feel you have no home and then this thing goes on. It just lifts your spirits again and gives you a new lease of life. I think that’s what happened there.* ”

Participant

“ *I was absolutely taken aback by the crowd reaction, especially afterwards, once we had performed. When we were performing we were just getting on with it and not really aware of the audience, but when we finished they all came up to us and were so excited about it and so appreciative and complimentary. I thought, ‘Wow, they really enjoyed that.’* ”

Craig Nethercott, Staff participant

“ *They were going crazy. Everyone was talking about it weeks after, the staff, the residents.* ”

Participant

This participant notes how the other residents in the audience were drawn into the experience and that may help in breaking down barriers between residents:

“ *People who were in the audience were drawn into it... normally people keep themselves to themselves.* ”

Participant

This resident wanted to be able to send a recording of the performance to his friends and family to raise his reputation in their eyes, even though he was in prison.

“ *Family and friends can see I’m doing something useful... these kind of things build bridges with people.* ”

Participant

This participant comments implicitly on the orchestral feeling of the occasion.

“ *I think all the different instruments made it.* ”

Participant

“ *It felt good to play as part of a band. It was an amazing feeling, an uplifting feeling.* ”

Participant

There were a relatively small number of outside guests invited to the performance. They had all been invited by the partner organisations. This participant feels, perhaps rightly, that the men in the band should also have had the opportunity to invite guests.

“ *People should’ve been able to invite outside guests.* ”

Participant

Sarah and Jason comment here on the anxieties of one of the singers, who had been in the prison for some time and was well known to the other residents. However, he had many longstanding problems and issues which did not make it easy for him to communicate and get along with the other men. It was therefore a particularly important success of the project that this rather isolated resident was able to participate, both for the benefits he would derive from the social encounter, but also to encourage other residents to recognise his positive qualities as well as the challenges he faces. He had participated in the workshops and rehearsals, but when the performance was imminent he got cold feet. One of his concerns seemed to be an incident that had happened with other residents on his way over from the wing. He was also slightly unnerved by some other members of the audience. Notwithstanding that moment of considerable doubt, he then overcame his uncertainties and performed with enormous aplomb.

“ *C pulled out [from performing] in the conversation I had with him just before he was about to start, ‘No, I’m not doing it’ and then he was freestyling. I was like, I don’t know what you are doing but just carry on.* ”

Jason Rowland, facilitator

There were many members of staff in the audience and some of the prison’s peer supporters were tasked to collect their impressions and feedback on the performance. Again, the comments were extremely positive. Comments below include descriptions like ‘awesome’, ‘fantastic’, ‘superb’, ‘mind-blowing’, ‘inspiring’ and ‘moving’. This was the feedback from the Governor of the prison, Will Styles:

“ That was an absolutely fantastic afternoon. The atmosphere in the hall was pure, living and breathing Rehabilitative Culture. Everywhere I have been today prisoners (even some of our more difficult to engage men) have been asking me when we are going to do it again and whether or not we can start our own orchestra, band, rap crew and singing groups. It’s all had an utterly brilliant impact around the site. It’s one of those rare awesome days I will always remember.

Will Styles, Governor, HMP Whitemoor

And these are some of the comments from the staff who attended.

“ Well done to all involved, this was very good. Something different. Bringing unity.

“ What a fantastic way to celebrate music in all its guises. A true collaboration and an inspiration – well done all!

Staff member in audience

“ Absolutely amazing – I’m so impressed with the collaboration and wonderful atmosphere – well done!

Staff member in audience

“ Mind-blowing! Really well done to all of you.

Staff member in audience

This participant comments on the scale of the achievement given the limited preparatory time.

“ Uplifting & inspirational – especially considering short term experience!

Staff member in audience

This staff member in the audience comments on the relationships between participants apparent in the performance.

“ Awesome! Great collaboration and respect.

Staff member in audience

This member of staff in the audience responded to the musical qualities of the performance.

“ Wonderful re-interpretation; loved the range; really moving and inspiring.

Staff member in audience

These audience members also liked the musical genres and commented on the talents, presumably previously hidden, of the participants.

“Amazing!! Love the music style. Brilliant singers with a lot of talent.

Staff member in audience

Many people commented on the unexpected musical talents on display in the performance.

“I was absolutely blown away by how talented and professional [it all] was. The singers, musicians, peer supporters, everyone absolutely amazed me with their talent. I have run out of words. More please!

Staff member in audience

“Really impressive! So nice to see everyone’s strengths & talents.

Staff member in audience

“Absolutely brilliant! I have been in the workshop next door listening (and teaching) and it was even better ‘live’. Well done everyone! Such amazing talent!

Staff member in audience

“Fantastic production by all involved. Such wonderful talent that we need to keep using and showcasing!

Staff member in audience

“This has been the best part of my week so far! Britain’s got talent behind bars!

Staff member in audience

“I was amazed at the musical talent. Well done guys.

Will Styles, Governor, HMP Whitemoor

“The musical talent and singing quality was second to none!!

Jane Clarke, Deputy Governor, HMP Whitemoor

These comments about people’s talents are of course particularly poignant and significant in a long-stay prison environment, where the residents can feel that they are seen as worthless by society, without useful social attributes or individual achievements, and therefore they are readily dismissed or forgotten. Given the inherent power imbalances between staff and residents, experiences which lift the esteem of the residents, not just in their own eyes, but also in the eyes of staff that work with them must be a very good thing. These rather sensitive comments about the talents of the participants came from one of the musicians.

“ The amount of talent on display – in particular some of the singing/rapping/percussion playing – was quite simply astounding... I feel like my eyes were opened to a creativity and sensitivity that (shame on me) I didn’t think/realise existed in places and people like this.

Oliver Pashley, clarinet

Similar comments about levels of talent were made by visitors from outside.

“ Amazing people who are so talented. Helped to create music that any artist would be proud of!

Visitor in the audience

“ Thanks so much for asking me to come on Tuesday, what a wonderfully moving and fun afternoon. I was with Jason, the facilitator, when one of the female Governors came up to him and said ‘I have been in this prison for 8 years and I can honestly say this is the best day I have ever had here.

Sally Taylor, Chief Executive, Koestler Trust

“ Very, very many thanks for inviting me to the performance at HMP Whitemoor. It was a humbling and exhilarating experience and for me, as a first-time visitor to any prison, both enlightening and upsetting. It must have involved a huge amount of work of all kinds to bring it off, but it was clearly a huge success for everyone involved - staff, residents performing and watching, the Britten Sinfonia ensemble and all the ‘great and the good’ from the Arts Council, trusts and foundations etc. I can’t think of any arts event I have ever been to which so emphatically achieved the elusive impact we all strive for (and so often kid ourselves we have managed).

Patricia Williams, University of Oxford

“ Superb! Loved it – great arrangement & really brave people putting themselves out there.

Visitor in the audience

This musician sets out a very full account of the benefits to the participants that she witnessed: benefits in how they see themselves, potentially as proud and talented musicians, as well as all their criminal and other histories and helps with their relationships with others. There are also considerable benefits in relieving the generally lowering experience of being in prison.

“ [The residents got] so many things! A sense of their pride in their work, a sense of discipline in preparing the work that was potentially different to what they may have experienced before. Performing experience, an opportunity to show a different side of their character, courage to perform in front of their peers, the chance to try out a few different instruments, the chance to make firmer friendships and mingle with people they may not have known before, a sense of wellbeing and no doubt a huge boost in mental health having been able to remove themselves from a generally mundane lifestyle for a short period.

Dawn Hardwick, piano

Specifically, Dawn draws attention to the immediate benefits of pride in performance.

“ I was really touched that during the concert there was an overwhelming sense of pride from the residents. I'm so glad they felt proud of themselves after performing, and the size of the audience was a testament to how important it was to them.

Dawn Hardwick, piano

The commitment and the flexibility of the senior leadership of the prison to ensuring the project happened and was a success should be affirmed. The complexities of the endeavour and ambition in a high security environment like HMP Whitemoor cannot be over-estimated. The fact that this was achieved without fuss or visible anxiety is considerable credit to the skills, *esprit de corps* and leadership in HMP Whitemoor. Jason stresses the importance of remembering both how essential it is and how easy it can look if done well.

“ I'm very, very aware that we get this huge privilege of standing with a group of musicians, writing some brand new material, conducting it, taking a bow at the end and enjoying all the huge applause. [I'm] very aware of the massive work that has gone on around you to allow us to do what we want to do and allow the residents to do what they want to do within the band setting as well. All that magic happens. We just get on with the job that we want to do which is creating, making and entertaining and playing music. There's a huge amount of work and effort goes on to make these things happen.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Because this was the first time that either the prison or the orchestra had done a performance in this kind of environment, there were inevitable technical difficulties. They did not detract either from the sense of occasion or from the enjoyment of both the players in the band or members of the audience, however they were nevertheless noted.

“ *A lot of technical things could’ve been better...mics cut out and so on.*

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Phil comments that this problem could be addressed by the prison having their own technical equipment, which could also be used in training opportunities for the participants. He refers to a training programme of this kind run by De Montfort University.

“ *That’s why we need our own tech stuff... with De Montfort University we might be able to get help to involve other inmates with the tech side of things.*

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

PART 2.

OUTCOMES

Appreciation of classical music

As already noted, the views of most participants of classical music beforehand ranged from indifferent or negative, to outright hostile. Above all, the lack of familiarity fuelled the sense of suspicion and doubt that this kind of music was not for them. For some participants, however, the *Tuning Up* programme gave them a new and lasting taste for classical music, which has been sustained many months afterwards.

“I’ve never listened to [classical music] but now...I listen to it all the time. It’s kind of grown on me. It’s part of my everyday life. At night time, in the middle of the day, I might put on Classic FM and have a little listen to it. I’m a Gershwin fan now.

Participant

The participant who made the comment above is an accomplished songwriter and rapper, who mixes his own music. The introduction to classical music has been brought into his own musical practice too.

“I’ve been incorporating some classical into the beats that we use now for rap and it still has a hip hop drum style to it, but we have a lot of violins and stuff in the background now, and even a choir singing. Male voices in the background just to add a different dynamic....It breaks up that kind of mundane thing you get in most rap music. It’s the same kind of sound. It’s just rubbish. You have to do something different to catch people’s ears and classical does that if used in the right way.

Participant

Another participant also saw musical possibilities in the project:

“ When [Megan] started playing the violin she was doing something with one of the beats and that just instantly clicked with me. I started writing to that particular piece. Then I was thinking I just want to do a song with a pianist and a violin...but in the past I would never imagine doing a song with a violin. It wouldn’t even cross my mind.

Participant

Paul Archibald re-affirms the importance of introducing people to classical music, but not for snobbish or overly didactic reasons, more as a way of stretching musical horizons.

“ It’s so heartening to hear that we’ve got people whose ears have actually been opened to classical music. It’s not just about trying to be evangelical about classical music. It’s really just about colours and sounds and becoming a little more aware about what is out there musically.

Paul Archibald, trumpet

Musical reflections on crime and rehabilitation

One of the participants composed a series of rap songs during the workshops which formed part of the final performance. He took the opportunity to express some of his feelings about his crime, being in prison and his prospects for the future in those pieces.

“ As soon as I heard a beat formulating I just started writing little bits and pieces and, by the end of the third or fourth session, we have four songs....On the last song I was talking about the process of being in prison, how I ended up being in prison and the life that I led, the people that done wrong in my life, not victims of my crime. In the second verse of the song I was talking about how I’ve changed; how I’ve risen from the ashes like a phoenix to do something better with my life. It was called, ‘Dead and Gone’, that song.

Participant

Working with staff but without authority

These comments relate to the important humanising aspects of the programme, removing the stigma of being an offender and all that it carries for undermining self-esteem, confidence and prospects for rehabilitation. The fact that the staff, including the Governor, were in the band for the final performance was a profoundly de-stigmatising and equalising moment which was widely commented on and will be remembered.

“ The staff joined in. The Governor was playing too!

Participant

“ The feedback we’ve had, the prisoners explained they felt they were humans and not a number or a risk. That was really significant. They loved that the staff joined in, in particular there were a few comments about the Governor joining in at the final performance. They loved that. One in particular focused on feeling that staff and prisoners were on a level, on an equal playing field.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Jason also notes the equalising benefits of being in a band, united in a common purpose outside of everyday hierarchies and power relationships.

“ When we first get together in a group...in a circle... I try to explain what we do, and I always make a point of saying we are all a group of musicians working together as one to devise a piece; that’s what we are here for...Our job is to be a band.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

This comment from a participant makes the same point forcefully.

“ To be treated as we were by Britten Sinfonia as opposed to being prisoners/worthless was a hugely positive factor.

Participant

This participant comments on the important role played by one particular prison officer.

“ She’s a great person. She’s always singing in the wings...I think she kind of invited herself...She’s a very people person with a lovely, bubbly character. She done an amazing job on the day. She builds bridges with prisoners and officers... When you can collaborate with musicians, officers and prisoners together, that’s what it’s all about, as well as building bridges with each other.

Participant

This staff participant is a member of the psychology team and makes a clear connection between this project and the therapeutic work that is done by him and many others in the prison.

“ It’s just fantastic to be able to sit down with the guys and just express our shared interest in music. My role here is within the psychology department and a lot of the work

we do is underpinned by building a strong rapport, strong therapeutic links with the guys, so to be able to do that out of the context of psychology; just do it with some instruments and get to know each other on a personal level – it's a fantastic opportunity... It's not something I have seen at Whitemoor before and would like to see more of it going forward.

Staff participant

Seeing men in prison as individuals with their own identities and attributes is obviously of enormous importance. It is also highly beneficial to create opportunities for staff to be seen outside official, authority-based roles and indeed to see themselves outside those roles and uniforms.

“ *It is an opportunity for people like me to sit back and not have to do what we normally do which is [to] take the position of authority and instead show a slightly different side to our role which in turn makes our professional practice within the custodial service much better.* ”

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

These two residents comment also on how important good relationships with staff are and the extent to which projects such as this one help with that:

“ *I get on generally well with staff. I find them, more often than not, very helpful. I play football and some other activities with staff i.e. Britten Sinfonia, Good Vibrations and family links.* ”

Participant

Personal development in prison

There seems to be a widespread public perception that time in prison, particularly long sentences are futile and a waste. In fact, many offenders experience profound and beneficial changes and personal growth and development, without which they would be unlikely to desist from continuing criminal behaviour and re-build their lives in preparation for release. Here is a quote from a resident in HMP Whitemoor who feels they have benefitted from the experience:

“ *I feel I've grown as a person, developed new skills and can become a positive member of society.* ”

Participant

Anxiety, mental health and wellbeing

It is well-known that many people in prison have mental health difficulties, sometimes of a serious and lasting kind. This resident comments on his own situation.

“ I’m depressed a lot of the time due to personal issues which has led to further problems...I am very paranoid at the moment which causes me to be anxious, but I’m trying to keep the lid on it and not act as though there’s a problem day to day.

Participant

Phil comments in detail on how one of the participants used the confidence and skills he had acquired as part of his personal development psychological programme.

“ We have a psychological programme for people who have been convicted of murder or any form of extreme violence. We have a large self-change programme, delivered by a psychologist, and at the end of the self-change programme they do a presentation of what they call ‘the old me to new me’. This presentation normally lasts about an hour or an hour and a half. They are in front of staff, their peers, family in some cases, parole psychologists and it is a very harrowing experience for them as individuals, but they have to talk through their past experience including offending history and offending details, how they would do things differently, what they would do differently and what would stop them doing things differently. But, also, they are asked to give a bit of something of them and he chose to sing in front of a group of people. It was really good.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

These residents also commented on the mental health benefits of the Tuning Up programme.

“ Singing, by helping me breathe properly with stress and tension. The guitar/an instrument needs a lot of attention and dedication which in turn helps with the worries.

Participant

“ Personally, I am having real difficulties with my mental health but none of that is down to the course. In fact, that sort of gave me a different focus and took my mind off my worries for a while.

Participant

Phil also comments on the mental health benefits of musical interests acquired through the Tuning Up project. This is a very important benefit for the management of the prison.

“ There are quite a few comments...about some of the men learning ways to deal with some mental health issues as a result of now going away and being able to strum a guitar or hit on a drum in their cell which they may not have done previously. Two or three touch on ‘I have concerns of anxiety, depression, mental health concerns and I now have another string to my bow which has made me deal with this in a different way’, which was quite significant for us.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Sense of purpose for the future

In their feedback forms several residents commented on their need for a sense of personal development and purpose while in prison.

“ I’m trying to be positive and rehabilitate myself.

Participant

“ To better educate myself and contribute to the Whitemoor community. I want to keep a clear record and live in peace.

Participant

These residents give a succinct account of the rehabilitation journey he needs to take, including skills, family life and addressing criminogenic factors in his behaviour. They explained that these were important positive motives for becoming involved in the Tuning Up programme.

“ I’m trying to better myself by getting new skills, try to be a better person for my girlfriend, step-kids and family. Changing the way I behaved in the past before I came to prison.

Participant

“ Always keen to gain new skills. I need to progress to training so that I learn and achieve industry qualifications. I would also hope to see visitors and family more rather than phone calls.

Participant

Allaying anxieties about safety for visitors

Most of the musicians who participated in this project had never visited a prison before. Unsurprisingly they had some concerns about their personal safety, as perhaps all first time visitors to prisons do, particularly visitors to places like HMP Whitemoor where the residents have committed serious crimes and are serving long sentences.

“Initially my concerns were for the welfare of my colleagues and myself but after the first session my concerns were more focused on the project itself. Could we pull it off on limited rehearsal time? How would the men react under pressure etc.?”

Matthew Gunner, French horn

Sarah notes how important it is for organisers of programmes such as this to allay these anxieties. Sometimes these fears are borne of hearsay and it is undoubtedly true that incidents of violence between residents, and between residents and staff do occur from time to time.

“How can I reassure our musicians of their safety when they come in here? There are obviously one or two prison officers in the room, but what would happen if something kicked off? Because [a member of staff] told me, for example, she was injured once in a kind of riot situation and obviously I need to think about the worst thing that could happen to my staff because I have to reassure them, if that happened, this would be what would happen. I know you have chosen the right people to be in the room but if something happened, I need to know that my staff would definitely be safe.

Sarah Rennix, Britten Sinfonia

Phil sets out a clear, thorough and thoughtful response on behalf of the prison authorities.

“On the whole prisons are very mundane and safe places where not a great deal really happens. There are occasions of course - and we see those in the media - where staff do get injured. Normally though we foresee those in advance and they are in residential areas [in the prison]. So, say [in] a workshop-type area, we certainly have not had any incidents this year down there and when there are [incidents] they are between prisoners rather than staff. Thirdly, the risk assessment for a high secure prison is one officer per 10 prisoners. That's not the usual member of staff, but an operational member of staff. So what we actually had was really elevated levels of staff down there in order to try and ensure that it was as safe as possible. What instantly would happen in a situation like that, whenever we've got visitors, whenever someone is not used to a prison environment, we are aware of that. If there ever was an incident in there one of us would have ushered people outside the area exceptionally quickly. Once the

officer who sat in that room presses that bell or presses a button on his radio.... there are 30 officers who would all come in exceptionally quickly. So when we said there were...15 prisoners [in a workshop], there would be twice as many officers within the click of a button. What prisoners do when they are going to kick off and we are going to have a violent situation, they do it at a time when the odds are against us. So they do it when there are 126 on a wing and there's only 30 staff rather than when there is 15 of them and there's 30 staff; mathematically they will think about that. I do accept the concerns.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Jason comments that these feelings of anxieties are usually misplaced and can sometimes lead to unpredictable, unintended consequences.

“*I have always felt safer in prison than I have probably [felt] in east London secondary school projects because I am always of the opinion that actually the residents that are coming are coming because they want to be there so they are not going to kick off ...Actually, I was working in another prison - you said about pressing a button, where one of our musicians thought it was the toilet light and he pressed it!*

Jason Rowland, facilitator

This female musician was reassured by her experience of safety at HMP Whitemoor. It was important to us as organisers that the musicians were not all men. The benefits to the residents of an encounter with a skilled, professional woman working with them when they live in a community of more than 400 other men are obvious.

“*I now feel confident that I am able to work in an all-male, potentially challenging situation and I really appreciated the respect that was showed to me by all the residents.*

Dawn Hardwick, piano

This musician, who had not worked in a prison before, was more worried beforehand about a lack of rapport with the participants than personal safety. These are not trivial anxieties.

“*Admittedly, I was very curious about working in a prison, not least a high-security prison such as Whitemoor. My main fears: not being able to relate to the prisoners; not being able to communicate (i.e. having nothing in common musically); the prisoners not enjoying the programme; us not enjoying the programme; the prisoners not feeling the work being created was ‘theirs’; feeling patronising to*

the prisoners. So apart from those minor points, I wasn't nervous at all!

Oliver Pashley, clarinet

This musician, who had worked in prisons before, felt positive from the outset and his optimism was justified.

“ *I really didn't have any concerns before the project, and after the visits I realised I never needed to have any. The whole thing was thoroughly organised. The workshop leader was super friendly, talented at his job and efficient in producing what was needed. The residents were friendly and hugely interested in the whole thing. It was obvious it was an exciting project for everyone involved.* ”

Paul Archibald, trumpet

Phil notes particular concerns on the part of staff on the day of the performance because there was such a large group of men in one room. As it turned out, the greatest anxiety was not the risk of an incident, but performance anxiety on the part of those who were in the band!

“ *Staff were anxious that day. You've got 80 men in that room. Because when I talk about those times when numbers count against us, this was one of the times. These are anxiety-provoking times. Staff feel it. Interestingly though a lot of the residents that were taking part, and Sarah and no doubt Jason, you picked up on this from conversations, there was true performance anxiety from the residents.* ”

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Changing prison culture

Phil explains some of the challenges in prison culture, particularly in the context of many staff who have been working at the prison for several decades and many long staying residents.

“ *More positive than negative, significantly more positive than negative. It's necessary for us to have those conversations publicly and openly though because it's the only way it will change the culture and challenge some of the perceptions that exist within prison, so for M [a prison officer] to have had that opportunity and then subsequent discussions afterwards was absolutely invaluable...We've got prison officers who have been in the job for 25- 30 years and 20 years ago prison was a very different place. It wasn't so much about rehabilitation. It was about punishment,* ”

incarceration and keeping the public safe by controlling the prison population. Equally we've got prisoners who've been here 20 to 30 years and those people naturally, by virtue of their experience, their age, when you've got new officers coming in, they are quite powerful individuals. They are people who hold a big amount of sway within our culture. They are not all negative. I admit I make them sound quite bad, but it's always worth considering and talking about.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

He also explains the importance of leadership in the prison on challenging entrenched behaviours.

“ *The Governor is very challenging on the topic. He said at one of our operational morning meetings, ‘Look at the back of your ID badge and look at the back of your warrant card and it talks about: you are rehabilitative and that you are here to do a job. If you can’t do that part of the job then it is very simple, there is the door and I would be happy to sign your P45 so you make your choices now.’*

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Projects such as *Tuning Up* which focus on helping long-stay residents in prison to lead more enriching lives and supporting them to make the most of their long sentences can be seen as part of that shift towards a more rehabilitative culture, which is now a clear and explicit objective for the prison service.

Benefits for musicians

The musicians who participated all said they got a great deal personally and professionally from being part of *Tuning Up*. Their perceptions were changed by the experience which also inculcated enthusiasm for working in prisons again.

“ *Simply, congratulations to all involved in making this happen. It was a truly excellent project and one I would be happy to be involved in any time. I was truly touched at the reactions of the performers and their friends after the concert.*

Matthew Gunner, French horn

This musician applauded the commitment and effort on the organisers of the project, in the prison and in Britten Sinfonia and comments on what a fulfilling experience it was for him as a musician as well as personally.

“ Having finished the final performance, I can happily say that none of my fears materialised. On a practical level, the project was managed exceptionally smoothly – I dread to think the amount of organisation that goes into running a project at a place like Whitemoor – and on a musical level I feel like everyone involved was genuinely open, genuinely curious, and got something from it beyond having made four 10-minute pieces....What exactly the thing that everyone got is almost certainly different from person to person. For me the whole experience was incredibly humbling. This is definitely one of the most fulfilling and inspiring education projects I have undertaken as a clarinettist.

Oliver Pashley, clarinet

“ I just really regret not having done more as a professional musician to be able to work in this kind of environment because I can't really think of anything more important to be honest. It's so important we do these projects for every reason.

Paul Archibald, trumpet

Paul also notes some important lessons for other aspects of the orchestra's work.

“ It was a joyful occasion. People were really keen to engage with the audience. As orchestral musicians, we anguish for years over how we can engage with our audiences and I'm sitting here with people who have never performed engaging brilliantly with their audience. It was an interesting lesson.

Paul Archibald, trumpet

Influencing public perceptions

This trenchant observation from a resident about public attitudes to prisons would no doubt be echoed by many others, prisoners and staff.

“ There's too much negativity about prisoners nowadays... in the media, in the news, Channel 4 documentaries. Everybody is smoking spice. Everybody is bullying staff. Staff don't have any interaction with prisoners. You need things like this to have a balance on what is going on in prisons because good things do go on. It's just not what sells newspapers basically. It's better for people to show all the negative things. Then they can say prisoners are doing

nothing with their lives. They should be locked away. You need to have a positive side as well.

Participant

This musician comments on how her perceptions of prisons and those in them were changed. The experience influenced her conversations and debates with her friends.

“ On a personal note I found it incredibly moving. I tried not to think of the reasons that led them to incarceration whilst working in the prison and focus on the music but had plenty of time to reflect away from Whitemoor. I have to admit to an overwhelming sense of sadness at the waste of potential/life/talent but at the same time it was inspiring to see the enjoyment they received and gave with music. I was constantly humbled by the politeness of the men throughout. The experience opened up huge debates with people I know and is worthy of opening up further to the greater public. I'm sure many people's perceptions would be changed had they witnessed [the performance on] Tuesday.

Dawn Hardwick, piano

Need for talented and committed facilitators and musicians

Jan Ford, the experienced producer from Orchestras Live comments on the special qualities and commitments of the group of musicians and the facilitator who were such a cohesive and inspiring success in this project.

“ I think it is like an iceberg. There is a little tip of the iceberg which comes out of the performance and underneath it all there is 9/10th of the preparation, thought and structure and all the skills that go into making it look totally and utterly professional and effortless. We need to clone more of you because there are not enough leaders to do this kind of work at the right level. The skill of the leader and the skills of the prison team made what we had so effective.

Jan Ford, Orchestras Live

This is how Jason's sees his role as facilitator:

“ I see my role like a ringmaster. I guess my job is not to tell people what to do but to arrange it. Generally, I think you need one voice just to make a decision. Everyone was having amazing ideas and there were times when there were conflicting ideas and it was like: 'let's go with your idea

now, we can put your idea in next'. So, it was making room for them all and also having that musical vision. My role is to lead and to make sure we have a piece...We want to create a high-quality piece of music which everyone, the residents, the musicians, everyone on the stage is proud of doing. Actually, being quite selfish, I've got to stand there and conduct it. If it's rubbish people are going to go, 'what's that bloke at the front doing? It's a pretty rubbish piece of music.'

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Paul Archibald comments here on Jason Rowland's crucial role, without which the project could not have succeeded.

“*Someone like Jason has...got to steer us all, because...One of the downsides of a project like this is that once everyone gets into [the piece]... everyone has got ideas and we are all throwing in these ideas. Actually, it can end up being a complete mess. I think Jason did a terrific job by just sifting these ideas and making sure, even though we were not aware of it, we were being steered in the right direction.*

Paul Archibald, trumpet

Here is one participant's comment on Jason's approach and its importance.

“*He was asking people what they would like. If someone had an idea he would try and incorporate it rather than say 'No'. There was a guy [who] had a lot of the ideas for the basis, especially the last song, for [the] basis of the melody. Jason just built the rest of the orchestra part around that initial piano part...We all respect him as a person. He came here to do a job. He did what he needed to do, and we played a brilliant part. He extracted the best out of us... Released the potential.*

Participant

Paul makes the comparison with working the conductor of an orchestra.

“*When you are working with a workshop leader you need to feel that he or she respects your opinion and vice versa. That's exactly how it works in an orchestra. If you've got a conductor and you don't feel respected, actually you don't really work for that conductor and the whole thing becomes a little negative. So, it's a really level playing field and it's all based on respect.*

Paul Archibald, trumpet

Jason also stresses the importance of the attitude and approach of the professional musicians. He draws attention to their exceptional musical skills, their humility and their ability, almost inadvertently, to draw musical ideas from other less experienced participants.

“ It’s hugely impressive and hugely important to the project that you have the professional players who are absolutely world class and coming in. They are not showing off their world class-ness. They sit down as part of the band, as part of the ensemble and even for me standing at the front, there are moments where you will listen to some of our players and it’s like, ‘This is really, really cool. We can keep that groove going now.’ They’ve fired up someone on the other side. It’s inspired somebody else to lift their game, so everybody raises their game. I think it’s great.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

PART 3.

NEXT STEPS

The project clearly elicited a big and genuine enthusiasm among participants, other residents and staff for musical activities. This resident had already communicated his enthusiasm through the education centre in the prison.

“ We’ve already started a band in our [music] workshop.

Participant

Access to musical instruments

A prison officer who participated in the workshops and the concert, as well as attending the follow-up focus group with residents, noted the interest from residents in learning to play musical instruments.

“ Since the performance many people are taking up instruments, drums, guitar, piano...

Prison officer

“ There are a number of prisoners with keyboards in their cells, guitars in their cell, drum-type things in their cell. I have had a recent request from one of the cello players. We don’t see an issue with that. Stewart, the Music Technology Instructor, he’s made some connections and links with somebody following the event to get some instruments into the prison potentially.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Jason took great satisfaction from the desire of one participant to learn the cello with no previous experience.

“ The best thing about this project is the chap... who said he wants to learn cello. Just that thing of going away from a project like that and just a man who has never played an instrument before like that saying to me, ‘I would like to learn cello now.’ Apart from the orchestra saying to me this has been a great success; that to me has been just amazing.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Sustaining musical activities in the prison

A problem with high-profile, high-energy projects such as this one is that, once they are finished, people can feel rather down if there is no sustained follow through. Alan Gibson, one of the musicians, suggests there could be some musical follow through from the pieces made for the performance.

“ I was wondering whether we had the recording of the concert. I don’t know whether...some of that recording could go into the computers of the music tech suite. There was some fantastic singing. There were some beats, rhythms, grooves. You could get snipping and chopping and you could have a follow-on; a whole other project which is using stuff from that recording. You can get loads of tracks, beats and music coming out of that and that could go into a podcast or maybe it could on the radio on the BBC Late Junction or something.

Alan Gibson, electric bass

Jason agrees.

“ I know it was all a bit of a wash because of the sound but also [the sound recordist] had a direct feed off the bass and the vocal mikes were close. I mean that fantastic singing that C was doing, you could do other beats on that.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

Phil confirms this could be taken forward in the music tech suite by the teacher.

“ Stewart will be more than happy to do that and he could do that with a completely new group of prisoners because they do formal qualifications there in music technology. It’s a funded course and they do end up with qualifications.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

“ I am pretty sure I gave Stewart all the scores as well... If he has the recordings, he could use them as a learning tool to say this is what the band was playing but actually written down, this is what it looks like.

Jason Rowland, facilitator

The significance to the participants of knowing that the music being created was still alive, being worked on and having a life beyond the project is an important symbol and metaphor for the way in which their positive experiences can be built upon as building blocks to release and rehabilitation. In contained and controlled environments, symbols and metaphors have a special and an especially strong meaning.

Music mentors

Sarah suggests that participants in this programme and others like it could 'graduate' into becoming music mentors.

“ I was speaking to some of the residents and they said I speak three languages and I mentor because I've finished all the courses in languages. I thought that's great, so I wondered whether we can train up some music mentors. Instead of bringing musicians in and doing whole class sessions, we just get people who are going to be there for a while and train them up on strings or brass, so they can do basic lessons with whoever is interested. By the time the musicians come in they have practised a bit and they are more ready to do these workshops. They might even put something together for the festival. I know they have got music tech and they have to be on the programme and all that but [it would be good] if there was some way of selecting people that could be taught some instruments and then teach.

Sarah Rennix, Britten Sinfonia

“ There's a definite possibility for different mentors because Stewart also has contacts with music lessons for piano and singing so we may well have an orchestra, but a lot of the residents want to hold a talent show. I remember the residents came up with a name: Ex-Con Factor, which I thought was quite snappy and the Governor really liked it. They are really, really keen to take it on board.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

Podcast

Britten Sinfonia have recorded a podcast featuring the music, as well as participants and musicians talking about their experience of *Tuning Up*. These will be available on Britten Sinfonia's website, as well as being publicised via Lemos&Crane and Orchestras Live.

Improving prison facilities and equipment

A noteworthy aspect of the project is that the prison's facilities and resources were harnessed at no cost. This can be seen as a considerable in-kind contribution. Space, staff and prisoner volunteers were all essential components in the success of the project. Since the prison intends to keep up the commitment to a musical life in the prison, facilities could be improved. The prison could acquire sound recording equipment. This would greatly assist with the cost and logistics of projects such as this, as well as giving the prison the opportunity to use sound recording equipment for other educational activities.

In the focus group residents commented that they could make Rockwool panels in the prison workshops to reduce the echo in the larger rooms in prisons. Again, that would be an important in-kind contribution which would otherwise cost money. The men could also make and install drapes for the workshop rooms. The benefits would also be felt in a sense of ownership and co-production. The participants are not just receivers, but also contributors.

Reaching out to the local community – a festival?

This participant in the focus group expressed enthusiasm for something even bigger in the future.

“If it was a bigger and longer, we could’ve made something like a whole concert for sure.

Participant

“I found it really interesting when this project was evolving... Jan you said something about the prison being part of the community rather than people thinking there is a prison over there and we are going to ignore it and pretend it’s not there...The prison is a big part of our local community and it has employed local people for centuries. I am quite interested in...how this sort of project can change that as well.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

In response to the possibility of inviting members of the local community into the prison for a musical workshop or performance, Phil notes:

“ Anyone can come in as long as we know beforehand. One of my original thoughts was to invite the local musicians in, some of the amateur musicians. The only reason I shied away from that was that ultimately the task itself was getting rather large and I didn’t want to add any further to that.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

The partners on this project are working together to plan musical events and a one-day musical festival in HMP Whitemoor for 2019 which will be larger than the 2018 event and hopefully will involve members of the public as participants and audience members as well as, most importantly, family members and friends of the residents.

Longer-term plans

Phil mentions a creative, unusual plan for prison buskers.

“ We are working on something at the moment following on from this and from some other musical bits we’ve got. We’ve got quite a few prisoners now who are either learning musical instruments or already play something. When our population goes to work and back from work the wings let them off, they are all searched, and they go down. So, what we are thinking of doing is having buskers on the route, so a couple of people doing something to brighten up the walk. So, when the prison population goes to work in the morning there may be one or two key points having some buskers.

Phil Bramham, HMP Whitemoor

PART 4.

LESSONS LEARNT

1. **Orchestral repertory works**

Despite initial resistance, the benefits of using orchestral repertory as a starting point and an inspiration were considerable. The participants found it interesting, unusual and stretching. Most importantly, the music they composed and performed as a result was significantly more formal and demanding than would have been the case had they been simply allowed to make music based on their own existing tastes and knowledge. The educational benefits would have been considerably less.

2. **Orchestras' existing recorded material are an important resource**

Most professional orchestras are actively engaged in recording and filming, for example Britten Sinfonia performs at the BBC Proms regularly. So, they have a good deal of recorded and video material which is an important resource, both as inspiration for music-making as in this project, but also for use as follow up in music clubs possibly run in prison libraries or education centres, for example.

3. **Screening of recorded concerts are a good inspiration; live performances are better**

Watching a recorded concert when followed up with a music-making session and discussion led by professional musicians is an effective way of engaging participants with unfamiliar repertory and new musical genres. Screening of orchestral concerts without following them up with music-making sessions does not sustain engagement for extended periods of time, particularly if the performances are very long, more than 30 minutes say. A live performance by players from the orchestra of the piece that was to be worked on, as an inception to the programme, would work even better perhaps.

4. **Work with, not against, existing musical knowledge**

While the orchestral repertory represented a new and stretching experience, recognising that the participants had strongly held musical preferences of their own which could be validated as part of the project was also important. Ignoring, denigrating or setting aside those tastes and skills would not only have undermined their musical confidence but may also have been perceived

as a supercilious indifference to their own culture and heritage which, for all of us, is generally reflected in musical tastes and in any number of other attitudes and preferences.

5. The musical, educational and symbolic benefits of fusion

Musical projects such as *Tuning Up* have the most to offer participants when they are both introduced to something new, in terms of musical genres as well as musical skills, as well as building on their existing tastes and attributes. The benefits are felt in musical development as well as a sense of confidence in improving skills and having one's interests and tastes validated and included by musical 'experts'. The sense of development and evolution also has powerful symbolic resonances for people who may otherwise feel stuck for a long time in prison.

6. Reducing asymmetries of power and control

The question of power and powerlessness is inevitably never far below the surface in prisons. The men know that ultimately they are in a highly controlled environment over which, if they transgress, they have little say. A high security environment like HMP Whitemoor only accentuates that fact and the living symbol of that powerlessness is the long sentences of incarceration which all the residents of HMP Whitemoor are serving. That said, projects such as this that take place alongside the general regime rather than as part of it are an opportunity in a small way to counterbalance that power difference. As participants and musicians there is a sense, perhaps not of absolute equality, but of shared endeavour, collaboration and mutual interdependence. These are important life skills to stress and of course, regardless of the official rhetoric, exist within prison life as well. Prisons work best with the co-operation of the men and that co-operation is most likely when people feel that the regime and those in authority over them have their best interests at heart even as they fulfil the requirements of the sentence and the court, however unwelcome.

7. Two or three musicians for each workshop

The methodology used for *Tuning Up* was that each of the six Britten Sinfonia musicians participated in one workshop each and then came together for the performance with the men and staff from Whitemoor. Since the maximum number of participants in a group was 15, and there were 30 participants, the effect of only having one musician is that the group leader, Jason Rowland, had then to manage the other group as well as the entire session for the group of 30 as a whole. So, it would be preferable to have two or three musicians for each workshop, costs permitting, and, if financially necessary, slightly reduce the number of workshops.

8. Breakout rooms

Since the most effective way to conduct the workshops is in two groups of roughly 15 participants each breakout rooms are a definite benefit to concentration and musical productivity. Finding breakout spaces and moving residents between rooms during workshop is not always logistically straightforward in a prison setting, but it is nevertheless a considerable aid to concentration and achievement.

9. Importance of big orchestra effect

Having two groups of 15 participants in each group meant that bringing the two groups together with the Britten Sinfonia musicians and the members of staff participating in the band created a performing orchestra of more than 50 people. This made for a great 'wall of sound' as the recordings make clear. This big orchestra feeling was one of the aspects of *Tuning Up* that differentiated it from other musical projects in prisons, which tend to be small scale, involve one or two musicians, much smaller groups of men and no members of staff at all. That feeling of creating a 'real orchestra' with a big band sound was integral to the enthusiastic reaction from the audience and from the participants and holding everyone's attention.

10. Sustaining musical activities through the year

The days can be long and monotonous for offenders serving long sentences. One-off projects which last a few days or weeks, however enriching and ephemerally satisfying, can be problematic in that context. They raise expectations which either can't be fulfilled or there is, for one reason or another, no follow up. It is therefore important after a high profile, exhilarating event like the performance of *Tuning Up* to have a follow up of other musical activities which participants, having been enthused, can continue with. These might include learning to play musical instruments or participating in musical education activities.

11. Keeping staff involved and enthusiastic

One of the most striking aspects of *Tuning Up* was the involvement of staff, including senior and governor grade staff, in the music making activities. This put people on a level playing field as musicians, forgetting briefly the strong and explicit hierarchies that inevitably govern prison life. With musical activities that continue after the performance, staff should be involved in those also to maintain the sense of involvement and commitment from everyone in the prison. Not every activity has to be high profile or involve a lot of planning and expenditure. An *Acapella* band or a prison choir involving both residents and staff could be taken forward by some of the many talented singers among the prison staff, subject to flexibility with rotas.

12. Improving acoustics

Prison workshops are bare and echoey places where, for musical activities, acoustics could be improved by drapes or Rockwool panels. These could be installed temporarily for musical activities if the rooms are multi-purpose. They could be manufactured in prison workshops and installed by the men themselves, encouraging ownership of the whole project and all the activities.

13. Sound recording equipment in the prison

Bringing sound recording equipment into the prison is hard work logistically and in staff time, but having a good quality recording at the end of the programme is essential to achieve the public engagement objective – to ensure that members of the general public as well as friends and family members of men in prison can appreciate their musical achievements. The feeling on the part of participants that their work is appreciated and, even though they are serving a long sentence, they are maintaining an active and creative contact with the outside world is enormously important for feelings of wellbeing and preventing feelings of

isolation and the depression that may follow. So, a small investment by the prison in good quality recording equipment would reduce logistical headaches as well as ensuring good quality recordings are more widely available outside the prison. The recording equipment could also be used for other musical education activities in the prison.

14. Involving family members in music-making activities in the prison

A special difficulty for men serving long sentences is maintaining meaningful contact with their families. For many this becomes impossible as their lives grow further and further apart. Many men leave prison after long sentences with no contacts in the world outside at all, a sad and ongoing fact of prison life. Unsurprisingly this is a substantial risk factor for reoffending. Indeed, maintaining family contact and having family to welcome you home on release from prison is one of the most promising positive indicators of long-term resettlement and rehabilitation and a permanent move away from a life of crime. Projects such as *Tuning Up* have the inordinate benefit of creating a musical object borne of experience which can be shared with family members as a symbol of an achievement, a recognition that time in prison is not completely wasted. That small feeling of pride on the part of the man in prison in the eyes of those he desperately wants to feel connected to, and accepted by, is of immeasurable benefit.

15. Music as a way of connecting the prison to the community

HMP Whitemoor seems, like many prisons, remote and far from major towns and cities; however it is a substantial local employer and it would be difficult to imagine local people not being aware of its large-looming, nearby presence. Strengthening the ties between the prison and the wider community would also help to build trust and encourage local people to volunteer or become part of the life of the prison. Again, this would have the benefit of creating a connection between potentially isolated long-term residents and the outside world, with considerable benefits in a sense of belonging and therefore a sense of wellbeing.

CONCLUSION

Tuning Up exceeded everyone's expectations and ambitions. The reasons for the success of the project were the excellence of the musicians, the exceptional musical and facilitation skills of Jason Rowland, the determination, thoroughness and creativity of Sarah Rennix and Megan de Garis, the organisers from Britten Sinfonia, wise experience and advice from Jan Ford at Orchestras Live and the commitment and enthusiasm of the leadership of HMP Whitemoor. Above all, the project succeeded because of the commitment and positive attitudes of the participants, both residents and staff.

While the partners feel this was a special project with a special group of people, we do not feel that the project could not be replicated with a similarly strong partnership between prisons and orchestras assisted by willing enablers and a relatively modest financial contribution. On the contrary, our hope is that other orchestras and prisons will learn from our positive experience and work together with similar benefits and achievements to those we are proud to have accomplished.

ABOUT THE TUNING UP PARTNERS

HMP Whitemoor

Whitemoor is a maximum security prison for men in Category A and B located in March, Cambridgeshire. The prison has an occupational capacity of 458. The prison focuses on settlement (helping those convicted of serious offences to make positive use of long sentences) and resettlement (reducing the risk of reoffending through assessment, work, education and offending behaviour programmes). The prison includes a Dangerous and Severe Personality Disorder Unit. The Fens Unit is part of the national OPD pathway of the Health Partnerships Directorate, providing thorough assessment and a fully worked out treatment model. Whitemoor also houses a Close Supervision Centre (CSC). The unit prepares prisoners who pose a severe risk to others, to return to a normal prison environment.

www.justice.gov.uk/contacts/prison-finder/whitemoor

Britten Sinfonia

Britten Sinfonia is one of the world's most celebrated and pioneering ensembles, acclaimed for an inspired approach to concert programming which makes connections across 400 years of repertoire. Britten Sinfonia breaks the mould by not having a principal conductor or director, instead collaborating with the finest international guest artists. Britten Sinfonia is an Associate Ensemble at the Barbican in London, Resident Orchestra at Saffron Hall, with residencies in Norwich and Cambridge and performs a chamber music series at Wigmore Hall. The orchestra made its debut in China in 2016 and in 2018 made its debut at the Sistine Chapel. Central to Britten Sinfonia's artistic programmes are Creative Learning projects within both schools and the community including the youth ensemble, Britten Sinfonia Academy and annual composition competition, OPUS.

www.brittensinfonia.com

Orchestras Live

Orchestras Live is a registered charity passionate about bringing world class orchestral music to as wide a range of people as possible, regardless of their location, age, background or circumstances. Our work is founded on our vision that 'orchestras are for everyone' and we target those for whom orchestral music is a new experience or something from which they have been excluded, often due to the belief that 'orchestras are not for the likes of us'. We have a key objective to broaden and deepen engagement with a focus on reaching those most marginalised. We believe that orchestral music can have a profound beneficial effect on wellbeing and our projects are the catalyst for a range of social, emotional and musical outcomes. Our priorities are to focus on children and young people, diversity, health and wellbeing and people living in culturally underserved and geographically isolated areas.

www.orchestraslive.org.uk

Lemos&Crane

Lemos&Crane has provided practitioners and policy-makers with information for action on social problems since 1994. We work with professionals in criminal justice agencies, social housing, local government, schools and voluntary organisations as well as trusts and foundations. Lemos&Crane is one of the member organisations of the Monument Fellowship. Over 20,000 people are registered to use Lemos&Crane websites to learn from research projects, improve ways of working and share good practice. Lemos&Crane has worked extensively with policy makers and government, including the Ministry of Justice, HM Prisons and Probation Service, Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government, Cabinet Office and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Our partners in these projects include Thames Reach, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Caritas Westminster, London Symphony Orchestra, Britten Sinfonia, Orchestras Live, National Gallery, V&A, Tate, Clinks, Koestler Trust, Diagrama Foundation, Centre for Justice Innovation, Restorative Solutions, Khulisa, National Criminal Justice Alliance for the Arts and others.

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It's all had an utterly brilliant impact around the site... one of those rare awesome days I will always remember."

Will Styles, Governor, HMP Whitemoor

