

2015

The Jazz UK Will Michael Jazz Education Awards

Introduction

Diplomas are awarded annually by what is now Jazz UK in association with the Music Education Council's Music Education Awards' Scheme. They matter for two reasons:

First, they are the only means of according national recognition to those music Hubs and Music Services which demonstrate an outstanding commitment to jazz education;

Secondly, they matter because they acknowledge the work of those field practitioners who are actually delivering jazz education in school and other settings, and especially those who are helping to combat the still widespread jazz phobia among classroom music teachers and instrumental tutors.

The Diplomas are 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 scheme.

This year the Awards' presentations took place at the Royal College of Music on 1 December and comprised a well-attended reception and presentations ceremony followed by a concert tribute by the RCM Big Band, directed by Mark Armstrong, and a Trio set by Phil DeGreg, to two distinguished jazz educators – Eddie Harvey and Will Michael.

To conclude this introduction my esteemed colleagues on the Awards Panel – Dr Catherine Tackley, Andrea Vicari, Richard Michael and Bill Martin – offer warm thanks to

- all those colleagues most of whom, above and beyond the call of duty, are spreading the jazz gospel nationwide;
- the Music Education Council, of course;
- the WCoM for their generous support over the past two years and whose Master, Andrew Morris, formally presented the Diplomas;
- the RCM for hosting the occasion and Mark Armstrong and the RCM Big Band and the Phil DeGreg Trio for the musical tributes to Eddie Harvey and Will Michael.

Ivor Widdison

Chair, Jazz UK Jazz Education Awards Panel

Set out below are the citations in respect of the Diploma winners:

Devon. The Music Hub looks to the Devon Youth Jazz Orchestra Association (DYJOA) to provide jazz education in its area. The high quality of the two flagship youth jazz orchestras – DYJO 1 and DYJO 2 – has been chronicled in our reports over several years. Public performances throughout the County and sometimes overseas is the norm; and the training and performing opportunities they have provided over the last 40 years continues to be a notable feature of their work. The aspect of their activities which most interests us is the outreach work they do in schools and other settings. With the support of the Hub a contingent of the best soloists from DYJOS 1&2, known as the Jazz Ambassadors performed and lead workshops in three different areas of Devon, as part of an established Jazz Explosion programme. Before delivering such programmes to schools the Ambassadors undertake four training sessions.

With support from the Hub DYJOA is planning to increase its jazz education in the coming year by, inter alia, finalising a primary school jazz introduction pack; given successful trials this will be made available to all Devon primary schools.

As a contribution to classroom music teachers CPD, a jazz education tool kit, assembled by DYJOA. was featured at this year's South West Penninsular Music Education Conference.



East Renfrewshire are far and away the smallest Authority (population 91,000) making a submission this year, but still able to employ four staff members who have the Advanced Diploma in Jazz from the University of St Andrews.

While it may not be our custom to emphasise big band successes, when we have evidence of an effective trickle down effect here (as in Devon) we cannot but raise our hats! Thus new jazz ensembles started up in four of East Renfrewshire's seven secondary schools, supported by Instrumental Music Service staff (IMS) inspired directly by the Senior Big Band's performance in the Commonwealth Games Legacy Showcase and a live Christmas broadcast on BBC Scotland's Jazz House with studio rehearsals under Tommy Smith. This followed award winning performances at the Glasgow Music Festival.

The Big Band includes players from all seven secondary schools and continues to send members to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland jazz courses and to the Scottish Youth Jazz Orchestra no. 2 Band.



The IMS primary music course provides improvisation workshops for 100 primary 7 instrumentalists, and is planning a residential course early in 2016.

And finally we think we should make special mention of the fact that this is the fifth consecutive year that East Renfrewshire have been awarded a Diploma.

Gloucestershire This Hub has a Jazz Education Policy. In our experience this is unusual. It is also very praiseworthy. The headline aim is “to encourage jazz performance at all levels”. And the objectives, which are ambitious, are to stimulate, encourage and develop jazz skills to schools, students and teachers in addition to promoting good practice at its Central Music School. And what is more the same Central School provides “disciplined” rehearsals for local youth and adult musicians to explore challenging repertoire, ensemble skills and improvisation. It is, sadly, rare these days to come across a music service/Hub which makes any jazz provision for adults. Three other music centres also provide jazz performance opportunities as a result of which they often feed players into the Jazz Academy Big Band and the senior Gloucestershire Youth Jazz Orchestra.

By means of a locally produced PDF booklet, good practice and the jazz knowledge base are promoted for students, tutors and classroom music teachers. The booklet also shares advice and practise strategies, music theory resources, ideas for the development of improvisation and jazz language skills and listening suggestions – it is difficult, in our opinion, to overestimate the importance for students’ development of hearing jazz, preferably live; and this is recognised by Gloucestershire’s policy and practice.



Also worthy of praise, is Gloucestershire’s inclusion of improvisation and jazz history in its Whole Class Music Curriculum, with teachers being encouraged to use improvisation as a creative tool in Whole Class lessons.

And finally, we have here a submission which in some measure meets all our guidance criteria; this is probably a first !

Oxfordshire All Oxfordshire County Music Service (OCMS) First Access instrumental lessons use play and copy ideas as a warm-up activity which develops into short improvisations. Improvisational support material can be accessed by pupils at home. And such is the importance attached to this skill that all OCMS instrumental music assessments up to grade 3 require pupils to make an improvisational response to an appropriate stimulus. A jazz improvisation presentation to all teaching staff was included in OCMS INSET.

OCMS dedication to the Big Band was very much in evidence with a Schools Big Band, Senior Schools Big Band and the Oxfordshire Youth Big Band – a Dixieland Jazz Band (a recent



innovation) and the Jazz Collective also meet weekly. The latter has a focus on higher level improvisation skills. Nine local schools also have jazz groups.

Every OYBB concert is recorded for a CD and some students use the recordings for GCSE and A level music purposes. The OCMS Big Band chart library, which supports all the OCMS ensembles referred to above, exceeds 500 titles and covers all styles.

And for a practical demonstration of how much can be achieved by partnership working a Diploma of Special Merit was awarded to

Southampton & Hampshire

Our reports often refer to the beneficial effects of giving young musicians opportunity to hear good quality live jazz. These two Hubs have strong partnerships with two prestigious venues which has led to a committed audience of young musicians attending touring jazz group concerts. This is one of several reasons why jazz is flourishing among young people in both areas. One of those partners – Turner Sims – as part of their commitment worked with two Hampshire schools on a project led by stellar members of Tomorrow’s Warriors which included several visits to the school and a concluding concert hosted by Turner Sims.

Inspiration thus gained is nourished by jazz being an integral part of INSET and CPD provided by both Hubs and in schemes of work of peripatetic teachers employed by the Southampton Hub including elements introducing jazz to all First Access pupils. Importantly, both Hubs employ specialist jazz teachers.



The two well-established and over-subscribed large ensembles though based in Southampton, recruit from both Hub areas. The Southampton Jazz Workshop (SJW) takes young musicians from as young as eight into a range of public performance opportunities and mentoring school ensembles which are interested in jazz and improvisation. The SJW also represents something of a nursery for that exemplar of the best that youth jazz orchestras can achieve, viz the Southampton Youth Jazz Orchestra (SYJO) and thus experience

playing with leading professional jazz stars. Thanks to the Turner Sims connection this year SYJO participated in a significant 70th anniversary celebration with John Surman and John Warren.

The BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Jazz taught by professional jazz musicians, equivalent to a full A level and recognised by conservatoires with jazz courses, had another successful year at Hampshire Hub member Alton College.

Strong links with the University of Southampton have been maintained, drawing on composition and harmony skills of staff on the Jazz & Pop undergraduate degree pathway and resulting in regular jazz jam sessions for young musicians who want to play jazz and improvise in a supportive and near-professional context.

Our warmest congratulations to all who were responsible for the above successful submissions.

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