

In these times of considerable change, the Music Industries Association (MIA) is concerned that the importance of music education should not be underestimated or overlooked. Encouragingly, amongst all the talk of cuts and reductions, there are signs that the Government views music education in a positive light and is receptive to supporting its provision. The MIA believes therefore that the position of music educators and the wider music industry should be clearly heard and advocated, and to this end has developed the following position paper.

Music is important. It surrounds us every day and everywhere. It is likely that more music is being created, performed and consumed today than ever before. But the music industry is changing rapidly. Since the advent of the internet, traditional models of making and distributing music have undergone a revolution. We know that musicians and creative artists are innovative, flexible and adaptable, but in order to take advantage of these changes it has never been more important to ensure provision of high quality education and training at all levels.

Education empowers people, it provides them with the skills and knowledge required to be successful in life. And in music especially, in such a fast-changing, competitive world, education is of fundamental importance for anyone who aspires to create, perform, record or otherwise contribute to our musical heritage. And what a heritage that is – right from the classical composers and musicians, through the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, the punk revolution, Britpop artists such as Oasis and Blur through to Coldplay, Arctic Monkeys and Dizzee Rascal, music is a source of national pride, music is a fundamental part of our culture and our society and music generates both emotional and economic wealth and well-being.

Recently, the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt. Hon. Michael Gove MP, has ordered a review of music teaching. Mr. Gove says that ‘all children should have the chance to learn an instrument’ and that it is a "sad fact" that many state school children do not get the opportunity to learn an instrument. Mr Gove has further said the review should prioritise the use of public funding to give every child the opportunity to learn an instrument and to sing. He said it should look at ways to improve classroom teachers' skills and confidence in giving music lessons - an area of weakness that education watchdog Ofsted has highlighted.

The Department for Education has additionally said that ‘quality music education helps improve concentration, behavior, numeracy and language’.

The MIA is fully supportive of these views and the ongoing review of music education and has for some time been advocating a more positive approach to the teaching of music to children and young people in the UK. Music is often considered to be of secondary importance compared to the ‘core’ subjects of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, modern languages or similar. However, the MIA is strongly of the view that music education should be a key part of a broad and balanced school curriculum at all stages, including pre-school, and that deciding to become a musician, performer or creator of music is a legitimate, rewarding and worthwhile career choice, for the following reasons:

1. The UK economy through its creative industries benefits significantly from music, with over 130,000 people employed actively in the making, performing, recording and distributing of music contributing nearly £5bns to the economy annually. The creative sector generates 10% of GDP, currently contributes 6.2% GVA or nearly £60bns annually and is one of the country’s most successful exports. It was the only part of the economy (bar the public sector) to grow during the recession. Just under 2 million people are employed in creative industries.
2. Music contributes to the national sense of pride, develops community cohesion and narrows social difference

3. Music develops creativity and contributes uniquely to raising attainment in literacy and numeracy and should therefore be a key part of a broad and balanced school curriculum
4. Music has a vital role in supporting and developing vulnerable, disadvantaged and disabled people
5. Music is intrinsically important. Music making benefits people of all ages and promotes the development of health, emotional intelligence, teamwork and other social skills

Additionally, music is a key engager in enterprise learning - the importance of innovation in sustaining business viability in such a fluid, vibrant sector. Young people can become the key drivers of this innovation and can drive business revolution through engagement with industry and real world processes.

The MIA believes that structures for the effective development and delivery of world class music education at every level, from pre-school through further and higher and into adult education, need to be enhanced. In addition, it believes that the benefits of music are not universally and fully understood by key stakeholders in the debate, such as school Heads, Governors, parents, politicians and other decision makers. It is important that these stakeholders fully understand the relevance of music and the broader musical context to developing skills in innovation, entrepreneurialism and enterprise, key factors in driving the Big Society.

Currently there are significant risks to the provision and development of music education. In particular, music may be lost as a statutory national curriculum entitlement (though the position is still unclear in this regard) and funding cuts are threatened for instrumental teaching and music services. Music services are an important and proven mechanism for delivering high-quality education and training to schools and can achieve more than individual schools can on their own. The significant changes underway at the level of HE will impact negatively on arts and humanities subjects, which will not be supported through any teaching grant in the future. These subjects are also threatened in schools by the proposed development of the new English Baccalaureate and changes to school assessment criteria. And the proposed Arts Council cuts will undoubtedly impact negatively on music.

These real risks lead the MIA to conclude that if the provision of music education is not effectively championed as decisions are made and changes come into effect, then there is a significant danger that the obvious and far-reaching benefits of music and music education will be lost. As a result the next generation of musicians and creative individuals will be significantly disadvantaged - as will we all.

About the MIA

The Music Industries Association (MIA) is the trade association of the UK musical instrument industry, representing over 350 manufacturers, distributors, retailers, publishers and educators, which collectively generates annual sales of over £600 million of instruments and associated products. It has the mission of “creating and encouraging music making” and takes a proactive role in promoting the wide-ranging benefits of music making on behalf of the sector. This is achieved through liaison with government departments and the various music education bodies and through direct action programmes such as “Get Alive” and the “Learn to Play” teaching format.

The MIA also runs the industry charity, Music for All, which helps people of all ages to be able to start playing an instrument, especially school age children. It has the mission of “Making More Musicians”. For more information: www.mia.org.uk, www.musicforall.org.uk

Key research/statistics:

- The UK economy through its creative industries benefits significantly from music, with over 130,000 people employed actively in the making, performing, recording and distributing of music contributing nearly £5bns to the economy annually.
- The creative sector generates 10% of GDP, currently contributes 6.2% GVA or nearly £60bns annually and is one of the country's most successful exports. It was the only part of the economy (bar the public sector) to grow during the recession.
- Just under 2 million people are employed in creative industries.
- The Government has also recognised the importance of music education by establishing the Henley Review of Music Education.
- In 2004, the then Labour government launched a "music manifesto", which included the pledge to give every child in England the chance of free or cut-price instrument tuition.
- A scheme called Wider Opportunities was rolled out in 6,500 schools in England, Wales and Northern Ireland which involved children learning to play instruments as a class for free.
- According to figures provided by the Federation of Music Services, the number of pupils learning an instrument has risen from less than half a million in 2002 to a predicted 2.1m next year. The statistics on musical tuition in independent schools are higher

- Polling conducted by YouGov and the Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM) demonstrates that 91% of the public want children to have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument at school, back music education in schools with more than 75% backing the current funding level. This poll surveyed 2,095 people online in a representative sample of all adults in Great Britain. Other results from this poll include:
 - 19% play an instrument or sing; 43% would like to
 - The government contributes £82.5 million to music education through the Music Standards Fund – around 3p per person per week. This is supplemented by a further £137 million from local authorities, schools, parents, sponsorship and charities. The survey found that 3p per person per week is considered 'a reasonable cost' by 77% of respondents
 - People from all backgrounds were strongly in favour of giving children the chance to learn an instrument, with 90% or more support in all age groups and social grades.

Notes on YouGov/ISM poll:

1. *All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. Total sample size was 2095 adults (questions 1 and 3) and 2047 (question 2). Fieldwork was undertaken between 3 - 10 February 2010. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Great Britain (aged 18+).*
2. *'Respondents' excludes those who answered 'don't know' to questions 2 and 3, i.e. 18% and 9% respectively of those surveyed.*
3. *Breakdown of age groups: 18-24, 90%; 25-34, 92%; 35-44, 90%; 45-54, 91%; 55+, 93%. Breakdown of social grades: ABC1, 93%; C2DE, 90%.*