

THE
MUSIC
COMMISSION

RETUNING OUR AMBITION FOR MUSIC LEARNING

EVERY CHILD
TAKING MUSIC
FURTHERA Ten-Year Vision
from The Music
Commission

What it means to make progress in music is many faceted. No two journeys, in and through musical learning, are the same. Nevertheless, everyone starts from an initial inspiring experience of music, either hearing or performing it.

For most learners, the progress they make is rarely linear. People start and stop. They move at different speeds. They find new inspiration from the people they meet and the music they experience. But making progress in music is founded on a solid grounding of how music works, an understanding what it is made of, and the opportunity to apply that learning in a range of settings so that the music learner develops confidence and individuality as a musician. The job of music education is to provide the knowledge and the core fundamentals of music and the guidance to the resources and opportunities that enable the learner to take their music further.

The Music Commission was established by ABRSM and Arts Council England to examine how people from all backgrounds, especially young people, can be the best they can be in music.

We started from the premise that making progress in music matters. Making music to the best of our ability enriches and connects us. It unlocks talents and skills that we use every day that benefit us throughout our lifetimes. At the pinnacle, it generates significant economic value.

Our work has explored the conditions in which progress in music can be better sustained, including looking at barriers, assessing best practice and identifying the support that needs to be in place.

Our case is a simple one. If every one of us can take our music further, we will all benefit; individually, as communities and, as a society. But we know there are many, often, significant barriers that prevent many young people realising their musical potential. Reviewing the evidence, the following barriers are addressed by our report:

- **There is a wide inconsistency of music provision in schools**
- **The cost barriers to families represent a significant inequality of access to music education**
- **There has been an inadequate response to how young people use technology in their experience of music**
- **There is insufficient support beyond first access programmes for learners who wish to progress their music education**
- **Schools need greater support in delivering a rich music curriculum that focuses on key musical skills**
- **Resources and organisations are not working together effectively enough to support every learner to progress.**

Our central conclusion is that music education must now be firmly centred on enabling all young people to make progress in their musical knowledge, understanding and skills. Over the next ten years, we believe that this single purpose should drive strategies, partnerships, delivery and investment in every area and aspect of music education.

Young people are listening to music, sharing music and making music as never before. And the ways in which they do this are changing radically. The dizzying variety of what is musically available makes the idea of one progression route much more complex than it was in the past. We see across the generations the barriers breaking down between one genre and the next. Because of the technological changes by which everything is available to everybody at the touch of an icon, young people in particular have a much more fluid approach to learning. It is vital, therefore, that we find new kinds of structures to support these developments. It is in this wider educational landscape within which mixed modes of learning take place, where people can explore their tastes and curiosity, where music education must catch up.

1



Leaders in schools and education are confident and enabled to put music at the heart of their students' learning

2



Every school is supported to provide an effective music curriculum and the provision of a quality music offer is a key performance measure

3



The development of a diverse and skilled music education workforce is extended through enhanced training of specialist and generalist teachers, and support to enter the profession

4



Financial support is universally available to support all music learners to progress beyond first access

Every young person, regardless of background or circumstances, is supported to realise her or his full musical potential.

8



New, integrated approaches to the teaching and assessment of learning of music in a digital age are developed

7



Young people are informed and engaged in shaping their own learning pathways and involved in the development of music education programmes

6



Parental engagement is supported as a priority from the earliest years onwards

5



More collaborative models of music education are established, involving support for and between schools and relevant partners to help students to progress in music

Given the diversity and complexity of the music education sector, Retuning Our Ambition for Music Learning sets out broad ambitions for progression in music education. These ambitions are expressed as a series of outcomes designed to help set a course for the future of music education through the 2020s; a future that is focused on ensuring every music learner has the chance to be the best they can be.

Most importantly, we want our findings and recommendations to prompt discussion, in schools and communities, between parents and music teachers, and amongst arts and music organisations and policy makers. At the heart of those discussions, we want to see questions asked about where we are heading, how we support all learners to realise their potential and what we want music education to look and sound like over the next ten years.

The Music Commission is chaired by **Sir Nicholas Kenyon**, managing director of the Barbican Centre, former director of the BBC Proms, and former controller of BBC Radio 3.

The Music Commission Panel members are: **Dr Sam Aaron** - Research associate, Wolfson College, University of Cambridge, live coder and founder of Sonic Pi; **Hasan Bakhshi MBE** - Director, Creative Economy in Policy & Research, NESTA; **Carolyn Baxendale MBE** - Head, Bolton Music Service, leader of Greater Manchester Music Education Hub; **Professor Pamela Burnard** - Professor of Arts, Creativities and Education, University of Cambridge; **Sam Jackson** - Managing editor, Classic FM and Smooth Radio; **Mary King** - Singer, educator, vocal coach, writer and broadcaster; **Suzy Klein** - Writer and presenter, BBC Radio 3; **Nick Mulvey** - Musician, singer and songwriter; **Paul Roberts OBE** - Chair of the board of directors for the Innovation Unit, vice-chair at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and Nottingham Contemporary, national council member, Arts Council England; **Nitin Sawhney CBE** - Artist, producer, songwriter, club DJ, broadcaster, multi-instrumentalist, and orchestral composer; **Abel Selaocoe** - Cellist, improviser, co-founder of BBC Introducing artists' world-folk-fusion quintet Kabantu; **David Whelton OBE** - Former managing director, Philharmonia Orchestra; **Claire Whitaker OBE** - Director of live music producers Serious and the EFG London Jazz Festival.



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 The Music Commission



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