

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON MUSIC

1 December, 2020

Online

Tom Arthur, MSP (Chair)	Nick Stewart (MVT)
David Francis (TMF)	Robert Kilpatrick (SMIA)
Rab Noakes (MU)	Donald MacLeod (Hold Fast)
Diljeet Bhachu (SWIM)	Mae Murray (MEPG)
Scott Morrison	John Wallace (MEPG)
Adam Behr (Newcastle Univ)	Shonagh Stevenson (HITS)
Georgina MacDonell (Nevis Ensemble)	Paul MacAlinden (Glasgow Barons)
Karen Dufour (New Music Scotland)	Aidan O'Rourke
Kenneth Taylor (St Mary's)	Jo Buckley (Dunedin Consort)
Matthew Whiteside (The Night With)	Ed Milner (NYCOS)
Nick Zekulin (NYOS)	Jamie Munn (Nevis Ensemble)
Barry Dallman (MU)	Alan Morrison (Creative Scotland)
Claire Baker, MSP	Louise Pow (MU)
Olaf Furniss (Wide Days)	Gill Maxwell (SMC)
Stuart Fleming (PRS)	Carol Main (Live Music Now)
Jenna Main (ABRSM)	Alison Reeves (Making Music)

In attendance: Judi Smitheram (Canterbury Folk Festival, NZ)

Apologies:

Gordon Lindhurst, MSP, Beatrice Wishart, MSP, Michael Lambert (A Modern Way), Hilary Brooks (SWIM), Andrew Cruickshank (MU), Lisa Whytock (Active), Brian Whittle, MSP, Dougal Perman (SMIA), Jane Stanley (Glasgow University)

TMF = Traditional Music Forum, MU = Musicians' Union, SWIM = Scottish Women Inventing Music, NYOS = National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, PRS = Performing Rights Society, ABRSM = Associated Boards of the Royal Schools of Music, MVT = Music Venues Trust, SMIA = Scottish Music Industry Association, MEPG = Music Education Partnership Group, HITS = Heads of Instrumental Teaching Scotland, NYCOS = National Youth Choirs of Scotland, SMC = Scottish Music Centre

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting
Proposed John Wallace, Seconded Adam Behr
2. Matters Arising
 - a. Members' Debate.
TA reported that the Member's Debate on the impact of the Covid pandemic on music had been well attended and positive, including a useful response from the Cabinet Secretary. He thanked CB for bringing the motion forward, DF for co-ordinating the contributions from CPG members, and all those who contributed.
3. Music Education
JW gave an overview of the current state of music education, commending the activities of the member organisations of MEPG who are carrying out their work in the face of extreme challenges. He gave an update on two pieces of research 'We Make Music Online' and 'Following the Science'. The latter showed that there was no statistically significant evidence that singing or playing brass, woodwind or bagpipes produced any more of an aerosol effect than breathing and talking. It is public

perception that is driving current restrictions as much as scientific reality, but we have to accept that there will be little change until vaccination becomes more widespread. In the meantime music teachers are doing the best they can in the circumstances. JW conceded that his scepticism about teaching outdoors was unfounded, as it had proved both effective and popular with pupils. He was less impressed by SQA advice that pupils playing wind, brass and pipes should consider switching instruments, particularly as the advice came only four months before practical exams. This was an unnecessary distraction.

MEPG's online training sessions have proved popular. The ancient issue of registration of instrumental music instructors proceeds at glacial pace towards its resolution. There is, however, the intention that the changes in the law necessary for the issue finally to be resolved will take place in the next Parliament.

One thing the pandemic has done has bring to the fore an appetite for music learning across all ages and backgrounds. Music education cannot be pushed to the margins of educational activity, and it is testament to the efforts of MEPG and allies that this has not happened. In support of this MEPG is aiming to get the topic into the manifestos of all the political parties before the May elections.

Karen Dufour: The SQA's proposal is absurd and undermines both teachers' and pupils' efforts to adapt to the current situation. It would not apply to any other subject, and does not take into account the demoralising effect it will have on students.

Claire Baker MSP: Happy to follow up with the Education Committee. Thinking about private music education, there seemed to be contradictory advice. A letter from the Cabinet Secretary in October indicated that private tuition in the home could be classed as a commercial meeting rather than a social one, and therefore permissible with the appropriate mitigations. However, a response from Mairi Todd, Education Minister, seemed to indicate that private tuition in the home was only permissible at Level 0. She has asked for clarification from the Cabinet Secretary.

Shonagh Stevenson: pointed out that the SQA proposal was in a consultation paper, and hoped that the response to it would help the SQA to understand the realities of the situation. The confusion around what is and what is not allowed had caused a degree of anxiety among students who were now questioning the logic behind guidance on what they can and cannot do. Even though there has been a lot of adapting through the various online and technological means of delivery there is still a great need for the emotional, face to face connection of young people with their instructors.

Kenneth Taylor: Need to look carefully at why Scotland is adopting a policy towards singing, brass, and wind that is different from almost every other country in Europe. England has allowed wind playing and even ensemble singing since June. It can't be right that singing is seen as being a more dangerous activity than some others. What schools are forced to do is work around the guidelines.

Ed Milner: thanked MEPG for the 'Following the Science' document, especially in the light of a lot of misleading information in the media about singing. NYCOS is concerned about the inconsistencies regarding singing when it seems to be allowed elsewhere, and the impact this is having on young people.

Diljeet Bhachu: how were the restrictions on instrumental tuition being followed up in the university sector?

Adam Behr: re the SQA, as well as the demoralising effect of such proposals, there is the problem of those pupils who will already have applied to university citing their instrument of choice. To have suspend activity on that instrument will put Scottish students at a considerable and immediate disadvantage. On DB's question, the degree of adaption with the move to virtual and online activity has been impressive, but there is no doubt that the face to face contact is being hugely missed.

DB: The experience of students in higher education because work is exclusively online is very isolating.

Carol Main: Governor on the board of the RCS. There is some face to face, and small amounts of ensemble work, but the overriding impression is of solidarity across every part of the institution to a degree that hasn't been seen before.

JW: commented on the lengths to which people have gone to provide some kind of an experience. Glad that his earlier optimism seems to have flushed out the negative aspects of Scotland's approach, an austere, almost Calvinist one, especially with regard to singing.

TA: In terms of action points, CB has been taking matters forward, but the CPG should put together a letter bringing together some of the points that have been raised.

4. Covid Re-opening

a) Judi Smitheram, Canterbury Folk Festival:

New Zealand had an early, thorough and strict lockdown, with only essential businesses and activities allowed, restrictions on funerals, border controls, isolation for incoming people in hotels with guards to enforce it. Social distancing was 1 metre.

There was a complete ban on entertainment from March 23rd, but Government implemented an economic relief package for self-employed. A gradual re-opening meant that bars could put on entertainment.

Creative New Zealand set up a fund, but it wasn't sufficient to support everyone who applied to it. Post-lockdown virtual meetings and events have continued to be popular, as people have continued to be cautious about going out and mixing with others.

Positives include JS's own event, the Canterbury Folk Festival able to take place in November after postponement from Easter. Another positive is that festivals have had to concentrate on NZ artists, with the only international artists being booked those who were already resident. There has been a lot of creativity during lockdown, processing of emotions about the situation.

TA: thanks to Judi for the presentation. It gives a good sense of what might await Scotland when we are finally free of the pandemic.

David Francis: how quickly were venues able to open, at what capacity, how quickly was there a return to normality?

JS: Initially 100 were allowed in bars, but other venues like churches and community organisations. Some city councils like Christchurch were very risk averse. For example, a venue with a capacity of 40, say, would have its capacity reduced to 6, which meant that most events scheduled for that venue wouldn't happen. Restaurants could have a performer, but dancing was not allowed. But now theatres and concert halls are at full capacity. Hand sanitisers and contact tracing are still in use, though, and there are still occasional community outbreaks.

TA: What is the mood within the wider community – are people looking forward, or is the pandemic still weighing on people’s minds?

JS: The pandemic has badly affected the tourist industry, which has had a knock-on effect on hospitality and entertainment. NZ is also waiting for the vaccine in order to allow borders to re-open.

AB: Does NZ have a quota, a percentage of NZ material that has to be played? Some countries which operate a quota have upped the percentage.

JS: Radio New Zealand is the main supporter of NZ-based new music.

AB: Another potential revenue stream for artists (although broadcasting is a reserved matter)

b) The ‘Art of the Possible’ report

Nick Stewart: music can’t simply start up without a great deal of preparation. Insurance is a massive issue, and the government’s abundance of caution, but the hope is that live events will be back up and running by the summer. It will probably start with 50%, rising to 75% (with no social distancing) before full capacity. The vaccination programme will make this possible, as would pre-gig testing linked to track-and-trace and ticketing. Venues had mitigation ready to go. Music Venues Trust thinks that the current mitigations are not powerful enough. Would prefer Test and Clean (e.g. by Ultraviolet Germicides) Hand, Face, Space. The Scottish Commercial Music Industry Task Force is advocating for sanctioned hubs, starting March or so.

Donald MacLeod: Would like the Cross-Party Group to press on the Government and the Cabinet Secretary the need to liaise regularly with the Scottish Music Industry Task Force. The Scottish Government is being excessively cautious particularly when it comes to things like background music. DMcL has met John Harden, Clinical Director Jason Leitch’s deputy, and showed him that the ventilation and air conditioning systems in many modern venues is state of the art, and that pre-lockdown are taking mitigation measures. The purpose of the hub events mentioned is to bring confidence back into the market. The end of March is a crucial time. Furlough ends, grants are stopping, but it is also estimated that around 60% of the population will be vaccinated by then, so this is an opportunity to think about what might be possible. We have to get the economy going again.

NS: There is also a proposal for a kite-mark system. There are some gigs happening in Level 1 areas, such as Inverness. The vaccine is a game-changer and we need to start planning re-entry.

TA: The context is changing because of the vaccine, with some estimates saying that up to 1 million could be vaccinated by the end of January. This will allow us to start thinking about re-opening of various sectors, and where continuing support will be required.

DMacL: The response from John Harden showed that he welcomed the report with the caveat that some clinical rationales needed to be added. Clear outlines of mitigations will be required and the capacities for each venue. Impacts on external aspects of music presentation such as transport should also be included in thinking about re-opening. Rebuilding confidence is going to be the biggest challenge, and it will require a lot of pulling together.

TA: The other thing that will make things easier will be mass testing when that comes in.

DB: From the perspective of a producer with Glasgow Mela and a freelance musician, wanted to look at smaller gigs and venues, and also the kind of audiences who are disproportionately affected by Covid. The news about the vaccine is good but there are a lot of unknowns around effectiveness, and how long it will take for immunity to take hold. With the Mela, we could have 12,000 in Kelvingrove Park. How feasible will an event like that be, free to the public accessible to particular audiences, such as elderly South Asians.

DMacL: Our discussions with John Harden centred on smaller venues. With regard to events like the Mela they tend to happen in the summer when we hope things will be getting back to normal. But we have to start small before there's any hope of getting back to where we were in Scotland.

NS: The advance mitigations I was discussing earlier are cheap to do and most effective in smaller venues with standing audiences. Re free and open events, if you don't have control of your audience you don't have control of your control measures. In risk assessment terms the hazard with Covid is always 5 out of 5. What we are trying to suggest is that we reduce the hazard in the first place, which we can now do by finding out whether people have been vaccinated or tested.

The Music Venue Trust's kite mark scheme has a set of explanatory graphics, which will encourage confidence.

KD: Some of the smaller venues are very small and will require a lot of support to put mitigations in place, especially when venues or gigs are run by volunteers.

NS: The Music Venue Trust is doing all it can to publicise the mitigations. Outside the genres that MVT normally deals with, MVT could be asked to help. The kite mark could be extended. But there's no doubt that the risk assessment does require a lot of thought. There are no shortcuts.

Alison Reeves: Making Music has risk assessment templates and is looking to produce graphics similar to the MVT ones.

DF: The CPG will write to the Cabinet Secretary advising that regular liaison with the Scottish Commercial Music Industry Taskforce would be advantageous.

5. Classical Music Sustainability Group

Georgina MacDonald Finlayson: We believe in the need for a significant change in society to meet the challenges of the climate crisis and to minimise its damage to individuals and communities.

Scott Morrison: summarised the extent of the climate crisis, and steps that are currently being taken to meet carbon targets. The Classical Sustainability Group is a contribution, including active input from musicians, from that sector to addressing the challenges, by pooling knowledge and expertise.

Challenges include engaging people across organisations from board to audiences, transport, buildings and venues, international touring, and current business models. The music industry relies on *travel*, a major source of emissions. We need to equalise the costs of air and rail travel, improve public transport. More sustainable travel is slower, which has cost implications, particularly recompensing musicians for their time. A key issue with *buildings* is persuading building owner to introduce measures towards sustainability. A tenant organisation can have green policies and intentions which are not matched by their landlords. The appropriateness of *international travel* needs to be reassessed. Finally current business models need to be radically re-evaluated and

oriented towards sustainability. More sustainable practices are more expensive and there have to be incentives to encourage organisations to adopt the right policies.

GMF: There are positives in having to rethink practices in order to achieve the zero emissions target. The current pause in normal practices has been beneficial, and we have found that organisations and musicians are ready to make the necessary changes. The move to digital for example is growing and has shown how the presentation of music can be rethought. Culture, music in particular, can help to catalyse the changes needed: through storytelling using the medium of music, humanising facts; more place-based and community-oriented events. Music organisations are willing to change but need more support to effect these changes. The Covid crisis has shown how large scale, societal responses are possible, and the climate crisis is if anything more serious and far-reaching.

TA: Happy to circulate details of the Sustainability Group's meetings to CPG members.

DF: Digital communication is not devoid of environmental impact, which is often underestimated.

SM: Agreed that there are changes at base needed before we jump on the digital bandwagon. But raw materials and their supply chain aside, there are mitigations particularly in carbon-free energy production which address that issue.

TA: I will reflect on the points raised and will look for opportunities to raise these issues across portfolios.

Matthew Whiteside: It may be that, having been deprived of work over the past year, many musicians will double down and do as much travelling as they can once it becomes possible.

SM: We can only hope that won't happen, and that people will consider carefully.

CM: The irony is that Brexit will make international touring difficult in any case!

TA: Tying things together, both Scotland and New Zealand were pioneers of governmental thinking about the well-being economy which among other things looks to re-appraise ideas of value – thinking there about the point that international travel equates with glamour and success.

Finally a reminder about the deadline for evidence to the DCMS committee on streaming.

Rab Noakes: wanted to draw attention to the warning from the chair of the DCMS committee that the music business should not interfere with the enquiry. This was in response to comments from musician Nadine Shah that many people were reluctant to come forward.

6. Other Business

NS: wished to record the thanks of the Scottish Commercial Music Industries Taskforce to Scottish Government and Creative Scotland for expediting the Cultural Organisations and Venue Recovery Fund.

7. DONM

TA: Parliamentary business stops 24, 25 March. Two meetings before then would be useful.

