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Issue 55 Summer 2024

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Credit: Brocklehurst Photography



**SUPPORTING AND
CHAMPIONING
LEISURE-TIME MUSIC**

Welcome

Elections are looming, and there have been some changes in Making Music leadership, which we emailed you about in April.

We will support our members as always and believe this change will enable us to be even more effective in providing this. To bring in a new voice and create the work-life balance needed for the team to give its best, Barbara Eifler is now sharing leadership of Making Music with Co-Chief Executive Seamus McGibbon. You can find out more about Seamus on page 21.

Zooming out to the bigger picture: UK-wide elections are just around the corner, even if we don't have a date yet (as we write). We will give you more details about two topics you might wish to discuss with your potential MPs when the time comes, but meanwhile there is a short overview on page 5.

This year could signal a step change in recognition for leisure-time music, and you can all play a part in that – by making sure your elected representatives know what you do so brilliantly week in, week out in your groups.

Have a glorious summer of music!



Barbara Eifler & Seamus McGibbon

CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVES, MAKING MUSIC

barbara@makingmusic.org.uk

seamus@makingmusic.org.uk



Photo: Seamus McGibbon and Barbara Eifler
Credit: Fatima Yasmin

Help Musicians

“The charity supported me during my Masters and their help was absolutely invaluable. Now is an especially challenging time for musicians, both financially and emotionally, and charities like Help Musicians are vital during these difficult periods.

- Isata Kanneh-Mason
Pianist & Help Musicians Ambassador

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THE BIGGER PICTURE



Election asks

Besides the many local elections in May, we are also heading for a general election. So, what could you raise with potential candidates on your doorstep?

Creative Tax reliefs

The recent welcome news that Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR) is to remain at the higher post-Covid level still leaves choirs out in the cold. Making Music has been advised that asking for a new Creative Tax relief (which would require primary legislation and therefore much parliamentary time) is less realistic than asking for an extension of OTR to include 'voice' as one of the instruments.

This change could be easy and quick for any government to put in place; and OTR has been a success story, fulfilling government aims of stimulating growth and activity. So, the stage seems set for potentially successful advocacy.

Find out more at makingmusic.org.uk/add-voice-otr

#MakeSpaceForMusic

This crucial piece of infrastructure that most of you rely on – accessible, affordable, local spaces

for your regular activity – is under threat, from local authorities being encouraged to sell their assets to avoid bankruptcy, to churches of many denominations closing or selling old and costly to maintain buildings, to village/community halls, often entirely volunteer-run, buckling under the strain of cost increases (e.g. energy) and regulation (e.g. draft Terrorism Bill), causing an exodus of volunteers and difficulties recruiting new ones.

To help you talk to candidates or your MP about this, download and share the briefing makingmusic.org.uk/makespaceformusic

If you support this proposal and want to speak to your candidates or MP about this, download and share the briefing makingmusic.org.uk/election-asks-2024

HIGHER CREATIVE TAX RELIEFS

Making Music welcomes the Chancellor's budget announcement that the temporary higher rate of Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR) and Theatre Tax Relief (TTR) will now become permanent. Doubled during Covid, OTR and TTR were due to go back down to 35% in April 2024 and 25% from April 2025. OTR will now remain at 45% and TTR at 40% indefinitely. We supported our friends at the Association of British Orchestras' campaign on this, sharing relevant data and the over 30 outstanding case studies Making Music members submitted. These show without the shadow of a doubt how useful OTR has been to leisure-time ensembles. Find out more at makingmusic.org.uk/orchestra-tax-relief

MARTYN'S LAW

The final consultation on the requirements of the draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill for Standard Tier (capacity 100-799) premises has now closed. The next stage will be for a new draft to go to parliament. Making Music welcomed the new proposals as a step in the right direction in terms of making compliance possible and manageable for the many volunteer-run spaces music groups hire. However, we still have concerns around the 'responsible person' concept (and how that might or might not differ from Health & Safety or Fire Safety requirements) and its implications for hirers such as music groups; and the real possibility that even more volunteers running those crucial spaces will simply throw in the towel and spaces will close down. Read Making Music's submission at makingmusic.org.uk/martyns-law

* MM FACT*

Promoter group numbers have increased by 14%, but now only make up 10% of the overall membership, down from nearly a fifth (18%) of members 20 years ago.

MEMBER NEWS

If you have any news you would like to share, email editor@makingmusic.org.uk



Photo: Derwent Brass performing *Brassed Off* at Derby Theatre
Credit: Pamela Raith

A brass triumph!

Derwent Brass win the 2024 RPS Inspiration Award.

Congratulations to Derwent Brass for winning the Royal Philharmonic Society (RPS) Inspiration Award, the first brass band to achieve this in the award's over 200-year history. Derwent Brass were recognised for their pioneering programming and contributions to the vibrant brass band culture of the Midlands. Reflecting on their success, Band Manager Chris Leonard says:

'In my opinion, brass bands should look outside and be artistically brave to remain exciting and relevant, and it is the continued determination of Derwent Brass, combined with their love of collaboration and doing things differently, that I'm most proud of.'

The RPS also highlighted the band's recent 35-show run of *Brassed Off* at Derby Theatre. Chris notes:

'We were delighted to be involved in the 2023 return of *Brassed Off*. Directed by the theatre's CEO, Sarah Brigham, the production saw huge success. Our collaboration with the actors, who even learnt to play brass, allowed us to convey genuine emotions

and a strong sense of community in the performances. Despite the demanding schedule, by playing in smaller ensembles, we managed to get most of our membership involved.'

Speaking of the future, Chris continues: 'As somebody said to us shortly after winning this RPS Award "Keep doing what you've been doing!". Just a few nights after the Award night, we were on stage with Russell Watson in Derby Cathedral; it was truly incredible and an example of how we are actively trying to promote brass music to a wider audience. Balancing heritage and innovation to make quality music accessible to a diverse audience is key to the future of brass band culture across the Midlands and all of the UK.'

Derwent Brass were among the four Making Music members nominated along with Glasgow Madrigals, Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus and The Sunday Boys.

Read the full interview at makingmusic.org.uk/news/derwent-brass-win-rps-award

BETWEEN THE BARS

Between the Bars is a film by Ed Owles and Steph Beeston, commissioned by and in collaboration with North London choir Vox Holloway, with funding by Arts Council England.

It tells the story of the choir as they tackle a new music piece, *The Sun Does Shine*. This oratorio, by Harvey Brough with libretto by Justin Butcher, is based on the true story of Anthony Ray Hinton, an innocent man who spent 30 years on death row in Alabama before being released in 2015.

The film explores the choir's journey in portraying this brutal injustice in a powerful way through music, and wider questions of how art can tackle complex social issues.

Watch the 30-minute film at vimeo.com/postcodefilms/betweenthebars

GOWER FESTIVAL

The Gower Festival is an annual summer celebration that brings music-making into the churches of Gower, Swansea, in southwestern Wales.

Started in 1976 with a student orchestra and a handful of professionals, they performed an astonishing 31 concerts in two weeks, leading to the founding of the Gower Festival Society.

Taking place this year in July, it promises to be a joyful summer event – and we congratulate our member group the Swansea Bach Choir who will be returning to perform (after their last appearance in 2018) with a special commission by Welsh composer Gareth Treseder. In the choir's words, 'we are so pleased that we can play a part in ensuring that Welsh culture can continue for future generations to enjoy.'

Find out more at gowerfestival.org

MM FACT

In 2023, Making Music staff had over 2,262 phone calls with 1,111 groups (compared to 2022: over 1,764 calls with 1,054 groups).

Member announcements

New appointments, anniversaries, awards and projects



Sing for Pleasure is celebrating their Diamond Jubilee this year with a special Diamond Cuts project, looking back on their rich history and collating its memories into a physical and digital display. They are looking to gather 60 submissions to mark their 60th anniversary and represent the full spectrum of their membership and alumni. If you have been involved with Sing for Pleasure in the past 60 years and would like to contribute, express your interest by email to marketing@singforpleasure.org.uk by 14 August. singforpleasure.org.uk

The 150th anniversary of the birth of composer Gustav Holst and the 100th of the death of folk-song collector Cecil Sharp coincide this year, and the **Imperial Male Voice Choir** will commemorate them via their concert, *The Seeds of Love*. These composers had a significant influence on the preservation of traditional song and its absorption into the choral repertoire, and should rightfully be celebrated. The choir will also perform works by Vaughan Williams, Britten, Grainger and more. The concert will take place in London on 15 June. imvc.org.uk

The **Helensburgh Oratorio** made waves with their 60th anniversary concert at Glasgow City Halls, showcasing Vaughan William's rarely-performed *A Sea Symphony*. The concert also featured an orchestral arrangement of Aileen Sweeney's *Breathing Place*, from their collaborative Adopt a Music Creator 2019/20 project. Joined by the Rosenethe Singers, soloists Lee Bissett and David Stout, and an orchestra of members from the Scottish Opera and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, it was a night to remember! helensburghoratorio.co.uk

DD8 Music recently completed their 'Make Some Noise' project, with a group of young people aged 16 and up, over 12 weeks to create an original piece of music, an accompanying music video and a documentary of the process, the latter which was presented in March at the Dundee Contemporary Arts centre. This was an opportunity for young people to learn how to compose music, write lyrics, and record with professional studio equipment and software. The documentary will be available on the DD8 Music website. dd8music.com

60-second interview

Jon Jayes, founder and secretary of the Belvoir Big Band, introduces us to his music group.

Could you tell us a little about your music group?

We are a mixed group of leisure-time musicians with weekly rehearsals. We play at charity, fundraising and commercial events, taking no more than 12 gigs per year. Last year we raised over £2,000 at a concert for MacMillan Cancer Support and recently we donated £1,000 to the Alzheimer's Society.

How did the group start?

In 2014, another guitarist and I got together with a view to form a group with other players. That developed into a bigger band and within weeks, we had an embryonic big band. Over the last nine years we have gained 26 musicians who enjoy playing together and experimenting with new music that some of us have never played before. People come and go, but we still have many of the early members with us.

What type of music do you perform?

We play swing, blues, jazz, pop and rock & roll together with the usual big band standards, and the

60
second
interview



Photo: Belvoir Big Band performing at Melton Theatre

occasional diversion into big, dynamic film music.

Do you have any special plans/projects in the works?

We have our usual annual events to attend – country fairs, village events and church halls, but also local theatres where we perform for selected charities. This year we are celebrating our 10-year anniversary, and we plan to stage a special theatre performance.

Describe your group in three words.

Friendly, dynamic, committed.

belvoirbigband.co.uk



Building the energy for change

The environment music groups are operating in is always changing. How can your group adapt to and implement change? What can Making Music do and what can we do as a membership to support each other in that process?

The only constant is change – and even more so since 2020. Some groups have had to make big shifts in the way they operate, but for others, new pressures are only now building to a point where change will have to come so they can continue to operate. Every week our members tell us they're going through changes, enforced or planned, that are shaking their groups to the core, and some don't make it through that process.

In February we hosted an event for Chairs and other leaders of groups to talk about the change journey. We were joined by Sandra Dodgson, a specialist in facilitating sustainable change who has worked extensively with volunteer-led groups and so understands their specific challenges.

We heard from groups who had been dealing with enforced change because of an unexpected or unavoidable event; a group whose Music Director and Chair had resigned in the same month, another who had to move a performance because the venue priced

themselves too high. Emergencies create energy and people are motivated by the need to survive and to protect their valued group. But this type of change is chaotic and stressful – so how can we find the productive energy for change whilst the fire is still at a bit of a distance, rather than already burning out of control?

We noticed that group leaders often have a greater sense of urgency for change than the group as a whole. They are the ones who see the patterns of gradually falling membership and increasing costs and are quicker to accept that something has to change. But groups are often comfortable as they are; they like their repertoire, their venue, their regular schedules, their long friendships.

It's common for just a few or even one person to be the change driver. But there are good reasons not to push forward alone. We heard of people becoming overwhelmed because of the amount of work, and of situations where others in the group who disagreed with

the direction became blockers, or where differing factions broke apart groups. So how can a group create the enthusiasm and energy for change, and get everyone on board?

A suggested starting point is to find and articulate your shared purpose. What really matters to this group? What can we all agree on that we are passionate about, and that will motivate us to take action? Whether it is that you all love the music of Bach, want to win a regional competition, or need the space to de-stress with your old pals, tapping into people's drivers helps create energy.

We talked about building a narrative with your groups, taking time to talk about and understand where you are now and agreeing where you would like to go. What changes do you need to make to realise this vision?

We also heard about the need for big changes, like 'modernising our systems', which seems a gargantuan task – but why not break a big change into a plan of small changes? Little tasks can be shared around more easily, can be ticked off a to-do list more quickly and this keeps you motivated and creates more energy for the next task: small regular victories are

essential for showing everyone that change can be achieved and the benefits it can bring.

Moving forward as a group means giving more people the power to get involved. We heard how surveying members, creating small working groups, and getting people involved in decision-making and feedback means everyone can have an impact. But it's easy to forget that people have different paces when it comes to change, and sometimes people need time to 'catch-up'. So, if you decide to move to an online form for membership renewal, maybe keep the paper version for those who prefer – or create a tech buddy system for those who need the support.

But even if you move as a group, change does need leadership, and at Making Music we see how much pressure that puts on Chairs and other leaders. We have therefore started a Chairs' Forum, to meet twice a year, so that we can talk to you about the challenges of leadership and what we can do to support each other. The first one took place in April, but you are welcome to join the next one:

Register your interest in the Chairs' Forum by emailing info@makingmusic.org.uk

Photo: Linus Nylund
(Unsplash)

MM FACT

75% of our member groups offer concessions on their membership.



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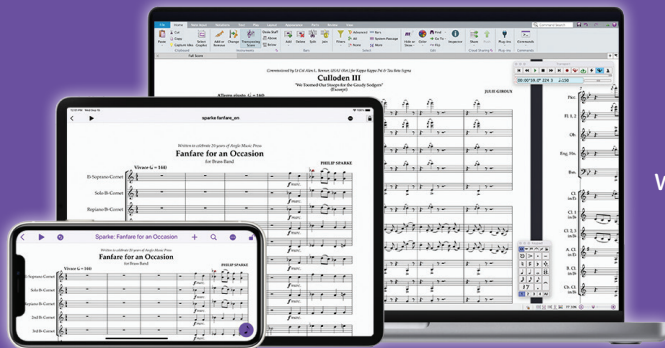
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Diversifying your membership

Jan Sheward, Chair and Founder of **OutSingCancer** choir, talks about the group's involvement in Making Music's INCLUDE programme.

Our journey towards greater diversity and inclusivity has been an enlightening one, marked by crucial insights gained from the Census Comparison Survey. This invaluable exercise confirmed certain aspects we already knew and shed light on others.

One key revelation was the confirmation that people underrepresented within our choir are, generally, people under the age of 50 and men. While this wasn't entirely surprising, the survey underscored the urgency of our mission to broaden our reach and welcome a more diverse membership.

The census also highlighted an interesting perspective: our choir's demographics align with those of our local community in that we are white British, mature in age and 95% from middle class backgrounds. Understanding the extent

to which our demographic composition mirrors those affected by cancer in our area is something that might help us better tailor our image to other communities.

To address the challenge of underrepresentation, we've started to redefine our marketing, designing new materials with messaging that's not only inviting but also more inclusive. Our website is also undergoing transformation as we improve accessibility, ensuring that it caters to all age groups, genders, and backgrounds.

As we embark on our inclusivity pathway, we have more exciting ideas in store. We're exploring ways to collaborate with other local music and health-related groups, creating synergistic relationships that can amplify our impact.

While challenges continue, we remain committed to adapting and evolving



Photo: OutSingCancer Choir performing at the Angmering Grange launch

our approach ensuring OutSingCancer continues to be a choir where everyone, regardless of age, gender, or background, finds comfort, support, strength, joy and unity in the harmonies of our music and the warmth of our community.

Find out more about the INCLUDE programme at makingmusic.org.uk/INCLUDE

Diversifying your repertoire

Sophie Anderson, Publicity Officer of **Sheffield Philharmonic Orchestra (SPO)**, tells us about their orchestra's journey to diversify its repertoire.

Just before 2018, we went through a challenging period with audience numbers dwindling and financial instability. We knew something had to change. Led by our Music Director, George Morton, the orchestra were keen on commissioning new works, particularly by underrepresented composers.

One clear disparity on the concert platform is the underrepresentation of women composers. Research by The Donne Foundation in 2021 reported that women composers made up only 5% of the pieces scheduled in classical music concerts. So, for our first season programme (2019-20), we featured women composers in three concerts,

as well as a newly-commissioned arrangement of Clara Schumann's *Quatre Pièces Caractéristiques*.

The feedback from the audience and the orchestra members was overwhelmingly positive with players appreciating the exploration of new pieces and audiences embracing new programming — George even won a Making Music Award for his arrangement of the Clara Schumann piece!

The wake of the BLM (Black Lives Matter) movement in 2020 prompted us to reflect deeper on our commitment to diversity, especially across concert programming. Following this our 2021-2022 seasons prioritised repertoire by composers

underrepresented in concert programmes, and the orchestra committed to a policy to perform a more diverse repertoire in every concert.

Since adopting this approach — alongside other strategic decisions — we've increased our average audience size by 52%, achieved financial stability, and are now a much more inclusive orchestra. Inclusivity has become a core value to us and we're looking forward to lots of new music to explore.

Read the full case study at makingmusic.org.uk/case-study-spo Get inspired by The Donne's list of 5,000+ women composers at donne-uk.org/the-big-list/

MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICES

Helping you get the most from your membership

CONTACT US

info@makingmusic.org.uk / 020 7939 6030

Child licensing and the MMSafe service



Making MusicSafe

Child licensing legislation – which is also applicable to leisure-time music groups – requires almost all performing children to be covered with either a licence or an exemption called a Body of Persons Approval (BOPA).

If your group includes children who are performing with you on a regular basis, then the process of getting permission from local authorities to allow these children to participate during school time would not be new to you. This can be laborious and time-consuming, especially when it is required multiple times throughout the year for every child and performance.

To make this process easier, Making Music have teamed up with Brass Bands England to establish the Making Music Safe service (MMSafe). Members of Making Music who are based in England or Wales – regardless of the type of music group – can use this service to gain

access to a national BOPA (Body of Persons Approval) administered by Brass Bands England.

For just £48 per year, this service provides members with the necessary tools, guidance and access to training required to be able to take advantage of Brass Bands England BOPA. The service not only helps you to navigate the child licensing regulations, it also ensures that you have everything needed to safeguard your members. Being covered by the Brass Bands England BOPA means you would not need to apply to each authority individually and you would have an exemption for all performing children, cutting out a lot of your group's admin work.

Find out more at makingmusic.org.uk/mmsafe

MAKING MUSIC WEBINARS

If you missed a Making Music event and want to catch up on any content, you can view our webinar recordings at any time and place that suits you.

Our webinars include topics such as where to find sheet music, how to influence your local authorities, how to get involved in the #MakeSpaceForMusic campaign to raise awareness of the threats faced by venues, as well as more information about our services such as the Making Music Platform service and MMSafe.

All of our webinars can be found at makingmusic.org.uk/resources by selecting **Video/audio** from the **TYPE** dropdown and clicking on **APPLY**.

MM FACT

Vocal group numbers have increased by more than 75% (to 2,144) – but now make up a smaller percentage (54%) of overall membership than they did in 2001 (63%).

NEW online resources

- Case study: Diversifying repertoire with the Sheffield Philharmonic Orchestra
- How to make your group easy to find online with SEO

Access and inclusion resources

- LGBTQ+ inclusion guide
- Working with transgender singers
- Glossary of LGBTQ+ terms

Webinar recordings

- Where do I find sheet music, and at what price?
- #MakeSpaceforMusic
- Understanding and influencing parish and town councils in England and Wales

For all resources visit makingmusic.org.uk/resources

CONTACT US

info@makingmusic.org.uk / 020 7939 6030

**Phone lines: Mon, Wed and Fri 10am-5pm
Tue and Thurs 10am-2pm****Summer events**

- Becoming a Making Music Trustee
 - Welcoming new members
 - Creating content for social media
 - Diversifying repertoire
 - General finance
- Save the date**
- Wed 26 June: AGM and general member meetup
- For all current events, confirmed dates and how to book your **FREE** place, visit:
- makingmusic.org.uk/events**

Corporate members

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ACS are offering a range of products that protect your hearing but still allow you to hear the music – and participate in music-making. Their custom ear plugs are made using impressions from your ears to make a perfect fit – they also provide high-fidelity attenuating earplugs (universal fit). Member discount: 15%-20% off, plus bulk discounts! Visit **makingmusic.org.uk/acs**

New members

A warm welcome to our 52 new members who joined between 16 November-15 March!

Aldbourn Band	Florence Brass	Peterborough Sings!
Anstruther Philharmonic Society	Front Room	Sounds of Southern Africa Choir (SOSA-XA!)
AVON SINGERS	Generation Groove	St John's Band
Band of the Hampshire Constabulary	Hart and Soul Community Choir	St Mary's Singers Music Society (St Mary's Singers)
Borders Chamber Choir	Hexachord	Streatham St Barts Chamber Orchestra
Bratton Silver Band	Ilkley Chamber Orchestra	Teignmouth Youth Choir
Bristol EnharmoniQ	Ilkley Philharmonic Orchestra	The Elgar Scholars
Bristol Piano Club	Imagine That Productions	The Fifty
Brunel Brass and Academy Band	Irish Doctors Orchestra	The Harmony Division
Chesterfield and North East Derbyshire Music Centre	Just Friends	The Hex Choir and Orchestra
City of Lincoln Brass Band	Lancaster Community Music Trust	The Lydian Orchestra
Conservatoire Concerts	Leeds Baroque Choir & Orchestra	The Open University Orchestra
Culm Valley Community Choir	Meridian Winds	The Palace Singers
Darlington Piano Society	Merton Concert Band	Threnody
Elegia Consort	New Opera Company	Truro Sinfonia
Elmore Chamber Music Festival	North East Community Music	West Suffolk Symphonic Wind Band
Five Valleys Voices	Norwich Sinfonietta	
Flitwick Singers	Oadby Community Choir	



Project-based recruitment

Will Prideaux, Director of music education charity **Peterborough Sings!**, talks to us about the Peterborough Male Voice Choir's work supporting project-based recruiting.

In 2012 there were approximately 450 lower voice choirs in the UK; by 2022 this had reduced to only 300. Whilst the closure of choirs was undoubtedly hastened by the COVID-19 pandemic, the statistics from this period suggest that lower voice choirs are closing at an average rate of 15 each year. Research also reports that lower voice choirs are consistently failing to engage with a broad range of demographic groups including those under the age of 65, non-White British, and LGBTQ+ communities. This represents nothing short of an existential crisis.

What is going wrong with this quintessential part of our shared cultural heritage? The problem is complex. Issues include image, ambition, capacity, repertoire, ageing membership, skill levels of music staff, and varying attitudes to inclusion. In some cases, choirs are essentially monocultures of longstanding, close-knit members who do not actually want new singers to join!

Based on sector research we commissioned from Sheffield University in 2022, and with broad aims to slow this decline, Peterborough Male Voice Choir are currently leading a scheme funded by Arts Council England to support five lower voice choirs through a transformational programme of project-based recruitment.

This has included work on rebranding and improving these choirs' 'sales pitch'. Training has taken place on marketing, social media and inclusion, as well as the principles of project-based recruitment – creating accessible routes into these choirs which address the barriers that stop new members from joining.

Peterborough have supported project-based recruitment activities with Radcliffe-On-Trent, Worcester, Northampton, Welwyn Garden City and Carlton Male Voice Choirs and the take-up has been remarkable. These projects have begun with an average of 70-80 men, and Radcliffe-On-Trent voice tested an astonishing 150 for their project!

Some of these men won't complete the project for various reasons – some will not want to continue with the host choir after the ten weeks – but our experience shows that about 20% will progress to full membership. That's 14-16 new members for each choir (or 30 in Radcliffe's case!).

And that's only the headline: the use of project-based recruitment also attracts a more diverse range of members, particularly in terms of cultural background and age, and the marketing and engagement activities which are an integral part of this approach raise the profile of the organising choir and create exciting new connections and opportunities in their communities.

This approach is certainly a shot-in-the-arm for the lower voice sector, but the philosophy is easily transferrable. The overriding principle is viewing your organisation as an outsider would, of defining your offer to be appealing to those you would like to attract, and of identifying and addressing barriers to joining to create accessible routes to membership.

Read more about the national Men United project at peterboroughsings.org.uk

Photo: Participants for Men United Project 2023

'The use of project-based recruitment also attracts a more diverse range of members, particularly in terms of cultural background and age.'



PROJECTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Keeping you up to date with projects and programmes



Photo: Make Music Day event at King's Cross 2023

INCLUDE UPDATE

Making Music's INCLUDE programme, working with four member groups to make their group more accessible and inclusive, had a busy start to 2024. Each now has an Inclusion Action Plan with steps including: 'adding information to our website about the accessibility of rehearsal and concert venues', and 'ways to include people who can't read music'. In February and March, they organised events for leisure-time music groups in their community, including Making Music members, to come together to explore access and inclusion. Each had a different focus, depending on what the groups wanted to learn more about:

- **How can we include more men in leisure-time music making?** – Great Bowden Recital Trust
- **Music Groups in North Lincolnshire: Getting to Know You** – Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society
- **'Modelling Local Excellence'** – how can leisure-time music groups in West Sussex be more inclusive? – OutSingCancer Choir
- **Community Come and Sing** – Luton Choral Society

Bringing together groups from the same areas, or genres, meant specific community issues were well-explored. We hope this is the start of learning and collaboration networks in each of these communities. The next stop for the INCLUDE groups is hosting Make Music Day events on 21 June to widen their connections. If you're in the area, pop down and join in! Check out the groups' INCLUDE blogs at makingmusic.org.uk/INCLUDE

Refresh your creativity

Feeling uninspired and stagnant? Bring a fresh burst of creativity to your music group this summer with the following opportunities.

Make Music Day

An annual, international celebration of music, now held in 125 countries and over 1,000 cities on 21 June. This is a great opportunity for your group to take your music-making to the public, into your community – celebrating your activity with more people.

The rules are simple: performances must be free to take part in and watch, take place or premiere on 21 June, and involve music. They can be online or in-person, and of any genre and scale.

Start planning ahead to make the most of this opportunity and showcase the best of your group!

Find out more at makingmusic.org.uk/make-music-day

Sing to Save Lives

To commemorate the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's

(RNLI) bicentenary this year, this initiative will see choirs up and down the country (and perhaps also abroad) putting on concerts with a maritime theme to celebrate and inspire.

Choirs registering for the initiative will receive support from the RNLI, including from the team organising the 200th anniversary. You'll also get additional support from our corporate member ChoirCommunity, who have partnered with RNLI to promote this programme. To kick it off, they have commissioned original songs, which are available for free alongside other maritime-themed repertoire in their collection of songs.

Explore the repertoire and register your interest at choircommunity.net/rnli-200/

Need more inspiration?

Mark your calendars for **Learn to Play Day** and **Fun Palaces**, which will both take place this October.

MM FACT

Including all leisure-time music groups, the sector is worth around £180m annually, without secondary spending e.g. on instruments, hospitality, transport, printing etc.

50
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- Access to a wide variety of repertoire with a few exceptions (Check the ACL Exclusion List at www.pml.org.uk)
- Minor arrangements, such as changing the key to better suit the voices of the choir

*"The PMLL Amateur Choir Licence is a must have for choirs
rehearsing and performing concerts all year round."*

Mark De-Lisser

Contact pmlacl@mpagroup.com with any questions or queries

The Big Survey 2022 – the next chapter

This second report drawn from the survey data focuses on the financial contribution the leisure-time music sector makes to the livelihoods of professionals.

98% of leisure-time music groups have a professional music leader; 81% pay their leader. The question comes up time and again: how much?

For years, Making Music has had a Recommended Rates agreement with the Musicians Union (MU) for professional instrumentalists engaged by our members. These rates are recommended because Making Music cannot and does not wish to dictate such matters to members which are independent organisations with their own decision-making governing bodies. However, we are asked frequently for this information, and so we decided it would be most useful to produce something in partnership with the relevant body for music professionals which members can refer to for benchmarking and as a guideline.

We are now talking to the MU about recommended rates for musical leaders, too. In the meantime, the answer to the question is: extremely variable. With a range from £5 to £100 an hour, the average hourly rehearsal fee is £43 an hour, rising to £86 an hour for performances. Many groups agree set rehearsal fees and separate performance fees with their leaders, others negotiate an annual fee which corresponds to an agreed number of rehearsals and concerts.

The takeaway here is that there are at least 9,500 paid musical leader roles across the UK with leisure-time music groups, contributing around £34m to the livelihoods of these professionals.

And that's not all! If you add in the fees paid by our performing groups to instrumental or vocal soloists and orchestral players, and those paid by our volunteer promoters for engaging professionals, usually soloists (e.g. pianists), duos or small chamber ensembles, then the leisure-time music sector contributes around £116m to the portfolio incomes of professional performers.

Seeing that last year's Musicians' Census by the MU put average earnings at £20,700 and the number of musicians in the UK are estimated at 46,500, this would mean that engagements with leisure-time music groups are responsible for over 10% of the roughly £1bn income of those musicians.

In addition, music groups commission around 1,200 new pieces of music a year and nearly 600 arrangements – another significant contribution.

Not forgetting a spend of approximately £5.7m on sheet music plus performing rights royalties associated with performances and repeat performances of music by living composers and pieces still in copyright, it is clear that, however small individual music groups might be, collectively they pack a considerable economic punch, and are an essential part of the music industry ecology.

Read more at makingmusic.org.uk/big-survey-2022
Read more about our agreement with MU on recommended rates for engaging professional musicians at makingmusic.org.uk/rates

Photo: Mathias Westermann (Pixabay)

* FUN FACT*

In 2016, Mozart sold more CDs than Beyoncé.

EXPLORING MUSIC

Readers tell us about the music they love. Email editor@makingmusic.org.uk

Jukebox

Readers share how a particular piece of music inspires them

Photo: Côr Meibion Caerwys



Hiraeth Traditional Welsh folk song

Pronounced *Here-eye-th* in English, this word requires several sentences to try to describe it and do it justice. It is a feeling, an

emotion – it can conjure a vision of multiple thoughts and simultaneous memories, over both time and distance.

It can be a longing to hold onto these thoughts and memories in times of sorrow – of good times, happy times, or cruel, unhappy episodes, best forgotten but often remembered. Of people who now live far away from Wales

(or their home country – for *hiraeth* can apply to anyone, anywhere in the world).

The song *Hiraeth* is a traditional Welsh folk tune that has been arranged for lower voices by Alwyn Humphries. The song has a beautiful piano introduction, floating gently through the air. The words are both powerful and tender, periodically interspersed by a gentle, melodic ‘oohing’ through the tenor voice ranges. In the final few bars, all voices join together with these ‘oohs’, gradually diminishing to a lingering, almost silent finale.

I can feel the emotion rising even as I finish writing this article. Truly stunning.

Mike Jones
Côr Meibion Caerwys (Caerwys Male Voice Choir)
corcaerwys.co.uk

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Including new music and a celebratory dinner!
2–3 Nov: Manchester Weekend for Conductors & Singers
22 Nov: SfP60 Schools' Day, (Manchester & online)
23 Nov: SfP60 Conference, Manchester
With sessions on: singing and arts policy; singing and health; singing in schools and community settings.

Plus more events to come - keep an eye on our website!

www.singforpleasure.org.uk



DROP THE MIC

If you have any software, hardware or performance tips you would like to share, email editor@makingmusic.org.uk

How can new people find your group online?

We discuss the basics of how to make your music group's website easy to find online.

You might have heard of SEO before – short for Search Engine Optimisation: it's all the ways you might modify a website to make it rank higher on a Google search results page. Many people don't bother to go past the first page, so it's important that your music group's website appears there – all you have to do is to make it easy for the people who need you to find you.

So how does Google's algorithm work? You type in your query in the search bar, then Google will scan all public webpages and look for those that contain high-quality, relevant information related to your query. One way they evaluate this is by looking at the keywords on a webpage.

Keywords are the words, or specific combination of words, that somebody puts into Google to find something. For example, if somebody types in 'join choir in Birmingham', Google will check all websites that have these keywords ('join', 'choir', and 'Birmingham'), as well as any other related keywords – so 'choir' can be related to 'singing group', 'vocalist', 'soprano', etc. The more specific the better – a search for 'choir in Birmingham' will bring up thousands of results! But if you modify it to 'no audition casual lower voice

choir Birmingham', you will get fewer results, but they will be better tailored.

Put yourself in the shoes of somebody wanting to join your music group – what keywords would they type in? Would they be part of a specific age group, or minority community? Are they looking to improve a skill, or just have fun? Once you have a 'portrait' of this prospective new member, then you can look at improving your website for them. Add keywords in all the places it makes sense – but don't go overboard! The most important thing is to keep it relevant to your group.

It's important to note that SEO is a massive topic in an ever-changing industry – but that doesn't mean you can't cover the basics, and improve your search results standing with the tools you already have. Make sure to check out our full resource to get the most out of it!

Read the full resource on SEO at makingmusic.org.uk/SEO

If you have any software, hardware or performance tips you would like to share, email us at editor@makingmusic.org.uk

MM PLATFORM APP



Our newest addition to the Making Music Platform (MM Platform) service is the accompanying mobile application, the MM Platform App. Once downloaded on their smartphones, it allows your group members to quickly access the main features of your group's Platform.

From the App, your members can mark their availability and attendance for events, access and download files including documents, news items and sheet music, submit recordings for assessments and update their personal details. Exclusive to the App only, you can also create playlists of learning tracks for your members with no limit to the number of tracks included. The App allows songs and documents to be shared through your own Dropbox and Google Drive accounts, making it easier to share folders of documents and music.

You are also able to send push notifications to your members directly through the App, and if members are allowed to view each other's personal details, they can access these through the App and click on another member's email address or phone number to easily contact them by phone or email.


This is an additional feature to the MM Platform service and costs £36 per year, per group.

Find out more at makingmusic.org.uk/mm-platform-app

FUN FACT

Mozart wrote the Don Giovanni overture hours before the premiere, after a night out drinking with friends.

PREMIUM CORPORATE MEMBERS

Our corporate members play an important role in supporting leisure-time music. Member music groups can use exclusive discounts, subsidies and offers (indicated by  below) to save on everything from sheet music to booking artists and making recordings. For more information, visit makingmusic.org.uk/discounts



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READERS' PAGE

Got something to say? Email:
editor@makingmusic.org.uk

Seamus McGibbon joins Barbara Eifler as Co-Chief Executive of Making Music



Photo: Seamus McGibbon
Credit: Fatima Yasmin

Seamus and Barbara are jointly responsible for Making Music's strategy, direction, and oversight for the effective delivery of all of Making Music activities.

They also act as ambassadors for Making Music members and leisure-time music, meeting with key personnel from local and national government, music, charity and education sectors.

Seamus joined Making Music as a consultant in August 2023 having previously worked for numerous membership and creative organisations, for over twenty years, including the Association of Photographers where he was CEO and as Business Development Manager at both the Culture Trust Luton and UK Theatre. He is a keen walker and enjoys live music, theatre, art and film.

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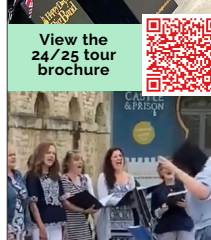
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BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

KATHY MCLEISH

TRUSTEE



What attracted you to the role?

I came across Making Music when I became the Music Director for Godalming Community Gospel Choir earlier this year. I have been a trustee of a college in the past and I wanted to take on a new venture. So, this role combines my deep passion for singing, and the desire to see leisure-time music made accessible to as many people as possible. I'm excited about being involved with an organisation that can make a great impact in the wider community.

What do you for a day job?

I work for the Institute for Human Rights and Business as Governance and People Management Officer. My career has been predominantly in the not-for-profit sector, and I have worked in governance and human resources for around 15 years.

What are some of your hobbies/interests outside the arts?

I love programmes such as the Great British Sewing Bee and Bake Off. Earlier this year I bought a sewing machine and plan to make upholstery (once I've taken my machine out of the box!).

Tell us about one of your favourite pieces of music and why?

Choosing a favorite piece of music is very difficult! There is so much that I like, from jazz to gospel to R&B – but gospel is my favorite, so I'll pick a gospel song. *Total Praise* by Richard Smallwood is the perfect combination of amazing harmonies and beautiful melodies. I love it because the words, based on scriptures from the bible, are moving and when coupled with the dramatic music, it is incredibly stirring. Whether singing it or directing a choir singing it, I can see that the song is affecting those performing and hearing it. I think that is very special.

STAFF MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MAREK LITWIN

FINANCE MANAGER



When did you join Making Music?

I have been working at Making Music since March 2023. It has been a very interesting year, yet somehow it feels as if I have been working here for years.

What does your role involve?

My role encompasses two key components: the traditional responsibilities of a Finance Manager, which fundamentally revolve around accounting, and a more exhilarating aspect where I work directly with organisation treasurers to deliver Orchestra Tax Reliefs and Theatre Tax Reliefs.

Where did you work previously?

Prior to this role, I worked for RSPB in Scotland for over four years, where I actively participated in 36 different conservation projects. I also worked for the Association of Scottish Visitor Attractions, another membership organisation committed to developing the tourism sector.

What attracted you to work for Making Music?

I saw it as an opportunity to join a dedicated group of individuals committed to making positive changes. Needless to say I was not mistaken!

Do you play or sing yourself?

I have started learning the flute, and it has been an interesting yet challenging experience. Learning how to breathe properly and where to place my fingers demands persistence. When I manage to produce a sound that is somewhat pleasant, it feels like a big win.

If you had to pick a favourite piece/song/composer, who/what would it be and why?

Definitely Chopin. I can hear traditional Polish folk songs and dances masterfully interpreted and transformed by his genius. These compositions remind me of the tragic history of my country and our resilience to overcome it.

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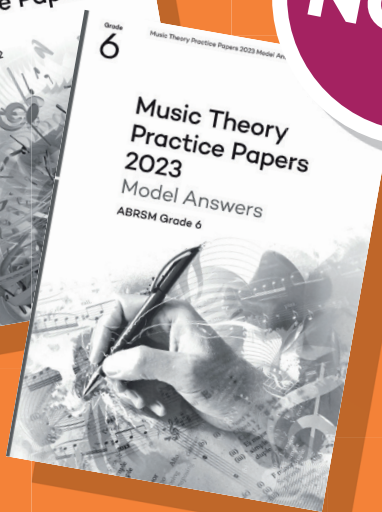
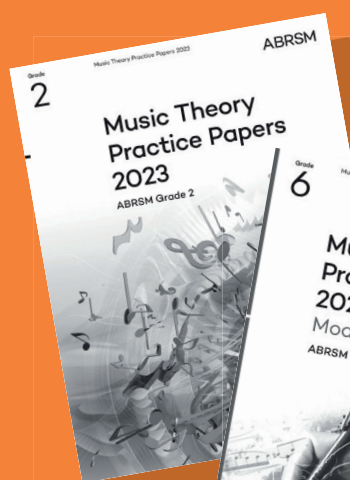
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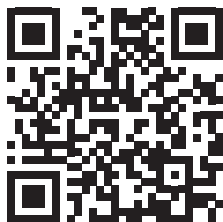


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