

The Musician

Journal of the Musicians' Union
Winter 2022
theMU.org



Sarah Bennett

Cover star: flautist with the Hallé Orchestra and freelance player

Union Solidarity

How trade unions have united over the UK cost of living crisis

Members' Conference

MU hosts a landmark equality, diversity and inclusion summit

Loud And Clear

Why musicians must take action to protect their hearing at work

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Musicians'
Union



Is This Really Levelling Up?

Following the latest round of funding cuts to British artistic and cultural organisations, Naomi Pohl outlines the Musicians' Union's view on what actions we can take



Naomi Pohl,
General Secretary

“We have wanted to see an increase in arts funding overall rather than this current ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’ approach”

Following Arts Council England's funding announcement on 4 November, the Union has been working hard to assess the potential impact for organisations that engage musicians and fight for those who have received significant cuts.

The announcement reveals a mixed bag of positive policy developments by Arts Council England – for example an increase in diversity in the NPO portfolio, and severe cuts. We understand that there was a clear directive from the UK Government to move money out of London as a result of the ‘levelling up’ agenda. The Union has always been in support of more money for organisations across the breadth of the UK and across musical genres, but we have wanted to see an increase in arts funding overall rather than this current ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’ approach.

Money invested in the arts in the UK generates a healthy return for the economy. This has been our case when we’ve lobbied for increased arts funding in the past and we will continue to make these arguments. We also lobby on the basis of other benefits provided by arts organisations to the country and local communities – the work they do in education and in healthcare settings, for example.

In the immediate wake of the announcement, I met with ACE Chief Executive Officer Darren Henley and Music And London Director Claire Mera-Nelson to discuss it. I particularly challenged them on the cuts to Opera and asked what could be done to secure the future of the affected companies. In the case of English National Opera, they are calling for a longer period of funding at

current levels in order to safeguard jobs and give them time to transition.

Challenging Arts Funding Cuts

Given that the ACE cuts have come about as a result of sustained Government reductions to arts funding over the past decade, the MU has asked Culture Secretary Michelle Donelan for an urgent meeting to make the case for more investment. We have also asked our parliamentary allies to question Ministers in the Commons and the Lords, and I have spoken with Keir Starmer's team.

We are particularly looking to challenge the idea that taking money away from London organisations is the best way to implement the ‘levelling up’ agenda. Does levelling up in some areas have to mean significant levelling down in others?

The UK Government should be looking to support the full arts infrastructure across the UK and the amount spent in our sector is minimal compared to other areas of public spending.

Take Action Now

Alongside the Union's own work, the MU is supporting member and organisation campaigns such as #LoveENO that highlight major cuts.

Here's How You Can Help

- Tell the Union if you are directly or indirectly affected by any funding cuts
- Write to your MP to express concern and make the case for increased arts funding. Handwritten letters sent by post are particularly effective when lobbying your local MP.

For details on how to contact your MP please visit [theyworkforyou.com](https://www.theyworkforyou.com)

We want to hear your stories, positive and negative, so we can build up a clear picture of the impact of Arts Council England's decisions on the musician community. [theyworkforyou.com](https://www.theyworkforyou.com)



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Linton Stephens





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Photo: Jonathan Stewart. © MU

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MU Contributors



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Andrew writes for *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *Classical Music* and *BBC Music Magazine*, among many others. He is also Director of Southwark Voices. **p14 & 22**



Neil Churchman

Neil is an experienced journalist in broadcasting and print. A former BBC national newsroom assistant editor, he now writes on music and the media. **p42**



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Henry Yates

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Tim Tucker

Tim is an author, journalist and musician. He gigs and records in Bristol, and is currently researching the benefits of Web 3 for musicians. **p30**



Neil Crossley

An editor and writer whose features have appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times* and the *FT*. Neil also fronts the Bristol band Furlined. **p18**



Ariane Todes

Ariane Todes is a journalist specialising in string music, and was editor of *The Strad* magazine. She plays violin in a variety of amateur orchestras. **p26**

Photo: Miles Myerscough-Harris. © MU

Cover photo: Joseph Branston. © Musicians' Union 2022. Taken at Menagerie Restaurant & Bar, Manchester. www.menagerierestaurant.co.uk



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frontline

Winter 2022

The MU in action, working on behalf of professional musicians

Musicians' Union Makes Its Mark At Party Conferences

The MU had a successful Labour Party Conference in October with an impressive stand that was visited by a large number of MPs. At the Conference, the Union highlighted the recent MU and Fabian Society report on music education, which recommends the creation of a National Music Service for England.

Meetings were held with MPs including Stephen Doughty, Alison McGovern and Thangam Debonnaire, as well as prospective Labour candidates and David Lammy MP's policy team. The MU also met with Labour leader Keir Starmer and Deputy Leader Angela Rayner, alongside other trade unions.

Rousing Speech

MU Head of Communications and Government Relations, Isabelle Gutierrez, attended all National Executive Committee meetings and took part in the debate on a green and digital future. General Secretary Naomi Pohl spoke on a number of panels including events on the future of UK-EU relations, an arts and culture roundtable with Jeff Smith MP and a fringe event on proportional representation. She also gave a rousing speech at the TULO rally alongside other Union General Secretaries.

MU delegates voted in favour of the successful 'proportional representation' motion and MU member Andi Hopgood made a very well-received speech on stage about the need for music streaming reform.



Photo: Jonathan Stewart. © MU

The MU also attended the Conservative Party Conference, to ask government for more funding for music education and to discuss music streaming issues. Naomi Pohl spoke in favour of orchestral funding and improvements in terms and conditions for Musicians' Union members.

Music For All

At this Conference, the MU also hosted a very successful event called Music For All, to promote the importance of music education, with music from the Brodsky Quartet [see profile on p26]. Naomi and the MU's National Organiser for Education, Health and Wellbeing, Chris Walters, spoke about the need for increased funding for music education. For full details visit the news section of the MU website at theMU.org

“The MU hosted a successful event called Music For All, to promote the importance of music education in the UK”

MU Officials And Staff Appointments

Matt Wanstall, previously the Union's Regional Organiser for the North of England, has been appointed Assistant General Secretary. The Union's leadership, working closely with the Executive Committee, is now made up of the General Secretary and two Assistant General Secretaries.

Paul Reed, formerly of the Association of Independent Festivals, has now been appointed to the North of England Regional Organiser role and will lead the MU team based in Manchester.

New International Role

MU Official Dave Webster has taken up a new post as Head of International for the MU. Dave will continue to focus on tackling the impact of Brexit and will also provide advice to members on international issues, heading up policy on issues such as transporting instruments on planes, international trade, and travelling with instruments.

More Key Appointments

Kelly Wood has been appointed National Organiser for Live, Theatre and Music Writers, and the former Scotland and Northern Ireland EC member Dr Diljeet Bhachu has been appointed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

The MU's new Head of Finance and Admin is Ronke Adeagbo, formerly of the trade union PCS. Ronke succeeds Beverley Dawes in this role, who retired in summer of 2022 following many years of valuable service.

Philip Morris recently joined the MU's North of England team and is already proving a very effective advocate for musicians in the Region. Also joining the Manchester office is Sharon Reeves, as the full-time North of England Membership Services Assistant.

After undertaking valuable work with the MU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, Rose Delcour-Min is taking up a post as the Union's Education, Health and Wellbeing Officer, working for members who teach, alongside National Organiser Chris Walters.



Photo: Mark Allen

MU Sponsors Innovation Award At The Ivors

The MU was delighted to sponsor the Ivor Novello Award for Innovation at The Ivors Composer Awards, which are sponsored by PRS for Music. BBC Radio 3's Hannah Peel and Tom Service hosted the awards ceremony on Tuesday 15 November, where twelve Ivor Novello Awards were bestowed to celebrate the best new music by classical, jazz and sound art composers.

Virtuoso tabla player, percussionist, producer and composer Talvin Singh was the recipient of the inaugural Innovation award, which was presented by MU General Secretary Naomi Pohl and jazz maestro Orphy Robinson MBE. Singh was praised by the Ivors Academy for

being "a major creative and cultural influence, an innovator in every sense of the word, who continues to leave a unique footprint on our musical landscape".

This year's winners also included composer Judith Weir, who was honoured with Fellowship of The Ivors Academy, and Sir George Benjamin, who received the Award for Outstanding Works Collection. Another winner was Rebecca Saunders, who won her fifth award for *To An Utterance*, a work praised by The Ivors Academy jury for showing "a really special kind of compositional consistency". For more on the Awards, please visit tinyurl.com/ivorsmu

Industry Stats

110m

Apple Music predicted to hit 110 million subscribers worldwide by the year 2025, according to a report by JP Morgan.

67%

Percentage of young people who regularly make music of some kind, a poll on UK music habits by Youth Music and Ipsos Mori suggests.

145,000

Jobs in the UK music sector in 2021. This is up 14% on 2020, but down a massive 26% pre-Covid figures in 2019, says UK Music.

For the latest news on how the Musicians' Union is helping you, visit: [theMU.org](https://www.theMU.org)



ASK US FIRST Check through our list of promoters before agreeing to accept an engagement at tinyurl.com/askusfirst

Classical Music Industry Research

Groundbreaking research into parents and carers in the classical sector has found that the classical music industry is at risk of losing talent and decreasing in diversity.

The Bittersweet Symphony report was conducted by the charity Parents and Carers in Performing Arts (PiPA) and Birkbeck, University of London, and supported by Help Musicians and the MU.

The report reveals that parents and carers pay a significant penalty in terms of their wellbeing, work opportunities and remuneration to maintain a career in classical music. The report also found that parents and carers struggle due to outdated working practices in the classical music sector.

The report concluded that over 85% of self-employed women who have caring responsibilities (including mothers) reported a pay penalty of £8,000, earning the least, at £12,000, compared to £20,000 for freelance men. Other findings revealed that half of respondents (50%) are unsatisfied with their work-life balance, and 82% reported managing work and family commitments as being moderately to extremely stressful.

To find out more about the landmark Bittersweet Symphony report please visit tinyurl.com/3yp5xnn2



Photo: FangXiaNuo / Getty Images

MU Update On Brexit For Musicians

The MU has been closely involved in the compiling of two comprehensive reports outlining the difficulties that musicians are experiencing in the post-Brexit age.

Dave Webster, MU Head of International says: "Brexit is stifling our industry and we need government to come out, engage with the industry, the EU (they are suffering too from this) and act before it's too late." For more information, and to find links to the reports, please visit tinyurl.com/mubrex

Teaching Holiday Pay Guidance

The MU has updated its guidance page on holiday pay for music teachers, particularly when calculating this for atypical work and part-year workers.

Employers calculating the average week's pay must now consider all pay earned over the 52-week period. Any weeks where no pay was earned must be ignored. Instead, earlier weeks up to 104 weeks before the calculation date must be brought into the calculation to make up 52 remunerated weeks.

Once the average week's pay is identified, the formula to calculate holiday pay is: the average week's pay x 5.6 = statutory holiday pay. Employers should now calculate the worker's 52 remunerated work weeks each time the holiday calculation is performed. For full details please visit tinyurl.com/holipaynu

Being Black In The UK Music Industries

The MU called on the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) to lobby the government to improve pay gap reporting, ensure Black histories are taught in schools, and to make diversity monitoring a legal requirement.

The 2022 STUC Black Workers' Conference took place once again at the Golden Jubilee Conference Hotel in Glasgow. MU Scotland and Northern Ireland Regional Committee member and activist Graham Campbell moved the MU's motion on Being Black in the UK Music Industries, which was seconded by NUJ. The motion was passed unanimously.

Dates For The Diary

12 Dec

What: Feldenkrais: Move Better, Feel Better, Perform Better, Holistic learning workshop
Where: Online
Info: theMU.org

16 Jan

What: NY:LON Connect 2023. Annual music industry conference
Where: 20 Primrose Street London EC2A 2RS
Info: nylonconnect.com

21-22 Jan

What: ICMETM. International Conference on Music Education and Teaching Methods
Where: Online
Info: tinyurl.com/ICMETM23

23-26 Jan

What: UK Americana Music Week 2023: Annual conference, showcase, festival and awards
Where: Hackney Central
Info: theamauk.org/events

23-24 Feb

What: Music & Drama Education Expo
Where: Business Design Centre, London N1 0QH
Info: musicanddramaeducationexpo.co.uk

Your Voice

This selection of tweets, emails and letters reflects the diverse range of dialogue between the MU and its members.

Warm Welcome

Great opening to the MU conference, welcoming our first woman GS to the stage! Refreshing to hear a senior leader discuss breastfeeding breaks in meetings!

Oлга FitzRoy @OlgaFitzRoy

Education First

We need a National Music Education Service in England, with better working conditions for teachers at its heart.

Ben Cooper @BenCooper1995

Fund The Arts

We must properly fund music and the arts subjects in our schools, because when children have access to music, they improve across their education. We must never forget this.

Clr Tom Plater @ThomasPlater

Take A Break

If there's one thing to be positive about it's the current crop of very successful artists being open about just how hard it is on your mental health to do this as a job. And making the call to stop and rest. Props to both Arlo Parks and Sam Fender for making this conversation happen.

Dr. Catherine Anne Davies
@CatherineAD



Arlo Parks is one of many young artists who are acutely aware of their own mental health as musicians

Photo: Erika Goldring / Getty Images

Building Confidence

"If a child has the confidence to stand on stage and sing they have the confidence to do anything" The wonderful Alison McGovern and Naomi Pohl passionately making the case for music education at the Labour Conference.

James Topp @jamestopp

Minimum Rate

Artists need to start setting a minimum rate. The Musicians' Union has guidelines on it. Acts shouldn't be getting anything less. We are only undercutting ourselves. It's our job as much as our passion. We have bills to pay too. Music has value! You have value!

brownbear @brownbearband

Fair Deal

Musicians still face huge costs and complications to tour in the EU resulting in less opportunity. They need a deal and a government that's on their side.

Ellie Reeves MP @elliereeves

Lack Of Action

The Musicians' Union on Energy: "More than half of our members did not benefit from furlough or from the self-employed assistance (SEISS) during the COVID 19 crisis, so for the Government to use the money spent during the pandemic as an excuse for lack of action now is particularly galling."

Louise Braithwaite
@LouBraithwaite

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Together, United...

With industrial action gathering pace around the country and more strikes on the horizon, *The Musician* reports on the industrial action and how the Musicians' Union is positioned to respond

Report by Katie Nicholls

Print journalists are well accustomed to using the caveat 'at the time of writing', but such is the tumultuous nature of the UK's current political landscape that when *The Musician* interviewed Paul Nowak, incoming General Secretary of the TUC, for this report, Liz Truss was prime minister. By the time the feature was written, it was Rishi Sunak. When MU members receive this issue of *The Musician* it's possible that there could be a new Chancellor or Home Secretary, such is the uncertainty that prevails in Westminster's political circus.

Beyond the revolving door of politicians in Parliament, a sad certainty is the grim economic outlook that predicts increased taxes, reduced benefits, higher rates of interest and rising inflation, which is currently the highest in 40 years. In a recent TUC poll it was revealed that one in seven

people are skipping meals, an illustration of the desperate situation of many UK workers, including musicians, technicians and music teachers.

A Country In Crisis

With the backdrop of the cost-of-living and energy crisis looming large, many workers have seen effective pay cuts and in response to minimal pay rises alongside poor working conditions, unions representing rail workers, communication workers, postal workers, dock workers and the criminal bar association have all taken strike action since spring 2022. With the British Medical Association, the Royal College of Nursing and two of the largest teaching unions – the National Education Union (NEU) and the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Woman Teachers (NASUWT) balloting their members this autumn on industrial action, it looks likely that the 'summer of discontent' will bleed into the winter.

If all the unions currently balloting their members on industrial action receive the overwhelming response that, for example, the NEU did, which saw 86% of votes in favour of supporting a strike, then the UK could see doctors, paramedics, nurses, teachers, rail workers and postal staff on picket lines this winter. Mick Lynch, General Secretary of the RMT (The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers), is vocal in his support of coordinated action. Speaking at a fringe meeting during the TUC Congress, which

Left: Naomi Pohl, General Secretary of the Musicians' Union, at the Labour Party Conference. Right: Paul Nowak, incoming General Secretary of the TUC





John Michael Whelan, General Secretary of the trade union ASLEF, joins a picket line outside Euston railway station

took place between 18–22 October, Lynch stopped just short of calling for a general strike: “We need an uprising. We need a whole wave of synchronised, coordinated action. I don’t care what it’s called.” In response, Frances O’Grady, General Secretary of the TUC later told *The Guardian*, “Obviously in [some] sectors it can make particular sense to synchronise days and timing. In other areas, what I see is clearly a wave of action happening, and you can have sensible discussions about what’s more industrially effective. Synchronisation can be. Sometimes, actually, it’s better not to have everything on the same day.”

“To be honest, I don’t think there will be a general strike” says Paul Nowak. “I think there’s a danger that you can get into a theoretical argument about general strike or generalised strike. The point is that our job is to make sure that the strikes that do take place – and it’s difficult to take strike action legally in this country – are as effective as possible. We’re not interested in sloganeering or grand calls,” he continues, “what we’re interested in is that the action that’s taking place – when people are losing pay and taking a big decision to go on strike – that they’re being properly supported. It’s the job of

“We need an uprising.
We need a whole
wave of synchronised,
coordinated action”

Mick Lynch

the TUC to coordinate unions and support unions. We potentially have groups of workers in the NHS, civil service and in education that could take strike action early next year and our job is to make sure that strike action delivers for members.”

For the music industry – which suffered particularly vicious blows during the pandemic – it’s a sector very much in a precarious state of recovery, a consideration that Naomi Pohl, General Secretary of the Musicians’ Union, says informs the roadmap forward for the MU and its members. “I’m not talking about strike action,” she says, “I am talking about a major industrial campaign but strike →



Photos: Anadolu Agency / Getty Images; Jess Hurd

The Party Of Pay Cuts

Frances O’Grady of the TUC reveals her thoughts on the damage of 12 years of Conservative government.

“The Conservatives have shown themselves to be the party of pay cuts. They have cut pay directly – with year after year of pay caps and cuts across the public sector. And they have pushed through laws that restrict the right to strike, making it harder for workers to negotiate fair pay rises.

“There may not be many musicians on the public sector payroll. But musicians depend on audiences. When nurses, firefighters and other public sector workers have their pay cut, they have to tighten their belts and cut their spending. So the hit comes around to working people in arts and entertainment, too.

“We’ve seen Liz Truss openly admit that the Conservative approach has failed since 2010. But her extreme approach was even worse, failing so hard and fast that she caused a financial crisis with devastating impacts for working people. Sunak has now entered office with no democratic mandate whatsoever and a cabinet full of people who share responsibility for crashing the UK economy. We need a general election now.”

action may come. There might be a crunch point for musicians if they can't get a better deal and they really feel like they've got no other option."

Roadmap For Action

The unions, says Paul Nowak, have never been "more high profile", and the Musicians' Union has seen record increases in membership in recent months, as workers look towards unions as a lifeline during this time of crisis. Paul Nowak will be taking the reins from Frances O'Grady in January 2023 and says he feels "incredibly privileged, but also daunted" by the prospect. "The political situation is changing by the hour, but what's clear is that lots of our members are slap bang in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, and the big job of the TUC is to support our members and support our unions to make sure that working people don't bear the brunt of that crisis. It's a big job ahead."

The TUC intends to face this huge task with a multi-pronged approach that combines building on the TUC's Solidary Hub, which Nowak explains is "about providing practical support to unions, disputes and campaigns: beating ballot thresholds, supporting reps who may be on strike for the very first time and leveraging in support from the wider movement". This, he is keen to establish, is not just about supporting each other's disputes, but "supporting each other's organising campaigns so that we're making the best of our resources across the movement."

The key, says Nowak, "is building our rep base, and I think there's a lot the TUC can do to make sure that when unions are bringing in new reps they make sure they've got access to support and training, and that we're networking reps from different unions." Digital presence, he says, is another TUC priority targeted at "harnessing the power of digital to reach out to people and organise them to enable them to bargain more effectively".

With 48 unions under its wing the TUC needs to take a broad perspective. For the Musicians' Union, however, the vision is targeted on the specific issues experienced by those working in the industry, and its roadmap reflects that perspective. "One of my pledges when I was running for General Secretary was to build back pay and



"There might be a crunch point for musicians if they can't get a better deal"

Naomi Pohl

conditions post-pandemic," says Naomi Pohl. A lot of our orchestras and West End theatres, touring and regional theatres had to agree to variations to their usual terms and conditions during the pandemic so, for example, in the West End there was a reduction on Sundays, and our members agreed to go down to time-and-a-half for a period of time. Really our priority is to get back to normal terms and conditions, but obviously we want pay rises that reflect the cost of living as well."

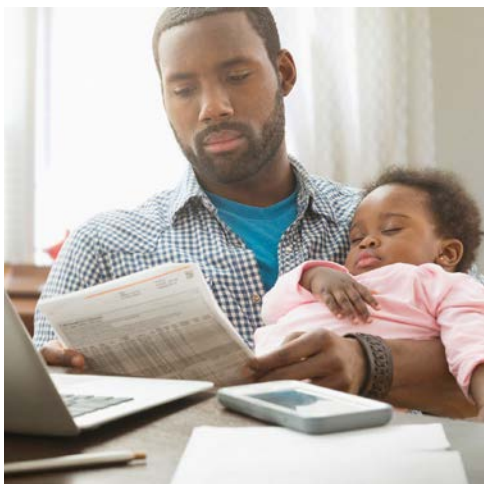
Naomi explains that the MU plan is a long-term one, stretching over the next "two or three years" – time spent lobbying government for better arts funding and tax relief, meeting with the arts council, and putting in measures that should get organisations in a better position to offer pay rises. "We also need to look at areas like the recorded music business where they're actually making record profits," says Naomi. "They've not been dealing with closure frankly, and they can afford to put the rates up for members."

Help For MU members

"We've got a cost of living information hub on the website right now, so we're doing a lot of signposting," says MU General Secretary, Naomi Pohl. "If MU members are in severe financial hardship they can apply to our benevolent fund, and to Help Musicians or the Royal Society of Musicians, so there's direct financial support available. The other thing we're trying to flag to members is that we collect over a million pounds of royalties each year, and we're working hard to get that money out to people. Also, we recover unpaid fees: a gig or teaching work; we can chase that money for you."

"Members should feel part of a community and be aware that other members are going through exactly what they're going through," says Naomi. "We're here to support, we're here to provide advice, and we're constantly reviewing our benefits to see if there's anything further we can supply to our members."

Photo: Jose Luis Pelaez Inc / Getty Images



Far left: Outgoing TUC General Secretary Francis O'Grady, and her successor Paul Nowak, campaigning together for workers' rights. Below: The increased prevalence of foodbanks in the UK is a very visual indicator of the current cost of living crisis



Photo: SolStock / Getty Images

Not surprisingly negotiating with the current government has proved to be as Naomi says, “difficult”, but with new faces in the cabinet she says the MU is committed to forging forward. “Nadine Dorries turned me down for a meeting, and if you can’t get access to the Secretary of State [for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport] you’ve got problems!” Naomi reports. “I’m hoping that Michelle Donelan will agree to meet us – I’ll keep trying – and I’ve got a meeting with the Arts Council. There’s the lobbying work and then there’s the negotiations themselves, where we have to achieve the best possible deal that we can.”

Naomi says a lot of MU members are low paid and are really struggling. “The average musician is paid between £20K and £25K a year, so if you’ve got your own bills and mortgage rising at home there’s a very real risk that musicians will leave the industry and just go and find employed jobs in other sectors, and we can’t afford that. We’ve got to balance the needs of our members with the state of the industry at large.”

Power In Solidarity

Since the legalisation of the Trade Union Movement in 1871, workers across the sectors have put faith in the power of collective bargaining. During this time of political and economic crisis it’s never felt more important. “Even though musicians are struggling and possibly leaving the industry, our membership figures are going up,” reports Naomi, “and I think that’s because in such difficult and insecure times people feel that they need that reassurance of somebody to speak to and get advice from.” Paul Nowak agrees that the current situation has triggered not just wider increased support for the unions, but also support within the union movement too. “It’s not one homogenous movement, but I do get the sense that we feel more like a united movement – more than we have done for a long time,” Nowak considers. “You always have to recognise that at the end of the day unions are there to represent their members, but it’s just as important for the unions to come together because that unity gives you strength.” **mu**

The Power of Learning

Flautist and teacher Sarah Bennett is thankful for her musical education, but fears those opportunities may be shrinking

Profile by Andrew Stewart

Cynicism is a condition unlikely ever to afflict Sarah Bennett. Her love for making and sharing music, whether as second flute in the Hallé Orchestra, as an extra with other leading British ensembles or as an aspiring DJ, is immune to every known strain of gloom and negativity. She's equally passionate about the importance of lifelong music education and the positive energy that orchestras can bring to the communities they serve. Those subjects are close to the heart of a musician who knows from personal experience and observation the transformative power of learning an instrument, listening to a symphony orchestra or performing with a group of musical friends.

Sarah joined the Hallé in 2018 after completing postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music. It felt like a homecoming for a player who received most of her training in Manchester, as a pupil at Chetham's School of Music and a first-class honours graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music. As well as playing second flute, she takes the principal's seat when her colleague Amy Yule is absent. Her journey to the Hallé shows what can be achieved by someone born outside the privileged classes when aspiration, aptitude and attitude are backed from an early age by family support and state-provided opportunities. She recalls life-shaping experiences of music at primary school in her native Leeds, where she was held spellbound by the way a teacher turned the pages while playing piano for assembly.

"I knew I wanted to be a musician from the age of four or five," recalls Sarah. "I told my mum when I was very


young that I wanted to be a 'constant' pianist, not a concert pianist! I believe it's so important to have music in schools and to give the music bug to young children. It only takes one teacher to give them that love of music for life." Sarah began learning flute when she was eleven and soon discovered the importance of being encouraged at the right time in the right way.

"I always wanted to play the flute, and had a fantastic teacher called Margaret Humphreys who was quite amazing. She ran a very tight ship and was always on me with my technique and the way I was playing. There was no half-playing anything: she always wanted it to be like you were performing a concert. She was fantastic at nudging me towards where I wanted to be with my playing at a young age."

Family Help

Good teaching and family backing made all the difference to Sarah's progress. Her grandparents bought her first instrument, while her mother spent hours each week ferrying her to and from rehearsals and concerts. "I'm from a working-class background, so that was a big sacrifice for them," she notes. "Monday nights would be wind band, Tuesday was orchestra, Wednesday would be something else. It took my mum's love and determination to get me to where I am now. I don't think it would be possible without the support of your parents."

Two years after receiving her first flute lesson, Sarah gained a place at Chetham's School of Music. She flourished there while playing in the company of like-minded young musicians. "I realised then that →



“I’m from a working-class background. It took my mum’s love and determination to get me to where I am now”

“There’s so much education work going on with the Hallé”

I wanted to play in an orchestra. It was about the fun of making music with others. It was my absolute dream to play with the Hallé. It’s remarkable how many people have been there for 20, 30, even 40 years. The same is true for members of the chorus. It goes to show what a nice organisation the Hallé is to work for – everyone is looked after. We call it the Hallé family. Everyone’s so lovely and looks out for each other. It’s amazing!” Playing monumental pieces such as Mahler’s *Third Symphony* and Schoenberg’s *Gurre-Lieder* with the Hallé calls for total teamwork, says Sarah. “It’s that feeling of the energy you’re putting into the whole thing, even when you’re playing really quietly. Just thinking about that in *Gurre-Lieder* gives me goosebumps.”

Fewer Opportunities

Sarah Bennett laments the closure of school music centres around the country, including those in Dewsbury, Cleckheaton and Huddersfield that were so central to her early musical experiences. “I’m sure that, with the cost-of-living crisis today, most parents are not going to be able to afford the extra £30 a week for instrument lessons, let alone the money to buy an instrument. It’s heart-breaking to think that audiences for classical music are dwindling along with the number of people who are learning music at school. And it’s distressing to think about what the future looks like for classical music. But at the same time, the standards of the young players who are coming through is phenomenal. It’s quite extraordinary to hear the level of some of the students I’ve done workshops with at Chetham’s!”

While the Hallé is unable to plug ever-widening gaps in school music provision, the orchestra is clearly making a difference in Manchester and across the north of England. Over the past year, the organisation’s Come And Play Concerts introduced 25,000 children to the full-throttle sound of a symphony orchestra, and enabled 18,000 of them to play with the Hallé. “I’m proud of what the Hallé’s doing to

make sure that children get the opportunity to listen to a live orchestra,” comments Sarah. “There’s so much education work going on with the Hallé, which is very positive. As well as the Come And Play sessions, I do a lot of coaching with the Hallé Youth Orchestra. We’re reaching everyone from people who’ve never heard an orchestra before to some of our most talented young musicians.” The range of work, she adds, reflects genuine inclusivity, refreshingly free from the fear so common among politicians and policymakers of being branded as elitist.

Losing Facilities

In 2011, Sarah was among the young wind players who were invited to work with the London Symphony Orchestra Academy for

a week. “It was a huge learning curve for me and totally opened my eyes to what was needed to make progress,” she notes. “As a result I got to know the LSO’s principal flute, Gareth Davies, and have often worked with the orchestra since. Experiencing that when I was eighteen gave me a real kick-start and helped me get where I am now. Yet that Academy has gone because it’s seen as elitist and not open to all. We should be able to have top quality projects that are accessible to everyone and high-level training for the next generation of musicians. It shouldn’t be either/or. We have to get the message across that we need both.”



For Sarah Bennett, a musical education would have been difficult without the help of her family

All photos: Joseph Branston. © MU. Taken at Ménagère Restaurant & Bar, Manchester. Texture on previous page: Anna Efetova / Getty Images

Sarah is a passionate advocate for the education work of Manchester's Hallé Orchestra



Mancunians need no reminding of the Hallé's importance to their city's cultural life. The orchestra gave its first concert at Manchester's Free Trade Hall on a wet Saturday night in January 1858, and have been giving world-class performances ever since. Its profile, always high, received a boost a decade ago with the opening of Hallé St Peter's, a former church in Ancoats – the creative heart of modern Manchester – used as a venue for concerts, rehearsals and community events.


"Everybody in the city knows about the Hallé and feels quite passionate about it, which is rare for an orchestra," observes Sarah. "People feel like it belongs to them. It's really encouraging to speak to people about the

Hallé. We're so lucky to be able to play at Bridgewater Hall and have St Peter's and St Michael's, another space in Ancoats, for our education activities."

Community Resource

The feeling of being rooted in the community has been reinforced by the various Hallé choirs, some chosen by audition, others open to all. They engage over 600 members in weekly singing sessions and attract people from diverse backgrounds. "We're so lucky to have the choirs. We've just performed Verdi's *Requiem* with the Hallé Choir and did *Mahler No. 3* in January with the sopranos and altos of the Hallé Choir and the Hallé Children's Choir." Both programmes were conducted by Sir Mark Elder, the Hallé's Music Director since 2000. "He has such an amazing attention to detail and an incredible ear," says Sarah. "You can't get away with anything with Mark – you have to be on top form! Every single note has to be exactly how he wants it, which means the energy for his concerts is like that for nobody else."

New creative paths opened for Sarah at the start of 2022 after she decided to take up DJing and fuel her passion for disco and house music. She bought a set of DJ decks and began spinning discs at a Manchester gym on Saturday mornings to gain experience. "Even though I love playing in the orchestra, it's nice to be in charge of my own music," she comments. "It's a different outlet for expression. I've been practising and getting gigs out and about in Manchester. I just have the best time – it's my fun musical hobby!"

With news breaking by the day of arts funding cuts and recessionary times ahead, Sarah Bennett may be glad of the joy that DJing brings. Yet she insists that the rewards of being an orchestral musician outweigh its frustrations by far. "Of course you don't earn as much as a doctor, for instance, but your life is rich in a different way. I know that doesn't wash when prices are soaring and fees are frozen, but I wouldn't change what I'm doing for the world. Your colleagues become like a second family, because of the amount of time you spend together and the special bond you form over the years. I love what I do. The feeling of working with my colleagues and playing incredible music together is better than anything else I could imagine." 

The MU And Me

"I feel passionately about trade unions. All my family are Labour and I am too. The feeling of being part of a union and knowing how much power that could give us are so important. I think all musicians should be in the MU. Because we do the job for the love of it, people take advantage of that and want something for nothing. People who employ musicians quite often think that we're lucky to do a job that we enjoy and look to exploit that. They don't realise the preparation that goes on behind the scenes and the years of study you need to be in a professional orchestra. We need representation because it's so difficult to fight that alone. The fact the MU has the session and teaching rates there for everyone to see, and that they stand up for us so we're not overworked in rehearsal is so important. I'm a proud member of the MU and pleased to be the Health and Safety Representative for the Hallé. It's about looking after people and protecting their working terms and conditions. We have to look after one another."

The Decibel Debate

It's probably the most precious tool we musicians have, but are many of us taking our hearing for granted?

Report by Neil Crossley

When it comes to ensuring the health and wellbeing of professional musicians, few factors are quite as critical as hearing. Anecdotes abound of musicians who have had their hearing irreparably damaged in live and studio settings. Musicians across all the genres are affected. In recent decades, there has been a growing awareness of the dangers of excessive and prolonged exposure to noise in the workplace and the need for musicians to protect their hearing. But there is still much work to do.

The MU and its partners Help Musicians, the Musicians' Hearing Services, and the British Association of Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) offer a wealth of advice and support as well as fast access to advice, specialist medical treatment and hearing protection. All these organisations recognise that only by musicians taking early action to protect their own hearing can they avert serious problems down the line.

High Incidence

According to a report by US organisation the Hearing Health Foundation, musicians are four times more likely to develop noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) as the general public and 57 per cent more likely to develop tinnitus. Another survey, by UK charity Help Musicians, found that 40 per cent of professional musicians across a range of genres have experienced some type of hearing loss as a direct result of their work.

“Any small change in their hearing has a much larger impact on their life and livelihood”

Dr Paul Checkley

As clinical director of Musicians' Hearing Services, Dr Paul Checkley is all too aware of the prevalence of hearing damage in the music profession. “Musicians have a better and more in-depth relationship with sound than an average person, so any small change in their hearing has a much larger impact on their life and livelihood,” he says. “Tinnitus, noise-induced hearing loss, hyperacusis, and diplacusis are some common conditions... It spans all musical genres and disciplines, and the most important factor is the loudness of the sound in relation to how long the exposure lasts.”

Coping With The Condition

For those who have already incurred damage, the biggest challenge is how to deal with it. Paul Gray, bassist and former MU Regional Organiser for Wales and the South West, has suffered from profound tinnitus and hearing loss since the early 1990s. He says he first noticed the early signs of the condition back in the late 70s when he was playing with seminal Canvey Island band, Eddie & The Hot Rods.

“The tinnitus levels gradually crept up over time without me fully realising, starting in the late 70s with a slight ringing after shows that would disappear after a day or two,” he says. “We all got it and wore it as a badge of honour, as you do when you're young and think you're invincible. More so than live shows, what really damaged my ears was writing music into the night in my home studio on headphones. It's so easy to get carried away and keep turning the levels up when your ears get tired and by the early 90s I'd developed a full-blown multi-frequency ringing 24/7 in both ears that has never left.”

Below: Matt Jolliffe (right) of dance duo FOAMA who believes he saved his hearing in the nick of time
Right: Dance clubs can be dangerously loud places



Photo: Max Cheshire @maxcheshire

The Real Impact

Gray says it was a massive screech of feedback through an onstage monitor that really tipped him over the edge. He was forced to stop touring and recording and says he became a virtual recluse for three years. In addition to tinnitus, he also has profound hearing loss and the conditions hyperacusis and recruitment.

“It doesn't matter if you're playing death metal or classical,” he says. “Onstage volumes and earbuds or headphones are usually way louder and more damaging than you may realise. I'm a living testament to that. Plug in

Photo: Wesley Glover





and plug up or one day your ears may ring and never stop. Twenty seven years for me now and frankly it's bloody awful. It affects your wellbeing, ability to sleep properly and your whole social life."

Despite these hurdles, Gray is now back playing live with his long-standing band The Damned, who in 2022 supported Blondie on an extensive US tour.

Balancing his hearing damage with live performance is a huge challenge. Onstage, Gray and the band wear high-end in-ear monitors (IEMs), which he sets to as low a volume as possible. He augments these with a device called the Rev33, which he says helps reduce ear fatigue. "I get by, but my tinnitus is always louder than anything else."

Prevention Is Key

The key to reducing the prevalence of hearing damage among musicians is to simply prevent

it happening in the first place. "Like most body ailments, prevention is key," says Checkley. "The more musicians understand the impact on noise exposure, the more they can protect their hearing and their hearing future."

The MU, Help Musicians and Musicians' Hearing Services are committed to raising awareness of hearing conditions. The three organisations created the Musicians Hearing Health Scheme, which aims to provide all professional musicians in the UK with access to specialist hearing assessments and protection.

The assessments are heavily subsidised by Help Musicians. The MU provides a further subsidy, so the price of the package is reduced from £50 to £37.50 for MU members.

The package includes an audiological assessment and ear check-up from a specialist in musicians' hearing. MU members will also receive one free set of custom-made, specialist musicians' ear plugs, →

How To Get Help

The Musicians Hearing Health Scheme gives all professional musicians in the United Kingdom affordable access to specialist hearing assessments and hearing protection.

To apply, visit Help Musicians at hearformusicians.org.uk. Applicants will need to provide contact details and evidence to show that they are a professional musician.

Help Musicians will then make an assessment and be in touch within five working days to let you know if you are eligible. They will also pass on your details to Musicians' Hearing Services who will be in touch to register you on the scheme and make you an appointment at a hearing clinic of your choice.

The Musicians' Hearing Service has permanent clinics in London, Manchester and Aberdeen, and has a rolling programme of regular clinics in Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Leeds, Newcastle, Norwich, Nottingham, Sheffield and Southampton.

For advice on hearing and the discounts offered to MU members through the Musicians' Hearing Health Scheme simply search 'hearing' at theMU.org

Musicians' Hearing Services
7 Devonshire Street
London W1G 9PA
020 7486 1053

MHS also works closely with:
British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM)
26 Fitzroy Square
London W1T 6BT
020 8167 4775

Bassist Paul Gray has experienced profound tinnitus and hearing loss since the early 1990s



Action Levels For Hearing

Noise at work issues are covered by The Control Of Noise At Work Regulations 2005 (CNWR). But due to the very specific situation in the music and entertainment sector, a special guidance called Sound Advice was created by HSE in 2008. For full details visit hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg260.htm

There are two so-called 'action levels' for workers, the noise exposure levels at which, if met, the organisation is required to take action to reduce the level. The First Action Levels require that hearing protection is made available for workers when the daily or weekly exposure level exceeds 80dB(A). For the Second Action Levels that figure is 85dB(A). To put this in context it's worth noting that the typical dB(A) levels reached by a rock band can be anything up to 125dB(A), and for a symphony orchestra, 94dB(A). To see the MU's full break-down of noise regulations and employers' responsibilities search 'noise regulations' at theMU.org

which are worth £149, and optional follow-up assessments every two years for £20.

Protect Yourself

Salaried musicians' employers generally provide regular hearing checks. Checkley says the MHS's audiologists work regularly with many orchestras and West End musical managements. But the MU recognises that there is no requirement for the self-employed and freelancers to have their own health surveillance. As such, the MU strongly advises all self-employed and freelance musicians to arrange their own hearing health surveillance if they think their exposure levels regularly exceed the Second Action Value [see column to the left], if they regularly have to wear hearing protection, or they have other concerns about their hearing.

Encouragingly, there are signs that the advice is starting to get through. "Both musicians and employers are now more aware," says Checkley. "The most common appointment at MHS is a musician coming in for regular check-ups and custom hearing protection to make sure that they are doing all that they can to protect their ears before any damage can be done."

Getting Help Early

One such musician is Matt Jolliffe, who sought help early from Musicians' Hearing Services. Jolliffe is a producer and DJ in FOAMA, a duo from Poole in Dorset who use synths, keyboards and drum-pads for their productions, performing on CDs and a mixer when playing live.

"The club environment is always loud and you constantly have to turn up the booth monitors to hear over rowdy crowds," explains Jolliffe. "I would often return from our gigs

“It’s early days but could be a game-changer for myself and others in the near future”

Paul Gray

Employer Responsibility

It’s worth noting that some cases of injury to musicians’ hearing are caused by employers simply failing to ensure safe noise levels. Consequently, there are growing calls for concert promoters, record labels, orchestra managers, event organisers, theatrical producers and contractors to better protect the hearing of the musicians employed by them.

Most have a legal responsibility to do this. The MU is advising employers to review their health and safety procedures. The MU believes it is crucial that noise risk assessments are carried out in workplaces and that a resulting action plan is also undertaken.

Look To The Future

For musicians meanwhile, taking proactive steps to protect their hearing in the workplace is key. Paul Gray is currently in discussions with a US company that has developed new IEMs technology, which effectively creates a “second eardrum”. Gray says this is the same technology that enabled AC/DC singer Brian Johnston to tour again. “It’s early days but could be a game-changer for myself and others in the near future,” he says.

For Matt Jolliffe, the worry that he might have damaged his hearing was a real wake-up call that prompted him to take action. “As musicians and artists your hearing is key to everything you do, and the main tool that you use everyday for your job,” he says. “If you can, turn your monitor levels down and invest in your hearing protection. You are investing in your future and protecting the most valuable piece of equipment that you own.” **mu**

For more info click on ‘The Musicians Hearing Health Scheme’ under the ‘What We Do’ section at musicianshearing.services.co.uk



Photos: Lorne Thomson; electravk; Hybrid Images / Getty Images

Above: Even orchestral musicians can experience serious hearing issues in the course of their work
Left: In-ear monitors can help control volume levels



Hearing Protection

Anyone who has ever used generic hearing protection on stage will know that the resulting sound can be compromised. Paul Checkley says this is not the case with custom-made ear plugs. “There are some generic attenuating ear plugs on the market, but protection is limited as the fit will never be exact as they are not bespoke to your own ear shape. Proper musicians’ hearing protection can give the musician the loudness, clarity and thrill of the experience, while still ensuring their hearing is appropriately protected.”

It’s a view reinforced by Jolliffe, who was fitted for custom-made ear plugs following his consultation at MHS’s clinic. “The great thing I have found about my ACS earplugs is that since they are customised and the filters are of such a high quality, I can still hear every detail of what I’m doing behind the decks and still have conversations with tech crews and others without having to shout.”

and occasional concert visits with the usual ringing ears. However, I noticed that every now and again this ringing would return at random times on other days. I was a little concerned... Stupidly, I decided that ignoring the problem would make it go away. It definitely did not.”

Jolliffe learned about MHS via a TikTok video from another DJ. When his ears were tested, he found to his relief that there was no damage, and that his hearing was much better than average. But the experience prompted him to get proper custom-made ear plugs to protect his hearing.

Members' Conference

Equality, diversity and inclusion were the key focuses of this landmark MU summit in Leeds

Report by Andrew Stewart

Society's inequalities have been cruelly magnified by Covid and the cost-of-living crisis. The MU is determined to eradicate them from the music industry and ensure that every musician receives equal opportunities and careers free from discrimination and harassment. Those objectives were at the heart of the Union's second Members' Conference, held in Leeds on 17-18 October. Its outcomes, directly informed by the MU members who attended, will shape MU policy and help build a more diverse and inclusive environment for everyone working in music.

John Shortell, MU Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, reported an increase in funding for his department and the appointment of Dr Diljeet Bhachu as the MU's dedicated EDI Officer. He also outlined the Union's project to diversify its membership and committees. While it was for the music industry at all levels to "collectively make change", he noted that promoting diversity alone would not guarantee equality and inclusion. The quest for EDI would require "challenging those structures that enable racism, ageism, classism, ableism to go unchecked". Diljeet added "I'm really excited to be working at the Union at what feels like a pivotal moment in our work – to be focusing directly on issues of inequality that affect so many musicians

“Conference has been a fantastic way to get to know members”

Dr Diljeet Bhachu



All Photos: Miles Myerscough-Harris. © MU

The first panel discussion at the 2022 Members' Conference focused on Mental Health and the Music Industry

and so many of our members. Conference has been a fantastic way to get to know members who are involved in our equalities networks, and give them space to voice their own ideas for how we can take this work forward."

Safer Spaces

The MU's committees are becoming safer spaces where EDI can be discussed and debated. Recruitment policies have been revised to deliver a more diverse staff. "We're yet to see the change we desire," said John. "But we're seeing movement in the right direction." Alex Gascoine, Chair of the MU Executive Committee, was adamant that equality, diversity and inclusion "must be at the heart of everything we do". The Union's EDI Action Plan has signalled its commitment to addressing inequalities of all kinds, and it is vital for the MU "to represent musicians whoever they are, and however they work".

Naomi Pohl, General Secretary of the MU, declared that EDI is "not a side issue. It's a music industry issue", and the MU was beginning to lead the way. "This is an important campaign for us. The focus of this year's Members' Conference demonstrates the MU's commitment to delivering a more inclusive and fairer music industry and Union. When we say we are behind every musician, we really mean that. Wherever you are based,

whatever your background and however you make music, we are here for you."

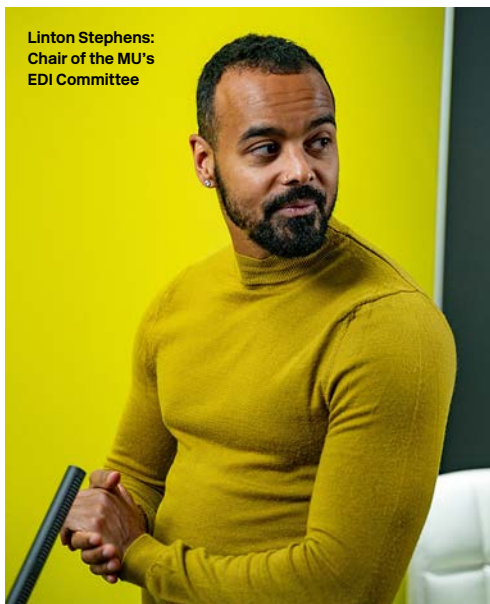
Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire, highlighted the exclusion of three million people from government income support schemes during Covid, many freelance performers among them. "I hope they're not lost to the business," she said. Her mayoralty has recently invested £11.5m in culture, created a department to support existing arts organisations and promote new opportunities, and was busy opening doors for working-class people to arts and culture. "Culture changes lives," she observed.

Freelance Life

Conference's first panel discussion examined 'Mental Health and the Music Industry'. Andi Hopgood, Vice Chair of the MU's Executive Committee, noted that musicians were three times more likely to experience poor mental health than the general population. "I believe so much of this is rooted in how we live our lives as freelancers," she suggested. Joe Hastings, Head of Music Minds Matter, noted that the Help Musicians' initiative had seen a 180% increase in people using their services in 2021, and a further 37% increase in 2022.



Linton Stephens:
Chair of the MU's
EDI Committee



Linton Stephens

Chair, MU Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

"Diversity is a fact. Whatever room you walk into where there are other people, whether you like it or not, each person has a uniquely different make-up. Diversity affords us wealth: a wealth of thought, of experience, of talent, ideas and approaches, and the ability to connect with a wealth of other people who recognise something of that in themselves. Equality is my recognition that when I walk into this room I have just as much opportunity as anybody else. I have the right to be treated like everybody else. Nothing about me that pertains to how I exist in this world is a factor that should disadvantage me. Inclusion is putting all those things into practice. And equity is knowing that we all meet at the table with slightly different needs. We need to address those for diversity, equality and inclusion to work, making reasonable adjustments in my attitude or thought or interaction, so we all meet on a level playing field or as close to it as possible."



Above: John Shortell, MU Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Left: DJ Paulette, EDI Conference delegate who DJ'd at the event

Elton Jackson, Director of Artist and Employee Wellbeing at Sony Music, recounted a shift in corporate culture within the label. They had taken advice from the charity Mind, he said, offered training in mental health first-aid, and were reaching out to artists to check their wellbeing. "It's about dropping the idea of guilt and shame around mental health needs." Sital Panesar, psychotherapist and founder of MusicaTherapy, a charity dedicated to the emotional wellbeing of musicians and industry members from ethnic minority backgrounds, noted how the pandemic "offered space to reflect on problems that had been building for years. Why were they not addressed before?"

There had been a shift in focus from the low mood and depression seen in the early phase of lockdown towards a higher prevalence of people struggling with stress and anxiety.

Eric Mtungwazi, Managing Director, Music Support, said that the number of people presenting to the charity with mental ill-health or addiction had increased. Many of those, however, were receiving help and getting better. "It shows that recovery is possible if the people get the right help when needed." He called for a greater awareness among promoters, managers, record labels and all who employ musicians of the signs of mental health problems and where to direct people when they experience them.

She urged music industry leaders to strengthen systems of support, not least by making them accessible to all. Eric Mtungwazi identified a near 50-50 split between those who present to Music Support with conditions arising during their time in the music industry and those who carried issues into the profession. "The conversation has moved forward," he said. "But what the industry is grappling with is the higher goal of behaviour change. The mental health issues, the addiction issues are often the symptoms of something. Are we prepared to make the changes so people can get the right help?" →

We are #BehindEveryMusician

MU General Secretary Naomi Pohl (left) in discussion with the MU's dedicated EDI Officer, Dr Diljeet Bhachu



Linton Stephens (left) moderates the panel Creating An Inclusive Music Industry

Music psychologist and singer Natasha Hendry spoke of particular problems within the industry and their potential damage to mental health. "The great thing about a panel like this is that inclusion is being seen as a mental health issue, and it hasn't been. It has been seen as a social issue," she observed. "But those barriers affect our wellbeing and that affects our ability to do and enjoy our work as musicians. It's important to recognise these extra and unique pressures we have and be encouraged to talk about them."

Recognising Discrimination

Linton Stephens, bassoonist and Chair of the MU's EDI Committee, spoke of his experience of discrimination. As part of the tiny minority of Black musicians in the orchestral world, he became accustomed to being ignored. That changed after he joined the MU eight years ago, felt the Union's collective power, and began shaping a vision of making "change for the sake of improvement". The way forward included recognising that discrimination exists and that it prevents everyone from receiving equal opportunities he said.



Singer, songwriter and MU member Kelli-Leigh delivered a powerful keynote address

Kelli-Leigh

"I started to stand up for what I believe in. The more I was speaking out, the more other singers were coming forward with similar stories. It's been scary to trouble the status quo and things that have been systemic for so long. But I pushed back and have now released fifteen solo singles. My Christmas single in 2021 on my label did 500,000 streams in a month; I had my first TV appearances; and have just released my latest pop dance single, *Hold On Tonight*, which was supported by Radio 1. We don't have an equal platform, but hopefully that will change. Resilience, self-belief and standing up for what you believe in is what I can suggest. The Musicians' Union is there to support that. If you feel like something's wrong, don't suffer in silence. Your gut instinct is probably right. The more of us who speak up and stand together, the more we can change this industry."



“Wherever you are based, whatever your background and however you make music, we are here for you”

Naomi Pohl

going to need to credit me and I'm going to need to be paid properly.” Kelli-Leigh said it was imperative for artists to understand the business side of the business, a fact brought home in 2018 when she featured on another Top 10 single.

“I thought, ‘Girl, I’ve made it! I’m going to get that phone call – someone’s going to sign me’. And that call never came.” In the wake of George Floyd’s murder and the advent of Black Lives Matter, she was struck by a tweet from DJ Funk Butcher. He asked, ‘Can we talk about Black singers on dance music?’. Her response went viral.

“I’ve sung on three Top 10 singles, two were Number Ones, one was Grammy nominated. I’m here as an independent artist, currently self-managing. I don’t know what to do and I don’t understand why.”


Speak Up

Kelli-Leigh subsequently joined the board of the Featured Artists Coalition (FAC), the UK trade body representing the specific rights and interests of music artists. John Shortell asked her to prepare a joint advice document with the MU and FAC to help singers understand whether they should be engaged as a session singer or featured artist. “It’s still very prevalent in the dance music industry to sing on records as a session singer, get paid a nominal fee and then hear that your voice is massive. If people wish, they should be listed as a featured artist for PPL, so they can get the royalties that are their due.”

The final panel discussion considered ‘Creating An Inclusive Music Industry’. Ammo Talwar, Chair of UK Music’s Diversity Taskforce, began by praising the MU’s Conference “as a bold statement”. He placed it within the context of a wider “change, challenge and convene” movement, and stressed the importance of allyship and listening to peers. Nadia Khan, founder of Women in CTRL, presented depressing

statistics about female artists. One study showed that male artists accounted for 81% of all Top 100 records from January to August 2020, while a report by creative industries consultant Vick Bain found that, in 2019, women and non-binary people accounted respectively for 19% of record label artist rosters, 14% of the music publishing profession and 27% of the global music management workforce. There was clearly “fear of change” within a male-dominated industry, which Khan suggested should be addressed through open dialogue and a clear goal of achieving extensive representation for women “at all levels across the industry”.

As the recently appointed EDI Project Coordinator at Leeds Conservatoire and an advocate for Black Lives in Music, Mica Sefia pressed for the removal of barriers that block equal opportunities. Her message was underlined by Yaw Owusu, Senior Manager of PRS Foundation’s Power Up, who said there was “a lot to be done” before the music industry could claim racial equality. Suzanne Bull, founder of Attitude is Everything, said it was time to recognise that all barriers are artificial. At the same time, the effort required to remove them could have a detrimental effect on the mental and physical health of equal rights activists.

In her closing remarks to Conference, Naomi Pohl reported positive feedback from members about booking and access requirements for the event. “People have felt included and welcome. That’s something we need to roll out in everything we do.” The Members’ Conference, added Naomi, gained from its breakout sessions and their lively discussions. “There have been so many brilliant suggestions coming out of them.” These would complement the Union’s Equality Action Plan and help achieve its targets. “We know where we want to get to, but over the last couple of days we’ve talked about how we are going to get there.” 

To watch the Conference in full please visit:
theMU.org/members-conference

In her keynote address, singer, songwriter and MU member Kelli-Leigh outlined the obstacles that she had faced on her career journey from function singer to success as an independent artist. The Grammy Award-nominated singer gave a masterclass in authenticity and openness. She recalled the ease with which her name was omitted from best-selling recordings that fully exploited her considerable vocal skills, and how she began to suspect that racial and sex discrimination had determined her status as an uncredited artist. “There were limited opportunities for people like me,” she recalled.

Those limits became clear while Kelli-Leigh was recovering from a car accident in 2013 and recorded the solo vocals for Duke Dumont’s *I Got U*. Soon after she was asked to sing *I Wanna Feel* for Secondcity. Both releases topped the UK singles chart. “My voice was absolutely everywhere. I felt deeply proud and excited, but I was just working for a session fee. The DJs and producers I’d sung for were doing incredible things with massive gig fees and radio slots, but my name wasn’t being mentioned anywhere.” After being fobbed off once too often, Kelli-Leigh pushed back: “If you want to use my voice, then you’re



Four The Love of Music

Beloved of the classical, pop and artistic world alike, The Brodsky Quartet celebrates its 50th year with a set of brave new projects

Profile by Ariane Todes

Looking at the Brodsky Quartet's publicity photos, it's hard to believe they could be celebrating their 50th anniversary this year. As they bound on stage at Kings Place, London, to perform the complete Shostakovich 15-quartet cycle over two days – standing – the focused, visceral energy of their performances puts groups with a fraction of their longevity to shame. Revelling in the full range of Shostakovich's meaning and palette, this is a quartet at the top of its game, an ensemble that is supernaturally tight with infallible individual chops. Age really is just a number.

This is partly because the original members were not yet teenagers when they first took to the stage in Middlesbrough in 1972. The quartet has been on the front foot ever since, blazing a unique trail, whether working with pop stars such as Paul McCartney and Björk (they famously turned Elvis Costello on to Shostakovich); writing their own quartet arrangements; allowing audiences to choose their programmes (at their *Wheel of 4Tunes* 40th anniversary celebration); redefining concert wear (teaming up with Issey Miyake in 1985); or their many collaborations with school children, music students, composers, actors and opera singers.

Most recently, they've released the *Schubert Quintet* with rising star cellist Laura van der Heijden, and as *The Musician* meets viola-and-cello husband and wife Paul Cassidy and Jacqueline Thomas, they are about to rehearse with Sir Willard White for their homage to Frank Sinatra's work with the Hollywood String Quartet. Some quartets specialise in new music, some in pop or salon music, some do educational work and others focus on core repertoire. The Brodskys do it all. Oh, and both Cassidy and Thomas have recently written memoirs.

There's never been a particular strategy, though, according to Cassidy: "We never recognised the 'classical music business'. The world that demands you take certain routes and do things in a certain way to fit into that business. We had no idea about that at all. The group was going forward on its own kind of path."

Young At Heart

This creative restlessness is reflected in their musical approach, too. "We refuse to stick to one interpretation of something," says Thomas. "Even now, we're still discussing every nuance of Shostakovich, which we've known since we were children. It's just endlessly fascinating. You never tire of questioning and discussing minute details."

The Brodsky Quartet's newest recruit, first violinist Krysia Osostowicz, who joined in 2021, explains: "We are young at heart. That's the quality I appreciate about the Brodskys. They haven't lost any of their original enthusiasm. I find it phenomenal. It's nice to be with people at this age who aren't jaded or tired and fed up, but who approach each rehearsal and concert with new excitement." Alongside their 50th anniversary is, perhaps, an even more remarkable one. The three lower voices have been together for 40 years – rivalling the Amadeus Quartet for stability – with only five different first violinists across the half-century. This is the bedrock of their sound and their →

"It's just endlessly fascinating. You never tire of questioning and discussing minute details"



unshakeable musical unity, a beautifully oiled machine that allows Ostostowicz alternately to rise above or blend.

But with that security, they embrace change. Thomas remembers when Cassidy joined: "We started to learn more about breathing and giving space to each other, being more generous with the sound and attacking slightly less. He fitted in with our way of playing as well, as we assimilated his. That's happened each time we've had a change. We've never just said, 'Okay, this is the way we play'."

Ostostowicz can vouch for this. She remembers her first rehearsal with the group: "The first thing that happened was Ian produced a great big rubber and put it on his stand. It was a sign that they weren't expecting to do the same things as usual. That is what I have found between one week and the next. Between one performance and the next we'll try something new. Even though they've been together for so many years, it always feels fresh."

A Nurturing Place

Education has always been at the heart of the Brodsky mission, unsurprisingly perhaps, as they themselves benefitted from a unique environment in Middlesbrough in the 70s. The four founding members (Belton and Thomas, plus her brother Michael Thomas as first violin and violist Alexander Robertson) met as



children in the youth orchestra there. "We were lucky to have grown up in this amazing area where there were free instruments, free lessons and a vibrant community of teachers and students," recalls Thomas. "We were in this nurturing place where you could join an orchestra at the age of ten and move up through the different orchestras until you left school at eighteen."

It's a Utopian vision that they wish for today's children. Thomas can't fathom the government's lack of support for music education. She says: "Music is everywhere. It's in cafes, hotels, restaurants. There is not a single film or television programme that doesn't have music. And yet the government doesn't seem to see the need to support the learning of it. They're saying that music is vocational and that musicians will do it

Our Union

In a concerted effort to highlight the importance of music education and the government's lack of support for it, the Brodsky Quartet performed at a Musicians' Union event called Music For All at the recent Conservative Party Conference. Thomas explains: "We were there to promote music education because it's being wiped off the curriculum altogether. Even practical music with free instruments is off the agenda. It tends to be that families who can afford to put their kids into music do and others don't get the help they need."

Around a hundred like-minded delegates came to hear them play and talk, but no MPs, although Cassidy says, "It was very worthwhile. It was important for the MU to be there. They filled the room". The quartet has a strong connection with the MU, as Thomas explains: "We turn to them if we have problems with royalties or bookings, or disputes. It's a very strong union, stronger than many others. We're very proud of it."



Although celebrating their 50th anniversary, their passion for music has not diminished

Photo: Sarah Cresswell

anyway. Can you imagine saying that doctors and nurses will learn themselves and we'll eventually have enough to fill hospitals? No, they provide scientific education and means to get into that field of study. Surely, it's just as important to support music education?"

Their commitment to education has also been hands-on. They give masterclasses around the world, as well as their Side-by-Side concept, whereby they play alongside students within the group. In this way, they recently performed Shostakovich and Beethoven cycles with students at Dartington and the Royal Conservatoire in Glasgow – they have previously done it in Australia and Mexico, and plan to develop it in other schools and conservatoires. Thomas explains: "It works brilliantly, because you're not just teaching, you're rehearsing with the students and they can chip in as well, so you get to the point where you're sharing ideas rather than giving orders."

They have often worked in schools, too. Their *Moodswings* album was the result of an ambitious three-year educational project across six UK schools, bringing together music, English and art classes to produce an entire programme of music – and even the stage design and costume – for voice and quartet. The project generated 100 songs, of which six were chosen alongside those by the likes of Errollyn Wallen, Sting and Björk.

Older Audiences

Despite these efforts, Thomas admits that it's hard to shift the dial on the average age of chamber music audiences: "People come to chamber music later in life, for various reasons. Maybe they have more time on their hands when the kids have left home, or their tastes become more open and they're willing to listen to more complex music. Our audiences tend to have a slightly older age demographic, but it's always been that way. There are always new middle-aged people coming through the ranks, but there are plenty of young people who are extremely interested and driven by chamber music." The quartet is less optimistic about the effects of Brexit on the business, she says: "We all

"Some countries are inviting British players less often"

hate Brexit. That old slogan of 'they're taking our jobs' – Europeans have been taking our jobs in music for years and we love it. In this country we embrace musicians from everywhere. There were Europeans in all the orchestras, on the stages of the chamber halls across the country, and that's how it should be. It doesn't mean we lose work. We play in their countries – we still get to perform in our own country."

What practical difference has it made? "We've noticed that some countries are inviting British players less often because it's more hassle for them having to fill in forms, and even travelling with endangered species on your instrument, like ebony, ivory or rosewoods that aren't allowed. When we were part of the EU, we had blanket protection for that."

With the fuel crisis kicking in, they're now seeing concerts cancelled by venues that have to save energy. Cassidy is also pessimistic about the recording industry: "The recording industry is in crisis basically. In the old days, it helped us when we got a Teldec contract. We've made over 70 recordings and that's been really important because it's a legacy. You hope that when you're long gone, music students will say, 'Have you heard their recording?'. These days, that's tricky for young groups, and of course, we don't get paid to record."

He needn't worry about the Brodskys' legacy. It is assured – through their rich catalogue and the many boundaries they've pushed. Maybe one day, they'll even convince the government to value music education. In the meantime, they show no signs of letting up. If anything, things keep getting better. Ostostowicz says: "Now we're all in our 60s, we don't particularly mind what anyone thinks of us. We do what we do because we believe in it and love it. We're doing what we want and that seems to be appreciated, which is lucky, because it means we can get to do it more." There will undoubtedly be much more to come. 🍷

Podcasting For Musicians

How recording a regular chat about music with your mates can pay promotional dividends in the long run

Report by Tim Tucker

Podcasting is currently the fastest growing media format, and the third most popular form of listening in the UK, after live radio and on-demand music. Prolific bass session man Guy Pratt (Pink Floyd, Madonna, Roxy Music) co-hosts the UK's most popular music podcast, *Rockonteurs*, with Spandau Ballet's Gary Kemp, which features some of the biggest names in the pop and rock world as guests. "Musicians like talking about music almost as much as they like playing it," says Guy. "We have this demographic of listeners who want that little bit more 'behind the scenes'. We're musicians ourselves, so we ask our guests the sort of questions that journalists won't."

If you're new to the medium, podcasts are simply audio programmes made available over the internet. Most podcasts are freely available, and dedicated podcasting apps on smartphones have made discovering and subscribing to shows super easy. With musical artists as diverse as Jessie Ware, Alice Cooper, Questlove, Rick Rubin and Scroobius Pip hosting their own podcasts, it seems it's the perfect medium for artists to interact with their audience. We asked Adam Shepherd, editor of podcasting industry magazine *PodPod*, what kind of podcasts are popular in the music category. "It covers a really broad spectrum," says Adam. "For example, there are a lot of podcasts where people talk

"Do it for your own enjoyment, first and foremost"

Adam Shepherd

about the music of their favourite artists, like The Beatles and David Bowie. There are also podcasts that look at the music industry and music lifestyle side of things, which is very interesting for people who want an insight into the world of music production and musicians."

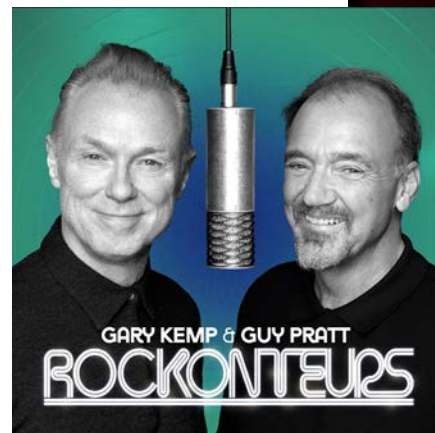
Connecting With Your Audience

It's not just the superstars who are getting into podcasting. Rob Cope started *The Jazz Podcast* as a way to stay connected to the UK jazz scene. "As me and my friends were getting into our mid-to-late twenties we were spending less time together," says Rob. "So I wanted to create a platform where people could come and hang out with each other and listen to their friends being interviewed."

The show, co-hosted with jazz musician Tara Minton, now reaches a much wider audience of musicians and listeners. "It's given us access to other musicians who might be at a more advanced stage in their career, as well as behind the scenes people, such as managers and promoters," says Tara. "We're now on all these people's radar. As a complete shock to both Rob and I, we were nominated for a Parliamentary Jazz Award this year in the jazz media category. So obviously we were invited to the award ceremony with the good and the great of the UK jazz scene. And everybody wanted to talk to us, because everybody wants to be on the podcast, right? So we have this really lovely icebreaker now."

Why are podcasts so successful? Many listeners point to the intimacy of the medium, which gives the feeling of really getting to know the people involved. "Gary and I, we're incredibly close friends," says Guy. "People love to talk music with their mates, so I think listeners relate to that."

Below: Gary Kemp co-anchors the popular *Rockonteurs* podcast with his friend, the musician Guy Pratt. Right: Pratt and Kemp with Nick Mason's Saucerful of Secrets band



Another great advantage for creatives is that podcasts are easy to produce. All you need is a recording device (a laptop or smart phone will do it) and sound editing software. Podcasts are distributed online through hosting platforms like BuzzSprout, Podbean and LibSyn, some of which offer basic packages for free. *The Guardian* reports that podcasts have the highest level of engagement of all media formats, which makes them a perfect vehicle for advertising, although even the most popular may not make money that way. "We haven't seen a penny," says Guy, whose podcast is regularly number one in the music category. "But luckily, it's not costing us money. If you've got a band, and you've got your audience or fan base or whatever, it's a fantastic way to sustain contact with them and keep connected. It's a great promotional tool."



Photo: Neil Lupin / Getty Images

How To Create A Successful Podcast

If you're thinking of launching a podcast, then make sure you start with a clear idea of what you are going to deliver.

"Have a format," says Adam Shepherd. "For example you could do a tour diary, where after every rehearsal or every gig, the band spends forty five minutes shooting the breeze about how the gig went and decompressing."

Many podcasts feature guests on each episode, providing fresh conversations. "You have to develop a chemistry with whoever you're talking to," says Adam. "And you also need a basic structure, otherwise it can turn into chaos."

Tara Minton of *The Jazz Podcast* stresses how important it is to be consistent if you want to build your podcast. "Be curious and passionate about the subject matter, because there are times when it really does become work. To keep a listenership you need to put out a podcast when your listeners are expecting it. For us that's a weekly show, but monthly can work just as well."

Fortunately, it doesn't have to be technically accomplished. "Don't obsess about the audio quality," says Adam. "It's not as important in podcasting as you might think. People are very forgiving about audio quality, because it's the content they're there for. If all you've got is one USB microphone and a laptop, you can make that work."

Besides advertising, there are other ways of making money through podcasts. "Patreon, Kickstarter and other direct audience donation models are super viable for podcast creators who want to make money," says Adam. "Buying albums is not the same value exchange that it used to be, whereas listeners are actually very willing to give their favourite creators money directly for making podcast content they love."


New Revenue Streams

There are other side benefits to podcasting for musicians too. "Live events are a huge revenue driver for podcasting in general," says Adam. "Popular podcasts like *No Such Thing As A Fish*, and *My Dad Wrote A Porno*, are making a lot of money from live tours and live recordings. Listeners have that regular engagement with them, which makes them much more receptive to buying tickets and going to shows."

So how do you go about growing an audience? The good news is that you don't have to spend a huge amount of money, as organic growth is totally possible. "You can do social media and email marketing, but fundamentally it's word of mouth, that's the most consistent driver for growth," says Adam.

Tara Minton, co-host of *The Jazz Podcast*, points to high quality guests as a great way to grow listenership. When they interviewed jazz legend Sonny Rollins on the podcast, they saw a huge boost in listeners, and getting him to do it was surprisingly straightforward. "I just went on Sonny's website and sent him a message asking him if he'd be up for a chat. And he was! That blew the doors off, because everyone wanted to come on the show after Sonny Rollins had been on it."

"PR firms and record labels will share the episodes featuring their artists," says co-host Rob. "So we just let nature take its course." Adam advises not to expect any kind of overnight success though. "Be prepared for slow, steady, organic growth. If you're lucky and can start off with a couple of hundred listeners, it will grow over time. But do it for your own enjoyment, first and foremost, and trust that if you build it, they will come."

"Musicians have passion, and there are people out there who are just as passionate as you are," says Guy Pratt. "I would advise anyone to do it." 

Writer Tim Tucker hosts his own podcast at myfavouritebeatlesong.buzzsprout.com

AI Threat For UK Music Makers

A proposed change to UK copyright legislation could have a serious impact on your rights and royalties

Report by Jamie Njoku-Goodwin, Chief Executive of UK Music

The rapid advances in the ways we use artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming the way we live our lives. However, the astonishing pace of change has left little time for policymakers, business leaders and others to fully assess the potential risks, and balance these against the benefits of AI.

I welcome many of the developments that AI has brought, particularly in areas such as public health. Yet, potential changes are afoot that could have a devastating impact on creators in the music industry and threaten their livelihoods.

Data Mining

This summer, the Government laid out a plan for a new copyright exception that would allow text and data mining for any purpose, including commercial use. In a nutshell, text and data mining – or TDM – is the process of using a computer to automatically extract patterns and trends from different sources, including music. During this process innumerable copies are being made.

The process sees an AI fed copies of existing music, which it then analyses to identify musical patterns before going on to generate supposedly 'new' music from the original works.

At present, AI firms cannot plunder artists' back catalogues to create new works that they can then monetise, because they would be in breach of long-standing and vitally important rules on copyright. If they want to use a piece of music, they have to seek permission from the rightsholder.

These safeguards ensure the musical creations and the income streams of the UK's legions of fantastic creators get the important protections they need and deserve.

Alarmingly, under the proposed changes suggested by the Intellectual Property Office (IPO), a key part of those invaluable protections could be swept away. The IPO has put forward proposals that would allow AI text and data mining for any purpose – with no possibility for rightsholders to opt out of these proposed changes.

A blanket exception would pave the way for AI companies to make huge profits by effectively laundering music they do not own, have not sought permission to use, and certainly have not paid for.

Under this change, the creators of the original music would not see a penny, or decide what happens to their creation. Not only is this morally wrong, it could have a catastrophic impact on creators' incomes and would be a body blow to a community that is the lifeblood of the world-leading UK music industry.

Stolen Creations

Some creators may welcome an approach from an AI firm and be happy to license their work – but they have to be given the choice and not just see their work taken without their consent or any reward.

The success of the UK music industry is based on the talent and creativity of UK music makers and the expertise and business skills of the UK music industry. A major part of this success is based on the UK's solid copyright, licensing and enforcement framework. This provides a means for creators to monetise

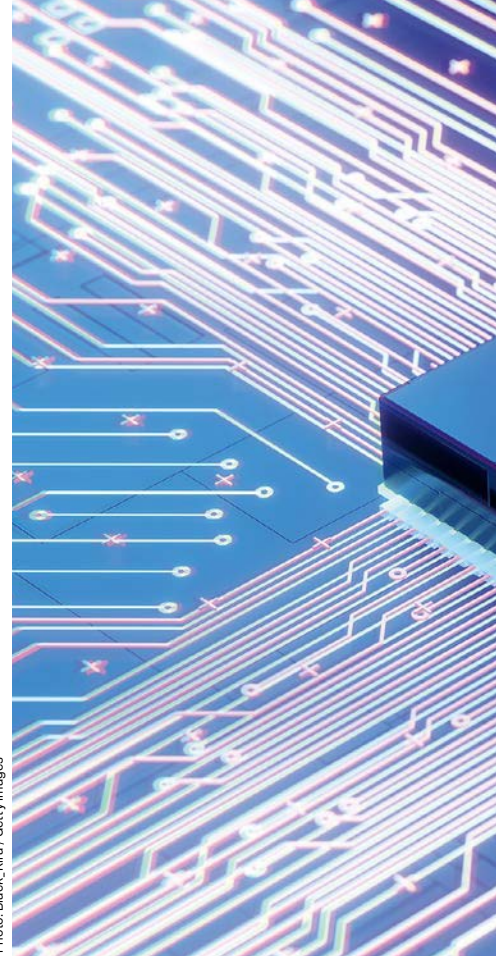
their work, creates incentives for investment in talent and offers people the chance to enjoy a fantastic and diverse range of UK music.

The removal of copyright protections would see the Government handing access to the back catalogues of UK musicians worth billions of pounds to AI companies without any compensation.

The exception would mark a huge transfer of value from Abbey Road to Silicon Valley and impact creative rights worth billions of pounds. The damage to the competitiveness of our world-leading creative industries and the impact on our exports would be huge.

You might think that the IPO has researched this area extensively and would be in a position to demonstrate what benefits this seismic change would bring. However, this is not the case. The IPO has conducted no impact assessment for its proposals or provided any evidence of its perceived value.

Photo: Black_Kira / Getty Images



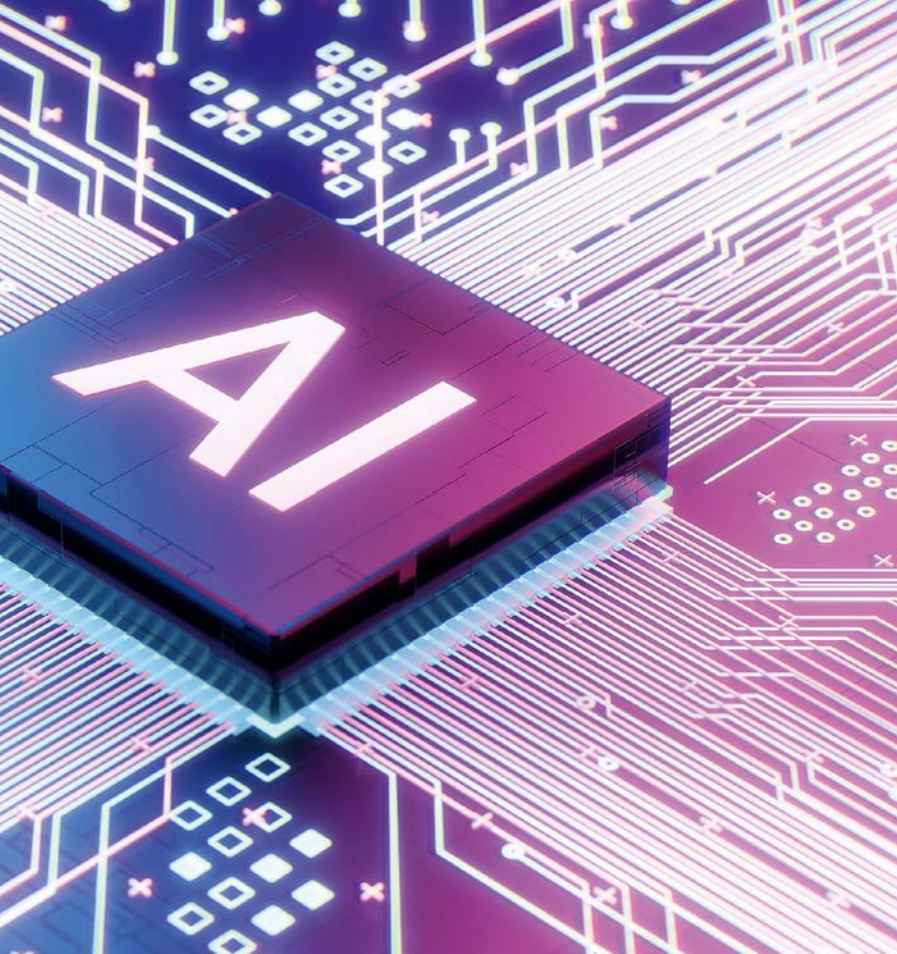


Photo: Joanna Dudderidge

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin of UK Music has grave fears that the IPO's proposed copyright exception will have a harmful effect on musicians and cultural creators everywhere

“This proposed exception is a regressive step”

Jamie Njoku-Goodwin

Irreparable Harm

The IPO has wrongly claimed that its proposed exception is in line with international best practice. But that is simply not the case. Barely any other countries have gone down this route, and the few that have made sure to build in safeguards – like Germany, which has included an opt-out mechanism to ensure rightsholders retain control.

It's deeply frustrating that at the same time as ministers laud the UK as a global creative superpower, the Government is pursuing a policy that would cause irreparable harm to our sector. The fact that the negative impact has not even been acknowledged by the IPO, while the supposed positive benefits are yet to be quantified, makes the situation even more maddening.

The few supporters of such a wide exception to copyright have made it clear that they do not want to pay for the work of our creators. No surprise there.

The planned change has sent shockwaves through the music industry, but it has united us to demand that the Government and the IPO drop this plan.

The UK creative sector, and in particular the UK music industry, has been innovating for decades. We are already part of the technological revolution.

We have no intention of standing in the way of positive changes and will continue to embrace technological developments. However, this proposed exception is a regressive step that, far from advancing our sector, will dramatically set back the UK music industry.

Work Together

After an extremely difficult couple of years, the music industry is desperately trying to bounce back from Covid-19. We are starting to see the green shoots of a recovery, but the difficulties around touring the EU, soaring costs and the impact of the cost of living crisis on sales means the road ahead is still rocky.

So it is vital that we avoid inflicting this needless act of self-harm on the UK music industry and do all we can safeguard our brilliant creators and their work.

UK Music is leading the charge against these destructive proposals, and we need all the help we can get. So I urge every MU member to support our campaign and make sure your voice is heard by writing to your local MP about this.

Together, we can convince Government to think again and abandon this disastrous course of action, which could fatally undermine the foundations that have made the UK music industry so successful for so long. [mu](#)

Instinctive Innovator

Clive Deamer always knew he was going to be a drummer. But could he have imagined where those sticks were going to take him?

Profile by Daniel Dylan Wray

Most 14-year-olds have little idea of what they want to do on a week-by-week basis, let alone for their entire lives. It's a transitional period full of changes, uncertainties and a halfway mark between childhood and adulthood. However, for Clive Deamer, he knew exactly what he wanted from life at that age. "After my first couple of drum lessons, I knew that's what I was going to do for the rest of my life," he says. "I felt it really deeply. I was hooked. I had this vision that I was going to make a living out of playing drums even though I had no idea how I was going to do it."

Now 61, he can reflect back on a period spanning four decades and see that early passion paid off. As a jobbing session drummer and percussionist, he has had a successful and eclectic career playing on albums and touring with artists such as Radiohead, Portishead, Robert Plant, Roni Size, Jeff Beck, Goldfrapp, Siouxi Sioux, Hawkwind, Jerry Lee Lewis, Tom Jones, and Alison Moyet, as well as playing in his own jazz quartet, Get The Blessing, since 2000.

"It was the only thing I was ever really good at," he says. "After my first few lessons, I was already immediately good enough to play with bands. When I was 14 or 15, I started to play with guys who were in their early 20s." This natural talent initially lent itself to playing basic rock drums, inspired by bands such as T-Rex, Deep Purple and Led Zeppelin, but jazz was always there in the background too. "I would occasionally hear bits of jazz drums and be utterly fascinated by that sound," he says.

"I had this vision that I was going to make a living out of playing drums"

After about a decade playing drums, the attraction to jazz eventually sucked him fully in. "I had a complete renaissance at the beginning of the eighties," he says. "I did a complete 180 and decided I was bored with 4/4 rock music. When Channel Four started they did a whole weekend of jazz films that completely turned my head and that's when I decided all I wanted to play was blues and jazz."

He played with artists in the 1980s such as Kevin Brown, as well as with a jazz outfit called The Glee Club, which featured Adrian Utley, later of Portishead, on guitar, as well as Deamer's brother Neil on bass. However, it was the 1990s when things really exploded for him. There were sessions with Hawkwind and Jeff Beck, but it was receiving a phone call from his old friend Adrian Utley that would prove to be a career-changing moment.

Mercury Rising

By the early 1990s, Deamer had almost 20 years of drumming behind him, and was a masterful and versatile player who could glide from rock to blues and jazz with ease. He was invited to play on Portishead's debut album *Dummy*, a record that would go on to sell millions, be one of the most acclaimed albums of the decade, and win the Mercury Music Prize. "Before the Portishead record, everything was preparation," he says. "Everything I'd done before that was just following my passions and saying 'yes' to everything. The Portishead record was the culmination of all of that work."

With hip-hop and sampling culture beginning to seep its way into contemporary British music, Deamer was brought in to play the unplayable. "All of my studying coincided with the music that had been born out of the sampler," he says. "Then that led to me being useful as the player that helped to make the Portishead records because I knew how to play all →





Clive Deamer performing live with Radiohead at MEN Arena in Manchester



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 “It was totally made in what I like to call musical Lego”

those old styles and how to apply them. I'd also had enough studio experience where I was able to fashion those styles of drumming into what was required for the track or what the artist was trying to get that they couldn't sample from anywhere else.”

Human Sampler

Deamer was like a human sampler of sorts, playing sounds lifted from other records that Portishead wished to twist and manipulate into their own. “What Geoff Barrow and Adrian were interested in was stuff that was on vinyl,” he says. “They would play me a track and say, ‘hey can you play this but instead of it being on cymbal, play it on hi-hat?’. They would play me something and then I could start from there and give them what they needed.”

However, Deamer's contributions on the record go beyond just being a hired hand. He plays drums on seven out of the 11 tracks. The opening track, *Mysterons*, with its distinct,

crisp and taut drum fills that punctuate the ghostly atmospheres, turntable scratchings and Beth Gibbons' floaty vocals, in many ways sets the tone for the whole record.

It remains a project that Deamer looks back on fondly. “It was another moment that changed my drumming,” he says. “Because the process that Portishead used to record changed the way I play. I was very aware that I was making a record with someone who's incredibly detailed and specific. Way more specific than probably anyone else I've worked with. They had a keen sense of what they were trying to create.”

It also led to another milestone project and another Mercury-winning album: the drum and bass classic *New Forms* by Roni Size and Reprazent. “That was another little mini revolution for me,” he says. “I was using my traditional skills but I was learning to fit them into very contemporary music.” His ability to play super-fast, complex rhythms that mirrored the twisting and unpredictable beats that is the backbone to drum and bass was a bold and innovative achievement.

Despite being a virtuoso player who is able to tap into a vast array of sounds, styles and musical genres, Deamer thinks subtlety and restraint can often be where the real skill lay.

“A lot of drummers get in there and they bash the hell out of a drum kit,” he says. “But when it comes down to it, especially when you're recording, the way that you balance the sounds on a drum kit when you play them is just like when you choose which notes to voice a chord, or when you've got four singers or a brass section to arrange. The way each note is put together and the relative volumes of one to the other is what makes it sound the way you want it to sound. It's exactly the same with a drum kit, the volume that you play the hi-hat in relation to the snare drum or the bass drum, or whichever combination, is really critical.”

Big Step

Deamer quickly became an in-demand drummer and spent the next 15 years working with a rich variety of esteemed and celebrated

Clive has had a passion for the drums since the age of fourteen and his innate skill and versatility have ensured regular work



Photos: Clive Deamer



Brexit Means No Bookings

Despite a hugely successful career with regular work from a variety of sources still coming in, Deamer recently found things with Get The Blessing have hit a roadblock. “We spent years playing all the way through Europe and since Brexit, offers to play there have dropped,” he says. “Booking agents don’t want to book us because dealing with the UK is now too expensive and too difficult. The EU offered UK musicians a special arrangement whereby we could retain freedom of movement, as long as it was reciprocal. Of course, the extreme ideology of the Tory party was like, we can’t have that. They betrayed UK musicians. Not only ones like me, who are older and have been successful, but also younger British musicians of all genres that could be working in Europe. Now they can’t or their ability to get there is either non-viable, too complicated or they’re just not going to be offered to work. Brexit has had a terrible effect on the entire industry. So, it’s difficult to quite know what to expect of the future other than we need to tactically vote out the Tories.”

artists. But in 2011 he was asked to step into the world of one of the most critically revered contemporary bands of the 21st century: Radiohead. “They had made the album the *King Of Limbs* and a key track on that album was called *Bloom*,” Deamer recalls of his intro. “It was totally made in what I like to call musical Lego, so they have musical elements that they built together. The track was built out of pieces of audio and technology working together to make this unbelievably densely polyrhythmic track – so densely polyrhythmic it sounds almost chaotic, right on the edge of being chaos and ordered chaos.”

Robert Plant has called Deamer a “spectacular polyrhythmist” and so he was the man for the job. “The challenge was, they wanted to be able to perform the track because they didn’t perform it to record it. So, my job was to help do that and it just developed from there.” He toured with the band for years and ended up on the following album *A Moon Shaped Pool*.

New Challenge

But was there an element of apprehension about stepping into a band that had been

together for 20 years? “My first thought was if I’m going to do this, how am I going to fit into a band that is clearly highly successful at functioning?” he says. “What space is there for me to occupy? How am I going to operate within something that’s successful without just kowtowing totally to what it is they think they want? But the very fact that they had invited me to try it was a huge compliment. A band like that must feel that I have something to offer if they are asking me.”

Being someone who dips in and out of other people’s bands involves a skillset that eclipses just playing skills. Interpersonal skills can be equally valuable. “Communication skills are a parallel to playing,” he says. “Being able to play an instrument well is being able to play it in a way that fits with what the other people are playing. Just like being able to communicate and talk to people is about understanding and listening to what they’re saying, and picking up on signals. They go hand in hand.”


Clive Deamer still retains an almost teenage-like zeal for music itself. “When you’re playing great music it almost feels effortless,” he explains. “When you’ve got a really great song to play along with it almost happens by itself.” He still gets a buzz just from the possibilities that exist by sitting down on a drum stool. “I still kind of get a real sense of pleasure just looking at a drum kit before I get to play it,” he says. “Just like I did when I started. That’s never left me.” 

Photo: Patrick Daxenbichler / Getty Images

For some performers, the very idea of getting up there on stage can send them spiralling into anxiety

HOW TO OVERCOME: PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

With over 70% of UK musicians suffering from anxiety in their public-facing work, Henry Yates asks leading UK performance and speaking coach Jimmy Cannon about root causes, quick fixes and long-term solutions

Jimmy Cannon was twelve years old when he felt the debilitating effects of performance anxiety for the first time. "I was taking my grade six trumpet exam and I'll never forget it," reflects the singer and saxophonist. "I was in tears before I went in. And the issue of performance anxiety is still going on amongst musicians. I have friends that have given up playing entirely because of it. Others use medication to cope. And the biggest issue is that a lot of the anxiety goes under the radar. It's not talked about. There's a lack of dialogue. Performance anxiety is the elephant in the room."

Now one of the UK's top speaking coaches – helping professionals across the gamut of sectors, from tech to finance – Cannon believes that his musician clients represent only a sliver of the problem. Even before the pandemic, research by Help Musicians showed that over 70% of musicians suffer from some form of anxiety, while Cannon's own research suggests that performance fears have been exacerbated as budgets contract and mistakes grow most costly. "Having researched this through my MA, there's an alarming amount of musicians now that suffer from performance anxiety. Eighty per cent of musicians have experienced some sort of performance anxiety in their lives. We're in an environment where competition is rife and there's huge pressure from social media."

"Performance anxiety is the elephant in the room"

Jimmy Cannon

Most musicians will recognise the calling cards of performance anxiety, from the physical manifestations (tremors, sweaty palms, racing heart) to somatic effects (a tightening of the throat) and cognitive deterioration (the insidious voice in your head that asks, 'Am I good enough?'). Yet the root causes, explains Cannon, go further back than we think. "Children don't tend to experience performance anxiety until later. In fact, they're generally oblivious to making mistakes. It's only when we're institutionalised – at about five years old – that we start to be aware of what reaction we're getting from others."

To make things more complex, he adds, the event you think you're nervous about might actually be triggering something deeper, perhaps from years before. "Performance anxiety can happen before anything – a recital, an audition, live TV, a studio session. But performance anxiety is not necessarily connected with your technical ability or the performance itself. Nor is it to do with a lack of passion or motivation or love for music. In fact, it can often be triggered by a life event from your past, by an ingrained lack of self-worth, and imposter syndrome. And that's something to tackle."

Practical Steps

The first step to solving performance anxiety, says Cannon, is to acknowledge that it exists without feeling shame or stigma. From there, musicians should decide whether they need a quick (but temporary) fix or a deep dive. "My first piece of advice is to be prepared. Get into the venue early. Chat with all the people who are around. Personally, I find that if I know the song inside-out and I've warmed up my voice, then I'm probably going to be okay. Whereas if I'm under-rehearsed, that's when I'm going to start feeling nervous."

Don't use an important gig as the moment to try out a new and untested item of musical equipment, advises Cannon. Instead, spend time getting to know your instrument, voice or entire rig inside-out, so you're never surprised by its limitations and can approach the performance with confidence.

Complete Control

"Be in control of your instrument, don't let the instrument be in control of you," he nods. "What I mean by that is, the physicality of playing an instrument – and I include singers in this – can be daunting, cumbersome and your relationship with it is paramount. You need to be in charge and able to feel comfortable holding, fingering, and playing it as if you're one with it. I had a lesson once from the British sax player Iain Ballamy where he encouraged me to (lightly) kick my MKVI around his flat, then pick it up and balance it precariously from my fingertips. I of course initially thought he was mad, but once I put it round my neck, I felt a sense of power over the horn. I felt free and not inhibited by its weight and heritage. Obviously you can't do that with a piano!"

When the clock ticks down to showtime, don't pace the corridors taking shallow, panicked breaths. "My research states that musicians reach their most heightened state of anxiety thirty seconds before the performance," says Cannon, "so even when you're just about to go onstage, there are several things you can do. Find a space where you're on your own, sit down in a chair and do a box breathing technique. Take a breath in for four beats, hold it for four, let it go for four, take in another breath. While you're doing that, be aware →

It can happen to any of us. Eddie Van Halen and Adele are among the many well-known artists who have spoken out about their anxiety when performing live



ARTISTS AND ANXIETY

Stage fright and anxiety can affect even the most high profile musicians. Barbra Streisand never got over the panic she felt when she forgot the lyrics to a song in a 1966 performance in Central Park. It was 27 years before she next stepped foot on stage and she never again made a public performance without a teleprompter. XTC's Andy Partridge suffered from acute stage fright as did Kirsty MacColl, who returned to the stage through the support and encouragement of The Pogues.

Managing stage fright has been a concern for numerous artists, such as Eddie Van Halen, Katy Perry, Andrea Bocelli and Scottish pianist Steven Osborne. Singer Lorde told *The West Australian* in 2014: "I am reduced by nerves. I can be completely crushed by feelings of all kinds. Usually I just tell myself 'The second you get up there it's going to be fine.'"

One artist who has spoken at length about her problems with stage fright is Adele: "I'm scared of audiences," she told *Rolling Stone* magazine. "One show in Amsterdam, I was so nervous I escaped out the fire exit. I've thrown up a couple of times." It can happen to the greatest talents, so finding your survival techniques is key.



Photos: Paul Nalkin / Gareth Cattermole / Getty Images

of your breathing, your surroundings and concentrate on three things: what you can see, hear and smell. The deep breathing releases endorphins, lowers the release of adrenaline and gets you into the right headspace."

Deep Dive

Techniques like these are an excellent sticking plaster, but when their schedule allows, musicians suffering from regular or severe performance anxiety should consider more comprehensive help to get to the bottom of it. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can be highly effective for reframing negative thoughts and helping you to visualise positive ones. The Alexander Technique focuses on breathing, body alignment and posture while helping you react more effectively to moments of stress.

Lesser-known but perhaps most effective, says Cannon, is Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). "ACT is basically about developing the ability to connect with the present moment, rather than past or future experiences. You're using mindfulness

techniques to cope with the situation then and there, based on what's important to you, rather than the anxiety itself. General anxiety will not go away, because it's so ingrained in our DNA. But the idea with ACT is that you train your mind to manage that anxiety in a performance situation. It's a really beneficial and effective method to use for coping with anxiety or something that's causing your career to not progress."

Talk The Talk

Of course, the role of a live musician is not merely to perform. Anecdotally, many MU members admit that filling the silence between songs can be just as daunting. Cannon agrees, and cites the example of British jazz vocalist Liane Carroll – with whom he recently performed – as the embodiment of the mindset he instills in his clients. "You should always try to break the ice early. You could be at the bar before the show. Don't necessarily stay backstage. Be sociable and as natural as you can with the audience. When you're onstage, have some sort of story. I believe there's a story behind every song and a journey that people want to go on with you. Don't worry about the segues between songs. Give yourself some time." Once the music starts back up, Cannon

“Audiences love musicians being authentic and natural”

Jimmy Cannon


Performance coach Jimmy Cannon has suffered from performance anxiety himself

Photo: Jonathan Stewart

continues, keeping lines of communication open will make you feel more in control, while allowing a tighter and more inclusive performance. “Communication is key, not only with the audience but with the other band members. There’s nothing worse than watching someone looking at their fretboard or the floor for the entire gig, however competent a musician they are. Speaking of communication, try and break the ‘fourth wall’ which is a theatre term for the invisible bridge between the performer and the audience. On a theatre stage, you’re often playing a part and the audience is generally not invited to ‘participate’ – apart from panto – whereas on a gig, health and safety permitting, it should feel like the audience are there with you on stage.”

Another effective way to relieve the pressure is to remind yourself that music is a human endeavour. As such, players should abandon the fool’s errand of trying to attain perfection and challenge themselves instead to deliver an honest, in-the-moment performance. “People love mistakes,” says Cannon. “Audiences love musicians being authentic and natural. If you drop the microphone, if you forget the words – it just doesn’t matter. People are going to forgive

you, if you’re authentic. Always remember that the audience want you to succeed. Particularly if they’ve paid to come and see you, it’s very unlikely that they’ll want bad things from you or will have any sort of wish for you to fail. They want you to be good. They want to be entertained. To realise that, I think, is really important.”

Finally, concludes Cannon with a smile, no musician should ever succumb to that most clichéd of supposed performance enhancers. “Dutch courage is a really bad idea. For a start, alcohol is terrible for your voice. But also, being inebriated is a false sense of security. It’s not authentic. As a musician, you want to find who you are and what you mean to people.” 

Jimmy Cannon is a singer and voice coach working with professionals to improve their voice for both public speaking and corporate presentations. He has a Masters in Vocal Pedagogy and is trained in ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Training), helping musicians manage and reduce their performance anxiety. To find out more visit jimmycannon.com

Top 5 Tips

How To Address Performance Anxiety

1

Acknowledge The Issue

Performance anxiety is a common issue that has too often been swept under the carpet. Don’t be afraid to recognise the problem and start taking steps to address it.

2

Be Prepared

Having devoted a little extra time to pre-performance practice, try taking practical steps like arriving at the venue early and meeting the sound crew – this will help settle your nerves.

3

Box breathing and mindfulness

If you’re feeling anxious, spend at least a few minutes on slow inhalations and exhalations (in for four, hold for four, out for four).

4

The Alexander Technique

This well-established method teaches posture and movement but is far more than physical, helping you control your responses to stressful situations in life.

5

CBT and ACT therapies

Go deeper with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (helping you to pinpoint and overwrite negative thoughts) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (helping you to perform ‘in the present’).

TOP TIP

THEY’RE ON YOUR SIDE

Remember that the audience is on your side, wants you to succeed and will forgive mistakes made during an authentic performance.



INTRODUCTION TO... EXPENSES

Keeping a record of what you have spent and what you can claim can be arduous, but it can save you money in the long run, as Neil Churchman explains

What is it about musicians and tax? George Harrison famously denounced it in his song, *Taxman*, The Rolling Stones went into exile in France because of it, and, in *Sunny Afternoon*, The Kinks' Ray Davies complained darkly that the then Inland Revenue had "taken all my dough". That was during the super-tax era of the 1960s and 70s, when rates for high earners were 90% or more – but tax bills have been a headache for musical geniuses through the ages. Beethoven himself is alleged to have falsified his tax returns, and Wagner is reported to have once dressed as a woman to give the Viennese revenue authorities the slip.

Nowadays it doesn't have to be like that. Of course, musicians, like any other citizens, are still legally obliged to pay tax on their earnings. But there's more free advice, and more professional help available than ever before, to ensure they pay their dues without missing out on important tax breaks.

What To Claim

Broadly, reasonable expenses that are necessary to run an effective business are deductible. They include: the cost of buying and maintaining instruments and equipment; fees for recording studios; the cost of recording software; travel to and from performances or auditions; website, management and publicity fees; hotel expenses; costumes, make-up and more.

But as the annual 31 January deadline looms for the self-employed to complete their returns and pay up, many musicians are still unsure about what they can and cannot claim, says Andy Levett, an accountant at the firm HW Fisher, which specialises in people in the creative industries. "Often a musician will not realise they may claim capital allowances on instruments or equipment they owned prior to becoming self-employed, or that were gifted to them," he says.

Clothing claims can be especially contentious: "Some years ago they were the subject

"The cost of dining or drinking with a business associate is not in fact allowable"

It's always a good idea to keep a tab of everything you spend and let the accountant sort it out for you

Photo: Kosamtu / Getty Images

of a landmark case on what counts as a business expense generally," says Andy. "The conclusion was that clothes can only be claimed if they could not reasonably form part of one's everyday wardrobe. So stage wear needs to be unconventional enough to avoid a possible disallowance." He adds that make-up specifically for the stage or screen can be claimed, as can accessories, merchandise or event-specific hairdressing, but he cautions: "It's important to be discriminating and not simply claim a percentage of total clothing costs for the year."

Different Categories

The often complex tax profiles of musicians reflect the varied nature of an industry where so many derive income from a combination of regular, freelance and teaching work. "A performing musician will tend to claim more on travel costs while a composer will have more costs in relation to running a studio," says Andy. "All will tend to claim for cost of instruments and other equipment, as well as general costs such as a business portion of phone bills. Band leaders will have fees for other musicians and



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE TAX ACCOUNTING

Daniel Trodden is principal tuba for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, but he also works for other orchestras where he is paid as a freelancer. In addition he teaches, both as a private tutor and as a staffer.

“With a complex tax situation like mine, an accountant is absolutely vital,” he says. “Right from the off, when I graduated, I did a tiny bit of freelance, just to keep going, and I realised I didn’t have a clue what I was doing tax-wise. I just put it through and let the accountants decide. It’s a great comfort that someone is taking care of it.”

Although he admits to being hazy on what is deductible in terms of meals, or medical expenses, some of the things he is able to claim have been a pleasant surprise – such as gig and cinema tickets, which are allowable as research. He says there’s also a creative dividend to having an accountant: he avoids stress as the tax deadline approaches, and is free to concentrate on his music. “Every January you hear your colleagues saying ‘I’m dreading doing my taxes’ and I think I probably pay a little over the odds for my accountant, but it’s amazing: I send him envelopes with crumpled up receipts and then he sends me something back to sign, and that’s all I have to do.”

Daniel reckons the music business education he received was heavily skewed towards self-promotion, with too little about tax. “I think there’s probably a case for more about tax for young musicians,” he says. “From what I gather it still isn’t being taught in depth.”

producers will have session fees. “Essentially, any cost incurred due to business activities can be considered and most may be claimed, with a few exceptions.”

One of the most pitfall-strewn areas is the cost incurred while working from home. “Some musicians may be aware of the fixed monthly allowance that may be claimed, but this is limited and if they have a room or space set aside as a studio and/or an office, they may claim a portion of the actual home costs based on the number of rooms or floor area. This includes rent or mortgage interest, council tax, utilities and insurance.” He cites a typical example where a musician has one room of a three-bed house set aside as a studio/office. Bathrooms and hallways are ignored, so a fifth of those costs may be claimed.

On the question of expenses for entertaining business contacts, the rules are clear. “They are often mistakenly claimed by people in all sorts of professions but are actually

blocked. So the cost of dining or drinking with a business associate is not in fact allowable. HMRC accept they are often a genuine business cost but they are disallowed by statute, presumably to prevent abuse!”

Beware of claiming medical expenses, too. “A musician will often assume that treatment to allow them to perform will be permitted – for example back surgery for a pianist – but this is usually not allowable as it is considered as having a dual purpose of restoring the individual’s health.” If there is treatment that simply maintains or improves an ability to play but does not have any real benefit in everyday life then it may be allowable, but care needs to be taken.

Travel Claims

Another vexed issue affects music tutors who teach in schools. “They often find it difficult to understand that the cost of travel from home to the school is not allowable,” says Andy. “But HMRC consider the school to be the ‘base’ for this type of work and therefore the cost of the trip is disallowed as commuting. For most other activities a musician’s base will be deemed to be their home and so travel for these activities is allowable.”

For those setting out on musical careers, Andy advises keeping a record of everything they spend, right from the beginning. Soon it will be law for most small businesses to keep digital records, so getting an app such as Xero, Quickbooks or Freeagent is recommended. Having a separate bank account for the business transactions will assist with digital record keeping. He also suggests doing a tax return as soon after 5 April as possible. It means you will have time to review all the expenditure to ensure you claim everything that is allowable, and you will also have plenty of warning of what will be due to HMRC.

Finally, he advises setting aside money for tax as you earn – 20% of the gross should be enough, although if your expenditure is high or the income low that may be too much. Ensuring your digital record-keeping is up-to-date will also help you know what your tax liability for the year is looking like. **!!!**

Delegate Conference 2023

Returning to an in-person event for the Conference in Birmingham

The MU's biennial Delegate Conference will be held at the Park Regis Hotel in Birmingham on Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 July 2023.

Conference receives a report from the Executive Committee (EC) on its activities since the last Conference, considers Conference Motions originating from Regional Committees, discusses and decides matters of policy, plus determines Rule changes.

Programme

The Delegate Conference will be considering the full contents of the MU Conference Report for 2023, alongside the Motions and Rule changes. The event will return to the traditional face-to-face style following the change to online format at the previous event in 2021.

Depending on the Motions to be considered by Conference, presentations from Officials might be made on industry issues. External speakers may also be invited.

Conference Report

The Conference Report will continue in the concise and focused digital design delivered in 2019, which proved very successful and was comprehensively welcomed by the Executive Committee and delegates.

It will continue to report on activities over the previous two years and will exclude lengthy detail on – for example – pay rates, which will be made available on the MU website. The structure of the Report will match that of the Executive Committee agenda and be based on the MU's organisational structure. This approach

will demonstrate closer links between governance and reporting to members. Questions from delegates on the various sections will be taken on a section-by-section basis, in line with traditional arrangements.

The Report, along with all other Conference documents, will be made available to attendees in digital format as soon as possible prior to the event.

Conference Motions

The timetable for the submission and moderation of Motions has been adapted with the aim of ensuring the calls submitted for consideration by Conference are as contemporary, timely and as relevant as possible.

To this end, Motions to Conference can be submitted at a later deadline than in previous years, namely 31 March 2023.



Photo: Ioanna Dudderidge

The MU's Delegate Conference is where the Union's work over the last two years is reported and new motions are tabled and voted upon. Birmingham will be this year's host city



Photos: Maremagnum; ChrisHeppburn / Getty Images

Members will be reminded of this date and be provided with full details on how to submit motions in the New Year.

Members will be invited to put forward Motions for Conference for their Regional Committees to consider at meetings to take place in the spring of 2023.

Motions carried by each Region will be contained within the Conference Report and referenced to a section in the document and numbered accordingly. Delegates will consider each Motion at the conclusion of questions on the section to which it has been allocated.

Please note that Retired (Free) members are not eligible to submit Motions. Each Region is entitled to propose one Conference Motion for every 750 members in the Region on 31 December 2022. This is subject to a minimum of three and a maximum of fourteen

Motions per Region. The Regional Committee will determine which Motions are to be submitted for inclusion on the Conference Agenda.

Conference Motions must be supported by five fully paid-up members of the Region and should address matters of Union policy at a national level.

Motions must be submitted in writing with the names and membership numbers of the supporting members of the Region attached. No member may move or support more than two Motions. Motions may be submitted via email. Acknowledgement of receipt will be provided on request. (Members are referred to MU Rule VI with regards to the submitting of Motions).

Rule Changes

Proposals for Rule changes will be contained in a separate section of the Conference Report. Delegates will consider Rule changes sequentially as a separate item in the Conference programme.

Travel And Accommodation

Hotel accommodation and catering will be provided on the Monday and Tuesday evening for delegates and guests. Delegates and visitors' accessibility requirements will receive our full attention and provision as required.

Reasonable travel expenses will be covered for attendees in keeping with the Union's expenses policy.

Expenses

Full accommodation and catering will be provided throughout the event so there will be no additional subsistence expenses payable to attendees.

Social Events

A formal mid Conference dinner will take place on the Tuesday evening.

Standing Orders Committee

The activities of the Standing Orders Committee continue unchanged.

Delegate Nominations

Nominations for delegates will be called at the same time as the call for Motions. This will allow potential delegates who wish to support a particular Motion to attend.

Members' Conference

As reported in this issue of *The Musician*, the Members' Conference held in Leeds in October focusing on equalities, diversity and inclusion, proved a notable success. Plans for Members' Conferences in the future will be considered by the Executive Committee and members will be advised in due course of the opportunities to attend and engage in these key events.

A large print or audio version of this information is available on request from your Regional Office.



Delegate Conference 2023

Writing Motions For Conference

Tips for getting your motions noticed and selected...

Make sure your motion is topical and concise. Your motion is more likely to be selected by the Regional Committee if it comes with a call for action that the Region can support, and the Executive Committee (EC) can implement.

In general, a motion is more likely to be selected if:

- It contains genuinely new and interesting proposals.
- Is on a subject where there is a lack of policy, and which hasn't been debated recently.
- Is on a subject of major political or industrial importance.
- Is likely to lead to an interesting debate, with amendments and speakers both for and against.

It is less likely to be selected if:

- It is a repeat of old policies with nothing really new.
- It is on a subject which has been debated recently.
- It is unlikely to lead to a good debate – for example if it is so uncontroversial that no one will want to disagree with anything in the motion.

When writing your motion, make sure it is:

- Topical, accurate and concise.
- Comprehensible and logical.
- Likely to prompt good debate.
- In a subject area on which it is desirable for the MU to develop or change policy.

Motions should be clear statements which cover:

- The problem which needs to be solved (welcomes, regrets, deplores, denounces).
- The principle which underlies the solution (reaffirm, recognise, declare).
- The proposal at the heart of the motion (affirms, believes, recommends, urges).

The best motions are structured as follows:

- A description of the issue or problem, which the motion seeks to address
- The principle(s) which underlie the solution.
- A description of any existing policies, which will contribute to the solution.
- The further policy proposals, which normally conclude the motion and are its most important element.

A common reason for motions not being selected is because they contain criticisms and a detailed description of the problem, but are unclear or entirely negative in their conclusions.

Proposals are usually introduced by “members call for”, but you could also use “recommend”, “propose”, “urge”, “demand”, “insist”, or “resolve”.

Make sure your motion is topical and concise. You will want Conference delegates to support your call for action



Photo: Jonathan Stewart, © MU




Photo: Joanna Dudderidge, © MU

Do

- Choose issues which are topical and new and not a repeat of existing policy.
- Include a proposal of action, as this is far more useful in shaping policy and therefore makes for a better motion.
- Use sections if you have several clear calls for action. Ensure that any subsections only deal with one point of principle and don't reference other subsections.
- Be concise and clear – write in plain English, explain any abbreviations, and try not to go beyond 150 words.
- Check that any factual points are accurate – motions that have inaccuracies are unlikely to be selected.
- Be original – the Union needs exciting, topical debates. Even if your motion falls it can still offer colleagues a valuable perspective.

Don't

- Write long, verbose speeches or be repetitive, vague or moralistic.
- Include quotations or actual sums of money, both of which run the danger of being inaccurate and thus invalidating the motion.
- Put forward motions which are already policy.
- Make personal attacks – the law of defamation may apply.
- Be afraid to submit a motion. They are important for the Union in developing and shaping policy into the future. 

If you think an issue needs to be addressed, consider proposing a motion

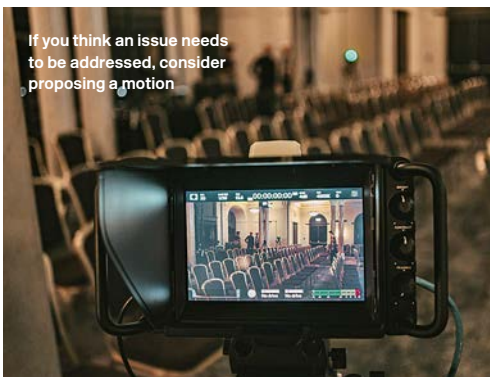


Photo: Miles Myerscough-Harris, © MU

Why I Joined The MU

Making waves as one of the few female pedal steel guitar players in the UK, Holly Carter tells *The Musician* about discovering the instrument

Report by Katie Nicholls

It's a rare sight indeed to see a female pedal steel guitar player in the UK, so multi-instrumentalist Holly Carter carved out a pretty unique niche for herself when she jumped from the electric guitar to drums to pedal steel, inspired by the Talking Heads track *People Like Us* (played by Tommy Morrell). "I've never met or seen another female pedal steel player live," she confesses when *The Musician* sat down with the Bristol-based artist. "It'd be great to do more stuff that gets women seeing a female pedal steel player. I feel quite proud to be one of the only few pedal steel players around, and I'd love to not be the only one that I know."

With a helping hand from a combination of YouTube tutorials and support from pedal steel artists Chris Hillman, Jo Harvey-White, Henry Senior and Bob Dixon she quickly felt a strong affinity with what she describes as an "inaccessible, complicated and quite daunting" instrument. "Bob taught me how to play an E major scale and said, 'Here's your guitar, here's your picks, off you go...'" she laughs.

Holly has just finished a 13-date UK tour with fellow Bristolian singer-songwriter Lady Nade, and before that a stint with renowned blues and roots artist Martin Harley, an experience she says she's "very grateful" for. "You want to

"When I think of a union, I think of people power"



Photos: Guy Bellingham; Jonathan Stewart. © MU




be playing with people who are pushing you," she considers. "That nice in-between place where you don't think, 'I'm really letting the team down here' and 'I've just really pushed myself to keep up'."

Union Songs

Aside from supporting other bands and artists, Holly is a singer-songwriter too, releasing her debut EP, *All Of You... And Me*, last December, and more recently a cover of an old union song, *Casey Jones The Union Scab*. The track is part of what she describes as an "obsession" with turn of the 20th century union activist and songwriter Joe Hill, and it is accompanied by a live show and talk she has put together about Joe Hill's life and music. All proceeds from *Casey Jones The Union Scab* will be donated to the RMT (National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers).

"It's the sense of community," says Holly when asked why she feels it's important to be part of a union. "When I think of a union, I think of people power, it's about coming together and supporting each other, and especially with the Musicians' Union. Music is an odd career," she

continues, "because people go into it because they love music and are passionate about it, and they don't necessarily think about the business or legal side of things... speaking for myself, of course!" Holly has been a member of the MU since 2019 and says that the support it's provided her has been crucial in her development as a musician. "Knowing that there's a community out there that we can call on is so reassuring. Unions are safety and they give power back to the people doing the work. It legitimises what we're doing."

Holly is making plans to take the Joe Hill talk and performance around the country, playing community spaces to keep the connection with union history alive. "Having people sing along and dance to an old union song from 1911 just feels so bonkers and lovely," she says. Americana fans can catch Holly playing in the house band for the UK Americana tenth anniversary awards show at the Hackney Empire on 26 January, 2023. Holly has also been shortlisted as a nominee for the Instrumentalist of the Year Award. 

For more information on Holly and her work, please visit hollycartermusic.com

tributes



Brian Blain

Beloved jazz man, Musicians' Union stalwart, and former editor of *The Musician*

A tireless advocate for UK jazz and its musicians, the promoter, union official, writer and activist Brian Blain has died aged 92. Latterly prominent as the programmer of the yearly jazz series at Lauderdale House – an arts centre in Highgate, London – Brian had previously chaired the Jazz Centre Society, been a director of Jazz Services, and a valued contributor to *Melody Maker* and *Jazz UK* magazine.

Born in Salford in 1929, he taught at a junior school in Lancashire before moving to London, re-training as a PE teacher and working in the East End. He then became an official of the Musicians' Union, staying in post for the rest of his career. He helped launch the MU's 'Keep Music Live' programme, travelling the length of the UK organising big band and rock workshops, with Val Wilmer as the scheme's supporting photographer.

The EC appointed a Sub-Committee in May 1965 to promote a 'Campaign for the Advance of Live Music'. Brian was immediately engaged to act for the Sub-Committee as Campaign Secretary and he succinctly outlined the summary of the campaign's objectives in his article published in *Musician* – as the magazine was then called – in January 1966: "To improve the quantity and quality of situations where the work of musicians may be heard."

He recognised the Committee was "a kind of pressure group to create a greater awareness of the necessity for their work as a basic pre-requisite for the continuance of music of the highest quality in all fields". This work led to the legendary 'Keep Music Live' phrase and logo, which proved to be one of the longest-running and most-recognised campaigns of the late 20th century.

Alert to newer and more adventurous forms of jazz, and always open-minded, he saw to it that jazz and rock musicians joined the Union, and pushed to ensure that female musicians and non-white players received their proper due. Brian also edited this very magazine for several decades, continuing to do so well into his full retirement in 2004.

"He was the best friend jazz in London could have had"

Richard Williams

A habitué at Ronnie Scott's, he was known at every other London venue, however small, where jazz was happening. Left-leaning, an ardent Manchester City fan, loquacious – no conversation with Brian was ever short – and always questioning, Brian's love of jazz modernism dated from his schooldays when he first heard the youthful Tubby Hayes with Kenny Baker in a local dancehall. Once in London he wrote reviews for *Melody Maker* as 'Christopher Bird', also contributing to other outlets, one highlight being his memoir of legendary drummer Phil Seamen, *I Remember Phil*, which was widely

reproduced. He reviewed for *Jazz UK*, first under John Fordham's editorship, then for Roger Thomas – Fordham often driven to distraction as he sought to decipher Brian's rather ramshackle copy. Although self-deprecating about his journalism, Brian didn't need to be. He knew what he was about, loved the music and its practitioners, and thought deeply about its future. A regular at Swanage where his concert introductions were often anecdotal yet always illuminating, Brian was the most convivial of companions. It was just a joy to be in his company.

Keith Ames and Peter Vacher, with many thanks to *Jazzwise*

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In 2019, *London Jazz News* published a celebratory piece for Brian's 90th birthday. Below are excerpts. To read the full piece please visit tinyurl.com/3mtywfe6

"When I asked Brian... what is the kind of jazz that he likes best... he thought about it. And then, before the memories started to flow, he replied to the question slowly, carefully: 'I think I have grown along with the music'."

Sebastian Scotney

"Brian's commitment to the scene, and his ability to communicate in words what was going on musically at the time was immensely important at spreading awareness during a decade where jazz in Britain was creating a dynamic of its own."

John Cumming

"Over the years we've had intense conversations about the jazz world and music. He would be a great champion of certain players... and [was] always prepared to stick his neck out while promoting at Lauderdale House."

John Etheridge

"Brian always had fascinating angles on jazz... real empathy with players... and love of jazz stories and jazz people that comes from a rare warmth and gregariousness."

John Fordham

Tom Springfield
Songwriter, producer
and big brother of Dusty

Born Dionysius O'Brien in Hampstead, Springfield was the motivating force behind two of the 1960s biggest folk/pop groups. Together with his sister Mary and Tim Feild, The Springfields were Britain's answer to Peter, Paul and Mary. Dionysius changed his name to Tom Springfield, Mary became Dusty and the trio enjoyed a string of chart hits before the group folded in late 1963.

Springfield then became involved with The Seekers, an Australian group that had arrived in the UK in 1964. He became their producer and songwriter, though never performed live with them, preferring to stay out of the limelight. The group notched up two UK number ones and Springfield was nominated for an Oscar for the group's theme song to the 1967 film *Georgy Girl*. He went on to write the theme for the BBC TV show *The Trouleshooters*, before effectively retiring from the music business after 1970.

Will Simpson



Paul Sartin
Classically-trained but
more famous for folk

Perhaps best known for his work with the stadium folkers Bellowhead, Paul Sartin was a gifted musician. Born in Croydon, his mother urged him into music, and he studied at the Purcell School for Young Musicians on an assisted places scheme.

Although he graduated from Magdalen College, Oxford in 1994 on a choral scholarship, he had been developing a love for folk since his teens, and formed the duo Belshazzar's Feast with his friend Paul Hutchinson. He was also a founding member of Dr Faustus, but it was with Bellowhead that he found more public acclaim, winning eight BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, including Best Live Act five times.

But away from this, Paul kept busy in many musical spheres. He was a visiting tutor on Newcastle University's folk music degree course, worked as a vocal tutor in Oxford at St Edward's school, and was a deputy lay clerk for Winchester Cathedral choir.

Paul died suddenly, aged 51, in September. He was a popular, multi-talented performer and a skilled communicator whose place on the UK folk scene will be sorely missed.

Roy Delaney



Manny Charlton
Pioneering rock
guitarist with Nazareth

Famed for his distinctive droopy moustache, Manny was born Manuel Charlton in Spain in 1941 to Scottish emigree parents. After moving back to Dunfermline, Manny was inspired by early rock'n'roll to play guitar, and began to busk around the streets of his city and played with a few local bands.

But his life changed while playing in the Kinema Ballroom band, where he met Pete Agnew and Dan McCafferty, who together with drummer Darrell Sweet would go on to form The Shadettes who would eventually become the early British rock band Nazareth.

With a dozen UK chart hits under their belts, including *Broken Down Angel*, *This Flight Tonight*, and a stunning version of *Love Hurts*, they went on to become festival staples, and one of the most influential Scottish bands of all time, with many of their releases produced by Manny.

Roy Delaney

Marion Broome
A much-loved violinist
and music teacher

Born in Essex, Marion studied at the Royal Academy of Music with Beatrix Marr. After two years with the Hallé Orchestra under Sir John Barbiroli she joined the BBC Revue Orchestra under Harry Rabinowitz, becoming sub-leader.

In 1961 Marion was appointed sub-leader of the newly-formed (now Royal) Northern Sinfonia and moved to Newcastle with her husband, Noel Broome, a violinist and viola-player who she met in the Hallé. The arrival of the first of their three children in 1962 meant giving up full-time work, but she continued to freelance, principally with the NSO, but also with the Scottish Baroque Ensemble and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

Marion and Noel were actively involved in the promotion of chamber music in the north-east, while Marion became a much sought-after violin teacher. She lived long enough to enjoy her 90th birthday, and leaves her husband, Noel, three children, and five grandchildren.

Noel Broome

The MU also notes the sad passing of Rab Noakes, musician, writer, guitarist, MU activist and producer. Please visit the theMU.org for a tribute. A further tribute will appear in the next issue of *The Musician*.

Dave Wintour
In-demand session
bassist in pop and rock

Dave was one of the most highly regarded session bassists of the 1960s and 70s, playing for a host of familiar names on their most important recordings.

Born in Lydney, Gloucestershire, his long career started out with The Chas Kingsley Combo, before moving on to playing sessions at the Dolphin Club in Gloucester. From here he moved to London and started to pick up session work.

Wintour played with Dusty Springfield, Stealers Wheel, Leo Sayer and Rick Wakeman. He can also be heard on The Who's 1969 album *Tommy*, and on Roger Daltrey's solo album *Ride A Rock Horse*. He toured extensively, featuring on Neil Sedaka's *Live At The Royal Festival Hall* album with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1995 he joined those West Country cider drinkers The Wurzels. After a seven year stint with the band, Dave relocated to Ireland. His final tour was in 2019 with guitarist Eric Bell.

Will Simpson

Photo: David Redfern / Getty Images

Photo: Peter Noble / Getty Images

Musicians' Union Election Results

This report is issued in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 as amended.

Executive Committee Elections, term of office 2023 to 2024

These elections were conducted using the 'First Past the Post' system

East & SE England

Result of ballot of members (2 to be elected)

Sarah-Jane DALE	248	Elected
Xenia HORNE	146	
Richard LIGHTMAN	323	Elected
Sarah SAYEED	214	
Peter WILLSON	142	

Ballot papers distributed	6656
Ballot papers returned	560
Turnout for this contest	8.41%
Papers found to be invalid	0
Papers counted	560

London

Result of ballot of members (4 to be elected)

Allan COX	69	
Steve DONE	573	Elected
Mike HORNE	380	
Sam MURRAY	375	
Emily SAUNDERS	431	Elected
Fred SCOTT	12	
James TOPP	503	Elected
Sarah WILLIAMS	671	Elected

Ballot papers distributed	9386
Ballot papers returned	880
Turnout for this contest	9.36%
Papers found to be invalid	3
Papers counted	877

Wales & SW England

The following candidate is elected unopposed

Tracey KELLY

Any member of the Musicians' Union requiring a copy of the Scrutineers' Report should email Phil Kear at the Musicians' Union at phil.kear@theMU.org

Midlands

Result of ballot of members (1 to be elected)

Pete HARTLEY	143	
Dan WHITEHOUSE	164	Elected

Ballot papers distributed	3050
Ballot papers returned	310
Turnout for this contest	10.16%
Papers found to be invalid	3
Papers counted	307

North of England

Result of ballot of members (1 to be elected)

Vernon FULLER	144	
Eric LEWIS	166	
Eileen SPENCER	235	Elected

Ballot papers distributed	5475
Ballot papers returned	550
Turnout for this contest	10.05%
Papers found to be invalid	5
Papers counted	545

Scotland & N Ireland

Result of ballot of members (1 to be elected)

Brian AYLWARD	64	
Matthew WHITESIDE	155	Elected

Ballot papers distributed	2743
Ballot papers returned	240
Turnout for this contest	8.75%
Papers found to be invalid	21
Papers counted	219

Members are reminded that the latest Musicians' Union Accounts (for the Year ending 31 December 2021) are available from theMU.org

Independent Scrutineers' Report

This report is issued in accordance with the Trades Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 as amended.

In accordance with Section 53 and MU Rules, 'Nothing in this Chapter shall be taken to require a ballot to be held at an uncontested election'. Where the number of candidates nominated in each of the above elections does not exceed the number to be elected a ballot is not required.

We are satisfied that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that there was any contravention of a requirement imposed by or under any enactment in relation to the election.

We are satisfied that the arrangements made in respect to the production, storage, distribution, return or other handling of the voting papers used in the election, and the arrangements for the counting of the votes, including all security arrangements as were reasonably practicable for the purpose of minimising the risk that any unfairness or malpractice might occur.

We have been able to carry out our functions without such interference as would make it reasonable for any person to call my independence in relation to union into question. A copy of the register of voters (as at the relevant date) was not examined nor were we requested by any member or candidate to inspect or examine a copy of the candidateship register.

Craig Poyser
Service Delivery Manager
on behalf of UK Engage
7 November 2022

Have you registered for your MU benefits?

While membership of the MU offers a wide range of free services, there are a number of benefits that you need to register or apply for

MU website

To fully access our website – **theMU.org** – you will need to register on your first visit using your membership number.

Contract advice – before you sign

Receive professional advice on the terms and implications of any complex agreements via our Contract Advisory Service. Contact your Regional Office to find out more.

Instrument and equipment insurance

For £2,000 worth of free musical instrument and equipment cover. Register by calling Hencilla Canworth on **020 8686 5050**

Partnership advice

If all the members of your group are already MU members, or

decide to join, we can offer free partnership advice and an agreement. Contact your Regional Office for more information.

Motoring service

The MU Family Motoring and Accident Aftercare Scheme provides 24/7 cover. Members must enter discount code MU24 to obtain free membership of the scheme. Register now via telephone or the web. **mu.assistprotect.co.uk/TMAJoinFree.cfm**

Musicians' Hearing Services

A range of hearing related services for MU members. For an appointment, call MHS on **020 7486 1053** or visit **musicianshearingservices.co.uk**

Help Musicians UK

Charity offering practical, positive support to emerging, professional

and retired musicians, whatever the genre. **helpmusicians.org.uk**

Medical assistance

The British Association for Performing Arts Medicine delivers specialist health support to musicians. Visit **bapam.org.uk**

Music Minds Matter

A comprehensive mental health support service providing advice, information, resources, and professional and clinical services for musicians in need of help. **musicmindsmatter.org.uk**

Music Support

A charity for individuals in the UK music industry suffering from mental, emotional and behavioural health disorders. **musicupport.org**

For full details of all the benefits of MU membership see *Members' Handbook*.

MU Sections

To join, contact the relevant MU Official.

Live Performance Section

Dave Webster
National Organiser
Live Performance
30 Snowsfields
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T 020 7840 5512
E live@theMU.org

Music Writers' Section

Kelly Wood
Live & Music Writers' Official
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Orchestra Section

Jo Laverty
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Recording & Broadcasting Section

Geoff Ellerby
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Education Section

Chris Walters
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Education, Health & Wellbeing
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E teachers@theMU.org

Theatre Section

Dave Webster
National Organiser
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London SW9 0JJ
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E theatre@theMU.org



Are you due a royalty payment from the Musicians' Union for the use of any of your recordings in television programmes, films or adverts? Are you the next of kin of a musician who used to receive royalties from us?

The Musicians' Union pays royalties to a growing number of musicians for the secondary exploitation of their recordings. In most cases we know which musicians performed on the recording and already have their contact and payment details, so the royalty income can be distributed straight away. However, there is a certain amount of income we have collected that we cannot distribute as we have not been able to identify who

performed on the recording; or we do know the names of the musicians but we have been unable to trace them or their next of kin. If you can assist the Musicians' Union with line-up information or contact details, visit **theMU.org/Home/Advice/Recording-Broadcasting/Royalties**. Here, you will be able to find more information on the types of royalty income we collect, as well as lists of musicians and recording line-ups we are currently trying to trace.

[theMU.org/Home/Advice/Recording-Broadcasting/Royalties](https://www.themu.org/Home/Advice/Recording-Broadcasting/Royalties)

Musicians'
Union



#BehindEveryMusician