How can the jazz sector help to tackle the music education crisis?
“This was a long overdue day for the jazz education community in the UK, an important step in beginning to focus attention on what is taught, how and why”.

Conference delegate

Stimulating debate
Important discussions

The purpose of the conference was to stimulate debate and start some important discussions so, at this point, no recommendations were made or action plans agreed but Jazz North will be continuing the dialogue with jazz sector partners and funders and, of course, at future education conferences.

About this report

These notes summarise the main points coming through from the final discussion session and conversations throughout the day as well as suggestions received through evaluation feedback.

Who we are and what we do

Jazz North is the sector support agency for jazz in the north of England. Through collective partnership working we build networks between artists, educators, producers, promoters and venues to strengthen the sector and its people.
How can the jazz sector help to tackle the music education crisis?

The 7th Jazz North Education Conference took place in the Sir Patrick Stewart drama theatre at the University of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire on Wednesday 12 June 2019. The theme and provocation of this year’s one-day conference was “How can the jazz sector help to tackle the music education crisis?”.

The conference explored issues raised in a hard-hitting report ‘State of the Nation’ published in January 2019 by The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Music Education in collaboration with the University of Sussex and the Incorporated Society of Musicians which demonstrated the scale of the crisis facing music education in England.

Discussions throughout the day reinforced the findings of the report and breadth of the challenges but also recognised that the recommendations within it are levelled at policy makers and the overriding belief of delegates was the lack of government understanding and support (through policy) for the Arts.

The question for this conference was therefore 2-fold:

- what factors impact the jazz sector?
- what can the sector do to chip away at these issues?
Speakers & Presenters

Delegates, some of whom had travelled from across the UK to Yorkshire, were presented with insights and practical demonstrations from leading practitioners and professionals such as Jimmy Rotheram (Feversham Primary), MOBO award winner and broadcaster YolanDa Brown, improvising artist Chris Sharkey, community musician Matt Robinson (More Music), Fatine Boumaaz (Ronnie Scotts’ Charitable Foundation) and Enrico Bertelli (Conductive Music).

Jimmy Rotheram spoke about how he had been able to use music to transform a failing Bradford primary school into an outstanding one facilitated by a supportive Head who encouraged the use of music in other lessons to reinforce learning and engage pupils. Jimmy talked about how the music teacher often has relatively low status in some schools which is an indication of the esteem that the subject is held in. The group also discussed the impact of the EBacc and its pressures on the curriculum and OFSTED assessments.

YolanDa Brown, whose CBeebies production ‘YolanDa’s Band Jam’ has inspired toddlers and parents with improvisation, talked about her path to a professional career and her work as Chair of Youth Music, a funder whose grants always include social outcomes requirements.

Chris Sharkey, who often delivers projects with social outcomes as key aims, used a practical demonstration of introducing improvising to any size group regardless of whether they play an instrument to illustrate one of his approaches to working with young people of all ages.
Enrico Bertelli outlined how he aligned music with other subject related outcomes including technology and science. The discussion encouraged practitioners and musicians to think outside of the norms when considering the benefits of projects to ensure that they are able to access as many avenues of funding as possible.

Helena Summerfield talked about the development of and delivery from Jazz North’s Jazz Camp for Girls initiative which aims to encourage girls to play jazz. She also outlined the learning from the pilot which has influenced the future development of the project.

Fatine Boumaaz shared concerns about diversity and access but celebrated the quality of the numerous projects that are being delivered across the UK. Fatine called for more collaboration and joined up communications across the sector highlighting these activities to increase engagement.

Matt Robinson is a community musician and jazz artist with a strong commitment to community music projects. Read Matt’s blog post on the Youth Music forum talking about More Music’s new initiative pro-actively tackling these issues in the NW. Matt led the opening panel discussion at the start of the day.
the word ‘jazz’ can be a barrier

Through panel discussions and presentations, delegates explored the main provocation and the additional challenges faced by the jazz sector as a relatively niche genre. It was immediately clear that while there may be a music education crisis, there is some amazing work going across the UK being led by passionate and dedicated educators and artists.

However, access and inclusion is a concern and the discussion explored and how we might reach those not already engaged in music. It was noted that this is a sector wide responsibility - we need artists, educators, leaders, promoters and organisations of all sizes to be leading this charge for inclusivity. Networks (such as this one) are vital to increase access and inclusion but we need more people in the room.

There appear to be patchy levels of engagement from the music services and this usually relies on one ‘jazz’ advocate. Even if there is one, there can be problems related to the perception of ‘jazz’. In primary music the word ‘jazz’ can be a barrier and a feeling that this is inferior to conventional classical music teaching. Inside schools, music teachers and even some music leaders, have a lack of confidence and creative skills. Today’s jazz conservatoire graduates have these skills in spades so one obvious solution would be to take advantage of that potential workforce?

Another suggestion was for the training of young music leaders, CPD for music teachers and workshops for PGCE students led and developed by jazz musicians. Presentations and practical demonstrations throughout the day also addressed the crossover between musical and non-musical benefits including social outcomes and the ability of music to improve other academic outcomes and personal wellbeing.
Workforce development

There is a growing shortage of trained staff and confident leaders both in terms of the creative skills/confidence in school music teachers and some music leaders outside of school environment. Added to which, there is no specific formal training for new music leaders. There is also a lack of connectedness between conservatoire and other Higher education providers.

One of the groups also outlined various initiatives led by Bridge Organisations in recent years aimed at strengthening relationships between schools and cultural organisations. Website information noted below for information.

**Specialist, Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE)**
Curious Minds (NW) curiousminds.org.uk/slice

**Cultural Leaders in Education (CLE)**
We are IVE (Yorkshire) weareive.org/./cultural-leaders-education
Culture Bridge (NE) culturebridgenortheast.org.uk/cultural-leaders-in-education

**Suggestions:**

- Develop a new Certificate of Music Education (CME) specifically for jazz/improvisation delivery OR incorporate improvisation into existing CME?
- Organisations should support training of young music leaders through traineeships, work shadowing opportunities where possible
- Should Higher Education provision (universities & conservatoires) provide music students with advice and training on how to work best with schools?
- Support the upskilling of teachers in school settings through workshops and CPD
- PGCE courses MUST put more time into training teachers for primary schools in how to deliver a creative curriculum AND to build confidence in trainee/teachers. Jazz practitioners could deliver workshops as part of PGCE courses
There appears to be a lack of communication, co-operation and co-ordination between music education organisations and the sector which leads to fragmented and non-cohesive activity.

There appear to be plenty of availabilities for students, but recruitment is difficult as is maintaining direct contact with young people to keep them aware of opportunities – YP usually need to be contacted at one remove via other organisations and parents.

In Primary music, the word ‘jazz’ is not useful - too genre specific. Jazz seems to suffer from a too elitist image so people are scared or put off by the genre.

Communications and networks

- Need to develop and maintain a tighter network that supports contact sharing and hub introductions. This could include a database of shared resources and focussed forums for project development/collaborations and closed FaceBook group etc.
- A website of opportunities although this would need careful assessment of what is already available and adequate resources to keep up to date.
- This education conference – work to attract more music hub delegates so that we can blast misconceptions
- When talking about jazz in an education context– talk about ‘improvisation based’ and ‘finding your voice through music’ learning

Suggestions
There is a lack of direct engagement with schools which makes it difficult to build lasting connections for those outside of the circle. Even those already working in school find the range of pupils they work with is narrow and they struggle to get adequate lesson time as the pupils are SO busy.

Everyone recognises that schools under pressure but there appears to be a lack of flexibility in the curriculum and in education forward planning. There was a feeling that instrument teaching within UK schools isn’t creative.

There are Patchy levels of engagement from music services (usually relies on one ‘jazz’ advocate) and practitioners and small organisation’s don’t really understand how to build relationships/work with them.

ACE in attendance at conference – it would have been good to get their formal view on the situation. Could there be an ACE session at a future conference?

How can we get more Hubs and school music teachers to attend days like today?

We need to deliver more workshops in secondary schools to show young people (particularly teenagers) that improv is cool and to inspire at an early age.
The level is often set too high so many regular activities (YJOs etc) can’t attract students with no grades or beginner level. However, reaching beyond the usual suspects, those who are already engaged in music education, is the key to tackling diversity and exclusion. BUT engaging those who have no knowledge of music opportunities is difficult, especially when there are few community activities and other geographical challenges such as rural isolation, economic deprivation etc. Everyone felt the difficulty in securing funding to deliver targeted workshops and unsurprisingly, lack of money/resources are the biggest barrier to engaging and working with more young people.

**Access and Inclusion**

The level is often set too high so many regular activities (YJOs etc) can’t attract students with no grades or beginner level. However, reaching beyond the usual suspects, those who are already engaged in music education, is the key to tackling diversity and exclusion. BUT engaging those who have no knowledge of music opportunities is difficult, especially when there are few community activities and other geographical challenges such as rural isolation, economic deprivation etc. Everyone felt the difficulty in securing funding to deliver targeted workshops and unsurprisingly, lack of money/resources are the biggest barrier to engaging and working with more young people.

**Thoughts:**

- Continue to develop projects like Jazz Camp for Girls
- A Tomorrows’ Warriors model in the north?
- Practitioners need help and support with understanding social outcomes/evaluation and outcomes focussed funding (i.e Youth Music)
- Organisations/programmes need to include minorities at all levels: tutors, administrators, boards etc. Young people need to see they are represented and having someone from their community leading a project will make them more inclined to take part

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Fatine Boumaaz
Next steps?
If you would like to find out about future Jazz North education events or developments you can join our mailing list by emailing: education@jazznorth.org

Referenced reports
State of Nation report  /State-of-the-Nation-Music-Education

Speakers
Jimmy Rotheram, Feversham Primary  sites.google.com/.../feversham-primary-academy/
Enrico Bertelli, Conductive Music  conductivemusic.uk
Fatine Boumaaz, Ronnie Scotts’ Charitable Foundation  foundation.ronniescotts.co.uk
YolanDa Brown  yolandabrown.co.uk
Matt Robinson, More Music  moremusic.org.uk
Chris Sharkey  chrisharkeymusic.com
Helena Summerfield, Jazz North  jazznorth.org

Trade sponsors
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