

The Musician

Journal of the Musicians' Union
Winter 2023
theMU.org



Artificial Intelligence

Assessing the threat of musicians being replicated and replaced

MU Conference

All the news from the 40th MU Biennial Delegate Conference

Steve Pearce

In-demand studio session bassist with impeccable feel and groove

contacts

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**Musicians'
Union**



The Case For Change

How the MU is working relentlessly to tackle a “perfect storm” of issues directly caused by the Government’s questionable commitment to culture



Naomi Pohl,
General Secretary

“At times like these, the Union’s organising work and our members’ connectedness is paramount”

Welcome to this edition of *The Musician*. I would like to thank Keith Ames, Editor of the magazine for 20 years, for all his work and I am sure you will join me in wishing him a very happy and well-deserved retirement. (See pages 10-11). I would also like to express my support and solidarity to all members affected by recent events in Israel and Palestine. The MU’s Executive Committee has released a statement condemning the rise in hate that we know is happening in the UK and the discrimination, harassment and cancelled work that members are facing as a result. Please take the time to read the statement on our website.

On industrial matters, the MU has been supporting members who face job cuts at ENO and Northern Ballet over the past few weeks. Following the BBC’s ill-conceived proposals in March, and various opera companies reducing their touring activity, we have a fight on our hands in the orchestral sector. This is covered in the Frontline section of the magazine, but I wanted to give my perspective on the ‘big picture’ issues and how they might be resolved.

Firstly, at times like these, the Union’s organising work and our members’ connectedness is paramount. When the BBC Singers were threatened, composers, conductors, freelancers, amateur choirs and many others stepped forward to challenge the proposal. This made the difference. We are facing a perfect storm of issues as a sector: diminished opportunities in music education, insufficient public funding, the cost of touring and ongoing Brexit impact can only be fixed if the political will is there. UK Music’s latest report, released in November

2023, evidenced that the music industry contributes £6.7bn to the UK economy. Music benefits communities, high streets and rural areas; bringing in tourism and boosting surrounding businesses. It has social, health and wellbeing benefits for participants and audiences alike. It has the ability to ‘level up’ opportunity, not just in the Government’s identified levelling up areas but everywhere, for everyone.

So what can be done? We will organise and equip members to challenge employers who propose cuts to pay and opportunities. At the same time, we are lobbying the Government and Labour Party for more support. We need the higher rate of theatre and orchestral tax relief to continue. We are asking the Treasury to either write off Covid recovery loans for the already struggling live performance sector or delay repayment. In ENO’s case, Nadine Dorries’s instruction to ACE to take money out of London has had a direct impact. In my view, while we support more money across the UK, the instruction has resulted in arbitrary decision making. Moving an admin office to a new postcode, for example, could tick a box. Delivering for audiences across the UK does not necessarily mean uprooting from an established base.

If properly funded, audiences can be served away from London with touring, project work and residencies, while local talent can be nurtured via funding of local organisations. Future Yard in Birkenhead is a great example of genuine ‘levelling up’ because it was born out of a community who wanted it, were consulted and can be involved in shaping its work. I also think we should be pushing Labour on a universal basic income for artists. Our members earned £20k per annum from music in 2013 and the same is true in 2023. We need a solution that keeps our members making music regardless of the political climate. Otherwise, we are always at risk of an exodus of talent. The Government must ask itself if it really values culture. It should; we know that voters do. **mu**



**THE MUSICIAN IS AVAILABLE
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FROM THEMU.ORG**

"I'm always shocked by how few women are included in any historical analysis of hip-hop"

Arusa Qureshi



Ms Banks performs at Wireless Festival in Crystal Palace Park, London, on 2 July 2022

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Photo: Belinda Enthoven. © MU

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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. **p16 & 32**



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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. **p26**



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Photo: Burak Cingi / Getty Images

Cover concert: Chris Stenner. Images: Hill Street Studios; SEAN GLADWELL / Getty Images



SUPPORT THE MU Encourage your friends and family to sign up as MU Supporters at theMU.org/supporters

frontline

Winter 2023

The MU in action, working on behalf of professional musicians

MU Campaigns Against Proposed Cuts To Live Music At Northern Ballet

The MU and the TUC have condemned proposed cuts to live music in Northern Ballet's touring productions. The plans mean that musicians in the Northern Ballet Sinfonia and the Company of Northern Ballet (NB) will be replaced by recorded music for some touring productions, a decision that has been described by the MU as an outrageous act of cultural vandalism.

Northern Ballet is facing a real terms funding cut due to a combination of standstill funding since 2015, and record inflation in the biggest cost of living crisis in decades. The MU is calling on Arts Council England to get round the table and agree a sustainable funding package that keeps Northern Ballet live.

Protests Against Cuts

Musicians in the Sinfonia are not salaried and only get paid for the work they do. Some are already relying on food banks to survive. In October, the musicians campaigned alongside MU activists to save their jobs outside the Nottingham Theatre Royal, ahead of a performance of *Beauty And The Beast*, and on 10 November, MU General Secretary Naomi Pohl and TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak joined a protest outside Newcastle Theatre Royal, to demonstrate against these proposed cuts.

"The MU is deeply concerned about the diminishing use of live musicians in UK



ballet productions," said Naomi. "Most ballet companies appear to be offering less work to orchestral musicians, even those who have players with ongoing contracts."

Naomi said that this is a direct result of funding cuts, adding that the situation at Northern Ballet is particularly stark.

Cultural Vandalism

"Ballet is a live medium and we know audiences demand live musicians. We urge the Arts Council and Northern Ballet to work together urgently to avert this cultural vandalism and ensure the company can keep doing what it does best: live performance."

To show your support and sign the petition please visit tinyurl.com/yck3sydt

"We urge the Arts Council and Northern Ballet to work together urgently to avert this cultural vandalism"

Naomi Pohl

MU Drive To Save ENO Musicians

The management of English National Opera has presented plans to cut the jobs for its orchestral musicians and music staff by 50%. These plans include axing 19 posts in the Orchestra and employing the remaining musicians on part-time contracts.

Some musicians will lose 70% of their current work and such cuts to the performing and music staff, musicians, singers and backstage workers will make working at ENO unviable. The management's new proposals, which have been discussed with ACE, are a result of decreased funding for ENO since 2014, alongside other financial challenges.

MU National Organiser for Orchestras Jo Laverty said, "ENO management was clear that it was the support and campaigning of the unions that helped them achieve their improved ACE funding settlement. To now be faced with these proposed cuts to our members' jobs is devastating and we can't accept what's on the table. We weren't naive to the likelihood of changes, but the extent of these proposals will send shockwaves through the music community and ENO's audience. Our members in the orchestra of ENO do not deserve to be treated in this way, especially given the quality and breadth of their recent work. The Union will fight hard to secure a brighter future for them."

MU Steward at the ENO, violinist Glen Sheldon added: "I am deeply shocked by the announcement to take a carving knife to the employment of ENO's musicians, leaving a rump of work that will no longer be a viable option for many currently employed there, or for those looking to it as a beacon of future opportunity."

Please share a message of support on social media using the hashtags **#WeAreENO** and **#SaveENO**. Please also write to ENO's board and management urging them to reconsider these proposals. A template letter is available on the MU website. For details of where to send your message, visit musiciansunion.org.uk/WeAreENO



Members of the Royal Opera House Orchestra have received huge support in their battle to restore pay, including that of the MU

Photo: Jonathan Stewart © MU

ROH Resolution To Restore Pay

Following an MU-supported campaign to have their pay restored to pre-pandemic levels, musicians in the Royal Opera House Orchestra (OROH) have accepted a significantly improved pay and conditions offer from the company's management to settle this year's dispute.

In 2020, the Orchestra musicians at the Royal Opera House took a 10% pay cut to help the financial situation of the company during the pandemic when the Royal Opera House was closed. The recent campaign has seen them calling on management to account for their loss.

Strong Turnout

The offer was accepted via a clear majority of the Orchestra members in a strong voter turnout and is a significant step forward in securing their pay levels. In the Union's view, this is a landmark solution for the year. It also recognises, in part via contractual improvements, MU members' justifiable concerns about work/life balance. This result is a credit to the courage and resolve of all MU members in the Orchestra and a powerful example of how a successful outcome can be achieved when members organise and stand

firm, even in the face of great pressure. MU officials would like to thank the Union Steward, Nigel Charman, and the members of the OROH players' committee for their determination and many hours of hard work.

During a number of recent performances, the musicians have been taking 'action short of a strike' to draw attention to their fight including wearing campaign T-shirts instead of their usual concert dress.

Public Demonstration

Jamie Pullman, MU London Regional Organiser, said: "We are pleased to see that the situation was recognised by the management, resulting in the current offer. We have been in negotiations for many months and our members felt they had to make a public demonstration of their frustration. They all love the Royal Opera House and want it to flourish, but they were also having to work double the number of weekends that they used to, and in cash terms they were earning less than they did in 2015. This situation could not continue, and the action was a demonstration of the determination of our members to ensure changes happen."



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

New Pledge For Arts Funding In Scotland

Findings contained within an MU briefing document were widely cited by MSPs during a debate on arts funding in the Scottish Parliament in October. Neil Bibby MSP, the Scottish Labour Spokesperson on Culture, commended the work of the MU, Equity and other organisations in putting pressure on the Scottish Government to fund the arts.

At the start of 2023, the Scottish Government threatened to cut £6.6m from Creative Scotland's funds for 2023/24, before doing a U-turn and cancelling the proposed cut on 21 February. However, in late September "the cabinet secretary disgracefully did a U-turn on the U-turn and confirmed that the £6.6 million cut was going ahead after all", said Bibby. Following widespread pressure from the MU and others, Scottish First Minister Humza Yousaf then pledged to double investment in Scotland's arts and culture, spending £100 million by 2028. The MU will continue to campaign to keep up the pressure on the Scottish Government to:

Deliver on its commitment to double investment in Scotland's arts and culture.

Frontload the implementation of the additional £100m per year to save jobs and cultural institutions.

Work with unions and others to ensure that Fair Work principles are applied consistently throughout the arts and culture sector.



Photo: Scott E Barbour / Getty Images

Vote 'Yes' To The MU Political Fund

A ballot of all MU members on keeping our political fund will take place in December. Ballot papers will be sent out on 15 December 2023 and the ballot will close on 19 January 2024.

When you receive your ballot paper, please make sure you read the contents, follow the voting instructions and return in the pre-paid envelope provided in good time so that your vote is counted.

Many decisions about members' working lives are made by politicians, but we are legally prevented from spending any money outside the political fund on lobbying them. So, it's vitally important we keep the fund so we can continue to influence politicians to make the right decisions for you.

For more details about the Political Fund and the Ballot please visit tinyurl.com/fdjuzpy4

Worker Protection Bill Becomes Law

The MU is delighted that the Worker Protection Bill has passed its final stage in the House of Commons, which means it will become law before the end of the year.

The Worker Protection Bill will create a 'preventative duty': a requirement that employers prevent sexual harassment from happening in their workplaces, moving us from a culture of redress to one of prevention. The new law means clear policies, training, and proper, impartial investigations into reported harassment. For full details please visit tinyurl.com/2s37e26v

Life Lessons Of A DJ

The "highs, lows and lessons" of a 30-year DJ-ing career form the focus of a new book by DJ Paulette, entitled *Welcome To The Club: The Life And Lessons Of A Black Woman DJ*.

The book presents a view of the electronic dance music industry from a Black woman's perspective and champions the powerful women within that space. It also states that behind the core values of peace, love, unity and respect, dance music is a world of exclusion, misogyny, racism and classism.

The book is published in January 2024 by Manchester University Press. For more details please visit tinyurl.com/4cfrnscj

Dates For The Diary

5 Jan

What: Feldenkrais: Move Better, Feel Better, Perform Better. Free up your playing and singing with Feldenkrais
Where: Online
Info: theMU.org

15 Jan

What: Punk Scholars Network's Conference
Where: Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe HP11 2JZ
Info: tinyurl.com/punkschol

18 Jan

What: Curriculum Music Conference
Where: Riverway Centre, Riverway, Stafford ST16 3TH
Info: musicmark.org.uk/events

24-26 Jan

What: Association of British Orchestras Conference. Classical music conference
Where: Bristol Beacon, Trenchard St, Bristol BS1 5AR
Info: abo.org.uk

29 Jan

What: Health and Wellbeing MU Members' Meeting to Discuss Workplace Challenges
Where: Online
Info: theMU.org

Your Voice

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

Save Our Careers

Please support campaigns to retain freelance musicians. It's on a knife edge as a viable profession.

Louise Braithwaite
@LouBraithwaite

Arts Cancel England

The International Federation of Musicians fully supports the MU's campaign to keep the Northern Ballet music live. Don't let Arts Council England become Arts Cancel England.

FIM @fim_musicians

No Show Without Music

First the Northern Ballet, now ENO (again). As a young freelancer it is devastating to see potential career paths being destroyed with such ease. Solidarity with their musicians whilst they find a way out of this mess. There is no show without the music!

Emma Prince @emmaprince98

Beating Heart

Just horrible to go from rave reviews for Grimes to so many jobs being threatened. They deserve so much better than this. The orchestra and chorus are the beating heart of ENO. Without them there's just a bunch of props and sets.

George @OperaCreep



Photo: Gilsbert Hanekroot / Getty Images

Proud Colleague

Just devastating. Complete admiration and respect for my amazing colleagues at ENO, producing incredible work this week, despite the heartbreaking news. It's a double-show-day of fairy smiles today, albeit with a serious lump in the throat.

Samantha Price
@SamJeanPrice

Write To Your MP

Please help musicians. You don't need to be an MU member to write to your MP.

Teresa De Pelegri
@TeresaDePelegri

Respect Is Due

Huge respect to my colleagues in the chorus and orchestra

of the ENO who just produced another stonking *Iolanthe* straight off the back of their Peter Grimes, and after this news. It is an honour to share the stage with them.

Marcus Farnsworth
@MBJFarnsworth

Safe Haven

Art heals, culture connects, creativity inspires. From creating moments of joy, connection and transformation, live music is a safe haven, especially in difficult times.

Lauren Wasynczuk
@laurenconducts

Not So Dishy Rishi

The music industry is being dismantled under Sunak.

Mill Hill Broadway @MillHillBwy

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Thank You For The Days

After 10 years as an MU activist, 25 years as an MU Official and 75 issues as Editor of *The Musician* magazine, **Keith Ames**, PR & Events Official, is retiring. Here, he reflects on the people, the highlights and challenges, and assesses the achievements of the MU across the last two decades

Following the path set by my elder brothers Ken and Howard, I joined the Union when turning professional. I had spotted the now classic Keep Music Live stickers on their instrument cases and learnt at a young age that being a musician was entwined with Union membership. Little did I know at the time that it would lead to the most rewarding part of my working life.

After years as a band member and singer/writer, I became actively involved in the Union in 1988, firstly as a West London Branch committee member and as a representative on the London District Council, then as a MU Conference delegate in the mid-nineties. This period taught me the never-ending importance of grassroots connection and activism at all levels.

Solid Support

In 1998, Chris Beebee – at the time my local branch secretary – encouraged me to apply for the newly appointed full-time role of London Officer. Following an interview, by a panel of no less than 12 officials and members, I was employed by the Union, joining the highly experienced and knowledgeable team led by Horace Trubridge with the support of Terry Childs and the late Gary Hyde. I owe them a great deal for their ideas and advice, which stood me in very good stead serving members in those early years.

My 25 years as an official saw my working alongside an incredible line-up of musicians and activists, all of whom have dedicated so much time and commitment to the MU. Dennis Scard, Dave Fenton, Deirdre Wilson, Paul Gray and Alex Mann come to mind, plus my excellent comms team colleagues led by Isabelle Gutierrez. There have been so many and my apologies for not listing you all. I should add there have been 10 General Secretaries since the Union was founded in 1893 and I have worked for, or alongside, six of them!

I also wish to acknowledge the work of Committee members across the UK, with particular thanks to those upon the Executive – the governing body of the Union – who have served across the recent decades. The voluntary commitment to the Union by many in that time, in particular Rick Finlay, Richard Watson, Andi Hopgood and Alex Gascoine, has been inspirational and key to the ongoing development of the Union's structure and professionalism. On a personal and retrospective note, their collective support for my three-year Communications Strategy for the Union in 2008 was hugely appreciated.

I would always encourage any musician to become involved, it is a truly fulfilling journey.

Unprecedented Challenges

The months of lockdown brought an unprecedented series of challenges for our industry, however the Union's response and support reminded many of the ongoing value and importance of a union. In addition to all the superb work by the organisation on behalf of employed and freelance musicians at that time, I believe the MU has particularly succeeded in three arenas over the last two decades.

Firstly, its political profile. We now have a presence and respect in the corridors of power that we could have only dreamt of in years gone by. Secondly, our standing in the music industry and the manner in which the principal trade organisations now work closely together. Our former General Secretary John Smith rightly continues to be acknowledged for his pivotal role in driving these important developments.

Lastly, and touching upon a discipline close to my heart, establishing contemporary communications at the heart of the MU's work has perhaps been my lasting influence. The Union's profile in the media, for example, has changed out of all recognition. In the darker days of the Union's history, circa 2001, the Union was very rarely mentioned in the press and when it was, it was purely in a negative and critical tone. It has been heartening to experience the repositioning of the MU as a vital touchstone for the media. The stream of enquiries from the BBC, Sky, the national newspapers and the industry press is

"We now have a presence and respect in the corridors of power that we could have only dreamt of in years gone by"

testament to how journalists and producers now see the Union as a valuable source of information.

As often discussed in this magazine, certain topics have been a focus of the Union's work since its formation. The funding of the arts, music in education and the apparent threat of new technology being notably ever-present. From the talkies, through the advent of independent television and commercial radio, from 'discotheques' to synths, sampling and the Sinfonia (orchestra enhancement technology), the MU has faced such developments determined to ensure its members' livelihoods were maintained. Now it is the spectre of AI that haunts our thoughts and understandably is the lead feature in this edition.

I took over stewardship of the magazine from the legendary Brian Blain, who was a tireless advocate for UK jazz and its musicians, as a promoter, Union official, writer and activist. Brian was in fact the very official behind the Keep Music Live campaign launch in 1965. Brian, I owe you a great deal.

In addition, I must acknowledge the numerous musicians from all sectors of the industry who have contributed to profile interviews, reports, features and advice pieces since the first issue I edited in the autumn of 2004. Much of the on-going impact of the magazine is due to members' wisdom and experience.

Team Work

This publication has always been a team effort and I wish to highlight the work of consultant editor Neil Crossley, designer Chris Stenner, photographer Joe Branston, and all the staff at Future, our renowned publisher. In fact, Neil and I have worked successfully together on the magazine and a number of other MU publications for approaching 20 years.

It would be remiss of me to not mention two particular sections of the magazine: the reviews and the tributes. Having written and administered almost 2,000 reviews of members' material, I can safely say I have a good understanding of a few genres! My policy has always been to only offer positive comments upon releases, with the aim of supporting our members' work. My apologies once more to all those artists for whom there simply wasn't space.



Keith Ames looks back on the highlights and challenges in his time as an MU Official

Photo: Joseph Branston. © MU

Meanwhile, it has been an honour to acknowledge almost a thousand musicians' careers in the obituaries. I know from members' feedback how these texts are valued. Learning of musicians' lives is a never-ending source of fascination and often a testament to creativity and resourcefulness.

We must have been doing something right, as we have received over 20 awards for our communications since the original rebrand of our publications in 2005, with *The Musician* itself being selected as Best Journal in the TUC Awards on three occasions in my time as Editor.

There have been many special moments and my being fortunate enough to interview the awe-inspiring cellist and Holocaust survivor Anita Lasker-Wallfisch in 2015 has to be a highlight. Fittingly, a profile interview of her granddaughter Joanna is included in this edition, my 75th as Editor.

In addition to my work in publications, PR and marketing, I have also particularly enjoyed organising the MU Delegate Conference for the last 20 years and representing the MU at events, exhibitions and conferences across the UK. It has been an honour meeting and serving the wonderful community that is our union of British musicians. Long may it prosper under the groundbreaking new regime.

I look forward to 2024 and plan to invigorate my work as a songwriter, to continue my research into family history and to maintain my links with the Union and in particular the maintenance of its history and archives. [mu](https://www.mu-musician.org.uk)

You are all welcome to follow my progress via [keithames.com](https://www.keithames.com)

Thanks, one and all...

AI: To Fear Or Not To Fear?

As artificial intelligence becomes more sophisticated, we discuss its continuing impact on the music industry

Report by Mark Sutherland



Photo: Jonathan Kitchen / Getty Images

“You can’t put the genie back in the bottle. AI is here”

Phil Kear

Dabbling with Artificial Intelligence (AI) rarely works out well for humanity in the movies. From the seemingly benign HAL 9000 in 2001: A Space Odyssey to the openly malevolent Skynet in the Terminator franchise, AI is always the Hollywood bad guy.

The big question here in the real world, however, is whether the nascent technology might cause the future extinction of thousands of musicians’ careers?

After all, in the summer issue of *The Musician*, Musicians’ Union General Secretary Naomi Pohl described the technology as a potential “existential threat to the recorded music industry, music publishing, performers and creators”. And many musicians are deeply concerned about the effect AI’s widespread adoption could have on their employment prospects, not to mention their copyrights.

No wonder AI has suddenly become a hot topic of music industry conversation. But, in fact, the tech had been around for many years before ChatGPT exploded into the public consciousness last year and allowed everyone the thrill of finding out what it might be like if, say, Snoop Dogg explained quantum theory to a child.

Positives And Negatives

Essentially, artificial intelligence is a computer system that can learn to perform tasks that would usually require human brainpower to complete. That can be great news in many areas, including healthcare, manufacturing and education. And, indeed, many musicians are already successfully using forms of AI to assist with composition and production tasks, in order to lighten workloads or increase efficiency.

However, there are also more potentially sinister applications of such systems in the world of music. The technology is moving so fast it can be difficult to keep up with all the developments, but in the last year alone we’ve seen a slew of tracks purporting to be by famous musicians that have actually been artificially generated – such as the infamous “Fake Drake” track, *Heart On My Sleeve*, which racked up hundreds of thousands of streams before it was eventually pulled from streaming services.

Impact On Opportunities And Rights

Not all AI uses are so easy to detect. Some generative systems are already being trained on copyrighted music without permission from the composers or performers being sought or given, let alone appropriate payments being made. In a cruel irony, those



UK Music's Tom Kiehl On AI

It's not just the MU that is campaigning for regulation of AI-generated music. UK Music is the umbrella body for the British music industry and interim CEO Tom Kiehl echoes MU concerns about the way the AI industry is progressing. "UK Music's principal concerns around AI relate to the need for consent and transparency," he says. "Large language models are being developed by AI companies that allow entirely new music to be generated based on existing pieces of work. It's unclear what, if any, permission has been granted by creators and owners of existing works for these works to be ingested into AI systems."

At present, AI firms do not usually list what music they have used to train their systems but if they were compelled to do so, Kiehl says, it would "enable action to be taken if consent hasn't been granted, and financial compensation distributed accurately when it has". Kiehl acknowledges that AI can "present great opportunities for musicians to do what they do best – create and perform". But he warns that action is required if the government is to achieve its ambition for the creative industries to become a key sector for future growth. "Music's ability to contribute to this is severely undermined if AI is allowed to grow at our expense. Protections and safeguards are of fundamental importance to allow both music and AI to grow in tandem."



The MU is working hard to "get ahead of the curve" when it comes to new AI developments such as OpenAI's ChatGPT

Photo: SOPA Images / Getty Images

systems could then be used to produce AI-generated tracks as a cheap alternative to the very music they were trained on.

"The music industry has adapted to technological changes in the past," says MU Assistant General Secretary – and resident AI expert – Phil Kear. "But there's no denying that each of those technological changes had an impact on musicians in terms of their work opportunities and their rights. And this is the biggest one of the lot.

"I can see musicians having to change how their careers are and it's worrying," he adds. "You could see musicians having to treat it as a part-time job, because there won't be so many opportunities to get your music out there or to record music. Work opportunities are going to be spread even thinner."

Kear says the MU is determined to "get ahead of that curve" by setting up an AI Hub to inform and educate members. He says members have already highlighted companies sneaking clauses into production music contracts saying works can be used to train AI systems without any extra payment being due, and warns musicians to be vigilant when signing deals.

Checks And Balances

The MU is also doing some intensive lobbying. There is already a broad consensus among creatives about the types of checks and balances needed on the way AI can be used, with the MU liaising with the Council of Music Makers and the Creators' Rights Alliance (CRA) to coordinate campaign efforts. UK Music has also been rallying its members – including the MU, BPI, AIM, PRS, PPL, FAC, MMF, Ivors, MPG and MPA – to share information and coordinate a pan-industry response. Those creators and rights-holders scored a significant victory in February, when the government paused plans for a blanket copyright exception for 'text and data mining' for AI systems.

"The sector came together to push back on these proposals, which would have hindered our ability to enforce our rights," says UK Music interim CEO Tom Kiehl. "This is a great vindication of the power of the collective voice that UK Music seeks to achieve across the sector."

Work To Be Done

But despite officials rowing back on those plans, Kear – who attends regular meetings between the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and music trade bodies – warns there is still work to be done to get the government on side, in the face of intensive Big Tech lobbying.

"I've tried and tried to get the IPO and the government to say this out loud, but



“Working alongside Equity gives us a good path to follow”

Phil Kear

they won't commit to saying that what the tech firms are doing, in terms of ingesting copyrighted recording, is actually a breach of copyright. I've pushed them and they continually say, 'We need to come to an agreement on that between all the parties,' or 'There needs to be further discussion about it'.

“That's the crunch point,” he continues. “Getting the government to enforce copyright law against these tech firms, when the government really wants to encourage AI. They see it as being a race with other territories so they can attract tech firms to base their projects here and as a cash cow to make money for the country. It's [a question of] how much they're willing to throw the creative industries under the bus to achieve that.”

Consequently, while the European Parliament has announced it will legislate to ensure “AI systems are safe, transparent, traceable, non-discriminatory and environmentally friendly” – something UK musicians would not benefit from, post-Brexit – there is no sign of significant government intervention on this side of the Channel.

Kear stresses that the MU are not “Luddites trying to stand in the way of technology” and, indeed, MU campaigning is tempered with realism. As Kear notes: “You can't put the genie back in the bottle. AI is here so we've got to find a way to live with it.” And, of course, many musicians already have – but, crucially, they use it to enhance their own human creativity, rather than replace it.

So, while AI systems are unlikely to be deactivated now, the MU is focusing on the principle that, if those systems want to use copyrighted material, the copyright



Artificial intelligence was a major bone of contention during the 2023 Writers Guild of America strike

owners have the right to give or withhold permission and – if it is granted – they must be appropriately compensated.

Record companies and music publishers have also pressed similar claims – this month, Universal Music Publishing, ABKCO and Concord Publishing sued AI company Anthropic, accusing it of misusing copyrighted lyrics to train its chatbot, Claude.

But Kear warns that the alliance between rights-holders and creators will remain fragile if there is not a strong commitment from the former to share revenues with the latter.

The Time Is Now

Meanwhile, record labels are already actively doing deals. In August, YouTube launched the YouTube AI Music Incubator, that will use Universal Music Group creatives including Ryan Tedder, Anitta and Bjorn Ulvaeus to “help inform YouTube's approach to generative AI in music”. In September, Warner Music signed a deal with AI-generated pop star, Noonnoouri. But so far there has been little discussion on how human songwriters and performers will be compensated by such deals, especially when old-style record deals – signed way back when AI was the stuff of science fiction – mean many recording copyrights are still owned by labels, rather than the artists who performed on them.

“At the moment, you've got the tech firms negotiating with the labels and publishers, while the actual creators are shut outside the room,” says Kear. “Your stuff could just be given away or licensed to AI, without you having a say in how much money you may or may not get from that.”

Kear says progress on this issue with labels and publishers has been slow, with many rights-holders claiming it's too early to negotiate on such matters. But he warns that, if labels and publishers want the support of songwriters, composers, artists and musicians in the battle to protect copyrights, they must be “honest and respect [creators'] rights”.

“The time is now to put our point across and say, ‘We'll only support you in this battle if you can guarantee us a fair share,’” he adds.

Without such an agreement – and without AI firms being completely transparent about precisely which music has been used to train their systems and generate new music – Kear worries that AI might simply generate unattributed ‘black box income’ that usually ends up in record company and publisher

coffers, rather than being passed on to the relevant composers and performers.

In the meantime, the MU is seeking learnings from other industries – with the likes of voice acting and photography already dragged further into the AI maelstrom than the music industry. Many want a focus on ‘personality rights’ to protect artists’ voices and images from unlicensed copying.

“Working alongside [performing arts and entertainment trade union] Equity gives us a good path to follow and a strong ally,” says Kear. “The relief I felt going to meetings with the CRA... everyone is just as terrified as I am about the potential for AI to affect their members.”

Educating And Enforcing

Despite that, Kear remains optimistic that the “quality level” involved in human creation will remain attractive to film, TV and advertising productions looking to source music to enhance their productions.

“You just don’t know how good AI music is going to be,” he says. “But Britain has extremely talented musicians, particularly in the session recording world. That’s why a lot of Hollywood films come over here to use our musicians to record soundtracks. And

you’d hope that stamp of quality will always remain; human-created, human-composed, human-played creations will always be seen as higher quality than AI-generated content.” That might mean a premium price is attached to such projects, although the opposite could be true at the other end of the spectrum, if production companies put pressure on musicians to cut prices to compete with cheap, AI-generated music.

The answer for now is to educate musicians on their rights and lobby others to enforce them. But Kear admits that, unless progress is made soon, the overall picture for musicians could be “bleak”. Even worse – as with other, earlier technological revolutions – the fear at the MU is that it will be those just entering the business that may suffer the most.

“There will still be pop artists at the top who are making a decent living out of the industry,” says Kear of a potential AI-dominated future. “There will still be top film composers and top-level session musicians who are getting opportunities. But it will be ever-harder to break into the industry and have a career that can sustain you financially.”

At least in the movies the AI menace is usually defeated. But right now, there’s a lot of work to be done if musicians are going to get their Hollywood happy ending. [mu](#)

Breezer recently released an AI-generated “Oasis album” complete with Liam Gallagher-sounding vocals



Photo: Sergione Infuso - Corbis / Getty Images

Recent AI Developments Of Note

Your Concise Guide To The Quickly-Changing World Of AI

June 2022 – The government proposes introducing a copyright exception for text and data mining by AI systems.

November 2022 – ChatGPT launches, catapulting AI into the public consciousness.

February 2023 – The government drops plans for a data mining copyright exemption.

February 2023 – David Guetta posts a track featuring an AI-generated Eminem rap.

March 2023 – The Human Artistry Campaign launches to advocate for AI that supports human creativity.

April 2023 – Indie band Breezer creates a “new Oasis album” under the name AI-SIS, with an artificially-generated Liam Gallagher vocal.

April 2023 – The “Fake Drake” track is pulled from streaming services after pressure from Universal Music Group.

May 2023 – Grimes launches Elf.Tech, AI software that allows people to recreate her voice. Artists can release the tracks in exchange for 50% of recording royalties.

May 2023 – The Writers Guild of America goes on strike over issues including the use of AI in scriptwriting.

May 2023 – Universal and AI ‘sound wellness’ company Endel sign a deal to enable artists to create AI soundscapes for sleep and relaxation.

June 2023 – The European Parliament announces AI in the EU will be regulated by the AI Act.

June 2023 – Sony Music hires former BPI CEO Geoff Taylor as its EVP of AI.

August 2023 – YouTube publishes its ‘AI music principles’ and launches the YouTube Music AI Incubator with Universal.

September 2023 – The WGA claim victory in the Hollywood writers’ strike.

October 2023 – A group of music publishers sue AI company Anthropic over alleged copyright infringement.

MU Delegate Conference

Equality, diversity and a commitment to collective strength lay at the heart of the 40th MU Biennial Delegate Conference

By Andrew Stewart

Cosmopolitan Birmingham, among Europe's most diverse cities, played host to the Musicians' Union 40th Biennial Delegate Conference, held at the Park Regis Hotel on 25-26 July 2023. The breadth of Conference motions and high level of debate served notice of the MU's importance in its 130th year. They also reflected the determination of Union activists and staff to protect musicians from unscrupulous employers, ensure that those who make their living from music are rewarded fairly for their work, whether live or recorded, and create a music industry that is open and welcoming to all.

The mix of seasoned and new Conference delegates, guest speakers and Executive Committee members represented a wide cross section of professional music-making in the UK. The opening session placed the emphasis on reversing damage done to music and arts education in state schools by funding cuts and regressive Government policy decisions, and underlined the need to support and campaign for music in higher education. Subsequent sessions addressed everything from UK copyright reversion rights and travel expense payments to freelance musicians, to providing support for MU members affected by domestic abuse or historic sexual, physical or emotional abuse experienced during their education.

Strategic issues, such as preparing the music industry for the next pandemic and campaigning for greater public funding for the arts, generated lively debate, as did a motion calling on the MU to express public support for other unions in their campaigns and strike actions. Other motions called for the promotion of positive stories about musicians who have overcome debilitating illness, the adoption by the MU of provision for Welsh language speakers, and the development of a strategy to support and offer Union members advice on childcare and for carers.

Welcome To Delegates

Delegates were welcomed to Birmingham by MU Executive Committee (EC) Chair Alex Gascoine, a self-confessed "first-time flyer" as Conference Chair. He guided the assembly through debates and votes on 17 motions and one emergency motion, 20 rule changes and sundry other business with great skill, kindness and humour.

"Working as a musician has become increasingly challenging [since the last in-person Conference in 2019]," noted Alex. "As we emerged from the pandemic, it became apparent that not everything was going to go back to the way it was. For organisations to survive, some musicians accepted pay freezes, which will take years to claw back, and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, introduced by the then Chancellor, had badly failed many of our members."

The delayed reopening of many venues, depleted audiences in the wake of Covid, deep cuts to the BBC's budget and the cost of living

"Your fight is our fight. And when you win, we all win"

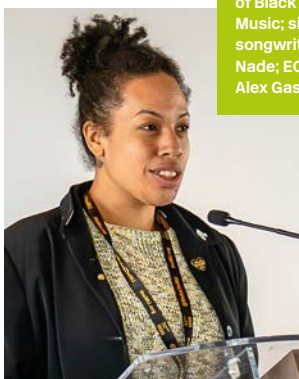
Paul Nowak



MU Official Chris Walters being interviewed for an MU promotional video



Top: MU General Secretary Naomi Pohl and EC member Sarah Williams; TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak
Below: Roger Wilson of Black Lives In Music; singer-songwriter Lady Nade; EC Chair Alex Gascoine



Paul Nowak's Conference Address

Messages about solidarity and the collective power of the labour movement echoed throughout Paul Nowak's galvanising speech to Conference. The TUC General Secretary reminded delegates of the sacrifices made by UK workers over the past year as they have taken industrial action against employers and government in pursuit of fair pay and just working terms and conditions. He called on MU members to send a message to all those struggling for the collective good: "Your fight is our fight. And when you win, we all win."

Paul praised Naomi Pohl for her achievements since becoming the MU's first female General Secretary and for leading "a vibrant, dynamic, growing union that's confident about its future". He said the battles fought by past generations of MU members against unscrupulous employers, including those launched by its founder, Joseph Bevir Williams, were as relevant today as ever and continued to inform the MU's work. He rounded on promoters and others who tried to extract free labour from professional musicians. "Let's be clear: musicians are workers, just like nurses are workers, and teachers are workers and bus drivers are workers, and you deserve fair reward for your labour. Not visibility, not experience, not profile – fair pay for the work of every single musician!"

Paul focused on "the catastrophic impact of Brexit" and the squeeze on public arts funding. The former, he noted, had undermined the ability of musicians to travel and work within the EU; the latter posed an existential threat to the livelihoods of musicians. The MU, said Paul, had successfully campaigned to protect jobs at the BBC, helped push ACE towards securing ENO's future and lobbied hard to support venues hit hard by lockdown and slow post-pandemic recovery.

crisis had variously compounded the post-pandemic squeeze on musicians' income and employment prospects. Alex cited practical measures taken by the MU on behalf of its members, including a beneficial new West End theatre contract, robust campaigns to secure the future of English National Opera and the BBC's England-based performing groups.

MU measures also included investment in new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) staff and the MU's representation across the UK's nations and regions, as well as the Union's cost-saving move from its old Clapham Road headquarters to a new base near London Bridge Station. The scope and impact of Union activities, noted Alex, have helped boost MU membership, up from around 31,000 in July 2021 to 33,703 in June 2023.

Dedication And Determination

"Equality and diversity will remain at the heart of everything we do, and the MU will continue to highlight everyone's right to be

treated equally, respectfully and with dignity wherever they work," observed Alex. He praised the dedication and determined work of the Union's 56 "extraordinarily talented and experienced" members of staff, thanked its activists, committees and Executive Committee, and stressed the importance to the MU of its freelance members. "[Freelancers] particularly need our support – musicians who make up nearly 90% of our membership and often feel overlooked, undervalued and underrepresented."

Musicians' Union General Secretary Naomi Pohl, elected to the post eight months after the last Delegate Conference, echoed Alex's assessment of the tough times that have fallen on musicians. "However, we're making progress in negotiations, campaigning and lobbying, and we're improving what we do for members all the time. We are showing our collective strength as a union." →



Andi Hopgood, Naomi Pohl and Alex Gascoine at the MU 40th Biennial Delegate Conference



Left: Jamie Njoku-Goodwin of UK Music
Right: Victoria Jaquiss, North of England Regional Delegate



Naomi reminded delegates of ongoing high-profile disputes between the MU and the BPI and the Royal Opera House, where the orchestra has voted strongly in favour of taking industrial action if its present pay claim is not resolved. She also spoke of the Union's battle with the BBC to secure the future of the BBC Singers and the BBC Concert, Philharmonic and Symphony orchestras and the consultation process that the MU brokered following the Corporation's initial announcement in March that it intended to disband the BBC Singers and reduce the number of salaried players in its three orchestras in England by 20%.

Listening To Members

"We're representing our members' interests vigorously within the music industry, to Government and through our membership of the International Federation of Musicians," Naomi commented. "We're listening to our members and making sure that their voices are heard." She noted how during the past year the MU had become less London-centric, more cost-efficient, more strategic in its expenditure and more relevant to its members. "I want to ensure that we increase our representation of previously underrepresented musicians. If there's one thing I achieve in my five-year term, this will

"We're making sure that our members' voices are heard"

Naomi Pohl

be it." The Union, she added, was on track to deliver a break-even budget next year and beyond. "Despite the threats, we've got many reasons to feel very positive about a bright future for the profession of music."

Conference heard from a notably diverse group of delegates and speakers. Their lived experiences offered invaluable perspectives from, among others, neurodivergent and disabled delegates, people of colour, LGBTQ+ delegates, survivors of domestic abuse and those with responsibilities as unpaid carers.

Conference Motions

The broad scope of Conference motions provided a package of measures and strategies for the EC to take forward and develop in partnership with MU staff. All the tabled motions and one emergency motion were passed, most without reservation from the EC and with few amendments. The 2023 Executive Committee's Report was accepted unanimously as were the rule changes, which mostly concerned the adoption of gender-neutral language in lieu of the existing MU Rulebook's high quota of male pronouns. To see these please visit: theMU.org/news/updates-to-mu-rules-2023

At the close of Conference, Naomi Pohl thanked delegates for their contributions to "a really fantastic debate" and MU staff for their tireless work in organising and managing

the two-day event. She also thanked Alex Gascoine for “the enormous amount of preparation” and skill he brought to the job of Conference Chair. “He gives an immense amount of his time to the Union, unpaid, and spends a lot of time on the phone to me, which is a burden for anyone to carry!”

Thanks were also due to the MU’s Head of International Dave Webster for his tireless work for the Standing Orders Committee; Conference sponsors PPL, Hencilla Canworth and Morrish Solicitors; the event’s guest speakers; and the staff of the Park Regis Hotel, not least for fortifying Conference with a memorable curry banquet.

Rick Finlay, at the end of his 21st Conference, spoke warm words on behalf of the EC. “I don’t think I can ever remember seeing quite so many new delegates at Conference,” he said. “That fills us with pleasure because we know that Conference has a magical effect on enthusing and exciting us all about the work we do. I hope you’ve found it an inspiring experience.”

Alive And Thriving

In conclusion, Rick then invited Lady Nade to offer a summary of her first experience of the 40th MU Biennial Delegate Conference.



“I’m a singer-songwriter, educator and advocate,” she said. “Campaigning for the positive connection between music, wellbeing, mental health and communities is sown into everything I do. I have been a member of the Musicians’ Union for over

10 years and most recently I became an ambassador for the Musicians’ Census. Music has helped to keep me alive when I felt my life wasn’t worth living. The Musicians’ Union helps keep the music industry alive and thriving, which aligns with me professionally and personally, and in these dark times offers a significant amount of light.”

List Of Motions Passed At Conference

MOTION 1

Part-time Student Membership

MOTION 2

Secure Music Tuition and Services

MOTION 3

Supporting Music in Higher Education

MOTION 4

Travel Costs and Expense Payments to Freelance Musicians

MOTION 5

Reversion Rights for Musicians

MOTION 6

Professional Musicians Working in Local Theatre

MOTION 7

Live Licence Fees

MOTION 8

Photo ID Reminder

MOTION 9

Public Funding of the Arts

MOTION 10

Save BBC Introducing and Local BBC Shows

MOTION 11

Trade Union Solidarity and Co-operation

MOTION 12

Welsh Language

MOTION 13

Features Highlighting Musicians’ Successful Health Stories

MOTION 14

Pandemic Future Planning

MOTION 15

Support and Advice Re Abuse Within Educational Systems

MOTION 16

Domestic Abuse Support for Survivors within the MU

MOTION 17


Childcare & Carers Support and Advice Motion

EMERGENCY MOTION

Closure of railway ticket offices

See the Carried Motions in full: theMU.org/CarriedMotions2023

Meeting MU staff and delegates, Lady Nade recalled, had been a profound experience. “My takeaways from attending my first Conference as a visitor are: togetherness, collaboration, community, embracing insecurities, listening, fighting fear and everyone being given the opportunity to have a voice, to be heard and be seen. So what’s been inspiring is knowing that these values are shared by everyone in the room and that everyone here is contributing something special and creative.”

Alex Gascoine closed Conference by thanking his Union comrades for the time and expertise they bring to the job and for their support. “And thank you Conference. I hope you have found this to have been a safe space for you, a safe space to speak, to disagree, to agree, to work together to formulate the future of the MU. I really hope that we see you again in 2025. I have one last job to do and that is to thank you for coming.” 



The Enduring Power of Hip-Hop

Fifty years since the birth of hip-hop, the MU assesses how the genre has grown from the margins to the mainstream

By Yemi Abiade

1520 Sedgwick Avenue is an address that towers over the world. The housing project, nestled in the densely populated borough of The Bronx, New York City, should just be another nameless apartment building among many in the city that never sleeps. But 50 years ago its fate was changed, and with it, popular culture was forever altered.

Because when DJ Kool Herc set up his turntables on 11 August 1973 to perform at his sister Cindy's Back To School Jam Party outside of their Sedgwick home, no one foresaw the birth of a musical genre and a cultural movement worth billions of dollars in the present day. The culture we now know as hip-hop. It started with Kool Herc because his supreme DJing skills brought forth the innovative Merry-Go-Round technique in which he isolated the percussive breaks of a record and kept them on loop, prolonging the breaks and keeping the crowd jumping, especially the dancers among them, known as b-boys and b-girls.

The Birth Of Hip-Hop

Thus, hip-hop was born, empowering DJs, dancers, emcees and graffiti artists to join the party and become pillars of this new culture, making it an undeniable presence among Black and Latin youngsters in 1970s New York. Whether you were any of the above, hip-hop powered communities to find their identity as performers and launched careers for the underserved in American society, the have-nots who were told they'd be dead or in jail by the age of 21.

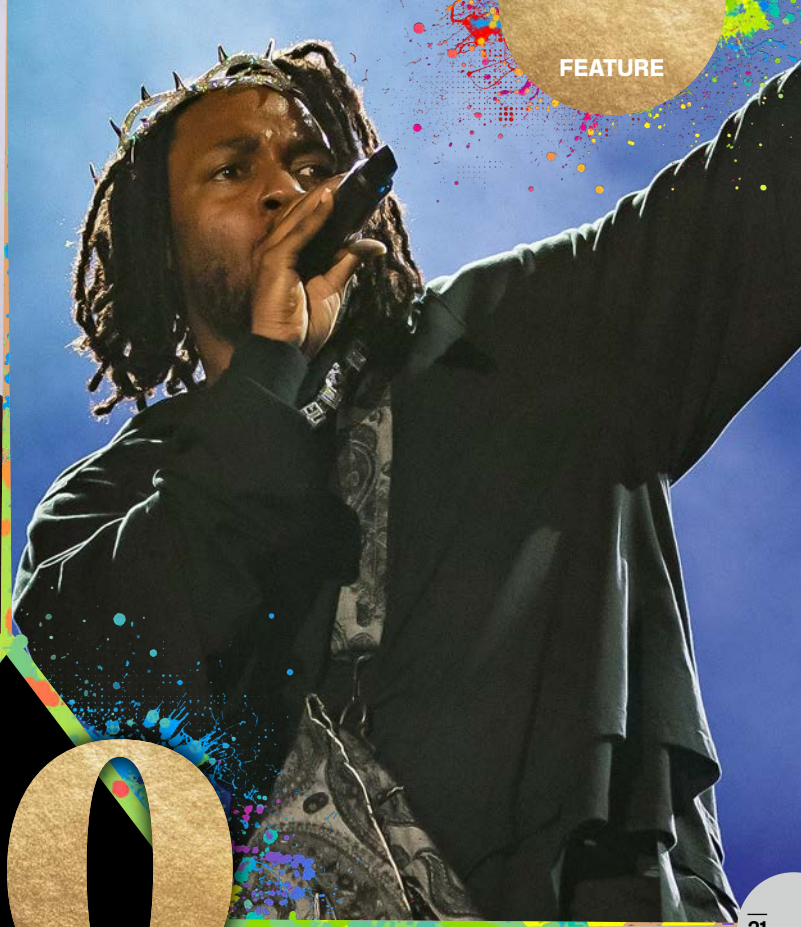
Hip-hop music would soon infiltrate the mainstream cultural zeitgeist, helped by one of the earliest rap songs, Sugarhill Gang's *Rapper's Delight* in 1979 and its iconic opening line "Hip-hop, hippie to the hippie, to the hip-hip-hop and you don't stop."

As the 1980s arrived, innovation would follow. From Grandmaster Flash's *The Message* to Kurtis Blow's *The Breaks*, hip-hop was growing in stature producing what we now consider classics in the canon. Legendary artists such as Run-DMC, LL Cool J, Public Enemy, Beastie Boys, Boogie Down Productions, Eric B. & Rakim, N.W.A. and Ice T would make their mark evolving the lyrical confines of rap from party-starting to explicit political and social commentary, harnessing the genre's power as an overarching comment on what it is to be Black in America. Comments on poverty, racism and police brutality that continue to persist in 2023.

Margins To Mainstream

This new generation was helped by shifts in production techniques, from the reliance on old Disco breaks in the 1970s to sophisticated, drum-machine and sample-led instrumentals thanks to the likes of Marley Marl, The Bomb Squad and Prince Paul to name a few. This laid the foundation for a mainstream invasion in the 1990s, with Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, MC Hammer, Coolio, Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G. reaching incredible commercial heights and transcending the genre itself. Meanwhile, the likes of Nas, Wu-Tang Clan, A Tribe Called Quest, OutKast and The Fugees were taking the art form to new creative heights with pivotal albums such as *Illmatic*, *Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)* and *The Low End Theory*.

At the same time, a storm was brewing in the UK, where hip-hop was at a nascent but pivotal stage. Here, where it was very common to hear rappers rap in American accents in the early 1980s, MCs such as London Posse and Demon Boyz broke rank, using their natural accent to inject their own authenticity to proceedings. Following them were the likes of Roots Manuva, Blak Twang, Ty, Skinnyman, The Streets and ➔



FEATURE

50 YEARS



"Women in the UK deserve so much credit for what they've done"

Arusa Qureshi

The Mitchell Brothers who, throughout the 1990s and 2000s, presented music moulded by the nuances of growing up in the UK. By 2002, grime took hold. Pioneered by Dizzee Rascal, Wiley, Skepta, Kano and D Double E among countless others, the new sound represented the new generation of brash emcees making statements with intense flows, vivid storytelling and supreme lyrical skill. Today, splinters of UK hip-hop such as Drill, Afroswing and UK Rap have produced stars such as Stormzy, Dave, J Hus, Central Cee and Headie One, each playing their role in making UK hip-hop the premier genre on British shores.

Why Women Are The Unsung Heroes

While hip-hop's narrative has been dominated by men, it's indebted to the unsung heroes at all stages of development: women. From artists to managers to authorities behind the scenes, women have been consequential to the culture's visibility, from Sylvia Robinson's Sugar Hill Records releasing *Rapper's Delight* and *The Message* to Hattie Collins and Chantelle Fiddy capturing the essence of grime as journalists in the 2000s.

Arusa Qureshi, a Scottish music journalist and author of *Flip The Script: How Women Came To Rule Hip-Hop*, doubles down on this fact.

"There have been and are women who are incredible DJs, journalists, radio presenters, club promoters and so much more who have contributed to making the genre what it is today and crucially, sharing it around the world," she says. "I'm always shocked by how few women are included in any historical analysis of hip-hop and how many men appear on 'best of all-time' lists compared to women when women have been in attendance since day one. Kool Herc is always credited as the instigator of the movement, but it was actually his sister, Cindy Campbell, who was the real organiser and promoter of the party. I doubt we would be where we are now without



Right: Stormzy performs at All Points East Festival 2023. Above: Arusa Qureshi has chronicled the role of women in hip-hop in her book *Flip The Script*. Previous page: The Sugar Hill Gang; Kendrick Lamar; Little Simz; Aw Grandmaster Flash, DJ Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaataa and Chuck D

Photos: Jim Dyson/Getty Images



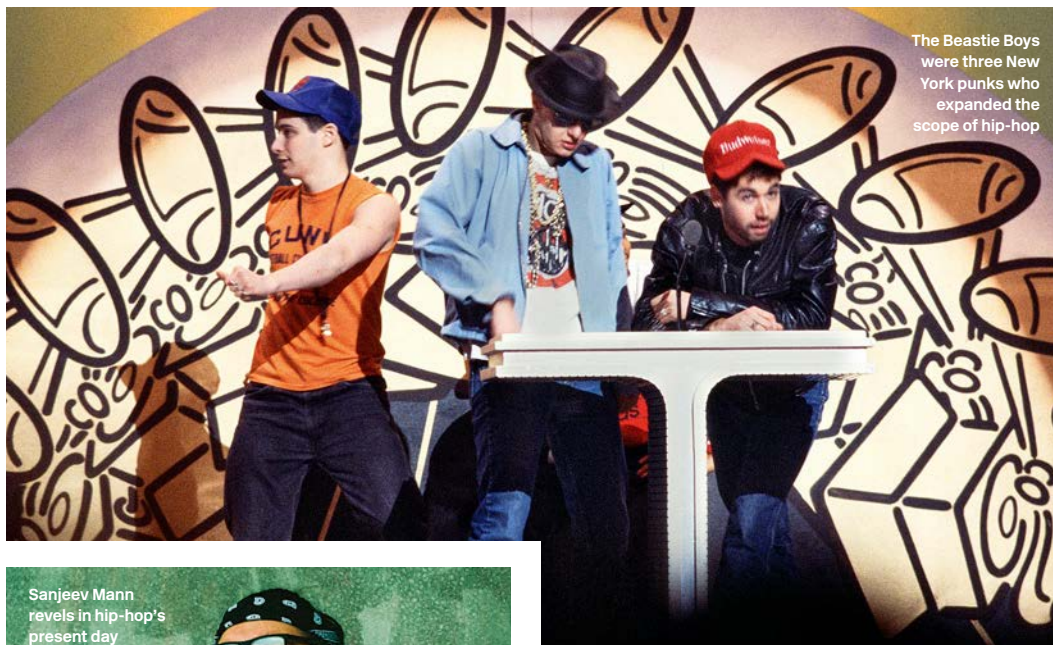
her skills and the support she gave to her brother. Then there's the obvious names like Queen Latifah and Roxanne Shante, but women in the UK deserve so much credit for what they've done over here too. I'd point to names like Cookie Crew, Ms. Dynamite, Speech Debelle, Little Simz, Lady Leshurr, Juice Menace, Shay D, Empress and Ivorian Doll to start!"

How Hip-Hop Evolved

In 2023, hip-hop's scope is global. From the favelas of Brazil where grime is a prominent sound to the sunny shores of Puerto Rico, where Latin trap rapper Bad Bunny has become one of the biggest artists on the planet, the genre and culture is indelibly knitted to the fabric of the world. In 2018, Nielsen reported that hip-hop had officially surpassed rock as the most popular genre in the USA, an achievement long in the making thanks to the efforts of heroes such as Jay-Z,

Kanye West, Drake, Kendrick Lamar, Future, Nicki Minaj, Migos, J. Cole and others.

Meanwhile, pop superstars such as Beyoncé, Ariana Grande and Taylor Swift have utilised hip-hop in their music, a true coronation of the culture's rise from the margins to the mainstream. Sanjeev Mann, a Scottish musician and producer who performs under the name Supermann On Da Beat, is revelling in hip-hop's present day power. "It's really cool to see hip-hop being such a huge influence on other genres from around the world, even country," he says. "I think it will definitely remain an influence in pop culture for a long time, but more in terms of culture, rather than a particular sound."



The Beastie Boys were three New York punks who expanded the scope of hip-hop



Sanjeev Mann revels in hip-hop's present day power to speak to everyone



UK rapper Tinie Tempah has gone from underground artist to mainstream TV presenter

How Hip-Hop Resonates

Its current guise as the world's most popular culture is proof of one thing: hip-hop is all things to all people. It uplifts. It mobilises. It inspires. It endures. It turns individuals with few prospects into bonafide stars, opening up infinite opportunities for a plethora of would-be artists and creative minds. It speaks to society's disenfranchised and turns their anguish into anthems, indomitable odes to the socio-economic and political matters of the day.

"Hip-hop's power lies in the way that it can resonate with people on a deeply personal level, while still also addressing broader social and cultural issues," Qureshi explains. "From the very beginning, hip-hop has spoken about the realities of life, social injustice, poverty, racism and so much more with a kind of authenticity that is powerful. On a musical level, it continues to evolve and adapt as

people incorporate new styles, technologies and sounds and this has a further impact on other elements of popular culture."

Giving A Voice To The Voiceless

From newscasters quoting lyrics to grime pioneer Wiley receiving an MBE for services to music in 2018, hip-hop transcends the everyday and reaches all corners of society. Fifty years on from the scenes at Sedgwick, the music and culture of hip-hop is unbreakable. "I think music would be in a very different place without the impact of hip-hop," says Sanjeev Mann. "It's given a voice to the voiceless, so it's definitely had an impact on the way people see the world. It was built on community and protesting for equality, so I think the world wouldn't be as accepting without hip-hop. I don't think I could imagine a world without it."

Key Moments In British Hip-Hop

1980-1983

The first British rap songs began to surface, from Allen & Blewitt's *Chip Shop Wrapping* and Bo Kool's *Money (No Love)* to Newtrament's *London Bridge Is Falling Down*.

1988

Derek B became the first commercially successful British rapper, entering the Top 20 with the tracks *Goodgrove* and *Bad Young Brother*.

1990

Rap group London Posse released *How's Life In London*, an important track empowering UK rappers to rhyme in their own accents.

2001

Garage group So Solid Crew released their chart-topping single *21 Seconds*.

2002

Wiley's *Eskimo* ushered in the new genre of grime, spearheaded by the likes of Dizzee Rascal, Kano, Skepta and Wiley himself.

2003

Dizzee Rascal won the Mercury Prize for his debut album *Boy In Da Corner*, the first grime album to do so.

2007-09

The likes of Tinchy Stryder, Chipmunk and Tinie Tempah began to achieve mainstream success.

2017

Stormzy's *Gang Signs & Prayer* became the first UK rap/grime album in history to top the UK Albums Chart.

2018

Dave and Fredo's *Funky Friday* is the first UK rap single to top the UK Singles Chart.

2019

Stormzy became the first UK rapper to headline the Glastonbury Festival.

MU At The Labour Party Conference

From championing music education to easing EU touring restrictions, Labour assurances signal hope for the future

Report by Isabelle Gutierrez



Shadow Secretary
Thangam Debbonaire
MP and MU General
Secretary Naomi Pohl

The MU was back at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool in October, talking to Labour MPs and Shadow Ministers about the changes that musicians need to see.

Our stand was as big a success as ever, with MPs and Labour Party members stopping by to show support for MU members fighting for their jobs at Northern Ballet and ENO, and finding out more about our work on music education, EU touring, streaming and AI.

The MU was delighted to see the appointment of Thangam Debbonaire as Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport back in September, and her first big speech as Shadow Secretary was very much music and culture focused.

She committed Labour to its first ever national cultural infrastructure plan and highlighted that she is working with Shadow Education Minister Bridget Philipson "to bring the best music, art, sports and drama to every child because every child's talent matters".

Working Together To Make Musicians' Working Lives Better

MU General Secretary Naomi Pohl said: "It is great to hear Labour's plans to champion music education, fix EU touring and promote creative spaces across the UK. "Thangam has been a friend of the Union and musicians for

"We need to see a fair deal for musicians, creatives and artists"

Naomi Pohl

years. As a musician herself, she genuinely understands the difficulties MU members are facing and she is committed to working with the MU to make musicians' working lives better."

Turning The Page On More Than A Decade Of Cuts And Mismanagement

In her speech, the Shadow Minister called on delegates to "Imagine the possibilities for the creative industries if they had a national champion squarely in their corner fighting for them," adding, "That champion is the next Labour government."

"Creative Industries backed by the next Labour government, right at the heart of our plan for economic growth where they belong, shouting loud and proud about the joy they bring. It's what makes us human. It makes life worth living," she said.

MU Highlighting Workplace Issues At Northern Ballet

Following the announcement from Northern Ballet that they are being forced to consider getting rid of their live orchestra for some touring productions and replacing the musicians with recorded music due to a real terms funding cut, Naomi addressed the main conference hall after Thangam's speech saying: "Our orchestra members at Northern Ballet used to have 20 weeks of work a year. Now they're looking at three or four weeks of work a year. They're going to foodbanks to survive. This is an absolutely outrageous situation and it's been caused by a Tory government underfunding the arts for at least a decade."

"We need to see a fair deal for musicians and creatives and artists who work so hard, but

just don't get the reward for the work." Naomi also raised Northern Ballet Sinfonia's campaign in meetings with MPs, where she spoke about pay cuts at Royal Opera House, jobs at risk at ENO, measures to make touring in the EU easier, and protecting freelancers from sexual harassment at work.

MU Secures Major Labour Party Policy Commitments On Music Education, Touring In The EU And Supporting Musicians' Jobs

The National Policy Forum document, approved by the Labour Party conference, has set out the Labour Party's plans if they were elected - and would deliver major improvements for musicians.

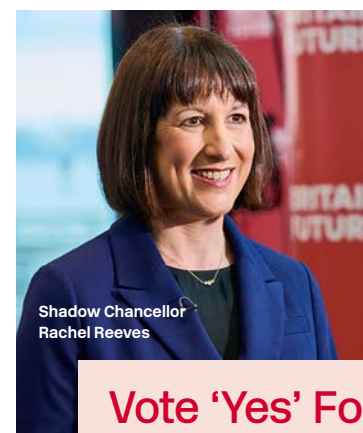
The MU, as a Labour-affiliated union, has representatives on the Labour Party's National Policy Forum (NPF), and the NPF document is the culmination of several years of hard work and negotiation with the Labour Party.

MU General Secretary Naomi Pohl said: "We are pleased that Shadow Ministers have worked with us in such a constructive way and we're delighted to be able to let members know that the MU has secured some important policy commitments on behalf of musicians."

Giving Musicians Their Future Back

The National Policy Forum document includes a commitment to improving the fairness of streaming. It says, "Labour will ensure our intellectual property system is fit for the digital age and strikes the right balance between the interests of creators, businesses and

From left: Keith Ames, Dave Webster and Naomi Pohl on the MU's stand at the Labour Party Conference



Shadow Chancellor
Rachel Reeves

All photos: Jonathan Stewart. © MU

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consumers... ensuring that content creators are fairly remunerated whether their work is broadcast or streamed."

The Union also secured wording on protecting jobs at the BBC and across the sector. As a result, the NPF document states that: "Labour will support the BBC to change with the times and adapt whilst supporting jobs and British content." The document goes on to highlight that "the UK's world-renowned creative industries are a huge asset to the UK's economy but the workforce has suffered from years of Conservative neglect, particularly in skills and the talent pipeline. Labour will support and promote growth in this important sector and ensure that it translates into jobs and opportunities for a diverse workforce."

Letting Every Child Learn Music


Working with Shadow Education Secretary of State, Bridget Philipson, the Union has achieved several commitments to music education. These include a commitment to "a broad and rich set of opportunities for every child in their early years and around the school day, including creative activities such as learning an instrument".

Labour has also committed to a broad curriculum that "must include subjects such as music". The document goes on to state: "In

Ofsted's 2020 annual parent survey just half of parents said that music was sufficiently covered within their child's education, despite evidence showing that music education can improve children's engagement with their education and lead to improved academic outcomes, in addition to the benefits of playing and listening to music on health and wellbeing."

The Labour Party has also recognised the importance of visiting music teachers, which the Union asked for specifically. As a result, the NPF document states that: "Labour will ensure a level playing field for all young people, by tackling the narrowing of the curriculum to ensure children can access and enjoy the creative arts as part of their education and recognise teachers supporting children to learn instruments and take advantage of creative opportunities as a valued part of the education workforce."

Supporting Musicians Touring In The EU

We know how difficult Brexit has made touring in the EU, and fixing these issues is one of the Labour Party's priorities in terms of improving the relationship we have with the EU. The MU has agreed to the following wording in the NPF document: "We will also push for an EU visa waiver for UK touring artists and the reduction of other administrative burdens." 

Vote 'Yes' For Political Fund

We will be conducting a postal ballot in December 2023 and January 2024, which will give you the chance to decide whether the Union should continue to maintain its Political Fund or not. Maintaining a political fund allows the MU to lobby politicians in order to influence those decisions. It is vitally important to note that, under the Trade Union Act 2016, the MU is forbidden from committing any funds other than member contributions to the political fund to lobbying or any of the other valuable political work. If you want us to continue our work on this and other important political work, please vote YES when you receive your ballot papers.

Playing for the Song

Steve Pearce always wanted to be a studio session musician and his tasteful playing has kept his diary full for four decades

Profile by Neil Crossley

One week before *The Musician* sits down to talk with session bassist Steve Pearce in the dressing room of Ronnie Scott's in Soho, his CV arrives by email. It's an impressive read. In a career spanning over four decades, his credits include playing with artists such as Van Morrison, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, Herbie Hancock, Mose Allison, Madonna, Scott Walker, Elton John, Everything But The Girl, Neil Tennant, Diana Ross, Michael Nyman, Sting, George Michael, Mariah Carey. The list goes on and on.

Then there are his numerous film credits on soundtracks such as *Quantum Of Solace*, *Evita*, *Donnie Brasco*, *The Lord Of The Rings*, *The Full Monty*, *Armageddon* and *The History Boys*. It's a rich legacy for a hardworking bassist whose inspired playing and impeccable feel and groove have kept him in demand for well over four decades.

Early Years

Steve Pearce grew up in Hitchin, Hertfordshire and was 12 years old when the hits of Slade and T. Rex ignited his interest in music. He also recalls the sonic epiphany of hearing Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells* on stereo headphones. "It was amazing," he beams. But by the age of 14 he was being drawn towards funk, jazz and Philadelphia soul. "I went to a grammar school where everyone liked Genesis and Yes," remembers Steve. "I couldn't bear prog rock. My friend Dale's brother was a funkateer and loved Kool & The Gang, The Ohio Players and The Fatback Band."

At the age of 14, he started learning bass, although it wasn't his first instrument of choice. "My dad was a musician and I told him I wanted to play the drums. He was very wise, because if you're a drummer that means your house is a rehearsal room. So he said 'why don't you play bass and you can come and play with me?'"

First Jobs

It was the mid-70s and Steve went straight from leaving school to playing full-time with his pianist father at function gigs around the area. "If you did a dance band gig, for the first half of it you did the dinner music, and there was no [sheet] music. All that would happen was the trumpet player would say 'b flat' and you'd do 35 minutes of bossa novas. There were loads of those gigs around, so that was my grounding really. I learnt while I learnt."

Steve taught himself to sight-read and began to share his father's love of jazz. His father arranged for bass tuition with Soft Machine bassist Roy Babbington. When Steve was proficient enough to go out on his own, his father wrote out a pad full of standards. "So when I was ready to go and do gigs without him I had this amazing book full of things and he used to write actual bass lines out for me to read."

From the outset, Steve had one overriding ambition: to become a studio session musician. He began spending time at the BBC Studios at Maida Vale, speaking to musicians and picking up advice. He calls Maida Vale his "college". Conductors and musicians were kind and encouraging, he says, allowing him to sit in on sessions and simply observe. In 1980, Steve joined the National Youth Jazz Orchestra. It was a move that would hone his sight-reading skills and kick-start his studio session career. Many of the →

"The trumpet player would say 'b flat' and you'd do thirty five minutes of bossa novas"



“I try to be as groovy as all the people that I love listening to”

musicians became fixers and would provide Steve and his peers with work for decades to come. By 1982, Steve was playing clubs around central London by night and building a career as a studio session musician in the daytime. Jingles initially provided a rich vein of work, he says, at studios around Soho such as Gooseberry Sound Studios in Gerrard Street. By the mid-80s Steve had established himself as a session player of real note. Work was plentiful and he was sometimes doing up to 14 sessions a week. He recalls having a chart on his wall with a list of 90 bass players in London, who he would dep out work to and vice versa.

Bringing The Music Out

When asked what appeals to him about working as a studio musician, he cites the pressure and the thrill of the moment. “I just love that kind of thrust,” he says. “You’re all together in the studio, music in front of you, sight reading and the red light goes on. You don’t know what’s going to be in front of you. And with the huge orchestras for the films, there’s 90 people in Studio One, at Abbey Road. And they’re not gonna stop for you. You have to get it right.” He accepts that being a studio musician inevitably entails sometimes playing on tracks that you don’t like. “But you have to bring the music out of it and you have to give your love of music to it,” says Steve.

Getting along with people and having a good attitude is also paramount, he says. Steve cites a moment early in his career when he and drummer Bobby Worth found themselves playing a tiny pub in Hoxton with a piano player “who thought he was Frank Sinatra”. A few years later Worth asked Pearce if he would like to go out on tour with Buddy Greco. “Now if I’d been sour-faced and miserable that night in Hoxton, I might not have been offered that gig,” says Steve. “But we just laughed.”

Staying With The Times

As his studio work burgeoned, Pearce rolled with technological changes. The perceived threat of bassists being replaced by bass

All photos: Joseph Branson. © MU, taken at Ronnie Scott's, Soho, apart from direct right: Jonathan Stewart. © MU



Steve became a full-time musician straight from leaving school, playing in his father's function band

synth came and went and the emergence of click tracks didn't faze him. By the 90s, he had started working in West End musicals and when in 2002, Norah Jones' debut album *Come Away With Me* sparked a resurgence in the popularity of the double bass, Pearce spotted an opportunity. “I could see the way things were going, and that if I wanted another gig in the West End, I might have to double on double bass.” Pearce threw himself into learning this new instrument. “I went to lessons with Mike Lee, a beautiful, beautiful man. I thought ‘I’m just gonna do this because I’ve never been to college and there is an academic way of playing and learning the double bass, which I did. It’s been incredibly useful, but then as Phil Todd, my great friend, the saxophone player says: ‘adapt or die.’”

Passion For Music

Pearce speaks with real passion and enthusiasm about the projects he is involved in. Perched on a sofa in the dressing room at

Ronnie Scott's, he clearly revels in the diversity of his work. He is here at the iconic Soho jazz club on an unseasonably hot October afternoon because he is rehearsing for a performance this evening with the Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra. “We’ve been doing it for 17 years now,” he explains. “I’ve been absolutely privileged and thrilled to be in the bass chair – and long may it continue. I’m here for the next two nights and we’re playing Duke Ellington’s music.”

Northern Soul

Other recent highlights include *Northern Soul At The Proms* featuring the BBC Concert Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall on 15 July, when the stately grandeur of the iconic venue was transformed by the soaring soul anthems of Northern working-class dance culture of the early 70s. “That was fantastic,” he says. “It’s on iPlayer and it was an amazing night.

Steve speaks with real passion and enthusiasm about the diverse range of projects that he is involved in



Champions and his first gig with Morrison was the main stage at Glastonbury that year. "We did three days' rehearsal at Nomis Studios and Van didn't come," recalls Pearce. "The keyboard player Neil Drinkwater, a great friend of mine said, 'Well, we'll do this one and we'll probably do this one'. I had 50 numbers on a large score sheet that I gaffer taped to the monitor. It was like busking in a pub gig but absolutely glorious. It's now a very famous bootleg."

Pearce has been in Morrison's band three times and finds the Irish singer inspirational to work with. "I remember we did Hammersmith Odeon. And there's 3,500 people in there. He takes it right down. He'd go into a groove and he'd walk like nine feet off the mic at Hammersmith Odeon and we couldn't play quiet enough. And in fact, the drummer was just playing the thing coming out the top of the hi-hat because he couldn't play his actual hi-hat, it was too loud. It was complete silence, it was like being in church. But that's Van's thing, you know. It was a glorious, glorious experience."

In The Groove

For the past 27 years, Pearce has been part of Hamish Stuart's band. It's a gig that is close to his heart and they regularly perform at the 606 Club in Chelsea. "Hamish has made me more of a player than any other musician," says Steve. "He's never told me once how to play. It's just being around that legacy of The Average White Band, that sort of music, beautiful blue-eyed soul – amazing."

When asked what he feels are his strengths as a bass player, Pearce ponders for a few seconds. "People say I'm groovy. I try to be as groovy as all the people that I love listening to. Musicians from different instruments say to me: 'The length of note you play is amazing. That's always what knocks me out about your playing'. But I mean, I'm blessed to play with amazing drummers, such as Ralph Salmins, Neil Wilkinson, Ian Thomas, Jeremy Stacey and Ash Soan."

"And of course, it's always about playing for the song. If you're a professional musician and want to make your living at it, then you'd better learn to play for the song. I've just sort of carved my own path. And I'm glad that the phone still rings." 🎸

The MU And Me

"I joined the MU when I was 17, straight out of school. I left school and my dad said, 'You've got to join the Union now, because you're a professional musician'. You couldn't work in theatres unless you were a union member. I was always chuffed to be in a union, and I've seen great changes but I've also seen people, as recently as three days ago, decrying the Musicians' Union."

"And I'm thinking that's out of order because they are enjoying pay rises, holiday pay, sick pay, people negotiating conditions on their behalf, all from the MU. And I've never understood why these people are not in the Musicians' Union. The fact that they have these benefits from the MU. Also, in the past, the MU have got me money when I've been owed. I get money from TV shows that I did many years ago, repeat fees. So I'm a great believer and a fan of the MU."



I didn't know how it was going to go down. I've played the Albert Hall many, many times but something other than the classical repertoire at the Albert Hall could invite criticism. But it was absolutely packed. It was an amazing night."

Out On Tour

While studio session work is his first love – "because it's so varied and it uses all my skills" – he has also done his fair share of touring with artists such as Tom Jones, Everything But The Girl and Van Morrison. He played on Van Morrison's 1987 album *Poetic*

A Fresh Approach To Classical Music

From dress code to front-of-house hospitality, the London Chamber Orchestra's managing director, Jocelyn Lightfoot, argues for a complete overhaul of the classical live sector

Report by Neil Crossley

Anyone who has worked in the classical music live sector in the last five years will be aware of the challenges it faces. Ruthless funding cuts, limited work opportunities for musicians and the English government's marginalisation of music education are among the hurdles needing navigation. Then there is the alarming decline in audience numbers.

In an interview with *The Observer* in May 2023, violin virtuoso Nicola Benedetti highlighted waning attendances at classical concerts and the pressure to compete against genres such as pop and rock. "You've only got to look at the audiences, at the numbers," said Benedetti. "They are going down. With the economic pressures of today, it means that, without subsidies and without high audience attendance, the inevitable question is: how are we going to plan to sustain our environment if we can't convince people that music without a strong backbeat is something still worth listening to? That it's worth the time spent?"

Possible Extinction

Such questions are foremost in the thoughts of Jocelyn Lightfoot, managing director of the London Chamber Orchestra (LCO). Lightfoot is one of a number of people within the classical music live sector who believe a complete rethink is required, in terms of how live

"I think the industry is at a tipping point. We could easily disappear"

Jocelyn Lightfoot

classical music is presented, promoted, marketed and perceived. Without this, says Lightfoot, the sector could face extinction.

"The number of people going to music colleges, the number of people coming out of music colleges who are able to work, and the number of people who are able to be musicians full time are just plummeting," says Lightfoot. "People are studying abroad and staying abroad. It's quite hard to admit that what we're doing and what we love isn't working, but we've got to be realistic because I think the industry is at a tipping point. We could very easily just disappear."

Lightfoot believes that the genre label 'classical' itself is far too vague. When it comes to promoting and marketing concerts, she suggests focusing on the themes, emotions or instruments used, particularly when trying to entice newcomers who may have little or no experience of classical music.

Reassessing Genre Labels

Lightfoot outlined potential alternative descriptions in a column in *Classical Music* in summer 2022. Rather than use historical time periods to define classical music, she suggested, it would make far more sense to define the style of the music. "What about 'pre-cinema cinematic' for the likes of Mahler and Wagner? 'Shifty beats' for minimalism? 'Storm and stress' is already a useful one for describing music from the historical classical period that is turbulent and contrasting."

Lightfoot isn't an advocate for losing the word 'classical' completely. "I don't think that's necessary, but I think we've got to be realistic

about our audience. The people that I'm most interested in are the ones who don't know what classical music is, who have come to a concert, haven't enjoyed it and haven't come back."

How To Engage New Audiences

There is some encouraging news. A 2020 joint report by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI), the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the streaming service Deezer concluded there has been a significant increase in the number of people listening to classical music recordings. Many of these listeners are in a younger demographic, millennials and GenZers who are drawn to classical music via streaming, films and gaming. The report showed that a third of those accessing classical music via streaming services were 18-25 year olds, while classical music streams by listeners under 35 had risen by 17 per cent.

This trend was reflected two years later, in December 2022, by a Royal Philharmonic Orchestra report into Christmas-listening habits, which found that 74% of UK residents under 25 years would "engage" with orchestral music at Christmas time by watching YouTube documentaries (18%), streamed concerts (16%) or through computer games (12%). For the classical music live sector, the big challenge is finding new ways to entice this younger demographic through the doors of concert halls. "For the vast majority of the public, the classical music industry as a whole is irrelevant," says Lightfoot. "But what is relevant to them is film music, gaming music, TV music and many pieces of classical music that they hear on a daily basis."

Photo: Eoin Schmidt-Martin



Lack Of Diversity

One overriding obstacle to enticing new audience members is the lack of diversity within the classical live sector, onstage and off. A 2022 survey commissioned by the BBC and conducted by BOP Consulting found that classical audiences were “not representative of the country”.

The survey showed that nearly 80% of audiences were aged 55 and over and 84% identified as ‘White British’. The survey also showed that only 2% of audience members identified as ‘Multiple Ethnic’; 2% as ‘Asian’ or ‘Asian British’; and 0% as ‘Black’ or ‘Black British’.

“Our industry is not good at racial inclusion,” says Lightfoot, who highlights the importance of building a real connection between musicians and audiences. “They’re trying to make everybody on stage as anonymous as possible. Whereas actually, what the audience wants to understand is who these people on stage are.”



Left: LCO managing director Jocelyn Lightfoot. Above: the London Chamber Orchestra

Photo: Upstart Productions

Making Audiences Feel Welcome

One of the areas ripe for change, says Lightfoot, is the relationship between classical venues and audiences. The key, she explains, is making sure that every person who attends a concert feels like they’re going to have a lovely time. “It’s very difficult to tell [venues] you need to train your staff to be more hospitable,” she continues. “Trying to get them to understand that when the audience walks through the door, they are our guests and we want to make sure that they feel like they’re supposed to be there, that they’re welcome, that they’ve got people who will help them.”

Dismantling The Dress Code

In 2021, the London Chamber Orchestra took the groundbreaking decision to remove the performance dress code for its musicians. “We wear black to respect the composers... all those things that basically just mean that people are scared by it and don’t feel welcome. So, we very much just ripped the plaster off and said, ‘Right, well, let’s not do anything that we don’t have a very, very good reason to do,’” explains Lightfoot. “People say to me, ‘But what if someone turns up to play and they’re just wearing jeans and a t-shirt?’” she continues, “and I’m like, ‘It will make the audience wearing jeans and a t-shirt feel welcome.’”

Another outdated aspect is the gendered binary dress code of ‘ladies and gents’, says Lightfoot. “That’s so outdated and you just wouldn’t have that in another [industry].”

Moving Forward

Lightfoot is buoyed by recent conversations with industry leaders such as Association of British Orchestras’ (ABO) Chief Executive Judith Webster and MU General Secretary Naomi Pohl. “I’m really excited actually about both Judith and Naomi because they seem to understand. We’re setting up a number of action groups to build relationships with other organisations in a really meaningful way.”

Lightfoot is also conscious that smaller orchestras can be more agile than bigger ones when it comes to implementing change. But both still share the same huge challenges, she says. “I think we have huge problems in the industry [in terms of] how we run. That affects the next generation of musicians and it affects the public’s perception of our industry. It affects our ability to learn from other industries that are doing much better than us. It also affects our ability to objectively look at our successes and our failings and actively do something about it.” **mu**

ACE Cuts Deep In The Midlands

Funding decisions by Arts Council England across the Midlands have severely impacted the area's orchestral musicians. But the Musicians' Union is fighting back

Report by Andrew Stewart

Upon reflection at the start of this century, many of Britain's arts organisations dared to believe that they had won the argument for generous, sustained public investment in arts and culture. The optimism of the noughties, dented by the financial crisis that blighted the decade's end, has since given way to the dispiriting grind of dealing with deep cuts to arts funding. In 2009/10, Arts Council England (ACE) received just under £453 million in so-called Grant-in-Aid income from the public purse and distributed just under £430 million to arts organisations. The funding body's annual distribution for 2023-26 is set to deliver £446 million to 985 organisations, part of a 46% real-terms reduction in overall public spending on the arts since 2005, most of it lost during the past 13 years of Conservative government.

The Arts Council's most recent cake-cutting round, announced in November 2022, delivered standstill funding to most of the nation's orchestras, reduced the London Sinfonietta's annual grant by almost 40%, presented English National Opera with an existential crisis and bumped Britten Sinfonia off its most-favoured list of National Portfolio Organisations. Arts Council Chief Executive Darren Henley heralded the National Portfolio deal as an exercise in "rebalancing", intended

"The MU is calling on government to make OTR permanent"

Stephen Brown



Black Sabbath – The Ballet, performed by Birmingham Royal Ballet and conceived by its artistic director Carlos Acosta

"to make sure creativity and culture is more accessible and relevant to everyone, and better reflects the diversity of England as it is today". While few would argue with the aspiration, the closure of high-profile venues such as the Oldham Coliseum and loss of organisations with deep community roots, Leeds-based Unlimited Theatre among them, underlined the impression that ACE was essentially robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Little To Boost Opportunities

Musicians' Union members in the Midlands might ask how a region comprising 10.8

million people stands to gain from yet another round of standstill funding to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, its only contract orchestra, the Nottingham-based chamber orchestra Sinfonia Viva, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Birmingham Royal Ballet and professional chamber choir and period-instrument band Ex Cathedra. A significant rise in Birmingham Opera Company's annual ACE grant and the addition to the National Portfolio list of Bolsover-based OPUS Music, which works in health and social care settings, and the pro-am People's Orchestra, which addresses 'the issue of low arts uptake in deprived areas' of Birmingham and

Photo: Lorne Thomson / Redferns / Getty Images



Professional chamber choir Ex Cathedra was among the music organisations to receive standstill funding from ACE



Photo: Katja Ogrin / Getty Images

beyond, has done little to boost work opportunities for orchestral musicians across the Midlands.

Clear Pattern Of Cuts

The Musicians' Union is determined to raise awareness of damage done by ACE funding decisions and campaign for an increase in sustained public investment in the arts. It cites the rarely seen consequences of squeezed spending on music in both the East and West Midlands, an area stretching from the Welsh border to rural Lincolnshire. The Midlands encompasses the UK's

second city, Birmingham, and the substantial conurbations gathered around Coventry, Nottingham, Leicester, Dudley and Wolverhampton, together with multiple market towns and scattered villages. Its music ecosystem, like its population, is diverse; its workforce, however, is predominantly freelance and consequently heavily reliant on the financial health of a widespread network of disparate arts employers.

Around 10% of MU members live and work in the Midlands, many travelling long distances to take up freelance engagements; a small number of Midlands musicians are contracted to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, leaving most other local orchestral players to build their work around dates with part-time or ad hoc bands. Arts Council England's standstill funding to the CBSO and other music organisations, delivered against a background of high inflation and soaring costs, fits a clear pattern of funding cuts to the arts in the Midlands.

Birmingham City Council's arts and culture spend, set at £3 million a year for 2023-26, includes standstill funding for groups such as the CBSO, Birmingham Royal Ballet and Ex Cathedra; the prospects for future funding settlements look bleak, however, given the local authority's £650 million equal pay liability and the government's recent imposition of commissioners to address the council's profound budgetary and organisational problems. →



Louise Braithwaite

"Arts funding has been a low political priority since 2010. Add austerity to that, and things have become extremely challenging here in the Midlands. Our local authorities have less money, which means spending on arts and culture is a long way down their list. All musicians understand that councils need to provide essential services. But many of us believe in the trade union ideal of 'Bread and Roses', that there should be 'bread for all and roses, too'. If you're involved in the arts in the Midlands, the difficulty is that you're trying to sell roses to earn your own bread to people who have less and less money to buy either. That's why public arts funding is so important. For all that, I remain positive about what I do and about the potential we have to stage fantastic things across this region. But we need support to get out of the gate. And our employers need the funding to be able to pay us properly."

Photo: Jessica Raphael / Photography

Trombonist Martha Ann
Brookes from the Birmingham
Opera Company performing
at Mailbox Birmingham



Photo: Mike Kemp / Getty Images

Stephen Brown, the MU's Midlands Regional Organiser, notes how the Union has flagged flaws in the funding settlement in discussion with the Arts Council. "One of my concerns is that the money they divvied up and redirected went to organisations that don't have trade union agreements," he observes. "Money has been removed from organisations that recognise unions – and who try to keep fees for musicians at a reasonable level – and given instead to amateur organisations that have no collective bargaining agreements. It's fine that ACE is trying to engage communities and spread the reach of the arts. But that isn't putting extra money in the pockets of professional musicians. The Conservative government's anti-Union laws are not the only way that unions are being undermined!"

Failing To Keep Pace With Inflation

Over the last decade almost all of ACE's National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) across the Midlands have received standstill funding. "Birmingham Royal Ballet, for instance, got an average yearly funding increase of just under two per cent," says Brown. "That's a drop in the ocean for an organisation that turns over millions of pounds. None of that extra money will find its way to members of the Royal Ballet Sinfonia, who didn't have a pay-rise for around five years; when they did get a rise, it's been below inflation. Tackling this must

begin by addressing arts funding. The situation will continue until funding is restored to a level that matches historic inflation."

The CBSO's Arts Council funding has risen almost imperceptibly from a yearly average of £2,180,983 in 2018-22 to £2,221,113 in 2023-26. Birmingham City Council arts funding, meanwhile, has fallen year on year. Its annual subvention in 2021-2022 delivered around £158,000 to Birmingham Royal Ballet and just under £608,000 to the CBSO, down from the £1.5 million the orchestra received from the local authority in 2013-14.

"Both have had to cut their cloth accordingly," says Stephen Brown. "We're seeing the same with freelance bands that have received standstill funding, like Viva Sinfonia in Derby and the English Symphony Orchestra in Worcester, and with the Orchestra of the Swan, which is not a NPO organisation. They're all struggling, so their player fees haven't kept pace with inflation."

"The government's Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR), due to end in April 2025, has helped offset some of the cuts from Birmingham City Council to BRB and the CBSO but not the effects of standstill funding from the Arts Council. That's why the MU is calling on government to make OTR permanent. The fact is that every orchestral musician in the region is expected to do more for the same money they were being paid 10 years ago." Arts Council and



Stephen Brown

"Sustaining a career is a big issue for musicians in the Midlands. We're looking to work with employers and funders to improve career sustainability for local musicians and improve the number of local freelancers the region's orchestras use to reduce the dependency on those being used from outside the region. Decent public funding is essential for that to happen here. It's also vital for the future of professional music around the country. We have a fight on our hands. What we're seeing at Northern Ballet, the Royal Opera House and English National Opera is just the tip of the iceberg. Media coverage of the threats facing their musicians is raising awareness among audiences and the wider public about what's happening because of real-terms arts funding cuts. The more people hear about it the better. The vast majority of MU members don't receive ACE money, but standstill funding sets the playing field for everyone. When it falls, so does the level of fees across the board. We must fight that with every means we have."

government slogans about 'levelling up' and 'rebalancing', he concludes, ring hollow when sounded into the void of deep and damaging cuts to public arts funding.

Cumulative Impact

Musicians who live and earn most of their income in the Midlands have already shouldered the consequences of chronic funding cuts and savagely trimmed music education budgets. Louise Braithwaite, oboist and Vice-Chair of the MU's Midlands Regional Committee, has felt their effects on her broad freelance career. Her playing portfolio includes regular work with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the English Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra of the Swan, occasional dates with, among others, the CBSO, and a variety of community-based projects, including live music in dementia care settings and hospitals with a small pool of freelance duo partners. "I also work in education settings, where cuts to school budgets mean you're dependent either on yourself or an organisation who will employ you as a freelancer managing to find the money to put something on for a particular school. That's becoming increasingly difficult in the present financial climate."

Braithwaite says that ACE's latest funding round comes after years of austerity, Brexit, global crises, Tory government incompetence and the lasting legacy of Covid lockdowns. Their cumulative impact, she says, has fallen particularly hard on orchestral players in the Midlands. "If you're a parent or care for an older adult or disabled person, for example, your ability to work in other parts of the country will be severely limited. Add to that transport costs, whether private or public, and a regional railway that basically runs north-south, but not east-west, and you're looking at obstacles that musicians who work in more urban areas rarely experience." High return travel costs to London for occasional dates and the lack of late trains to the Midlands from the capital, even to Birmingham, also narrow the options open to freelancers in the region.

"In music education, people make things work. But at what cost?"

Chris Walters

Photo: Andrew Fox



Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR) has helped the CBSO and others to offset the impact of standstill funding – but it's not enough

The negative effects of cuts to music education budgets in the Midlands and beyond are set to be exacerbated by the proposed reduction of England's nationwide network of 116 music hubs to create 43 new Hub Lead Organisations (HLOs). The Department for Education's (DfE) published rationale for the restructuring appears to equate music hubs, created in 2012 and funded by the DfE and ACE, with teaching school hubs, a group of 'lead schools' concerned with the professional development of teachers, strikingly unlike music hubs in constitution and operation. The plan, almost certain to be implemented in September 2024, was neither requested by the existing music hubs nor endorsed by them during its consultation stage. The number of hubs in the West Midlands will fall from 14 to five 'super hubs', while the East Midlands will be left with five of its present 10 hubs.

Intent On Overturning Cuts

Chris Walters, the MU's National Organiser Education and Health & Wellbeing, questions the DfE's assertions that larger hubs will deliver economies of scale, lead to greater consistency of music education provision over larger geographical areas and open up new opportunities for partnership and collaboration. "These

claims are completely free of data and evidence to back them up," he observes.

"We've seen partnerships between hubs, orchestras and other organisations grow organically over the past decade. By redrawing the map of hubs for no good reason, they are potentially being thrown away in the hope that new ones will materialise out of a top-down mandate. In music education, people always make things work and they'll make this work. But at what cost?"

The cost, observes Stephen Brown, is already apparent across the Midlands in the patchy provision of schools music education. "The crisis in arts education, with music being such a low priority at A-level for so long, means there's a squeeze on the future talent pipeline, especially with kids from disadvantaged, working-class or global majority backgrounds.

"Combine that with the direction of travel for arts funding, and we're quickly moving towards a time when the UK's professional musicians will come from a particular class background. That's not healthy for the profession or for the country, as it typifies the widening gap we're seeing in society. We will fight to overturn these cuts to arts and music education funding and look forward to doing so with a future Labour government."

World Without Frontiers

Vocalist, composer and multi-instrumentalist Joanna Wallfisch was born into a musical dynasty yet decided early on to follow her own unique creative path

By Lois Wilson

Joanna Wallfisch is a vocalist, composer and multi-instrumentalist who has released six albums, bookended by 2011's *Wild Swan* and *All In Time*, which was issued in August earlier this year.

Wallfisch's work crosses musical borders drawing on classical, jazz, art-song, folk and pop to summon fantastical sound-worlds that are strange, personal and touching. In the past she has been likened to Kate Bush, and like Bush, her voice is limber and tonally rich.

Music is in Wallfisch's blood. Growing up in south London – she now lives in LA – her mother is a concert violinist, her father a cellist. His mother, her grandmother, played in the Women's Orchestra Of Auschwitz, then after the liberation co-founded the English Chamber Orchestra.

Unsurprisingly her earliest memories all involve music. "I was surrounded," she says on Zoom from her kitchen, her young daughter bouncing on her lap. "My dad practised nine, 10 hours a day and I still have melodies in my head which are the most obscure cello scales and to me they are like lullabies. From the age of six, every summer my mum took me to Carmel By The Sea where she played in a festival. That was my normal."

Standing Out

Joanna initially set her sights not on playing music but on becoming an artist. "I didn't feel like I was heard in my family so it was important for me to do something that was unique to me," she explains.



Joanna Wallfisch's music mixes classical, jazz, art-song, folk and pop to enthralling effect

All photos: Jonathan Stewart. © IMU

"Everyone else was singing classical music so I painted. Every free period at secondary school I spent in the art room."

After gaining her diploma in fine art at Chelsea College, she studied fine art at Central Saint Martins in London. "It was a wonderful time," she recalls fondly. "Rock up whenever, hang out all day in a blank room with a bunch of mates making a mess, go to the pub, then do it again. What an amazing thing."

During a term spent in Paris through the Erasmus scheme she began busking with a jazz band. "That was the game changer. I knew then I had to pursue singing."

Her main touchstone was Ella Fitzgerald and after a year of "cheesemongering and bar tending and just flailing around with no real focus" she auditioned for the masters program in voice and jazz performance at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London. "I was told I got a place on the strength of my performance alone," she says. "And I went in not being able to read a note of music and came out being able to compose for big band and arrange for voices."

While there she performed as part of the Chorale Le Chateau for the Abyssinian Mass with Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in London – she would tour with the outfit again in New York in 2013.

"They came to London to do a residency at the Barbican and put a call out for volunteer singers," she explains. "They needed 100 singers and a bunch of us enlisted and me and Emily Dankworth ended up in the choir. It was very exciting and everyone was totally starstruck."

Touring With A Difference

She also made her debut album *Wild Swan* with New York drummer Rob Garcia, the template for which was Fred Hersch and Norma Winstone's collaborations. "Rob was doing a masterclass at the Guildhall. We did a jam session, then he went back to New York and sent me some of his compositions and I put lyrics to them and then I was like, 'Let's record our songs'."

"But I had no idea what it entailed. Rob booked a studio in New York, he arranged a band, we rehearsed and I remember being in the studio and we weren't getting one part quite right and the pianist Art Hirahara said to leave it because we could edit it later. I had no idea – I thought whatever you record that's it. But still I always go into the studio with the mentality that whatever we do right now, whatever magic happens in this moment, is it. Most of the songs on the new album, as with all my albums, are single takes."

On 2015's second album *The Origin Of Adjustable Things* and 2016's third *Gardens In My Mind*, by which time she was a resident of New York, she worked with pianist Dan Tepfer. "Dan had played with Rob Garcia and we clicked musically, and his audience understood the crossover of classical with jazz."

Romantic as well as musical partners, when the pair split, she had a total rethink. "It was the spur to shake things up," she says. "Wynton Marsalis would always say 'stay in your lane, stay in your lane' but I'm not very good at that and I just thought I'm going to cycle across America and sing songs and in 2016 I went on this crazy adventure cycling to and then playing venues roughly 50 miles apart. It was fantastic but hard work."

The Magic Of Motherhood

Her fifth album, 2019's *Far Away From Any Place Called Home* soundtracks the 1,500 mile trip and she also wrote a companion book *The Great Song Cycle: Portland To LA On Two Wheels And A Song*. "I then thought,



Never one to stand still, Joanna has toured both America and Australia... on a bicycle

let's promote both on a second *Great Song Cycle* tour," she laughs. This time she covered the Pacific Coast of Australia, from Brisbane to Hobart and documented it in a film *The Great Song Cycle Down Under*.

It's clear from our chat that Wallfisch never stops. As well as a soloist, she also sings with the Laude Ensemble, a chamber group with links to the First Congregational Church Of Los Angeles. She teaches on the songwriting faculty at Los Angeles College of Music and she is an early childhood music educator for the non profit Urban Voices Project.

She is also a working mother and involves her daughter in her work as much as possible, so her daughter is not just present on Zoom meetings – such as this one – but goes to rehearsals and public performances too. When her daughter was four months old she took to the stage with her in her baby carrier huddled between her and her guitar. "Bringing her to my musical events is a great thing, for me, for her, for the audience, we all get to share a magical experience," she says. "Motherhood has become the everything and everything else is extra. If motherhood is the river, then music, work, life, etc, are the rushes, pebbles, banks, birds overhead, fishes below, and I... well... I guess I am always the swimmer; sometimes floating, sometimes drowning, sometimes flowing down river, sometimes swimming up river." **mu**

Breaking The Silence

"I thought I was done after touring my fifth album and my book cycling around Australia. I was mentally and physically exhausted. I decided to stop. I had a moment when I was performing in Australia and after a song I said to the audience, 'I don't think I can do this anymore.' I was in a real depression about the efforts it was taking me to get heard. I felt I was going to every single length to prove I was a great artist, I was doing everything I could and I was just constantly coming back to square one. I decided I'd spend 2020 focusing on teaching and paying my rent and taking a break from gigs, which was lucky as the pandemic happened but during it I started writing songs, just for pleasure and because I have to write songs, it's what I do and then I got pregnant, and I wrote *All In Time*, the title track a week after finding out and the urgency returned. I did a Kickstarter which covered half the recording costs and after the separation and isolation of the pandemic breaking the silence became a profound experience. We recorded the album in December 2021, and my daughter was born in April 2022. The songs are about my life experiences but they are Frankenstein versions and musically there's a sense of being suspended between the elements, of being in a safe space, cocooned, in a world within a world. I guess it goes right back to our initial existence in the womb."

"Wynton would say 'stay in your lane' but I'm not very good at that"

Joanna Wallfisch

A Career As An Armed Forces Musician

With the British Armed Forces representing one of the largest employers of UK musicians, *The Musician* asks three experienced military band members for their advice on this rewarding but often-overlooked career path

Report by Henry Yates

They are some of the most prolific musicians in the world. They enjoy variety, benefits, travel and financial security unthinkable to most in the industry. They number almost 1,000, surely making them the largest body of full-time players in the UK. And if you engage with British culture, you have almost certainly seen them in action, with last year's state funeral for Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III's coronation respectively drawing TV audiences of 29 and 18 million.

Yet the career of an Armed Forces musician is a path taken by relatively few of the MU's 34,000 members. Perhaps, just as a combat career in the military evokes mental images gleaned from movies and TV, so the notion of joining the Armed Forces as a musician comes with preconceptions (often that it will involve a strict diet of marching music). Speak to those with first-hand experience, however, and a different picture emerges, starting with the revelation that there is no such thing as a 'typical' background for the musicians who apply to the three main recruiting bodies, the Royal Corps of Army Music, Royal Air Force and Royal Marines.

First Steps

"I was in a Championship Section brass band when I was 18 and saw a recruiting advertisement in the *British Bandsman*

"My first gig was the Duke of Edinburgh's funeral"

Alan Thomas

magazine," reflects John Park, who served from 1985 to 2007 and was a Sergeant and Principal Percussion/Vocals in the Scots Guards band. "In 1985, we'd just had the miners' strike and there wasn't a lot going on in the North-East, job and prospects-wise, so it seemed a logical move. I took the advert into the local Army Careers Office one Friday morning... on Monday I was on a train to Bovington, Dorset for my audition. It was that fast!"

For Alan Thomas, becoming Principal Trumpet for the Central Band of the Royal Air Force was the realisation of a childhood dream. "The reason I played the trumpet was because I'd get taken to the Changing of the Guard by my parents," he recalls. "I intended to either join the Marines, Guards or RAF, but I went to music college and ended up playing classical. I did a postgrad at the Royal College, three years with the London Symphony Orchestra, then the City



Photo: OLI SCARFF / Getty Images

There are almost 1,000 Armed Forces musicians across the British Army, Air Force and Marines

Photo: Crown Copyright 2023



Air Specialist (Class 1) Alan Thomas sounding the Last Post at the Tower of London during the Ceremony of the Keys

The Right Stuff

Have The Right Mindset

Perhaps more than any other sector of the music industry, a strong applicant for the Armed Forces will prioritise service, sacrifice and teamwork above individual glory, bringing a positive attitude to everything they do. "My advice would be to keep an open mind," says Park.

Study The Entry Requirements

Don't set your heart on a Forces career until checking you meet the entry criteria. From minimum/maximum age to the required musical standard, do your homework and fix any holes you can in your résumé.

Look Out For Bursaries

Financial help is available, with aspiring Army musicians currently studying for a music degree eligible for a bursary of up to £27,750 (£9,250 per academic year). See <https://jobs.army.mod.uk/regular-army/what-you-get/bursaries-scholarships/>

Ask Lots Of Questions

It's easy to get in touch online and the recruitment team can fill in the blanks or even arrange no-commitment taster days. "There's lots of information," says Cook, "and we have careers advisors who can discuss the process with you. Take a look at <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers/royal-marines/what-can-i-do/royal-marines-band-service>"

Don't Be Intimidated

Joining the military is not a decision to make lightly, but neither should you expect the ferocious trial-by-fire often depicted in the movies/television. "It's not as scary as everyone makes out," says Thomas. "People don't really shout at you!"

of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. But lockdown made me think: 'Maybe I could revisit that military thing'. My first gig was the Duke Of Edinburgh's funeral." For Julian Cook, meanwhile, it was a favourite teacher who lit the spark. "I played cornet and drums at school in Ipswich and was taught by a former Royal Marines musician who spoke to me about a career in the Royal Marines Band Service. I remembered watching them on TV at the FA Cup Final with their smart uniform, straight lines and distinctive white helmets and I thought, 'That's the job for me'."

Entry Points

Of course, as in any other branch of the military, application does not guarantee acceptance. It's interesting to note the relative entry requirements across the three recruiting bodies, taking in everything from age limits to qualifications.

"The Royal Corps of Army Music is interested in your performance and potential," says Park. "I had no formal musical qualifications at all. But I didn't have to be the finished article, as you would in the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. I had a few years' experience of playing at a decent standard in the brass band world and was familiar with following a conductor. I'd had a good drum teacher and learned to read music, then got to practise

it all twice a week at rehearsal, as well as concerts and contests. If you can put all that together for an audition, have a positive outlook and think you can offer something, there's no reason why you couldn't become a Forces musician. I spent a year at the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, on a course with 150 musicians, having lessons from the legendary percussionist John Cave."

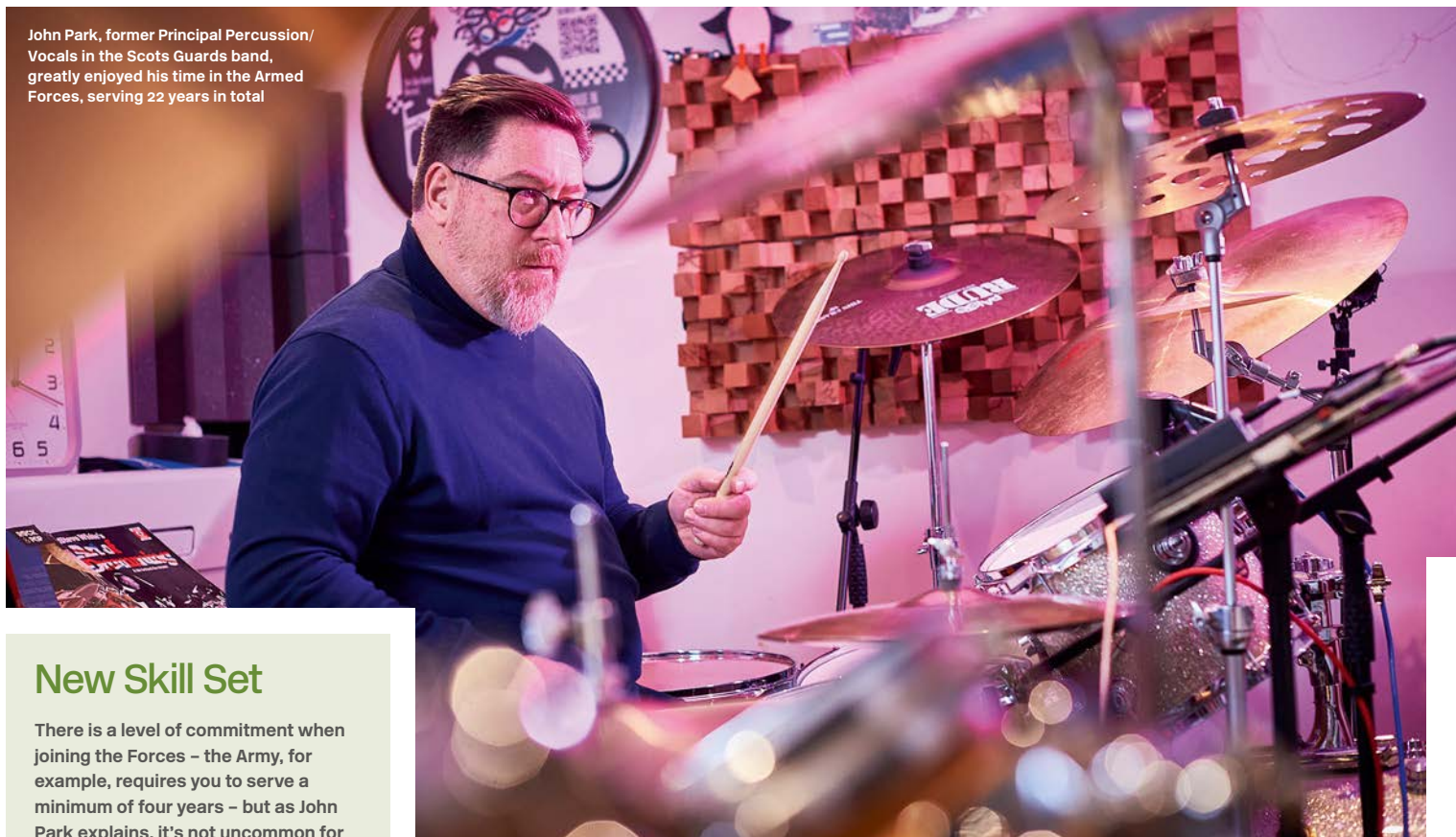
Invited to the Royal Marines School of Music for his own three-day audition, Cook also encountered a character-focused selection process – and was thrown a curveball. "For someone who is interested in a career in the RMBS, we look at a standard around grade 5," he says. "However, an individual doesn't need grades, they just need to show musical aptitude and a can-do attitude, even when times get tough. I passed the audition but I wasn't offered cornet or percussion – instead, they offered me clarinet and violin, two completely new instruments!"

The RAF sets the highest bar for musical proficiency – but offsets this by welcoming seasoned players. "I thought I'd be too old," admits Thomas. "But you can join the Royal Air Force until the age of 48. Musically, it's a grade 8 standard. Most of our musicians – but not all – are university or music college graduates."

Getting Physical

Musical ability and strength of character might get you through the door, but some →

John Park, former Principal Percussion/Vocals in the Scots Guards band, greatly enjoyed his time in the Armed Forces, serving 22 years in total



New Skill Set

There is a level of commitment when joining the Forces – the Army, for example, requires you to serve a minimum of four years – but as John Park explains, it's not uncommon for military musicians to take the skills they've learnt and apply them on civvy street. "I learnt so much and grew both as a musician and a person during my time in the Army. In 2007, I felt like it was time to move on – I had my feet under the table with a few different things, so I thought I'd be able to make it work."

"I went out of the frying pan into the fire when I left, because I was in a country-roots Americana band and we got picked by Take That to open for them on tour. I'm now on drums and backing vocals in a busy Madness and Specials tribute band – Special Kinda Madness. I sing for a big band, teach drums and percussion at two schools and I'm also the bandstand singer at Royal Ascot – I got that while I was still in the Army and I've been doing it for 16 years."

See specialkindamadness.com for John Park's live dates. See Julian Cook in action at the Annual Mountbatten Festival of Music at the Royal Albert Hall on 8-9 March, 2024.

raw recruits don't realise they will face the same training as incoming combat troops. "They turn every civilian into a soldier," says Park. "So it's lots of PT, drill, crawling on your belly in mud. You obviously have to be trained to use a weapon, which in my case was a submachine gun. And you have to do a weapons test once a year."

Yet musicians shouldn't be intimidated by the physical demands, reassures Thomas. "Everyone is daunted by the fitness test, but it's not that bad, and if musicians are given a target, we're very good at applying ourselves. Basic training is 10 weeks at RAF Halton. And fitness is important, even for the ceremonial things – you can't be out of breath and march up the hill to Windsor Castle. And that continues, because you have a fitness test every year."

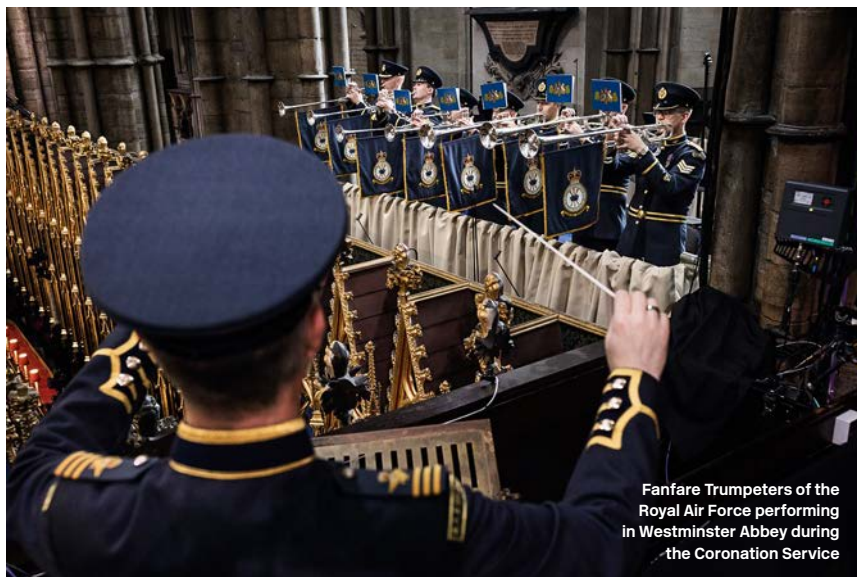
Testing The Limits

For those whose knowledge of military music rests on a dimly remembered Royal Tournament, the repertoire might not seem much more than a scuttle of snare drum and brass fanfare. Dig deeper, however, and you realise the remit of a Forces player rivals

anything on civvy street, with the Army's 14 internationally performing bands, for instance, performing genres including jazz, classical and pop in formats spanning from a full orchestra to a string quartet.

"It's very varied," says Thomas. "If you're playing a serious symphonic wind band concert, you can play some quite heavy repertoire. But if the same band are playing a garden party at Buckingham Palace, it's a different atmosphere, so the lighter side of the music comes out. Then there's obviously the old Royal Air Force favourites as well – your *Dambusters* marches and things like that. I recently spent four weeks doing the Edinburgh Tattoo, performing in front of 8,000 people every night."

"It's not a normal 9-to-5 job and it can be long days rehearsing in the concert hall or on parade," picks up Cook, "but the variety of work is something you wouldn't get in a civilian band or orchestra. The RMBS are



Fanfare Trumpeters of the Royal Air Force performing in Westminster Abbey during the Coronation Service

Photo: Crown Copyright 2023

“The variety of work is something you wouldn’t get in a civilian orchestra”

Julian Cook

circumstances requiring musicians to lay down their instruments and call upon a secondary skill. “When I was serving, I was a medic. I trained with the Medical Corps and refresher training was carried out once a year. I was deployed during the first Gulf War in 1991 and to Kosovo in 1999. That said, during my 22-year career as a Forces musician, this counted for around six months of it.”



RAF Trumpeters rehearsing the Reveille in preparation for the National Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday

Photo: Crown Copyright 2023

renowned for being versatile and perform in all types of ensembles. This could be a small string, woodwind or brass ensemble for a regimental dinner, our world-famous Corps of Drums performing drum routines with stars like Take That and Queen, a function band or dance band performing at a wedding venue, a fanfare team playing the opening fanfare for an event, or a marching band performing in a foreign tattoo – all the way up to a full military wind band, performing in concert venues all over the world.”

As Park explains, the pool of musicians can be configured a thousand different ways depending on the event. “There’s a full symphonic concert band and orchestra. But then there’s all the smaller groups shooting off that – brass quintets, string quartets, dance

bands, pop groups, big bands. For the Festival of Remembrance, I’d warm up the crowd of veterans by leading a singalong of World War II songs. And if a celebrity vocalist isn’t available for the rehearsal, I would be there in their stead to rehearse the song. I depped for Will Young and Russell Watson.”


Stepping Up

The day-to-day existence of a Forces musician is not dissimilar from those in any professional orchestra, spent practising, perfecting and performing. Yet the basic military training given upon entry is no token gesture, says Park, with exceptional

For military musicians to step up in times of crisis is a grand tradition, explains Thomas. “Historically, they’d drive fire engines during a fire fighters’ strike. During my time, the band were used for COVID testing and even giving vaccines, and we’ve had members go out to check passports at Heathrow Airport. Our current secondary role is in decontamination in chemical warfare. So we’re trained in that, just the same as we’re all trained how to use a rifle. So these things do happen, but it’s infrequent, because the band is busy in its role and we need at least 35 musicians to do a parade. Music is our day-to-day focus.”

The Bottom Line

While the early starts and long days of a military musician hardly make this a soft option, there are undoubtedly benefits that will seem alien to those in the wider music industry. “We’ve got our own state-of-the-art band room with practice rooms and all the gear – they also kit you out with all the instruments you require, as well as mouthpieces, reeds, mutes, and so on,” says Thomas. “We even have our own green room. So the facilities we’ve got are brilliant.”

Factor in the job security and financial package, he adds, and the case for investigating this career path becomes more persuasive still. “As long as you keep yourself fit, it’s a very secure job. The starting salary in the band is over £31,000, and then you consider that we’ve got a non-contributory pension and subsidised housing. The other thing is, as a Forces musician, there’s career progression. Whereas, if you’re Principal Trumpet in an orchestra – where do you go?” 



Not rushing into things is key when it comes to music contracts. Make sure you take your time and understand fully what is being asked of you

Photo: Yana Iskayeva / Getty Images

A MATTER OF GIVE AND TAKE: LEARNING TO NEGOTIATE

For most freelance musicians, negotiating doesn't come naturally. But with gig fees, contracts and more to consider, knowing how to do so is crucial to your success within the music industry. Katie Nicholls reveals some key dos and don'ts

It's fair to assume that most musicians, writers and composers didn't choose their career based on a love of negotiation. But unless you have a full-time manager negotiating fees, royalties, contracts and terms and conditions, it's a fundamental part of being a freelance musician.

"It's probably the worst bit of my job," confesses orchestral composer, arranger and violinist Fiona Brice, who has worked with major artists including Placebo and John Grant, as well as the BBC Philharmonic and Royal Northern Sinfonia.

From booking your first gig, to refining contracts with a record label, to agreeing the terms of usage for a composition, the world of negotiation embraces a broad spectrum, and it affects everyone who works in the industry.

An Essential Skill

Kelly Wood, MU National Organiser Live, Theatre & Music Writers, says that it's important that members get to grips with the skill of negotiation. In support of the MU Fair Score campaign, Kelly ran a workshop for composers. "We advise members to expect to have those conversations," she says. "Do they know how to negotiate? Part of the process is to get musicians to recognise that it's another role they need to learn."

"You feel like you're negotiating your self-worth, rather than the price of a job"

Fiona Brice

Nick Harris runs NERD Label Services, a label management company whose client list includes Tricky's False Idols, R&S Records and Maceo Plex's Ellum/Lone Romantic labels. He agrees that becoming an astute negotiator is an unavoidable truth for artists. "Nowadays we all wear many caps, but the one not everybody wants to wear and the one that is probably the most boring is also the most important, and that is understanding your rights as an artist and negotiating. It's important that artists have a good grasp – not just on how to negotiate deals – but on the mechanics of how the business of the music industry works, and how a record label functions. How money is generated and how expenses are recouped."

Facing The Challenges

Often the initial – and biggest – battle artists face when first entering a negotiation process is overcoming psychological hurdles, such as self-doubt, loss of confidence, or the fear of conflict. "It challenges my confidence," affirms Fiona Brice, "a lot of creative artists find there is a massive discomfort around putting a price on what you do. You feel like you're negotiating your self-worth, rather than the price of a job. When I was younger, I found it quite upsetting, but you learn how to divorce yourself from what is fundamentally admin."

While it's important to be confident, it's also crucial to keep a cool head. "I've seen artists that will get so excited that someone is showing an interest in their music they'll run into it," says Nick Harris. "I've had people sign a contract within a minute of me sending it to them and I cannot believe they've sent it back. It's clear to me that they haven't read it."

Timo Baker is an experienced film and TV composer who has worked on shows

including *River Monsters* and *Primal Survivor*, and film trailers for LA blockbusters such as *Man On A Ledge*. He says that negotiation is a skill he's "had to acquire and become comfortable with" over the course of his career. "I've got a valuable secret weapon in my arsenal in my brother, who is a lawyer," he explains. "Although he has now moved into an unrelated area of law, during his training at a large London firm, he studied various modules including several in media contract law. He instilled in me the importance of negotiating the key terms to give me the best chance at longevity in a notoriously brutal and unscrupulous world. It lifted the lid on the complex and often confusing world of legal parlance and phraseology."

Alongside low confidence, naive over-enthusiasm or the pure bewilderment of legal jargon, the person sitting on the other side of the table can also present a challenge. Negotiation should be a two-way process with both sides entering the experience prepared to reach a compromise, but Kelly says that members have reported coercive behaviour. This is backed by Timo. "I've had some quite unpleasant experiences over the years where I have been bullied and coerced into accepting terms after a contract hasn't had all the Is dotted and Ts crossed," he says. "The worst offenders have been some of the stalwarts of broadcast media. Navigating the labyrinth of legal lingo combined with bullish personality and ego while trying to secure a decent deal for yourself is increasingly challenging." →

“You’ve got to stick to your guns as much as possible”

Timo Baker

Photo: Joseph Branstetter. © MU



THE NATURAL FEEL

The MU has several resources to help musicians navigate the tricky path of negotiation. The Fair Play and Fair Score campaigns both offer guidance on how to price work. As part of Fair Score, Kelly Wood has run workshops on negotiation skills for composers, and more are being planned for 2024.

The MU can advise members on the minimum rates for players, composers and writers, and offer support if you feel you are being coerced into a deal that isn't fair.

For a comprehensive online tutorial on learning effective negotiation skills and techniques, head to [MU.org.uk](https://www.mu.org.uk) and search 'negotiation'.

“You have to weigh up the personality and tactics of the other side,” advises Kelly. “If someone is very firm and aggressive then you might have to become more assertive.” Timo supports this saying that while “it can get quite intense psychologically, you’ve got to stick to your guns as much as possible without compromising your creative position.”

Time For Homework

Alongside knowing who you are negotiating with, it's important, says Nick Harris, to understand the mechanics of the industry. He reports that many artists come to the table without any knowledge of how the industry works, which considerably weakens their position. “Most artists have understandably been busy creating their sound, image, style and niche. A lot of artists come to the negotiating table not very well prepared. Many don't understand what publishing is, or the difference between recording rights and authorship rights; a lot don't understand about the length and terms of contract, or royalty splits.”

Film/TV composer Timo Baker (above) believes it's important to do your homework before entering negotiations, from understanding legal jargon to being prepared to deal with difficult personalities

Education means empowerment and it applies across all negotiation points. Fiona also advises writers and composers to come to negotiation situations armed with knowledge and ready to ask questions. “For example, when negotiating for a writing job you need to know what the usage is,” she says, “What's the song for? Is it for an album, film, advert? How long is it going to be used for? Which territories?”

Undeniably, the more you negotiate, the wiser you become. However, there are ways to fast-track your skills as a negotiator while you gain vital experience.

Mastering The Skill

Knowing your worth and having a 'bottom line' is a foundation stone to successful negotiation. It's also essential, says Timo, in maintaining the standard of future



In the early years of her career, orchestral composer, arranger and violinist Fiona Brice (left) found negotiating daunting, but now treats it much as she would any other important admin

Photo: Joseph Branstetter, © MU



Photo: Hill Street Studios / Getty Images

contracts for yourself and for other artists. Whatever price you put on a project, Fiona argues, you need to be able to justify it and break the costs down. "If I'm doing an album and I'm using a string quartet and writing the arrangement, and I'm also playing in the quartet, it's not helpful to give them a lump sum," she says. "You need to have the musicians' fees separate, the writing separate, the copying separate. The more you can justify the detail the easier it is to have a conversation about the fee."

"It's very effective to be able to demonstrate the value of your price," agrees Kelly Wood. Kelly also suggests that while allowing for a certain amount of wiggle room is important, she advises members to be realistic about the fee to begin with. "Some people think the higher you go in the higher you'll end up with. I don't think that's the case. The risk is if you go in too high the other side might harden because they think you're being unrealistic or hard to deal with."

"I'm not a greedy person, I don't charge inflated rates," says Fiona. "If someone thinks it's expensive you've got to ask them, 'Why do you think that's expensive?'" By adopting this 'head on' approach to negotiation, Fiona says she's learnt to become a savvy negotiator despite the discomfort it can create. "The skill is knowing your rights and not feeling awkward about the conversation and broaching it as soon as you can."

"The positive experiences have been where I've jumped into a project because there was great creative synergy between myself and the production company," says Timo. Nick Harris also asserts that establishing a good understanding between the two parties is the cornerstone of successful negotiation. "Beyond the realm of negotiating, develop a good relationship with the record label you're signing your music to. Even before you get to the point of talking about a contract, have a discussion. Talk about your expectations as an artist and ask the label what their expectations are. Transparently discuss how much money is going to be spent."

The experience of the MU community can provide a wealth of support. The MU has resources, including guides for fees for writers, players and composers, as well as advice that can help members navigate the rocky path of negotiation. "It's a skill," says Kelly Wood, "but you can get good at it by understanding what a negotiation looks like. There are thousands of musicians out there who are very skilled negotiators." **mu**

Top 5 Tips

For Negotiating Your Way To Success

1

Do your sums...

Know what the going rate is as well as your 'bottom line' before you enter the negotiation process. If applicable, break down the job into an hourly rate and ask yourself if that is reasonable.

2

...and your Homework

Do your research on the organisation.

Speak to other musicians or composers and investigate the finer details of the industry so you can ask the relevant questions.

3

Don't be unrealistic

Going in a little higher than you need is a classic negotiation technique as it gives you space to compromise. Going in too high could work against you.

4

Be professional

Separate yourself from the task to avoid it feeling personal. Ask the difficult questions with composure and walk away if it becomes hostile.

5

Seek MU advice

Get any contract or deal in writing and send it to the MU before you sign.

TOP TIP

THINK LATERALLY

Try and see the situation from every angle and work towards a solution that meets both parties' needs. This is the basis for a good working relationship.

reviews

A look at some of the new albums, EPs and downloads released by MU members for 2023, together with links for more information on the featured artists

Therapy? are still making the kind of groundbreaking noise that they were at the peak of their commercial success



Photo: Tom Hooad

Therapy?

The great survivors of UK alt rock, Therapy? have been ploughing their own left-field furrow since their earliest days in the small Northern Irish town of Larne in the late-Eighties. But it was at the dawn of the nineties that their crunching underground noise hit the zeitgeist.



Hard Cold Fire

Their first album of new songs in five years, this should have been with us earlier, but lockdown and a massive 30-year anniversary tour delayed its release until now. But it was more than worth the wait. Mixing the buzzsaw guitars and complex drumming rhythms of their earliest releases, with some of the more introspective

sounds of their middle era, *Hard Cold Fire* distills the band's history into one very 'now' sounding whole. From the pounding riffs of *Mongrel* and *Poundland Of Hope And Glory*, to the unnervingly understated finisher *Days Kollaps*, this is an act still operating at their very best. therapyquestionmark.co.uk



To submit an album for review, please send links to, or files of, your recordings and PR material to: TheMusician@theMU.org

You should also forward your cover artwork and/or photos (minimum 300dpi resolution) to the same email address.

Reviewers: Roy Delaney & Keith Ames

jazz



NIKLAS WINTER Graduale

This dreamy, laid-back selection of songs lulls you into gentleness. A blend of original tunes and ancient music from his native Finland, Niklas's sparse guitar blends with trumpet, vibes and chamber choir to a beautifully delicate effect. niklaswinter.com



SAXITIVITY No Deal

Classy contemporary jazz as Frank Griffith guides his quality quartet around a variety of jazz styles - from minimal wafts to full-blown get downs. There should be something for just about everyone here. frankgriffith.co.uk



CHRIS HODGKINS Salute To Lyttelton

This excellent album contains a selection of Humph's compositions, in addition to a number of original tunes by bandleader Hodgkins, plus Harry South and Freddy Grant. A must for all British jazz fans. chrishodgkins.co.uk

folk



» **BRYONY GRIFFITH & ALICE JONES**
Wesselbobs

A shimmering collection of winter songs all deeply connected to the West Yorkshire landscape, using fiddle, harmonium, guitar and intricate harmonies to spill their rustic yarns.

bryonyandalice.com



» **SHOW OF HANDS**
Roots 2

Devonians Phil Beer and Steve Knightly mark 30 years at the top of their game with this superb double disc best-of collection. Pulling from all parts of their career, and including some live performances, this really is their ultimate collection.

showofhands.co.uk



» **GILMORE & ROBERTS**
Documenting Snapshots

This award-winning folk duo bring songs sounding both ancient and incredibly up-to-date, whether they be rousing romps like *Blackwater Falls* and *Change Your Tune*, or delicate historicals like *I, Burnum Burnum*. Ace.

gilmoreroberts.co.uk

collaborations



» **GOLDBERG ROMAIN**
Variations For Piano And Sitar

With Andrew Goldberg on piano and Ricky Romain on sitar, these modern riffs on historical Indian music fuse both East and West to produced a deeply meditative effect.

goldbergromain.co.uk



» **HANK WANGFORD & NOEL DASHWOOD**
Promised Promises

The Godfather of British alt country meets the UK's dobro wizard to celebrate the Hawaiian roots of classic country music and Western swing. Inspired Americana.

hankwangford.com



» **SHAO DOW**
Spider-Punk/ Shuhari

This former *Musican* cover star delivers two excellent slices of UK rap – the first a grinding metallic collab with US rapper Cam Steady, while the second is more low-slung grime with Japan's Catarrh Nisin.

diyyang.co.uk

singer-songwriter



» **VEGAN QUEEN V**
Freedom Warrior

Taking musical freedom to the ultimate mark, Vegan Queen V lives in a van called Freeda and drives her songs around the UK and beyond, aiming to uplift and inspire. And on this, her debut album, she sings of truth, love and freedom with a positive verve and an optimistic heart.

veganqueenenv.com



» **BALDGUY**
Porthferatu

Baldguy is a singer-songwriter who is joined on this psychedelia-tinged indie pop album by Terry Bickers from Levitation and David Cross from King Crimson. There are tinges of Syd Barrett on this sonically enthralling release.

soundcloud.com/user-672980402



» **EDD DONOVAN**
Anchovy

A smashing selection of delicate, intelligent and infectious pop tunes. Edd's warm-yet-fragile voice draws you into his stories, evoking his Cornish upbringing. The amusing shuffle of the title track and the mournful *Last Song* are the standouts.

soundcloud.com/eddonovan

instrumental



» **PHIL HOPKINS**
Harmonica Paradiso

Phil grabs his chromatic harmonica, teams up with some friends on piano, and leads us on a tremendous journey through familiar classics, songs from the shows and more.

philhopkins.bandcamp.com



» **BALLADESTE**
Conversations In Ritual

Showcasing the improvisational talents of this winning string duo, these nine ambient folk pieces aft like a warm summer breeze, occasionally drifting towards jazz styles.

balladeste.co.uk



» **MATT PETHERBRIDGE**
Blue Door

Matt spoils us here with 16 pieces of ornately played acoustic guitar tracks, each mellow yet melancholy in their delivery.

mattpetherbridge.bandcamp.com

tributes

Carl Davis

Profoundly gifted composer revered for his film and TV work

Carl Davis was a consummate all-round musician and a true music-maker. New York-born, he was adopted by the UK, where he lived and worked from the 1960s. He made an astonishing impact on music in Britain.

He was the driving force behind the reinvention of the silent movie for this generation. Following on from his work on Thames Television's lauded *Hollywood* series, he created a score for Abel Gance's epic film *Napoleon* (1927), since performed live to critical and public acclaim, a project so unique it stimulated a global revival of silent film performance with live orchestra.

He also wrote or reconstructed scores for over 50 silent films, ranging from works by Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd

to Buster Keaton, and including DW Griffith's masterpiece *Intolerance*.

Carl won both a BAFTA and an Ivor Novello Award for his music for *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, starring Meryl Streep. The creator of some of the most iconic thematic phrases on television, Carl wrote the scores to some of the best-loved British TV dramas including the BBC's *Pride And Prejudice* and *Cranford*, and ITV's *The World At War* and *Goodnight Mr Tom*.

He was a conductor and composer of symphonic works, including *Ballade For Cello And Orchestra* for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Paul McCartney's *Liverpool Oratorio*. He was a notable writer for the ballet and recent ballet scores include *Nijinsky*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Lady Of The Camellias*, *Chaplin: The Tramp* and *Le Fantôme Et Christine*.

Other work includes music for animated feature film *Ethel And Ernest*, based on the much-loved book by Raymond Briggs, and *Last Train To Tomorrow*, based on the story of the Kindertransport, commissioned by the Hallé Orchestra and Children's Choir.

In 2009, Carl created his own record label, The Carl Davis Collection, which has released more than 30 albums to date. In 2005 he was awarded a CBE for his services to music and he recently accepted membership of The Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences.

Katherine Camps Kilgour



Photo Nick Rutter

Martin Kelly

Beloved and long-standing trombonist at the ENO

It is with great sadness that we bring news that Martin Kelly, recently retired Sub-principal trombone at English National Opera, passed away in September.

He will be desperately missed by wife Julie, his family, children, grandchildren, as well as the numerous friends and colleagues who had the pleasure of performing and socialising with him.

Martin was at ENO for over 30 years. All who sat next to him in the brass section would comment on how simple he made playing look and sound.

He could float out jazz licks in the high register during his warm-up, switch to a broad orchestral sound for a Wagner opera, and was perhaps musically happiest when playing a beautiful phrase in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Joining the Royal Academy of Music aged just 16, as a specialist on the alto trombone and with perfect pitch, he was destined for a long and successful career in music.

After graduating, he started out performing in orchestras for summer seasons in Blackpool, before returning to London for an eclectic range of work that memorably included shows with Paul Daniels. He was in the orchestra for a lengthy West End run of *Starlight Express* and joined ENO in 1988.

"All who sat next to him in the brass section would comment on how simple he made playing look and sound"

There, he was incredibly supportive to established guest players, as well as those in the ENO low-brass section, and was famous for being welcoming and encouraging to young players who were just beginning their careers.

He had a deep, bass vocal range that surpassed the depths of the visiting opera soloists. As a former landlord, he loved a drink with friends and colleagues, as well as a lamb vindaloo. Martin was a gentle, kind character and a loyal friend. RIP.

Joe Arnold



Photo: Colin McPherson / Getty Images

Mo Foster

Groundbreaking bassist and session master

The session world lost one of its finest in July with the passing of the esteemed bass guitarist Mo Foster, at the age 78. Mo started out playing drums with the University of Sussex Jazz Trio, who backed touring acts including Cream, Jimi Hendrix and The Who.

He came to prominence in the late 60s in the Ronnie Scott-managed jazz/rock band Affinity. His reputation as a bass player quickly spread and in 1970 he moved into session work. Mo went on to play on over 350 recordings, with artists such as Gerry Rafferty, Meat Loaf, Cher and Olivia Newton-John, and on soundtracks for films such as *For Your Eyes Only*, *Octopussy* and *Revenge Of The Pink Panther*. He also toured with artists such as Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck and Dusty Springfield.

In 1975, Mo founded the bass guitar course in the UK, at Goldsmith's College. He was also a composer, producer and a writer. His book *17 Watts* charted the history of the London session scene. "There will never be another Mo," his friend Ray Russell told *Guitar World* magazine. "His values and integrity were emblazoned on anything he wrote and played and composed."

Neil Crossley

Terry Allonby

Guitarist and South Yorkshire jazz stalwart

Born in Doncaster in 1943, Terry turned professional at an early age and was a busy man at various residencies in those halcyon days of the 60s and 70s when bands were employed by Mecca ballrooms and Top Rank suites.

He was an excellent reader and worked as a touring musician with Tony Christie and others. But it was as a jazz musician that he will be best remembered. He could play fast swing lines effortlessly and cleanly, and had a bluesy touch to his playing. He led his trio on monthly jazz sessions from 1989 until May this year. I'm proud to say I was the keyboard player through this long run, and these Saturday lunches gained a huge following in Doncaster jazz circles.

Terry was also an influential teacher and his students will remember his inspiration and creativity. Following a brief illness, Terry died a few weeks short of his 80th birthday. He was a man with a sense of humour and outgoing personality as well as being a massive talent. He leaves a wife, Christine, and will be sorely missed by everyone. All who knew him will agree that the jazz scene in South Yorkshire will never quite be the same again.

Nigel Chapman

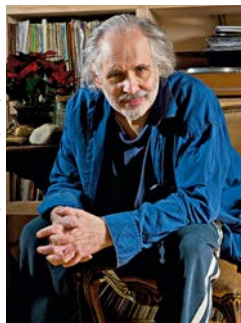


Photo: Guitarist Magazine / Getty Images

Pete Brown

Poet, singer and lyricist for Cream's finest work

Pete Brown, the British poet-turned-singer who wrote lyrics for some of Cream's most enduring songs, such as *White Room*, *I Feel Free* and *Sunshine Of Your Love*, has died aged 82. Brown was a beat poet and it was Ginger Baker who invited him to be a lyricist on Cream's debut 1966 album *Fresh Cream*. Brown had the most enduring relationship with bassist Jack Bruce and worked on the next three Cream albums. When they split in 1968, he formed the band Pete Brown and the Battered Ornaments, and then psych band Piblokto!.

In 1973, he released solo album *The Not Forgotten Association* but moved into scriptwriting. In 2010, he published a memoir *White Rooms & Imaginary Westerns*. In a yet-to-be-released documentary about Brown, Martin Scorsese says: "Pete was a great songwriter. Whenever the lyrics are repeated in my head... these images stay with me."

Neil Crossley

Giles Broadbent

Acclaimed violinist who founded Stringfever

The acclaimed violinist Giles Broadbent died in September after a short illness at the tragically young age of 51.

He came from a musical family – his father taught him the violin and he and his younger brothers Ralph and Neal busked around Europe as teenagers. A graduate of the Royal Academy Of Music, he was probably best known for founding the electric string quartet Stringfever with his brothers and cousin Graham. Their live shows, which combined comedy with classical and soundtrack material, took him all over the world. Their performance of Ravel's *Bolero* where all four members play one cello simultaneously has become a YouTube sensation, garnering over a million views.

Broadbent also led the orchestra for a number of West End shows including *My Fair Lady*, *Phantom Of The Opera* and *Sunset Boulevard*. He was also a member of the Millennia Strings, session players whose talents have graced a number of pop records. In 2015 he and Ralph were awarded the prestigious title of Associate of the Royal Academy, presented to alumni who have made a "significant contribution" to the profession.

Will Simpson

David McLaren

Violinist with the LPO, the NYO and more

David crafted his first violin from a cigar box and rubber bands. Aged fourteen, he began lessons on a real instrument and quickly progressed, forming his own quartet, playing with the NYO and leading Luton Symphony Orchestra. Encouraged by Ivor McMahon and Nona Liddell, David gave up his successful design business, moved to London and began freelancing. Early gigs with the Jacques Orchestra and tours with the Festival Ballet led to occasional dates with the LPO. Appointed a full-time member in 1963, David played in the Seconds until his retirement in 1999.

He loved Glyndebourne seasons and relished taking part in the stage bands. He was a keen photographer, loved cooking and Scrabble, and after retiring to Yorkshire, shared his sardonic wit and wisdom with friends, family and colleagues on Facebook. Gina Beukes of the LPO Seconds, summed up his professional life: "David, you were a rock in LPO, strong, vulnerable, fair, funny. A real team player." David is survived by his wife, Rosemary, and daughters Belinda and Susan, from his second marriage.

Rosemary Buck

John Davis

A well-travelled violin and viola player

John was born in 1928 into a mining community in Derbyshire. He had his first violin lessons, aged 10, but with no prospect of becoming a musician, he took a job as a lab assistant. At 19 he signed up for the army and after a few lessons on the clarinet joined the Royal Artillery Band.

Continuing to play the violin in the army orchestra, he made the decision to become a professional musician. After a brief period working in the Markova-Dolin Company as a violinist he switched to the viola and subsequently had jobs in the BBC West of England Light Orchestra in Bristol, BBC Midland Light Orchestra in Birmingham and then moved to London to join the BBC Concert Orchestra in 1959. In the late 60s John toured the world with the LSO and ECO and eventually became a member of the LPO, travelling to China in 1973.

John spent the rest of his career working in the studio on John Williams film scores and for artists including Paul McCartney, Shirley Bassey and Cilla Black. Known for his dry wit and his musical versatility, John was a respected viola player and popular colleague for over 40 years.

Miranda Davis

Patricia Lynden

One of the first women to join a UK orchestra

Born in Barnet in 1933, Pat took up the flute when she was 14. Initially self-taught, she went to Christopher Claudis for three years, then studied under Edward Walker at the Royal College of Music. On leaving she became First flute in the orchestra of Sadler's Wells Opera, for a year, then auditioned for Rafael Kubelik to become first flute at Covent Garden Opera House. Pat played there from 1956 until 1962, then freelanced with various orchestras, before being invited to join the Philharmonia. There followed nine years of playing under great conductors such as Riccardo Muti. Pat returned to Covent Garden and then to ENO, before retiring at 55. She subsequently taught many pupils, to whom she gave dedicated care and encouragement.

Pat was incredibly modest and down to earth. She had played first flute in the orchestras of Covent Garden, Sadler's Wells, the Coliseum and the Philharmonia, at a period when women were scarcely to be seen in orchestras. It is said that no-one has ever uttered a bad word about her – almost unheard of in orchestral life. Pat will be greatly missed by everyone who knew her.

Jenny Davidson and Robert Bigio



Photo: Frans Schellekens / Getty Images

John Marshall

Virtuoso drummer and percussionist

John Marshall, who has died at the age of 82, was one of a new generation of drummers in the 60s who spanned jazz and rock. He was a supremely gifted player and best remembered as the drummer in Soft Machine.

Born in Isleworth, west London, John studied with American drummer Philly Joe Jones, among others, before joining Alexis Korner's Blues Incorporated in 1964 and undertaking session work. He drummed on Millie Small's 1964 hit *My Boy Lollipop* and in 1966 he joined The Graham Collier Sextet. By the end of the decade he had co-founded jazz fusion band Nucleus, with trumpeter Ian Carr. John stayed with Nucleus for two years and then worked with Jack Bruce, on the album *Harmony Row* (1971), before joining Soft Machine in 1972, appearing on 24 albums. John's last gig was with Soft Machine at Ronnie Scott's on 20 June, 2022.

Neil Crossley

George King

Brilliant and extremely versatile pianist

In a career of over 70 years there isn't much that George hasn't seen or played many times over. He started at the piano relatively late in life as a teenager and only had very few formal piano lessons.

However, because of his determination and natural musicianship he soon caught up and became a favourite with many bands and singers in Edinburgh and London. This versatility led to residencies pretty much anywhere he lay his hat, even as far as Bermuda and New York in the 1970s, although he always said his favourite was a jazz trio gig he had at the Dorchester Hotel in London. For the last 45 years his regular partner was the jazz vocalist Angela King, who also happened to be his wife. They performed many times together and were loved wherever they played.

He wore the title 'musician' as a badge of honour and was proud of what he had achieved through hard work and dedication. This made him a superb piano and vocal teacher and a sought-after arranger for many leading performers in the UK.

He will be greatly missed by all who were lucky enough to meet and play with him.

George King (Jnr)

Norman Jones

Cellist lauded in both classical and pop

Norman Jones was born in 1921 in Birmingham. He began to play the cello aged five, and performed on the radio for *Children's Hour* at 11 years old. In 1947 he earned a scholarship to the Sorbonne Conservatory of Music in Paris, to study under Pierre Tortellier. He had a musical photographic memory, a gift that helped him overcome some of the challenges he faced suffering from chronic glaucoma.

When he returned to England, Norman formed the St. Cecilia Trio, joined the Royal Philharmonia Orchestra as principal cellist, and was part of the Element Quartet. Later, in 1968, he became Principal cellist with the New Philharmonia Orchestra of London. He retired from the Orchestra in 1982 but continued to play his cello with the BBC Pops Orchestra, for film and TV recordings.

Norman recorded cello concertos with various BBC Orchestras. He is one of the cellists on the original recordings of The Beatles' hits *Eleanor Rigby* and *Strawberry Fields Forever*. A world-class orchestral cellist, Norman played a 1713 Cristofori cello. He stopped playing when he was 96. He will be missed by his friends in the music profession.

Callum Jones

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

Log in to **theMU.org** to access member-only information, the full list of benefits and services or to update your details

Instrument And Equipment Insurance

Increase in cover to £3,000

All paying members of the MU resident in the UK, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are able to register at **muinsure.com** for the Union's £3,000 Musical Instrument and Equipment Insurance Scheme (MU £3K) as a benefit of membership. With effect from 1 September 2023 all members that have previously registered for the MU £2K Cover (and who have not subsequently purchased/have benefit of their own MU Specified Instrument/Equipment Cover) will continue to be insured. For more info visit: **theMU.org**

Help Musicians UK

Charity offering practical, positive support to emerging, professional and retired musicians, whatever the genre. **helpmusicians.org.uk**

Musicians' Hearing Services

A range of hearing related services for MU members.

For an appointment, call MHS on **020 7486 1053** or visit **musicianshearing services.co.uk**

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.

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.

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**

Medical Assistance

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

Motoring Service

Members are advised that the MU has stopped offering the Assist Protect member-benefit from October 2023. Members who have already registered for this service may continue using it until their registration of the service is up for renewal. At this point they must re-register on their own accord, not as an MU member. Please contact **membership@theMU.org** if you have any questions.

Music Support

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

For full details of all the benefits please visit: **theMU.org**

MU Sections

In addition to a Regional structure, the MU has Sections which act as focus groups for musicians working in areas such as music teaching, recording, composing, orchestras, theatre and live performance.

These groups represent the views of different parts of the music profession and are vital to shaping our policies and campaigns. To express interest in joining a Section, please contact the relevant office below:

Education Section

020 7840 5558
education@theMU.org

Live Performance Section

020 7840 5570
live@theMU.org

Music Writers' Section

020 7840 5570
writers@theMU.org

Orchestra Section

020 7840 5571
orchestral@theMU.org

Recording & Broadcasting Section

020 7840 5555
rb@theMU.org

Theatre Section

020 7840 5570
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 promptly. 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.

