

# 2014

## *Jazz Services' Will Michael Jazz Education Awards*

### Introduction

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These Diplomas are awarded annually by Jazz Services in association with the National Music Council Music Education Awards Scheme, which has been running for over forty years. They matter because they do two things. They are the only means of according national recognition to those Hubs, Music Services and schools which demonstrate an outstanding commitment to jazz education. And secondly, they matter because they give national recognition to those field practitioners who are actually delivering jazz education at school and other levels, and especially those who are helping to combat the widespread jazz phobia among classroom music teachers and instrumental tutors.

The Diploma is named in honour of Will Michael who, until his death in 2008, was a hugely respected jazz educator on the national stage and joint architect of this jazz education awards scheme; he was also an invaluable member of the Jazz Services' Education Panel.

We think the quality of this year's Diploma winners speaks for itself. They really do get better year on year, which of course is how it should be!

Our only regret is that the National Music Council's trawl of Hubs has this year produced one of the lowest ever returns. This is difficult to explain, though it is no secret that some Hubs have a struggle on their hands convincing schools that music education matters.

These Diplomas have come to celebrate efforts to include jazz and improvised music in music education, often against many odds. For us the undoubted importance of this area of activity lies in its contribution to a truly rounded music education; so it is relevant for the generality of aspiring musicians, not just those who consider themselves jazz specialists. This is also about educating future jazz audiences.

To conclude this introduction, my esteemed colleagues on the Jazz Services' Awards Panel (Dr Catherine Tackley, Andrea Vicari and Bill Martin) and I, on behalf of Jazz Services, would like to thank:

- all those colleagues most of whom, above and beyond the call of duty, are spreading the jazz gospel nationwide;
- the National Music Council, of course!;
- Nick Smart and the Royal Academy of Music for their warm and supportive association over the past four years;
- the Worshipful Company of Musicians for their generous sponsorship of the Awards this year; and
- our colleagues at Serious, who through the EFG London Jazz Festival, have raised our profile and given us invaluable direct support.

Ivor Widdison

Chair, Jazz Services' Education Panel

We received the following submissions:

**Bournemouth & Poole (SoundStorm)** are notably involving several high class UK jazz musicians in a variety of ways. Their young musicians are helping star pianist Robert Mitchell to create a new major suite for premiere at the local Arts by the Sea Festival and at the EFG London Jazz Festival this Autumn. SoundStorm support has been essential for the viability of this project.

Significant funding is put into education outreach programmes from the Studio Jazz season at the Lighthouse, Poole's Centre for the Arts. The workshops and master classes in the schools themselves have been lead by Simon Spillet, Rob Palmer and Arnie Somogyi's "Scenes in the City"; further visits planned for this term include by Alan Barnes, Claire Martin, Adam Glasser. The rationale here is to inspire into playing and /or listening to jazz. Indeed, Sound Storm's initiatives are making a very real contribution to the success of Lighthouse's Studio Jazz season with a younger audience demographic already in evidence.

SoundStorm's Bournemouth Jazz Band is now well established and providing a new opportunity for starter jazz players of all school phases ultimately to develop the skills to enable them to progress into the Dorset Youth Jazz Orchestra, the advanced ensemble – this a partnership with Dorset Music Service.

Following a dialogue between Jazz Services' Education Panel and SoundStorm/Wave Director, Dan Somogyi, a plan for pilot schemes aimed at developing the use of jazz more widely in the core and extension roles of music Hubs was drawn up, approved by the Panel and Jazz Services' Board and featured in JSL's submission for NPO funding from the ACE with a view to roll out in 2014. SoundStorm was also primed to trial some of the scheme in its schools in the summer term of 2014. The ACE, for its part, have not to date shown interest, but should another funding source be found, and we hope it will, SoundStorm will be keen to pursue the project.

**Bromley Music Hub** A first-time entry this and it hits the ground running! Sights are pitched high with high profile (EFG London Jazz Festival, for example) public performances very much in evidence. This is made possible when you can draw upon nine jazz ensembles in the Hub to feed into the two big bands and a series of improvisation workshops which for the past three years have involved Soweto Kinch as music mentor. That same mix provided the stimulus for a new 20 minute musical work, composed by the students and refined and extended by composer James Yarde, which was publicly performed. A similar project was completed with year 8 pupils with the aim of introducing contemporary dance and creative music fusion in a jazz idiom.

The New Generation Big Band performed over ten gigs in the summer season alone. The Senior Big Band, where all students are of grade 8 plus standard, is now undertaking national festival commitments.

The Bromley Youth Music Trust prides itself on high quality CPD for its own staff and while these awards are about the year's achievements we look to recognise also good developmental planning. So we are happy to acknowledge the Trust's proposal to arrange CPD workshops for instrumentalists and singers (including Gospel) via master classes and repertoire development for classroom and peripatetic staff. Soweto Kinch is to be brought back for further improvisation workshops, and in the Easter holiday 2015, a large scale jazz course, over three days, will be lead by Buster Birch and other high quality professionals.

**East Renfrewshire** may be the smallest education authority featured in this report – a familiar role for their instrumental music service – but that doesn't hinder their commitment to jazz education, evidenced aplenty by this their fifth Diploma award in successive years!

The pedagogic base is all important. This Service looks to guarantee that by the continued employment of four members of staff with the Advanced Diploma in Jazz from St Andrews University and by engaging Stewart Forbes, former Head of Jazz at Strathclyde University to lead the Service's jazz groups, to teach and to develop planned CPD on improvisation and jazz styles for all staff. The pedagogic base is further strengthened by a new initiative which is succeeding not least because pupils and students are especially receptive to tuition and mentoring by those who are recognisably young people! In this instance, by members of the Strathclyde Youth Jazz Orchestra (one of the top European Youth Jazz Orchestras) who are providing jazz training as part of the Renfrewshire YMI Jazz Initiative. Additionally, members of the SYJO under the direction of Stewart Forbes, undertook an eight-week programme with the Service's Senior Jazz Band, and the transformative affect on the Band was, apparently, spectacular. Incidentally, membership of this Senior Band is drawn from all seven of the Authority's secondary schools.

The annual primary music course involved 110 pupils and featured improvisation workshops. Substantial progress was made over the course of the week. In practice this course proves to be an effective feeder to the Service's Junior Jazz Band.

**Glasgow** to their credit have maintained the policy of providing instrumental lessons free of charge. The Glasgow Schools Big Band, formed in 2009, comprises 27 students from secondary schools in the city and rehearses weekly in term time in the City Halls. A standard big band repertoire is rehearsed and the development of improvisation skills is worked on. The Band is called upon to perform at the City's Christmas and Spring concerts and other public events.

The Jazz Summer School, which is promoted jointly with the Glasgow International Jazz Festival, continues to field some of Scotland's most experienced jazz musicians and educators who hold classes on music theory, ear training and ensemble playing. The Festival have also developed their own annual schools jazz band competition, but rather like the Summer School, few details have been vouchsafed to us.

**Manchester (One Education Music)** One Education Music is the main delivery partner in the Manchester Music Hub. This submission exemplifies the main advantage of the Hub concept, viz the scope it provides for collaborative provision, which when underpinned by a shared vision and commitment to a genre, in this instance of course, jazz education, can add up to an impressive number of successful outcomes.

Designation as a Beacon of Good Practice under the National Youth Jazz Collective (NYJC) umbrella of the Manchester Youth Jazz Collective (MYJC) was a standout achievement. The MYJC gives 8-18 year olds opportunity to participate in a series of weekend workshops and Saturday taster sessions. The focus has been on small group improvisation in streamed groups.

The commitment to CDP has been maintained. Ten members of staff attended intensive training days lead by Issie Barrett, Richard Michael and One Education Music's own team of jazz specialists. That same team also conducted whole staff training and CPD for the broader staff body with a focus on how to introduce jazz and associated musicianship practices into small group tuition contexts as well as Wider Opportunities' settings (not so easy!)

Specialist jazz staff lead jazz ensembles, big band and small group, in the schools where they teach. And there are several examples of workshops, course opportunities and projects by the Northern School of Jazz, Band on the Wall, Brighter Sound, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Manchester Jazz Festival among others, all helping to enrich the learning of young jazz students.

And finally, it would be tempting to think that the exploration by 45 students of the beguiling Felonius Monks commission's mix of renaissance music and jazz sparked a lasting interest in both musical forms!

**Oxfordshire**, a county which takes improvisation seriously! The syllabus of all First Access programmes includes it, and non-specialist teachers are provided with specific guidance.

One of the most effective ways of stimulating real interest in jazz among young people is to give them opportunities to hear and see members of their own age group performing to a reasonably high standard. The Oxfordshire Music Education Partnership (the Hubs formal name) are very committed to that approach to the extent that Music Service Big Bands and groups regularly visit schools to perform joint concerts; the submission we received evidenced this by a detailed schedule of all visits by all the groups concerned over the year. Teachers receive specialist support in preparing pupils and students in the schools to participate as singers and/or instrumentalists.

We are always interested in the number, size and frequency of coming together of jazz ensembles supported by the Hub, Music Service and individual schools: Oxfordshire's response to this question was: three big bands supported by the Music Service, high quality big band and jazz combo provision in six large secondary schools, big band workshops in three music centres, two regular soloist rhythm sections from the county big bands and two highly successful student-led jazz combos: all meeting at least weekly.

Music Service specialist staff have continued to run workshop sessions for other instrumental teachers within the Music Service. The focus has been on how to develop jazz provision at the County's music centres and how best to incorporate improvisation into mainstream music teaching.

Among several high profile public performances, two stand out: a commissioned arrangement of a work by composer Nick Blake "Back in the Day" for a celebration of the work of the Oxfordshire County Music Service performed by two of the Oxfordshire Big Bands augmented by extra percussion and 50 strings, which was performed also at the 2014 National Music for Youth Festival.



Finally, a joint submission by the **Southampton and Hampshire Music Hubs**. The two Hubs enjoy excellent individual reputations but rather than compete on jazz education they have worked alongside each other to provide projects and opportunities for young musicians in the region in a way which blurs the geographical boundaries. Yet it isn't projects which make this submission so distinctive so much as the continued commitment to good practice in the form of relevant and effective CPD for both instrumental tutors and classroom music teachers and long-term mentoring and development of successful jazz ensembles. The two principal jazz ensembles in Southampton continue to be over-subscribed. The Southampton Jazz Workshop (SJW) nurtures young musicians (aged eight plus) from across the region, offering large ensemble playing opportunities, public and school performances, indeed, the Workshop bands have built strong relationships with several school music departments within both the City and County. It is SJW policy and practice to encourage members to write for the Bands, with mentoring by the two directors. The SJW is also, in effect, a nursery for the prestigious Southampton Youth Jazz Orchestra (though the SJW has many more Youtube appearances than the SYJO!)

SYJO too draws upon the whole of the County and City for its young musicians, It is widely recognised as one of the leading UK YJOs and has several close associations with nationally recognised professional jazz musicians. One of those professional connections included a project with Ian Shaw, exploring new arrangements of Burt Bacharach songs together with Shaw originals; and a unique collaboration with the Kairos 4tet in which members of the Quartet embedded themselves within the ranks of SYJO whilst playing new arrangements of their own material written for the Band by Director Dan Mar-Molinero. Annually half a dozen or more SYJO members leave to pursue their jazz studies at Conservatoires.

Strong links with the University of Southampton have been sustained and indeed improved with lecturers from the Jazz and Pop Undergraduate Degree Pathway working with young musicians to improve their understanding of jazz composition and jazz harmony. Teacher training and CPD have as affirmed above been a key part of the jazz offer. In an INSET day held by Hampshire Music Service over 50 instrumental tutors participated in a 'how to approach teaching jazz' workshop led by the SYJO Director who also conducted a similar workshop for primary and secondary music teachers on the fundamentals of running a jazz ensemble. In both instances, resources were included to aid teachers when applying the workshop outcomes to their own teaching situations.



An important development in the year was the launch of the BTEC Certificate in Music (Jazz) for year one students and the Subsidiary Diploma in Music (Jazz) for year two students at Hampshire Hub member, Alton College. For 16-19 students in the region this represents an A level equivalent which is acceptable to all the leading jazz conservatoire courses. The curriculum includes one small group gig in local music venues per month. To complement that 16-19 offer, the Hampshire Hub provided free improvisation workshops to 8-16s exploring fundamental improvisation ideas, eg blues, modes, turnarounds, which were well attended.

There is even more to this submission, but we will leave it on this novel note. A proposal to set up a teachers' jazz orchestra has been met with enthusiasm. What better way to start breaking down the "difficult" jazz barrier!

## **Conclusion**

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We pay tribute to those Hubs and Music Services which have demonstrated their commitment to music education and to jazz education in particular and believe that an 'honourable mention' is due to Glasgow.

We are pleased to award Diplomas to Bournemouth & Poole (SoundStorm), Bromley, East Renfrewshire, Manchester (One Education Music), Oxfordshire and a Diploma of Special Merit to Southampton and Hampshire in respect of their impressive joint submission.

IKW/October 2014