The Musician

Journal of the Musicians' Union
Summer 2020
theMU.org

Across The Great Divide
Perform, teach, record, support: how musicians have brought people together in a time of social distancing

Live Streaming
How musicians can make the most of online performances

Tim Burgess
The Charlatans singer on his solo work and Twitter Listening Parties

Mental Health
Advice and support for musicians during these uncertain times

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Music Will Survive

How your Union is doing everything in its power to support its members at this challenging time, and plan for music's recovery in the future...

I recently gave an interview on BBC Radio 5 Live where I said that the current crisis is the worst our profession has had to endure since the 1920s when they launched the talkies and laid off all the cinema orchestras. Looking back I have to say that the Union got it wrong in the way it reacted then – launching a campaign to argue that the talkies were just a fad, a flash in the pan, and audiences would soon return to silent movies with orchestra accompaniment – but this time round, judging from all the messages of thanks we have received, we have got it right.

Launching the MU Coronavirus Hardship Fund, setting up the Crowdfunder, securing a donation of £100,000 from PPL and other donations from industry businesses to bolster the fund, and providing the members with up-to-the-minute advice, guidance and support on a regular and

timely basis have all been very well received.

The Executive Committee's decision to offer a three month subscriptions holiday to those in dire need is just the latest in a basket of measures that we have introduced to try and help you get through this calamitous situation.

Reaching out

When the Chancellor made his announcement on support for the self-employed and mentioned musicians before any other group of workers we knew our messages had got through. That said, we can't afford to take our foot off the gas on the lobbying front as we are only too aware that there are many of you out there who currently don't qualify for either the furloughing scheme or the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS). Every day we are reaching out to politicians and civil servants with a very clear message that more needs to be done for musicians, and we are using all of our channels of influence to get our messages across.

At the same time, we are in regular meetings with other industry bodies to try and get an idea of what recovery might look like. We are discussing

the idea of pop-up gigs, live broadcasts from venues and studios, outdoor concerts and how we can get studio recording sessions up and running again. The overriding consideration in all of these discussions is the safety and welfare of our members, and this will remain our number one concern. That said, we know that you are all desperate to be able to start work again even if we all have to reluctantly accept that the way we will be working for the foreseeable future will be very different from the way we worked before the pandemic.

Committed to helping

Finally, the Chair of the Executive Committee, Dave Lee, wrote recently in an email to a colleague that music will survive. He's right of course, but we need to do all we can to make sure that all the fantastic musicians who create the music can stay in the profession too.

Your Union is committed to helping you through these dark days, and we will do everything in our power to make sure that you weather this tsunami and resume your careers when it is safe to do so.

Very best wishes
Horace Trubridge

To hear more from Horace, visit theMU.org

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Will Simpson
Will has contributed to a range of music magazines, including Total Guitar, Guitarist and Mixmag. Will has also published the book Freedom Through Football. **p26**

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Dan is a writer based in Sheffield. He writes about music and culture for The Guardian, Uncut, Pitchfork, Loud & Quiet, Vice and The Independent. **p16**

Tracey Kelly
A singer-songwriter, one half of pop-jazz duo Tracey & Jason (with Jason Sidwell), and an MU member. Tracey has written for books on pop, jazz and rock. **p30**

Frontline

The MU in action, working on behalf of professional musicians.

MU LOBBYING REPORTS AND MU SURVEY RESULTS

The COVID-19 crisis has presented unparalleled challenges for musicians, and the Union has been at the forefront of the fight to ensure that our members are able to survive at this incredibly difficult time.

Setting up an Impact Survey from the start of the crisis gave us important and solid statistics to take to Government. We wrote to Ministers, placed parliamentary questions and had online meetings with Ministers, Shadow Ministers and MPs to argue for financial support for our members.

This bore fruit when the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announced the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) and mentioned musicians first in his speech.

It did, however, quickly become clear that a large proportion of MU members would not qualify for this scheme. Despite the Chancellor's claim that SEISS would cover 95% of the self-employed and that those not eligible would be the richer self-employed, our second Impact Survey made it clear that this was not the case.

Survey headlines

- 1,459 musicians responded to the survey.

- 38% of respondents said they do not qualify for the Government's assistance schemes for employed or self-employed workers.

- Even of those who said that they do qualify for SEISS, 26% said that they would struggle to survive financially in the interim period before payments are made.

- 45% of respondents stated that they usually earn under £20,000 net in an average year.

- 19% of respondents said that the problems caused by coronavirus may force them to abandon their career as a musician in the long term. 35% were unsure.

The full survey results can be viewed here: **musiciansunion.typeform.com/report/DIhT3i/3UvkLZQ0rPullebb**

Call for financial assistance

The Union called for the Government to address those musicians who did not qualify for Government assistance by providing:

- Meaningful support for those who have been self-employed for less than a year.

- Support for self-employed people who run as limited companies and pay themselves in dividends through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

- A way for musicians who are part self-employed (at less than 50% of their total annual income) to access support through the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

- The removal of the £50,000 cap in the Self-employment Income Support Scheme, as no equivalent cap exists for employed people, and to pay people up

to the cap.

- A speeding up of the Universal Credit application process up to cover the gap until support via the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme is made available in June, or an alternative method of covering the income gap.

We were also concerned that members who have taken time out for maternity leave may be being disadvantaged, since maternity leave is not being disregarded from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme.

Lobbying continues

Online meetings were held with the newly elected Leader of the Opposition, Keir Starmer, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Jo Stevens, and Shadow Culture Minister, Tracy Brabin. The MU also sent letters to the Chancellor Rishi Sunak and the Minister for Culture, Caroline Dinenage. We continued to argue for emergency financial assistance for the period before remuneration became available. General Secretary Horace Trubridge took part in a roundtable call with Ministers from the Dept for

Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), in which he argued strongly for measures to help newly self-employed musicians, musicians whose self-employed work is less than 50% of their total, for those running a limited company, and those with 'profits' of over £50,000. The Union was also in contact with the Dept for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the Treasury, and gave evidence to the DCMS Select Committee inquiry into the effect of COVID-19 on the creative industries.

We thank all members who responded to our surveys and sent in case studies and we would like to assure all musicians that we continue to argue your case on a daily basis at the highest levels.

ORGANISATIONS UNITE FOR MUSICIANS

In the same month as the MU launched its £1m Coronavirus Hardship Fund – a move that received coverage in broadsheets such as The Guardian and The Telegraph, as well as in media outlets like Classic FM, Music Week and Billboard – other music industry bodies were also quick

to commit to supporting musicians faced with no income. Help Musicians launched its £5m Coronavirus Financial Hardship Fund, which had received 17,000 applications by the end of March. PRS for Music also launched an Emergency Relief Fund, offering up to £1,000 each to PRS writers, depending on need and eligibility.

The BPI and BRIT Awards coordinated a £1.5m contribution from the UK recorded music sector, while PPL donated £700,000 to UK COVID-19 hardship funds, including £100,000 to the MU Coronavirus Hardship Fund. The Association of Independent Music (AIM) launched its COVID-19 Crisis Fund, making available an initial £500,000, with a target of £1m, to distribute £1,000 each to 1,000 contractors and freelance workers across the sector. Classical music students too received assistance. A fund set up by Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) with a target of £5,000 ended up raising £100,000.

GENERAL SECRETARY'S TERM EXTENDED

Yola Carter, Jade Bird, Joan Armatrading and The MU's Executive Committee, the democratically elected governing body of the

Union, has made a unanimous decision to extend the General Secretary Horace Trubridge's term of office until his retirement on his 68th birthday in 2025.

The decision was taken in full receipt of legal advice covering the required conditions to be fulfilled under TULRCA 1992 and the MU Rules. The Chair of the MU's Executive Committee, Dave Lee, said: "Since Horace became General Secretary there has been a new sense of urgency and drive within the organisation, with initiatives to bring the worth of our members to the attention of not only the general public but politicians of all persuasions. We have been reassured that our decision was correct by witnessing the Union's rapid response to the crisis faced by our members during this unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic and the readiness to make funds available to ease immediate hardship."

For more information visit theMU.org

Your Voice

This selection of tweets, emails and letters reflects the diverse range of dialogue between the MU and its members.

So Grateful
Massive thank you to The MU for providing me with £200 through the Coronavirus Hardship Fund. It's not a lot, but it's the most I've been granted as a self-employed musician with no work. So grateful!
Lucy May Walker @Lucymaywalker

Vital Support
Me too! Thank you for helping us, MU. It's good to see how much musicians have supported each other over the last weeks. Makes me part of a much bigger family.
Kate Addis @bassist76

Much Appreciated
Gotta say The MU are doing such an amazing job of taking care of its members – daily updates/advice/help/funding. Thank you. It is so appreciated.

Kerri Watt @kerriwatt

Outstanding Job
Thank you for providing such outstanding support and Covid-19 information to UK musicians.
Priscilla Angelique @priscillamedia

Proud Member
The MU have been fantastic. Very proud to be a member.
Adam Parrish @ParrishProg

Literal Lifesavers
The MU and Help Musicians UK, you are literal life savers. Thank you so, so much for the help you're giving to musicians
right now.
Coco Malone @CocoMaloneMusic

It Means A Lot
Feeling incredibly grateful to The MU for awarding me a hardship payment today. A small amount, but means a lot right now. they're also doing brilliant campaigning work. Join a union if you can – it's important to know you are not alone #hardshipfunds

Ben Osborn @tangled_hair

Speak To Us
If you are a musician and an MU member (for at least 12 months), speak to The MU. If you aren't already a member, they are wonderful! Non-members, Help Musicians UK are also super helpful, lovely and can help if you need it. #union
Life Of Bryony @BryonyPurdue

Big Impact
Thank you The MU and Help Musicians UK for all you do to help musicians up and down the country whose lives and livelihoods have been impacted by Covid-19.
Katy Rose Bennett @ktbennett

Incredible Work
The MU, Help Musicians UK,
The Arts Council and many more are doing such an incredible work! Please never take this for granted! Thank you for the huge support, help and info in these uncertain times!
Maria Chiara Argirò @M_C_Argiro

Challenging Time
A huge thank you to The MU for your financial

support at this challenging time. I hope you know how wonderful you are. Love from every single full-time, anxious musician (especially this one).
Devon Mayson @DevonMayson

Props To The MU
Gotta give props to The MU for helping out so many musicians at this time. What with Glastonbury cancelled, all comedy work, corporates and other events postponed and cancelled, they have provided many of us with a buffer. It's not perfect but it's very welcome.
Matt Blair @themattblair

Amazing Things
Thank you so much to The MU for the money received from your hardship fund. So grateful, you are doing amazing things to help us all in this difficult time.
laura miller
@iamlauramiller

Unmeasurable Relief
Utterly grateful to be receiving a hardship grant from The MU. This now means I can pay rent this month and the relief is unmeasurable. To

everyone who's offered both moral and financial support through all of this, I cannot thank you enough.
Amelle Rose
@AmelleRose7

Lost Tours
I am so thankful right now for The MU and Help Musicians UK for supporting me during this difficult time after my tours were cancelled. These hardship funds are a lifeline to me and my family right now.
Hannah White
@songsbyhannah

Lucky To Have You
We musicians are so bloody lucky to have this. I realise this more than ever right now as I see people close to me in other professions fighting for their rights on their own.
Cheryl Law
@LawCheryl

Shout Out
Huge shout out to The MU
for the £200 emergency relief fund and all of the absolutely amazing work that you do. So so

grateful.
Jazz Mino
@Jazz__Mino

Join Your Union
Feeling grateful to The MU for awarding me a hardship fund. It may not be a huge amount but this helping hand means a lot right now. I feel supported and not alone. If you are a musician #joinaunion. Also loving the daily emails keeping us informed.
Roxana Vilk
@RoxanaVilk

Very grateful
Cannot thank the The MU and Help Musicians UK enough for their incredible emergency relief funds, so gratefully received... the help for musicians they're giving is incredible, thank you thank you.
Cherry Lee Mewis
@CherryLeeMewis

Just Sayin'
Fellow musicians! We're lucky to have The MU and Help Musicians UK during times like these. Just sayin'...
Matthew Fry
@matthew__fry

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Follow us on Instagram @WeAreTheMU

soundcloud.com/musicians-union

Find us at theMU.org

Email us TheMusician@TheMU.org

CORONAVIRUS HARDSHIP FUND
To find out if you're eligible to apply for a £200 support grant from the MU, go to musiciansunion.org.uk/HardshipFund

SUPPORT THE MU
Encourage your friends and family to sign up as MU Supporters at **theMU.org/supportthemu**

ASK US FIRST
Members are advised that the latest edition of our Ask Us First list can be obtained from the Advice section of the MU website by logging in at **theMU.org**

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Making Streaming Work For Musicians

MU Deputy General Secretary Naomi Pohl introduces Keep Music Alive, a new joint campaign from the MU and the Ivors Academy that aims to ensure musicians receive fairer royalty rates from streaming services

In early May, we announced a new alliance with the Ivors Academy to campaign for a better deal on streaming. Since the Covid-19 lockdown took effect and the live music sector closed its doors until further notice, musicians have taken to Twitter to express their anger at unacceptably low per-stream royalty rates, and the lack of live income has thrown the problem into stark relief.

Tom Gray from the band Gomez is a member of the Ivors Academy Songwriter Committee and is leading a grassroots campaign using the hashtag #BrokenRecord. Tom's initial thread, explaining how royalty splits work and saying that "the music industry HAS to change... the ways in which we make money are

disappearing and the inequities of the recorded music business are being severely exposed," received in excess of 6,000 likes.

A watershed moment in the grassroots campaign came when Spotify announced its 'tip jar' initiative, so fans could give directly to the artists they love during the Covid-19 crisis. This was called out by many artists and in the press (see The Guardian article by Ben Beaumont-Thomas on 23 April) as being ironic when their business model is "begrudging and miserly" towards creators. However, while there are calls for Spotify to charge more so they can pay fairly, which we support, the heart of the issue lies in the division of royalties once streaming platforms have paid out to rightsholders.

At present, royalty splits are roughly 30% for the streaming platform, 10-15% for the song (shared between songwriter and publisher, often an 80/20 split in the writer's favour) and 57% for the rights in the recording. While the share paid to the label generates royalties for featured artists, what they get varies hugely depending on their deal. Many artists receive less than 20%, and

even then there may be a 10% deduction for 'breakage' – an irrelevance when you're dealing with digital and not physical product – plus further deductions for manufacture and distribution. This is nothing short of scandalous and so obviously outdated that it's hard to fathom how the major labels are getting away with it.

A fair deal

Labels will point to better deals that pay 50% to artists. However, while 50% deals may be offered to new artists, or where independent labels take an ethical approach across the board, many artists signed prior to the advent of streaming don't have sufficient bargaining power to renegotiate. Why would the majors agree to rewrite contracts at the expense of their massive profits?

While most artists generate almost all of their income from touring and only a tiny fraction from streaming, a handful of newer artists signed to the major labels, like Drake and Ariana Grande, make tens of millions from streaming annually.

One possible way of addressing this issue would

be for streaming royalties to be paid out on a user-centric basis. The current model means royalties go into one pot and are paid pro-rata based on the number of overall streams. Under a user-centric model, your subscription fee would be divided among the tracks you listened to. According to Deezer, for example, this could result in a fairer share going to emerging, heritage and niche artists. It certainly seems a fairer way of paying, and for this reason it may appeal to consumers as well as musicians.

Push and pull

One further aspect of the streaming debate has become known in the industry as 'push and pull'. If you select a track to stream, that's pull. If you select Artist Radio or a curated playlist, that's push – tracks are pushed at you. We would argue that the push element is very much like traditional radio and should result in royalties being distributed via PPL. This would benefit session musicians, who currently receive no income from streaming, and featured artists who either have bad deals or remain unrecouped.

Our #FixStreaming petition received 6,000 signatures in its first few days. We are calling on

the government to review streaming in order to ensure that it's fairer for the whole music ecosystem. For example, if a Select Committee agrees to investigate, they will be able to demand sight of licensing deals that are currently covered by non-disclosure agreements. This would throw light into some murky corners of the business.

New thinking

If we were to completely reimagine the streaming royalty pipeline, we could perhaps look at 25% for the platform, 25% for the song, 25% for the recording (split 50/50 with the artist) and the final 25% to go to PPL for distribution to the labels and performers, including the session musicians. However, getting this right would depend on both changing existing artists' existing contracts to 50/50, and persuading both platforms and labels to relinquish a portion of their income. It is difficult to envisage any of this happening without some form of government intervention or regulation.

The IFPI Global Music Report for 2019 states that total revenues for the global recorded music market have grown by 8.2% to US$20.2 billion.

For the first time, streaming revenue accounted for more than half this figure. This was driven by a 24.1% increase in paid subscription streaming with nearly all markets reporting growth in this area. There were 341 million users of paid streaming services at the end of 2019 (+33.5%). This is further fuel to the fire as far as artists are concerned. It must be possible for writers and performers to make a reasonable living, right?

If you want to back our campaign, sign the petition. Also, follow **@MrTomGray** on Twitter and the #BrokenRecord campaign.

Keeping Music Live In Lockdown

These are unprecedented times for the music industry, so we speak to musicians about the way that they are dealing with the enforced break
Report by Neil Churchman

It felt like the day the music died. The lockdown dealt the cruellest of blows to an industry based on the opposite of social distancing. Venues closed, tours ground to a halt, music lessons were scrapped and sessions abandoned. Almost overnight, tens of thousands of musicians found themselves in limbo and facing extreme financial hardship. MU General Secretary Horace Trubridge summed up the impact as "a disaster of gargantuan proportions".

"The scale is astronomical," he said. "This is without doubt the darkest hour for the music profession. The last time we had something as catastrophic as this was in the mid-to late-1920s when the orchestras were all sacked from

the cinemas because of the talkies. Even then live work existed and the studios were still open. The problem we have now is there's absolutely no live work and the studios are closed as well."

New ways of working

But the worst of times has also been bringing out the best in a sector whose forte has always been innovation and resilience. Within hours of the PM's announcement, many musicians were mobilising to migrate their performances and services online, while getting paid for them through donations or subscriptions. Front rooms became stages for performers. Music teachers were swapping classrooms for livestreams, and orchestras and choirs were developing new ways to engage with audiences barred from concert halls. "The creativity of our members has been second to none," said Horace. "Our members are having to cope with a complete loss of income and I am amazed and continue to be impressed by them every day."

The Musician spoke to members in March and April to gauge how they have been affected, financially and creatively, and how they are meeting the challenges of Covid-19.

Abi Moore
Singer-songwriter/choir leader
"Being a self-employed musician means this is not the first time I have been in crisis," explained Abi, a Nottingham-based choir leader and singer-songwriter. She moved swiftly to take her a capella choir, Totally Vocally, online, producing a series of video tutorials for members ahead of rehearsal sessions, which can involve as many as 70 singers logged on from their own homes at once. She has also been staging gigs of her own material from home (see p44). "It felt really good, apart from the minor technical hiccups. It was really nice to see people logging in and the comments I got afterwards. At the moment I feel really positive. In a way it has been a blessing in disguise for me, because it has made me do things that I have said I would do for years."

Diane Clarke
Principle flautist with Orchestra of the Swan
"Lots of concerts, operas, workshops, and a SEND project had to be cancelled, which obviously has resulted in a loss of revenue," Diane notes. "It has meant that I'm not able to play and perform with my colleagues and friends

– something I've always done and is such a huge part of my life. I miss this and I miss the connection with our audiences. Lockdown has given me a sudden need to rethink the way I engage with students who are still heading towards exams and recitals."

Midge Ure
Musician, singer-songwriter, producer
In late-March, with little prospect of an early escape from lockdown for the industry, respected performer and writer Midge highlighted how musicians had stepped up when they were needed in the past. Now, he said, it was the UK government's turn to act.

"The entertainment industry is always first in line offering their services in times of need for others – Live Aid, Princes Trust Concerts, Nelson Mandela Birthday concert etc. Not just the performers but the entire body of skilled workers who enable these events to take place. Free. Most of these people are self-employed and now face a devastating future. It's time to give a hand to the people who generate untold wealth for the country."

Luke Jackson
Singer-songwriter
Luke was among many who cited the movement restrictions as one of the hardest lockdown rules to get used to. "For a travelling musician, it's a complete 180 being told to stay in one place. Now I have accepted that I'm not going anywhere for a while, I am just working on making the most of what is possible and shaping it to try and benefit me when coming out the other side of all of this. Staying positive, passionate and driven are my main focuses right now."

Tabea Debus
Recorder player and YCAT artist
"My concert diary has been completely wiped clean until at least summer 2020," Tabea explains, "and possibly beyond. Many projects I was excited about being a part of have fallen through or been postponed indefinitely. Luckily I can a continue my recorder teaching remotely, even while I'm stuck in Germany for the time being. As always the whole YCAT team has been absolutely marvellous: staying in touch and making sure everyone is doing okay. The Hardship Fund takes the
edge off worrying about how one will be

able to cover all running costs with very little income left."

Bernard Butler
Guitarist, writer, producer
Bernard Butler spoke to the MU at the end of March about the long-term creative cost of coronavirus. "Musicians have been hit with a catastrophe of cancelled shows and sessions, closed studios, cancelled tours, unpaid technical crew, travel expenses unrefunded, visas wasted, promotional budgets down the drain, long planned releases dying before launch. The personal and collective effort, both creative and practical, can be months, even years in the making. There is no horizon, no point where shows can be rebooked and postponements simply moved to. This is not just a temporary blip – we have no idea when, how, or if projects can be reborn. This is financially catastrophic and mentally soul destroying. While we try to keep ourselves and our families safe, musicians will find ways to be creative – the complex musical economy must be helped through this time."

Siân Monaghan
Session drummer, performer and teacher

Online has also enabled many who teach music to retain students, and at least part of their income. Session drummer, performer and teacher Siân has launched an internet-based tutoring service called Lockdown! Music Lessons Online, which was set up with colleague and drummer Hayley Cramer. They set up a website in three days, offering students lessons with session musicians, songwriters and producers. "We thought this was a unique angle and a real opportunity for students to gain insight into the workings of a career in the music industry. Going online has been a breeze. The only thing I miss is not being able to play together with the students."

Ben Goldscheider
Horn player and YCAT artist
"The coronavirus has completely wiped out my source of income for the foreseeable future," says Ben. "Not only does it have implications in terms of cancelled concerts, it is also affecting the following years because of the backlog of postponements, worries about funding and so on. That's not to speak of the mental effect it has had. It's such a difficult time for musicians, normally a group of people used to living very

fast-paced lives and being energised by the public."

Andi Hopgood
Vocalist, choir leader and MU Executive Committee vice-chair
Vocalist and choir leader Andi Hopgood said she had been spurred into "proactive mode" by the crisis. "I'm trying very hard to keep positive. I am teaching online and trying to think of innovative ways to do things and keep some kind of musical presence while I can't be out there performing. If anyone can get through this, musicians can. We are super adaptable, creative and robust. We just have to change to this online world and keep up the value of our expertise and what we can offer."

Shelly Quarmby
Singer-songwriter
Life in lockdown has also brought changes for Shelly. "The biggest effect for me is the ability to travel. Like many, my work is diverse. One day assisting music in the community, the next teaching singing. I also tour the country in a theatre production and play my original gigs. Creators not having the funds to live, let alone

recover the industry in the future, is my biggest worry and puts the livelihoods of all the technical and support staff at risk too."

Rick Finlay
MU Executive Committee member
The far-reaching lockdown has left few unaffected. Even musicians with a wide portfolio – including performing, studio work and teaching – such as drummer Rick Finlay have not been spared. "My income is normally made up of a mixture of live performance work, recording, teaching, and also running a regular jazz venue where we provide employment for many musicians. All of these sources of income have dried up. On the positive side, the music community is a uniquely supportive and caring one, and I know that we will see the best of our colleagues in the weeks to come."

Yvonne Wyroslawska
Early years music and movement specialist
Within days of the lockdown Yvonne launched her first online class for under-fives. For these she has set her fees slightly lower, and is taking payment electronically.

“For me it's about giving some sort of normality for children and parents with the hope that if I can keep people engaged now, they will come back when things get back to how they used to be.” Like many others, she thinks the crisis will change the way she works in future. She's planning more web-based training for other music educators, and thinks the web will help her in other ways, such as when the weather gets bad. “If there's a snow day, we'll just go online. I don't think it will be regular thing, but it's a brilliant backup that I would never have considered before.”

The way forward

Leading industry bodies have launched emergency funds and financial appeals to help those hit hardest by the crisis. The MU's own Hardship Fund received more than two hundred applications within two hours of opening. The MU has also been seeking donations via Crowdfunder, and has been lobbying hard for more comprehensive government aid for the sector.

“What's beyond any doubt is that our industry is going to need a financial support package,” said

Horace Trubridge. "Even when the lockdown starts to be relaxed, we are looking at social distancing measures in place possibly until the end of the year and beyond. You can't open up small venues and put on gigs if that's the case.

"Our business isn't like the retail trade and service companies. It relies heavily on people being able to go into a venue and stand next to each other and watch a band. The music industry is worth £4.2bn to the Treasury, and the government has to act for it to have some chance of retaining our position on the global stage."

Latest union advice:
MU Coronavirus Outbreak Advice Hub
musiciansunion.org.uk/coronavirus

Wellbeing and mental health:
Royal Society of Musicians' Volunteer Support Network:
rsmgb.org/network

See p34 for more mental health resources for musicians

SIMON CARE

Folk musician Simon Care decided he had to act to help musicians hit hard by the coronavirus lockdown.

"I found myself to be slightly more fortunate than some of my fellow musicians on the folk scene and wanted to do something to help," he said. "I decided to do a live Facebook broadcast twice a week called Simon Care's Musical Jukebox, where I asked my viewers to request traditional English dance tunes, or to join in at home on their instruments.

"I also set up a small donations page through ko-fi.com/simonsmusicaljukebox so people could donate if they so wished. It was my intention to raise money then identify fellow professionals, be they musicians, techies, promoters or agents who might be suffering significant financial hardship due to loss of earnings.

I have also asked other professional friends to let me know if they have heard of anyone needing help."

Telling Stories

Most famous for his work with Britpop veterans The Charlatans, Tim Burgess has been keeping himself busy in lockdown with his online listening parties...
Profile by Daniel Dylan Wray

"I'm not getting much sleep," says Tim Burgess, frontman of The Charlatans. "But it's all fun. I'm not sleeping because I'm waking up so excited all the time."

It's credit to Burgess' eternal optimism, energy and productivity that he's bursting with excitement during a period when others are crippled by anxiety. But Burgess has always liked to keep a few plates spinning. Over the years he's released 13 albums with the beloved indie outfit The Charlatans, put out several solo records, written two books, formed his own record label O Genesis, and even produced his own brand of coffee and cereal. "The more stuff that I'm doing, the more focused I seem to become," he says. "I need to do stuff and I like to have several things going on at the

same time because one influences the other and then the other thing can become the brainchild of something else. I find having multiple things happening at once fuels the fire."

Burgess has had a little practice for time spent at home however. The proud MU member of 30 years – "It's my trade union and I'm very thankful for it" – moved to the Norfolk countryside seven years ago and has become used to a quieter life with more indoors time. "Moving from north London was initially quite a shock," he says. "It's a small village as opposed to a busy city – it's really not Grand Central station out here. So, it's taken seven years to get to this point and now I feel like with that experience behind me I'm doing okay in isolation."

Listen with Tim

During lockdown, Burgess is promoting his latest solo album, I Love The New Sky – one that happens to be his finest to date, as a genre-eschewing journey through art rock, folk pop and leftfield indie. He has also started Tim's Twitter Listening Party, a communal album listening experience on social media that has

taken off hugely and raises money for the MU Hardship Fund and the PRS Emergency Relief Fund, via the #BrokenRecord appeal.

The premise of the Twitter Listening Party is simple: Burgess ropes in an artist or band member to talk about a classic album they've made, everyone meets on Twitter at a certain time to hit play and listen along together whilst discussing it. "The first week was really big," he says of its surprise success. "It was The Charlatans, Franz Ferdinand, Blur and Oasis. I'm surprised by it but it's a positive thing because you think yourself it might be a great idea but you don't realise how other people are going to interpret it. It's exceeded my expectations." The requests have been coming in such volumes that Burgess has created a schedule, now booked up weeks in advance to keep track of all the artists involved, which so far include: Idles, Sleaford Mods, Foals, British Sea Power, Low, The The, Orbital and countless others.

"We've just done our first festival," he says of the weekend-long event that featured four listening parties a day headlined by The Breeders and Midlake, and included online DJ sets from

Burgess. “People never get the chance to go deep when an album comes out because you’re often too close to it,” he says. “But over time it becomes something you can dig deeper into. The most common thing that people are saying is that they are listening to albums in full again. Which is an amazing thing because when bands make a record, there’s a lot of thought, effort and artistry that goes into it, and it seems in recent years that maybe albums have been cast aside a little bit.”

Perfect timing

In many ways the timing is perfect for the release of his album I Love The New Sky. People have more time on their hands, and he’s created an active audience with an appetite for consuming albums in full. Burgess even got a tiny taste of being able to perform it for the public. “We went to New York to play a festival on the way to SXSW, but we only got that far,” he says. “But it felt like such a great place to debut all the songs.” Burgess is also pretty sure he contracted Covid-19 whilst in New York, returning home with symptoms but never falling seriously ill.

Looking back on the album has put him in

a reflective mood, given that's it's one that was made in multiple locations while he's now firmly stuck in just one. "I love the memories of the album already," he says. "It took a year to make, so it wasn't rushed. It came at its own pace." Burgess wrote the album at home in Norfolk, safely tucked away in a house where the nearest shop is an eight mile journey, but then he recorded it in a place that reconnected deeply with a part of his past: Rockfield Studios in Wales. It had been 25 years since The Charlatans recorded there, when they made their 1997 album Tellin' Stories. It's a place with bittersweet memories because the band's keyboard player Rob Collins was killed in a car crash during the sessions.

"I was looking for a sound that I didn't really know what it was, but I knew the vocal sound I could get at Rockfield," Burgess says of the studio that captured Freddie Mercury on Bohemian Rhapsody. "I didn't have to look too far for where to go next. There's a sound there that I really missed. I've tried to get The Charlatans to go back there, but they weren't having it because it can be a bit pricey so you need to manage your time really well. No disrespect to The Charlatans,

but it's a lot easier to manage if it's a solo project. Rather than telling a band what to do, I've only got myself to argue with."

New collaborations

Burgess worked with Welsh experimental musician and producer Thighpaulsandra and his bandmate Daniel O'Sullivan on expanding the arrangements. "They are both really accomplished musicians and I'm basic at best," he says. Although primitive beginnings are a big part of the creative process for Burgess. "I grew up on bands like the UK Subs and punk music, so I always listen to punk records when I'm writing a new album so I can start off basically. I wanted the album to have the elaborateness of the best Paul McCartney stuff, but I need other people to help me to do that in order to step into that world."

Broad influences

So for Burgess this album captures the best of both worlds, embracing rough edges as well as offering honed and shimmering productions. "We realised that we all like Crass, as well as that we all like Yes, so the album exists somewhere in between. Thighpaulsandra was referencing

some of the music sounding like 10cc and Roxy Music, but I've never really listened to those bands, they were just the chords I was using that felt right." The album was also taken to Brussels for more work, but despite the input of other people this remains a true solo album, the first that Burgess has written all by himself. "I've collaborated with The Charlatans for 13 albums, and I loved going to see Kurt Wagner (of Lambchop) in Nashville to work on Oh No I Love You, and I loved working with Peter Gordon in New York on Same Language, Different Worlds, but I needed to do this one by myself. I wanted to write everything, to stand solid and show people what I could do."

It also encourages a vital creative force for his work in The Charlatans if Burgess has other artistic pursuits. "It's important for me to have these separate outlets," he says. "It's also important for my contributions to the band. I love working with The Charlatans and I always want to bring something new to it – with this record, it's definitely pointing towards somewhere new." It's also one he's finished with a great degree of pride. "It feels like I'm putting myself out there, but all the way through making this record, I just

kept thinking: 'what an album'. All these tracks were really impressive to me. I feel confident about it and can't wait for people to hear it."

Strange times

The overflowing positivity that Burgess emits is also helping him put things into perspective and shake off the fact he's not going to be able to tour and promote the record in a conventional sense. "It's a very, very strange time," he says. "I had no idea it would come out at a time like this, but I'm very philosophical about it all. It has to come out at a time like this and it's going to be attached to a time like this forever. The title came to me during Brexit, with me thinking there has to be a brighter tomorrow, and then this all came along and it's the same again. It's such a hopeful album and I'm confident there will be a brighter tomorrow."

THE BEST OF THE BURGESS ALBUMS

- *Tellin' Stories* – The Charlatans (1997)
  A Britpop classic that showed, even five albums in, that the band could still knock out No. 1 long players with ease.

- *I Love The New Sky* – Tim Burgess (2020)
  Filled with deft production, well- crafted pop songs and crystal clear vision, it's Burgess' strongest solo album to date.

- *Oh No I Love You* – Tim Burgess (2012)
  A tender solo album co-written with Lambchop's Kurt Wagner.

- *The Charlatans* – The Charlatans (1995)
  Another chart-topping album from the band that has earned its place in the Britpop songbook.

- *Same Language, Different Worlds* – Tim Burgess (2016) A beautiful record made with frequent Arthur Russell collaborator Peter Gordon.

Last Orders For Small Venues?

As lockdown restrictions continue, The Musician reports on how Covid-19 and the measures in place to contain it will affect the future of the UK's small venues

Report by Katie Nicholls

At 5pm on March 20 2020, Boris Johnson ordered all the venues, pubs and clubs in the UK to shut their doors for an indefinite period. "Bit by bit, day by day, by your actions, your restraint and your sacrifice, we are putting this country in a better and stronger position, where we will be able to save literally thousands of lives," said Johnson in what was a drastic but necessary move.

Many had already taken responsibility into their own hands, cancelling shows in fear of spreading the virus further into the community, but nevertheless, this official statement was a dark moment for venues across the country, particularly the small, independent businesses

already besieged by financial struggles in an industry that has historically seen little government support.

Closing doors

"The last few months have been an emotional rollercoaster," says Lydia Stockbridge, venue manager of the Boileroom in Guildford, a venue that prides itself as an incubator for up and coming acts, with artists such as Ed Sheeran, The 1975 and Marmozets having passed through its doors on their way to stardom. "We initially thought we could perhaps re-open for May, but as the days and weeks went on, we realised that the situation would be here for the longer term."

While everyone understood the need for a lockdown to be put in place, the speed at which venues were ordered to close left many in a state of shock and unprepared for the financial and emotional mountain they are faced to climb. The Glad Cafe in Glasgow shut up shop four days before they were officially told to, but this not-for-profit organisation remains bewildered by what the future holds for them. "We obviously have no money coming in from trading," says creative director Joe Smillie. "All our gigs have

been cancelled and we have no idea when we will be able to open, as well as not knowing what financial assistance will be on offer to us if we are to remain closed for longer than the next couple of months."

It's a sentiment that is felt by many venues across the country. Matt Otridge, manager at Exchange in Bristol, says the venue is "tens of thousands of pounds out of pocket", while Rachael Campbell-Palmer, director at the Black Box in Belfast says the venue chose to close "before we were told to officially to close by government, uncertain of what the implications would mean, how we could continue to support the staff team, and if we could ever open again". Campbell-Palmer also highlights the public confusion caused by mixed messages given out by government before 20 March, she says. "It was frustrating that messaging was telling people not to go to public theatres, bars and venues, but at the same time not telling us to close."

Money talks

With lockdown in place, the government was quick to announce a financial package to

support small businesses to survive the lockdown period, but there have been reports of delays with applications, issues with eligibility, and the amount of time for emergency loans to arrive. “They have helped,” reports Matt Otridge, “but we have a couple of members of staff whose situation meant they weren't entitled to furlough money. In terms of the business rates grant, we are right on the threshold of being eligible for £25k, which would have gone a lot further than the £10k we received.”

All the venues the MU has spoken to have put their staff on the job retention scheme and have also accessed the business support grants, while some have had business rates relief from their local authority. None, however, have been able to claim loss of earnings on their insurance. The recent announcement of the 100 per cent government-backed ‘bounce back loan’ offers hope for those who fell through the cracks of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, with less stringent eligibility criteria and the promise of loans between £2,000 and £50,000 at an interest-free rate for 12 months. Beyond the financial measures that will hopefully see these small businesses through the next

few months, what continues to be a major concern for venues is what support lies beyond lockdown?

“The government needs to realise that the entertainment sector is probably going to be one of the last things that gets back on its feet,” says Dave Webster, MU National Organiser Live Performance, who is currently working with UK Live Music Group and other major stakeholders in the industry to present questions to government regarding its future support for the music sector. “The MU is pushing hard for some sustained support to recognise the fact that clear guidelines are going to be needed to come from the government in order for the public to, firstly, go back out there and, secondly, go inside to see gigs. That’s going to take a lot longer than shops reopening, or large open spaces. It's going to take a long time.”

The Black Box in Belfast echoes the concern that post-lockdown fear will have a serious effect on the gig-going behaviour of the public. “People are understandably going to be nervous about returning to gigs and bars. We will need ongoing support while the economy recovers, and we

want the government to listen. We don't want a repeat situation where we end up stuck in a place where legally we can open, but people will be discouraged to go out."

For a venue as small as the Glad Cafe, with a capacity of 120, enforced continuation of social distancing is a daunting prospect. "We won't be able to work at full capacity, which our business model is based on. We won't be making enough money to sustain the business," says Joe Smillie.

The bigger picture

The threat of closure of so many of the UK's small, independent businesses is a bleak prospect, not only for the staff and the owners of the venues, but for the musicians who use smaller venues, says Dave Webster, "as an extremely important artery" en route to playing larger venues and stadiums. And let's not forget the sound engineers, production managers, the promoters and, at the heart of it all, the gig-goer and the wider community that the venue serves. The Glad Cafe, for example, operates in order to fund the charity, the Glad Foundation, which provides affordable music tuition to its local community,

and they are looking for ways to continue doing that during lockdown. The Black Box in Belfast is also running outreach music sessions for and by people with learning disabilities via Zoom. "It was really important to us to stay connected with more isolated communities who will be finding this time harder than most," says Rachael Campbell-Palmer.

"When this madness subsides and people go back to some kind of normality, one thing they're going to want to do is go out and be entertained," says Dave Webster, "and we're going to need these places to provide that. And if we've lost as many as we think we might, well, how do we rebuild from that? If the venues simply aren't there, what happens? It's going to have a massive effect on the economy and a huge effect on personal wellbeing."

"Live music is so important for wellbeing," agrees Lydia Stockbridge. "We've seen it with live streams popping up to fill the gap while we all can't gather in person. It's so important that these cultural spaces remain solvent to be able to be there for us all when this pandemic is over and it is safe to do so."

The cultural value of smaller venues was recently recognised by London mayor Sadiq Kahn, who launched a £2.3m Culture at Risk Business Support Fund in early May to support London's creative and cultural industries at risk due to the impact of the coronavirus, saying: "These industries are so important to the fabric of our city during the day and night, and they will play a key role in helping us to recover from this public health crisis." The MU would like central government to follow suit with a more substantial look at how to support small, independent venues across the whole of the UK over the years to come.

A new kind of venue

While we await the lifting of restrictions, and for life to continue in whatever new normal that will turn out to be, musicians have proved to be resilient in the face of a crisis, performing online gigs and promoting fundraising to support local venues.

"I've got real admiration for those musicians who've just said, 'You know what? I'm going to make whatever I can'," says Dave Webster. "Musicians have done some extraordinary things

they might not have otherwise done."
Venues are also fighting for their survival with creative online events and crowdfunding schemes. "We have also been staying in touch with the community as much as possible," says Rachael Campbell-Palmer of the Black Box, "keeping up our visibility on social media channels, letting people know we are still here. We have been posting a few throwback pictures this week of gigs from over the years, and bands that were on our stage before they made it big, asking people to share their favourites shows. And there are gigs like Young Fathers, The Melvins, Mudhoney, Mr Scruff, Liars, and many more, that people talk about with such fondness. You really can't beat being at a sweaty gig in a small venue, feet away from the stage. People miss that and will cherish those experiences even more after this."

As The Musician went to press The Boileroom announced that it had raised funds of £34,000 from a Crowdfunder campaign to help keep itself afloat. Many other UK venues are exploring this as a funding option.

YES WE CAN...

Independent Venue Week is a seven-day celebration of small venues and the people who work in them. Every year IVW pays homage to small venues, not just as the places where music lovers can get close to the bands they love or witness future music stars in ascendancy, but because they are cultural hubs. Now, more than ever, independent venues need this support. "We've been told since the lockdown that we're going to need IVW more than ever," says Sybil Bell, founder and CEO of IVW, which is currently scheduled for January 2021. "We're going to work towards it, but keep an open mind as to when it might happen." In addition, IVW is launching a new initiative called Yes We Can. Sybil explains:

"We had always planned this spring to launch Yes We Can, which is focused on how venues are important cultural hubs in our local communities. Our goal was to work with various partners to bring activities

into the venue during the day when they're mostly shut, such as parent and toddler groups, mental health workshops, LGBTQ+ sessions and skills training. You get the community engaged. And we still can. We're repurposing Yes We Can so that we can do some of this activity digitally until such time that we can get people back in the venues.

"Not all venues will want to open until they can get back to capacity, so we'll only do this with their say so. But if you're allowed gatherings of 50 people in a space, would some of the venues want to open to host a mother and toddler group? Or a workshop on music education training, such as how to be a promoter, or what's involved in being a sound engineer, or host sessions with a featured artist?

"Yes We Can is very much about participation and collaboration, so where we have people doing remarkable things across the country we can say to other venues, 'Here's a model that works, here's

an amazing organisation and they're happy to share what they do with you. Do you want to roll it out to your community?'. People are crying out for stimulus and ideas for retraining, and they just want to feel engaged. If we can do that with venues at the heart of that, hopefully we'll be doing something strategic and positive beyond just the short-term relief."

We're Here To Help

Assistant General Secretary, Phil Kear on the financial support for MU members during the Covid-19 crisis

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the financial support available to MU members during the Covid-19 crisis.

We are all deeply aware of the devastating effect this dreadful period has had on the livelihoods of the majority of our members, and while we could not hope to replace the millions of pounds in lost income highlighted by our recent members' survey on the effects of the crisis, we are able to perhaps provide a lifeline to those who are in most desperate need.

MU Coronavirus Hardship Fund

On 23 March, the MU Coronavirus Hardship Fund was the very first such music industry fund to open. It is an initial £1m fund with a fixed £200 payment made to each eligible member completing the simple online application process. Eight weeks later it's still going strong,

having distributed more than £730,000 to over 3,600 members.

I would like to thank those members who have refrained from claiming, allowing their more needy colleagues to access much needed funds first. I know, from the many grateful responses we've received from successful applicants that your generosity has made a massive difference to many lives. Your support and dedication to your fellow professionals is truly admirable. That said, the fund is still open, and I would encourage those who are eligible and who are suffering true hardship to apply now.
We are here to support you.

Fundraising
We have received amazing support, both from within the MU membership and officials, and from the wider industry and the public. Sizeable donations have been received from industry organisations including PPL and Audio Network, while our online Crowdfunder, which was heavily promoted by Jazz FM on its launch, has raised over £51,000 in individual donations.

Behind this huge total are many stories of

generosity and sacrifice, including musician Ben Mills, who raised over £2,000 from online gigs, donating it all to our hardship fund, and Tim Burgess (see p16) of the Charlatans, who has promoted the #Broken Record Appeal via his Twitter Listening Parties, which splits donations equally between our fund and the PRS Emergency Relief Fund. Our own Live and Music Writers Official, Kelly Wood, who has organised an online eBids auction of kindly donated rare promotional items, with proceeds going to the fund. To Ben, Tim, Kelly and the thousands of you who have donated, we offer a massive heartfelt thank you!

Membership Subs Holiday

Since 4 May, members paying the full or partnership subs rates have been able to apply for a fixed three-month holiday from payment of their MU membership subscription fees. Regardless of how you pay your subs, you can benefit from the scheme. Unlike mortgage payment holidays, there is absolutely no obligation to repay the balance at a later date, and all the usual MU benefits and services are still available to you during your holiday.

Much like the hardship fund, on launching the scheme we encouraged members only to take the holiday if they were in severe financial difficulty, and much like the hardship fund we have seen remarkable restraint and consideration for others from our amazing membership. We continue to work daily on attracting further donations to our hardship fund, while lobbying the government to ensure they provide the necessary ongoing support to our members and the businesses who we hope will be there to engage them once this difficult period is over. We are monitoring the situation closely and will continue to consider other financial support options as and when our funds allow it. In the meantime, please stay safe.

Phil Kear

Tools Of The Trade

Trumpet and flugelhorn player Johnny Thirkell shares tips on maintaining his instrument…
Report by Roy Delaney

John 'Johnny' Thirkell is the go-to guy in British pop trumpeting. A regular touring member of Swing Out Sister, he has provided brass for acts as diverse as Tom Jones, Level 42 and Jamiroquai, to Bros, Kylie Minogue and Right Said Fred. He's also played on 22 No.1 singles, most recently Uptown Funk by Bruno Mars.

Throughout this career Johnny has played the same trumpet – a 1964 Doc Severinsen Getzen Eterna. "It's been a great workhorse for me and has been flexible enough to use on everything from film scores to rock gigs," he says. But recently he's been playing a carbon fibre trumpet, made for him by DaCarbo in Switzerland. "Who'd have thought that I would switch so late in my career?" he says.

A good clean out
Johnny stresses the importance of having an

organised cleanliness regime, particularly as trumpets and flugelhorns can get quite dirty inside the instrument itself.

“We often ignore the fact that the remnants of the last few weeks’ dinners are clinging to the inside. This will not only impede the air flow, but can also cause the dreaded red rot which will eventually eat a hole in the metal. I have a fairly organised routine. Every day, at the end of practice I blow a spitball through the trumpet a couple of times, just to clear out any food that’s hiding in there. Spitballs are small foam balls, and you can buy them at any good brass shop. Once a week I’ll run warm water through, then every month I’ll take the whole trumpet apart and soak it overnight in a bath of hot water and washing up liquid.

“The most common issue of course is sticking valves, and it’s super important to make sure they are always well oiled. Don’t skimp on oil. All it takes is one cock-up because of a sticky valve and you could lose a gig or not get booked again. All for the sake of a six quid bottle of oil. It’s not worth it.”

Carry on touring

Despite being one of the smaller common instruments, safe transit practices are still essential. "It's always a trade-off between protection and portability, and I have a number of gig bags depending on how I'm travelling and what I'm carrying. Flying and touring, of course, is a different matter. When I was touring with Level 42 they made me a flight case. This thing was an absolute beast and weighed a ton. It was fine when it travelled in the truck, but I like to keep my trumpet with me so I can practise in the hotel room, so not particularly practical. However, a few years ago the guys at ProZone in Chesham sold me a flight case which is essentially a regular Pelican case with solid hard foam inside that is laser cut to fit my trumpet and flugel. This stops them from moving around at all in transit and has been a game changer for me. I'm totally happy to put this thing in the hold or the truck and not worry about damage."

Careful now

But however well you try to look after your kit, there are always occasional moments where you can get carried away in the moment and cause some unwanted damage. "Some years ago

(when I was young and foolish) I had a habit of spinning my trumpet on the third valve ring. One night I obviously hadn't put the mouthpiece in fully and it flew out of the trumpet, across the stage and out into the crowd. The crew raced out into the hall and eventually found it but, as it had landed on the concrete floor, when I got it back the rim looked like a ploughed field, and the rest of the gig felt like I was rubbing gravel into my lips."

For more information on Johnny's work, go to johnnythirkell.com

How To Optimise Online Sessions

Remote recording at home has received a high profile during lockdown. It's getting increasingly popular, but how can you make the most of online session work?
Report by Will Simpson

The studios are closed. Just like the venues, bars and rehearsal rooms. At the time of writing the UK is still in lockdown and it looks like it might be some time before we'll see a live gig unmediated via a computer screen. But music goes on. It has to. It continues behind closed doors and online. And sessions are still happening. It's just that they are taking place in musicians' home studios and being sent to producers via soundfiles. Even before the Covid-19 crisis, many MU members were already recording their parts remotely and it looks likely that this way of recording will – to some extent – become a permanent feature of the session world.

Essential to being able to participate in a remote session is some sort of home recording facility. "It doesn't take a lot," musician Robin Harris explains. "A semi-decent condenser mic would probably do it. An audio interface for your computer, a digital audio work platform like Logic, Cubase, even GarageBand. You can pick one up for £100."

And a quiet room – admittedly harder to find during lockdown while kids are being home-schooled and families are living on top of each other. But then again now might be the perfect time to soundproof your recording space, fasten those eggboxes and place that mattress against the wall.

"You want to find the location that has consistent background as the sound," he says. "You need to have a clean gain signal. There is never one definitive mic placement, so you have to do some research. Don't think that buying an expensive mic is going to cure all your problems. You have to pay a little bit of attention to the room you're in."

Remote control

Indeed, one of the facets of remote sessions is the way it asks the musician to think about these issues and take on some of the roles traditionally associated with studio staff. "You're covering a number of jobs," says Graeme Flowers, a London-based trumpet player whose remote session work has increased steadily over the last couple of years. "Effectively you're a studio assistant, because you've got to set up mics. But you're also being a kind of producer, because you're having to have an overview of what you're doing: Does that sound any good? Is the sound of my instrument okay? Does it fit with everything?

"And actually playing your instrument is often bottom of the list. It's the last thing you're thinking of, which is the hard part of this online thing. I talk to a lot of friends who do this and they say that what normally would have been a three hour session takes all day, because they've got so much to think about."

Many feel that this added responsibility should be reflected financially. "If you were going into a studio you'd get your standard fee," explains MU

Sessions Official Sam Jordan. "But quite often musicians are saying – and quite rightly so – 'I should be given a facility fee because I'm using my own facilities'. They're doing all the set up and that can sometimes take quite a bit of time."

MU Session Agreements

Before you start any work online at home, the first step is ensure you get an MU Session Agreement signed to clarify your rights and your fee. The agreement will depend on the type of session it is and will, importantly, clarify exactly what the other party can use the recording for. This allows session musicians to receive further fees if the recording is used again – for example, if it is synched into a film at a later date.

In terms of composition/song rights, just as with a normal session, ensure you have discussions as early as possible. "If you are contributing to the writing process you're contributing creatively, so it's important to have that conversation," says Sam Jordan. "A song share agreement could be signed off if that's the case. A percentage should be agreed up front."

There are other things to bear in mind. Not

having a producer on hand means being in close contact with them before, after or even during the online session. Graeme Flowers makes sure he preps beforehand: "Maybe in the morning I will send an email clarifying the points that he wants and asking 'are you going to be on hand?'. 'Will you be on your phone so I can ask any questions?'. I have had problems in the past doing stuff for American guys where they're sending you stuff and you're doing it. Then everyone has then left the studio and gone home and then someone comes back with a potential revision."

Endless revisions

Flowers advises agreeing upfront about the number of potential revisions. "In normal times you're obviously going to go off and do your shopping, but now there's this thing where you have an unlimited amount of time to keep revising things, and actually you can't do that. You have to put a limit on your time."

Drummer Alex Reeves also highlights the challenges of not having a producer on hand. "It can be tricky to know what to play when there's no immediate feedback from the producer.

There's often a bit of guesswork and you must rely upon previous more communal experiences to know what they want to hear. Sometimes they might come back with something as simple as 'yes I really like that but could you improve it like this?'. Sometimes it can be much more involved. So you do another take, send it over and hope they like it! It can be quite time-consuming but as a process it's difficult to get around."

However, there is the option of having a live video link to the producer, something that drummer Andy Jones has tried: "I've been using Zoom with a programme called Loopback. It enables you to route your audio directly from your digital audio workstation to Zoom. So instead of you being on a Zoom call and your inbuilt mic on your laptop being the thing that everyone hears, they hear you through a high quality mic that you've plugged into your audio interface. You have none of the room noise or the cutting in and out."

"It does work and it can feel very natural. I was doing this the other day where we were both silent for about ten minutes – I was working on something and he was writing some lyrics. It was like that natural thing where you're comfortable

with someone in a room and it doesn't matter if you stop talking, which you can't do on a phone call but you can on a video because you have that other dimension."

It's fine online

So assuming you have your recording set up in place, how do you increase your chances of landing this sort of work? With face-to- face contact temporarily suspended, a social media presence takes on an even greater importance.

Trumpet player Paul Spong is a fixer who keeps an eye out for players online. "I must say a couple of times recently I've seen players online where I've thought 'ah great I can use them 'cause I know that they can do that now'. I recently saw a couple of cellists doing something. I'd used one of them before and I'd forgotten how amazing he was. For the player that is the best way of doing it – showing people what you can do."

Failing that there is always email or a good old fashioned phone call. "Make contact with the solid connections you have, the people you know you have a musical dialogue with," suggests Graeme Flowers. "A few key phone calls are

worth a lot of Instagram or Facebook likes. I find if you plaster stuff all over social media you will get a lot of love online, but it may not necessarily turn into work."

The new future?

Looming over all this is the question of whether the remote online session is just a passing fad or an enduring feature of the post-Covid world? "I fear it might accelerate the decline in the studios," says Flowers. "The bigger studios will still exist – you'll certainly need them for the sound of the orchestra. But for recording a solo instrument the majority of musicians will have some kind of home set up, so why would you spend £200 – £300 a day on a studio in London?"

"I hope that it doesn't become the new norm," says Robin Harris. "I don't think you can undersell the value of face-to-face. Whilst it's forcing us to find a different way of working at the moment I don't think it'll ever replace the importance of musicians being in the same room playing together."

For a broad range of advice on session work and the latest MU session rates and agreements

please visit bit.ly/3cgiOFg. Contact MU Session Official Sam Jordan at Sam.Jordan@theMU.org

FIVE STEPS TO REMOTE SESSION SUCCESS

- Make sure you are set up technically with a laptop, digital audio workstation and a decent microphone. And, of course, a quiet room to record in.

- If you can afford it, make use of the video link technology that will enable you to communicate while you're recording. If not, make sure you speak to your producer and get a clear brief before you start work.

- As with any normal session, be careful to sign all the paperwork relating to the session before you start. Don't be afraid to ask for a facilities fee to be included – it's your recording equipment that's being used, after all.

- Don't neglect your playing! With more emphasis on the technical challenges of recording it's easy to let your performance slip. Aim for a complete take, and don't rely on your editing skills to get you through.

- Keep your online presence and social media accounts updated

Picture Perfect

Photographs make up a crucial element in an artist's or band's career and public persona. Here, we look at navigating aspects of photo rights and usage

Report by Tracey Kelly

One of the advantages of being a musician in the 21st century is that it is possible to create and steer your own publicity and content output. But it also means that fans are thirsty for a continuous stream of new photos.

Ensuring rights ownership of photographs is paramount in this process. While it may be tempting to supply some of that demand by using photographs of yourself found online, the truth is that those photos will be the intellectual property of someone else. Conversely, it's worth noting what your own rights are in relation to images of yourself that are used. When you leave a group, for example, you may assume that your image will be removed automatically from the band's website and publicity materials –

but this is by no means a given.

The MU is all too aware of the potential pitfalls when it comes to ensuring rights usage of images. For musicians, identifying situations where your image rights or the rights of others need to be expressly protected in advance, is absolutely paramount.

Band on the run

The Musicians' Union dealt with a complex copyright infringement case for a band several years ago that highlights the dangers of assuming an implicit permission to use photographs.

An emerging band [name withheld for legal reasons] were about to play a gig when a photographer requested a press pass from their publicist to take photos at the gig. The publicist consented, on the tacit understanding that the band would be able to use some of the shots in their social media.

"It's quite a common practice. I've done it myself with my own bands," MU Regional Organiser Stephen Brown comments.

“When a photographer gets given a guest pass, we argue that it’s a quid pro quo. You’re not getting that guest ticket for nothing. The band can use the image, and it’s usually lo-res, you don’t get an image that you can blow up to a massive size without getting pixelated.”

“So the publicist agreed to that,” he continues, “and the band used some of the photos on their own social media. Subsequently, the band made an enquiry about whether they could buy some of the photos directly from the photographer.”

Rights of use

The photographer quoted two sets of prices: one for general use and a second for using the photos for other purposes, such as in advertising and posters, which would require image manipulation. At this point, the band decided not to purchase additional usages from the photographer.

“This is where we possibly slipped up,” recalls one of the band’s members, “because we assumed that these photographs were still free to use on social media. We had a run of gigs in Europe, so we made a little Facebook flyer and

put some dates on two of the photographs. We credited and thanked the photographer. There's usually no issue whatsoever – more often than not, the photographer is quite grateful their work is getting used. And if we'd wanted to use the images for prints or merchandise, then we would have negotiated directly with that photographer for the rights."

Several years later, as the band enjoyed greater success on the international scene, the photographer alleged copyright infringement, threatening to take the band to court for using a number of modified images in their online advertising. "That is when the photographer claimed that they had no right to use the images at all, in any format," said Stephen. "Certainly, there was a breach of copyright for manipulating the images."

The MU's strategy

Faced with litigation, a crucial question was posed: had there actually been an initial agreement between the band and photographer for the group to use the images? It was clear from the publicist's recollection that permission to take photographs was based on the fact that

these images could be used on the band's social media. However, this was difficult to prove, as the publicist had not kept his emails from the time, so there was no written or digital evidence.

So how did the MU help settle the case? "The MU negotiated with the photographer's legal representative to put our case forward," explains the band member. "The MU pushed the point that the photographer had gained free entry into our gig and had been allowed to take images of us so he could profit from them. Although legally, this doesn't stand up [if there is no contract], because he still owns the images, under normal circumstances there is a quid pro quo."

The fact that the photographer had initially quoted much lower prices than the damages he later claimed for also weighed in the band's favour. The MU was ultimately able to broker a deal, in a negotiated settlement out of court, that was favourable for both sides and saved the member significant sums of money.

Inking an agreement

Clearly, it is wise to draw up a written agreement with any photographer you work with, no matter

how sure you are of verbal permission. When negotiating an image rights agreement, be clear about what you want, what uses you are paying for and how much they will cost.

While the points listed in the column on p32 might seem like overkill when you're just starting out as an act, it's best to think ahead – at least to the usages you might require in the next few years. You can always negotiate for what you need now on the understanding that further usages added at a later date may incur extra cost.

Another incentive to using written agreements is that erroneously using images could potentially fall under laws in international jurisdictions. For example, if an American photographer takes some pictures of a British band, and the British band uses them without permission, the British band could find themselves being hauled through the US courts. And that experience, of course, is going to be hugely expensive.

Protecting an individual's image

Another situation that can arise is when a

musician leaves a band or ensemble. Quite often, the leaving member finds their image still being used by the group for publicity purposes. Although in the UK there is no specific law that protects an individual's image, it is possible to protect the content that incorporates your personal image, including photographs, trademarks and logos.

"We get members who say, 'I left the band 12 months ago and they're still using my image on their website to promote gigs'," says Stephen Brown. "And it can get quite fractious. We've known bands that have had major fallings-out – some of them even threaten legal action. Because members might be trying to promote a new band, and they don't want their image being associated with a past band."

The MU can help

But, provided the whole group are members, the MU offers a free insurance policy against such a situation: the Partnership Agreement, a bespoke agreement that can include all aspects of intellectual property, including who owns the copyrights and what happens to their image if a member leaves the band. For more

information on the MU's Partnership Advice Service, visit **musiciansunion.org.uk/Home/Advice/Your-Career/Legal/Partnerships**

KNOW YOUR IMAGE RIGHTS

Some questions you may want to pose when negotiating an image usage agreement with a photographer include:

- Will I be getting lo-res images, hi-res images, or both for the price I'm paying?
- Can I modify the photos? For example, can I crop them, add filters, add text, or Photoshop them into new images?
- Can I use the images online on my social media, website etc?
- Can I use the images in print?
- Can I use the images in physical products, such as merchandise?

- What is the cost for each usage? Is there a limit to physical sales, i.e. one price for up to a certain quantity of product, say 2,500 or 25,000?

- Is there a territorial or time limit for their use?

- Can I do a buyout deal for all rights to the images, for all purposes in perpetuity?

TRIBUTE BANDS

Tribute bands are another area where members can potentially find themselves on the wrong side of image rights, this time, involving more of the act's overall image and brand. "Quite often, UK acts that are doing tributes of established, high-profile American bands get 'cease and desist' notices," explains Stephen Brown.

“It’s not just about the songs – some acts have a particular visual image associated with them. So if somebody is trying to use that image as part of their act without permission, it can cause problems.

"Some stateside acts will seek an agreement with those tribute acts and stipulate certain standards that need to be in place. So if the original artist becomes aware of a tribute act that they really don’t approve of, they will try and close that tribute act down – because they will see it as besmirching the good name and reputation of the original act (their goodwill). You could be entering into ‘passing off’ or trademark issues as well."

Mental Health: Help Is At Hand

In these uncertain times, those working in the creative industries can easily get overlooked. But there's lots of help out there for anyone feeling the pressure

Report by Will Simpson

It's hard to imagine a time when the world needed live music more than it does now. Yet the familiar spaces where musicians meet their audiences are closed, orchestras have fallen silent, and concerts have been cancelled for the unforeseeable future. While virtual gigs have helped a little, fears about damage to the creative economy are likely to play for much longer and louder in the minds of musicians.

The pandemic has delivered a new age of uncertainty, complete with profound implications for mental health. It has also brought greater awareness of the need to talk about troubling thoughts before they

take command, and of the raft of practical help available online or over the phone.

Rapid response

The MU has responded at speed to support the wellbeing of its members. The launch of the MU Coronavirus Hardship Fund has been matched by a surge in the Union's mental health support advice, online workshops, and strategies to help musicians of all ages deal with life in lockdown. Other resources are available to members thanks to the MU's partnerships with the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM), Help Musicians and Music Support and links to Music Industry Therapists & Coaches (MITC).

"This crisis has affected the majority of our members," observes Diane Widdison, the MU's National Organiser, Education & Training. "That's why we've been proactive in helping musicians protect their physical and mental health." The Union's strategy, she adds, comprises online classes on everything from physical first-aid and meditation to Feldenkrais exercise therapy, with comprehensive guides by psychotherapists and healthcare practitioners.

Broad range of help

"As a trade union we're very concerned about our membership's mental health," says Diane. "We know that many of our members were already living on edge, and that what's happening now may push them over. We're trying to normalise things as much as possible by giving people the broadest range of information and tools to help them stay well." In addition to the MU's website, she observes, organisations such as BAPAM, Help Musicians and Music Support have increased their online presence since the UK entered lockdown in late March.

"We were already planning to provide more online assessments," observes BAPAM's Director, Claire Cordeaux. "That meant we could quickly create a remote service. Our helpline remains operational and many of our clinicians can give advice via telephone or video conferences. We'll help manage situations that may need further diagnostics in future."

BAPAM is also dealing online with vocal rehabilitation and the physical demands of musical performance. With musicians facing potentially long lay-offs, those who have been

playing through chronic injuries may now wish to seek treatment. "We want people to stay as positive as they can and be at their best when they return to work," says Cordeaux. "While we can't offer our face-to-face clinics, we're providing mental health assessments and working with a great group of psychotherapists. We've also run 13 online health promotional sessions for musicians, and will do many more."

Take care of yourself

MU members can now join online meditation courses led by Alison Gordon, a London-based professional violinist and qualified Mind Calm coach. Her Take Care Of You sessions began on 1 May and are set to run every Friday afternoon until 5 June. They have been built to explain how meditation works and explore its value to good mental health. "Meditation has changed my relationship to thought," Gordon recalls. "I used to think I was my thoughts and that they were my reality. Now I realise that was a choice that can be different. I wanted to do this course to share that experience."

A long war against low self-esteem and a particularly harsh inner critic led Alison Gordon

to discover Ascension meditation. "It's like mindfulness only on steroids," she says. "I'm glad I was pushed to that low point and discovered something that changed my life. I've never been happier. Ascension allows you to rest in the permanent aspect of who you are rather than follow the movement of thoughts. It can be really dramatic for people to realise they're not their thoughts."

Ingrained thought patterns matter to Eric Mtungwazi, Managing Director of Music Support. His charity, which serves the needs of individuals across the UK music industry suffering from mental, emotional and behavioural health disorders, continues to offer its confidential helpline. It has also added a new psycho-educational tool to its portfolio of support in the form of the Thrive app. The initiative, launched by Music Support in April, was developed in partnership with Thrive, pioneers of clinically effective app-based support for mental health and wellbeing.

Self-management

The only round-the-clock online mental health app resource approved by the NHS,

Thrive encourages self-management of common mental health disorders. It offers resilience-building exercises and ways to deal with life's daily stresses and shocks. "Thrive is about making mental-health support accessible through technology wherever you are," comments Mtungwazi. "It's about preventing crisis and helping escalate access to services and support. To do that via your phone is quite something."

Psychotherapist and former music industry booker Tamsin Embleton, founder of MITC, has written a detailed Guide To Anxiety Relief & Self Isolation that covers everything from the background to anxiety and ways to recognise and address its many symptoms, to tips for supporting anxious children. Her Young Freelancer's Guide To The Music Industry, created in partnership with the MU's Young Members' Network, contains words of wisdom relevant to musicians of all ages. Both guides are available for download on the MU's mental health support webpage.

Counter measures

Embleton's colleague, Whitney Showler, calls for

a mix of measures to counter the mental health crisis following in the wake of Covid-19. The way through, she observes, will involve self-help, group therapy, and one-to-one psychotherapeutic interventions. Given the scale and severity of the crisis, there may be no quick, easy or safe solutions, she adds.

"The anxiety we're currently facing is a problem we cannot ultimately solve. I believe it's presenting the circumstances we need to look inward and identify ways in which we can better cope with the situation we find ourselves in. I hope that during this time people will seek opportunities to strengthen their inner selves and build resilience and that, as a society, we decide it's culturally acceptable to talk about our emotional experience. That will help increase collective resilience and enable a healthier population on the other side of the pandemic."

Musicians and their employers, continues Showler, will no longer be able to avoid discussions of mental health or hope that traumatic stress can be cured by silence. "Musicians must feel emotional safety in their professional world, which is achieved when they

know what's expected of them and when they feel accepted and understood," she notes. "Their employers should learn and practise clear communication, including active listening. Many people in positions of power forget the value of listening to their employees but those who clearly state expectations and listen to their musicians' concerns will enjoy more productive and healthier professional relationships. When the quarantine is over we will feel relief and there will also be a great need to process the emotional journey we've experienced. Many will need to grieve what they've lost during the pandemic and work through the trauma, which will likely demand further psychological support."

Support for everybody

Brian Aylward, member of the MU's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, asserts that the coronavirus crisis has trained the spotlight on the way society treats disabled people. The musician and human rights, equality and liberation activist knows how things could change for the better in the aftermath.

"A lot less discrimination and a great deal more

awareness would help," he says. "For many disabled musicians this will be a particularly tough time, since some ordinarily find it harder getting work than musicians who are not disabled. What we're experiencing now may be even tougher when restrictions are lifted and venues take time to reopen. That could seriously impact mental health. On the plus side, the flexibility we're seeing now has been lacking from many employers in the past. If employers say it's not possible to provide A, B or C, we'll be able to say you were able to do it during Covid-19 without problems. That's a big thing from a liberationist perspective."

Calls for justice and equality have also been heard in recent weeks from those working with victims and survivors of domestic abuse and fighting racism. Chardine Taylor-Stone, recently elected to the MU's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, says that the mental health of black, Asian and minority ethnic communities has been disproportionately hit by the coronavirus crisis. "So many BAME musicians have family members working on the frontline in health and social care, which is very worrying. These communities often

struggle to access culturally sensitive mental health services."

Vital services

Taylor-Stone's perspective grew from personal experience of dealing with stress and anxiety. She was offered a choice of cognitive behavioural therapy sessions or a creative course, opted for the latter, and received singing coaching as part of her local authority's adult education provision. "That has since been axed, like so many other services, but it was just what I needed. Now I would recommend the Black, African and Asian Therapy Network (BAATN) to anyone looking for a culturally sensitive therapist or advice. And I would recommend that everyone should seek help and talk about their difficulties with mental health."

Lessons from history

Music Support's MD worries about the secondary impact of pandemic prevention measures on people's physical and mental health. While the Covid-19 crisis is without precedent in its global reach and disruption, he suggests there are lessons to be learned from the financial crisis of 2008.

“I completely understand why the immediate focus has been placed largely on the alleviation of financial hardship, with so many industries being decimated,” comments Eric Mtungwazi. “But the harsh reality is that the secondary impact on mental health and people with other health conditions will arguably be greater than that of the virus itself. Telling people with mental health and addiction issues to self-isolate is totally contrary to what we would normally advise. While comparisons with the Second World War are understandable, I think we can learn more from what happened in terms of higher rates of depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug use after the global financial crisis. That’s the closest thing in history that can help us avoid an even graver situation once we exit lockdown.”

HELP MUSICIANS HARDSHIP FUND
Claire Gevaux, Director of Programmes, Help Musicians

Our challenge has been how to provide the most effective support for musicians through a multi-layered approach: first, how to relieve the immediate financial hardship that thousands of musicians found themselves in as a result of the Covid-19 crisis and second, how best to support them during this elongated period of uncertainty. We quickly set up the Help Musicians Coronavirus Financial Hardship Fund which offered a one-off payment of £500 to help alleviate some immediate financial pressures. In the two weeks since launch we've received over 17,000 applications for support. We put in £5m of our own reserves to fund this, and, thanks to the significant donations from a number of major organisations within the music world, we've been able to fund thousands more than the initial £5m fund allowed.

WHERE TO FIND HELP

MU Mental Health Support
musiciansunion.org.uk

Black, African and Asian Therapy Network
baatn.org.uk
020 3600 0712

British Association of Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM)
bapam.org.uk/news
Helpline: 0207 404 8444

Help Musicians' Coronavirus information
coronamusicians.info

Help Musicians' Music Minds Matter
musicmindsmatter.org.uk
Helpline: 0808 802 8008

Mind
mind.org.uk

Music Industry Therapists & Coaches (MITC)
musicindustrytherapists.com

Music Support
musicsupport.org
Helpline: 0800 030 6789

Oxford Mindfulness Centre
oxfordmindfulness.org

Country Hearts

After gaining great acclaim in the UK, Americana trio The Wandering Hearts flew stateside to record their new album, and made some very influential new friends...
Profile by Katie Nicholls

The original plan had been to sit down with London-based trio The Wandering Hearts for a long, leisurely chat about how their blend of folk, country and Americana had won the hearts of Americans – and quite a few on this side of the Atlantic too. At the time of this interview, however, the UK is ending the fourth week of lockdown and so, instead, the three members: AJ Dean (guitar, vocals), Francesca 'Chess' Whiffin (mandolin, vocals) and Tara Wilcox (vocals percussion) gather on an iPhone screen for a four-way chat over Skype. Despite the smother of a digital blanket, The Wandering Hearts exude warmth and energy and a mutual understanding of each other and their desire to bring their singular take on Americana to as many ears as possible.

The three-piece have just returned from recording their second (as yet unnamed) album in Woodstock. Their debut, Wild Silence, was released in 2018, winning the Bob Harris Emerging Artist category at that same year's UK Americana Awards. The album also propelled them to sell-out tours of the UK and a support slot for Jack Savoretti, as well as festival headline slots, even opening the main stage at BST Hyde Park.

But while the UK was becoming acquainted with The Wandering Hearts, the band had already won over the heartland of country music, Nashville, having been the first UK outfit to debut at both the Ryman Auditorium and then that venue's famous The Grand Ole Opry show in the same week, thanks to the support of Marty Stuart. The country legend has championed The Wandering Hearts since they were the support on his 2017 UK tour, subsequently inviting them onto his Late Night Jam at the Ryman.

Hello, America

"Playing the Ryman was our first ever gig outside the UK and our first international show," says Tara. "We'd landed the day before and we were

jet-lagged and it was really hot and busy and, like any cool thing that happens, we hadn't allowed ourselves to enjoy the build up. You know, we didn't really realise it was actually happening until we were half way through the first song and I was like, 'This is the Ryman, right? And John Prine is about to go on...' It was just bonkers."

"People say America has taken you under its wing," she continues, "but they did that because Marty said they should. To come on stage after Marty has said, 'I love these guys, you're going to love them too' means that you don't have to win people over in the same way. We wouldn't have this without Marty."

It's a relationship that continues to flourish, too, as Marty guests on the band's second album with a song that he wrote along with his wife Connie and recorded with them in the Cash Cabin Studio in Tennessee. Undoubtedly, having the support of one of America's most revered country stars is a major boon, but this is not to take away from the talent of The Wandering Hearts, whose harmonic sensibilities stir thoughts of First Aid

Kit, Mamas And Papas and Fleetwood Mac. They are uniquely flying the flag for British Americana. "We've been welcomed in the UK into so many different genres," says Chess. "We've been really supported by the AMA-UK (Americana Music Association UK) and the Americana community and the country scene – all these different families and communities, even though we're not country, or we're not really one thing..."

Regardless of the genres this band glide around, what is clear is that the voice is the guiding instrument for all three members, who say that they quickly discovered their voices were symbiotic – and this finds its way through the collaborative approach they take to songwriting. "I think it's quite unique that all three of us are so fully invested and so involved," says Chess, "because the voice, the word and the lyrics is where our truth is, and the things that we write about and talk about end up being our songs."

The easy second album

They should be touring the UK right now with new songs from the second album, and while

the tour will be rescheduled, the album has been recorded and mastered and they're just waiting for the artwork to be completed and to decide on a name before it's released in late spring. Recorded with Simone Felice and David Baron, it took the band to the heart of Woodstock and into the Catskill mountains.

"It's been a real project of love," says Tara. "Everything that's gone into it, from writing the songs to choosing the songs to recording the songs has been such an easy, organic process for us, and everything seems to line up and make sense. With the new songs and the new record it's a real representation of our journey for the last year-and-a-half. It's got lots of different cool sounds on it and it expands massively on our original sound. We had a bit more freedom to explore and create the music that we want to hear."

Woodstock style

With such high-profile producers at the controls and working in a part of the world that boasts a musical provenance including The Basement Tapes by Bob Dylan and The Band, did they absorb some of its magic?

"I don't want to say 'psychedelic' because that might give you the wrong impression," says AJ, "but there were elements of psychedelia that we lifted straight from the style of Woodstock into the recording. We stayed in an Airbnb where there was a music room. It was a really old place, but there was a piano and a drum kit and mandolins and busted-up guitars and other weird instruments. We'd go back and have a few drinks and a smoke and we'd go, 'How does that song go that we're going to do tomorrow?' And we'd play around with it. It would morph a bit and have a bit more freedom and feel a bit loose, and then we'd go, 'Love that, let's play it like that tomorrow'."

And the influence of Simone and David on the album? "We've been fans of Simone for a while," expands AJ, "being in the Felice Brothers but also the work he did on the [self-titled] Jade Bird record and The Lumineers. We'd had him in mind as someone we'd like to work with for a while, but knowing the work someone's done is very different to meeting them and having a day-to-day working experience. But he was super chilled and it totally makes sense because the studio was on top of this mountain overlooking

the Ashokan Reservoir and it was a pretty beautiful and serene place."

Musical language

"The equipment that they had there was like nothing that I've ever seen," says Chess, "and David is a special kind of genius. Even if you didn't have the language to articulate what it was that you wanted to hear or say in the most layman's of terms, David would go, 'I've got it!'. You'd say, 'I hear Jefferson Airplane, or I hear this sound and I don't know what that is, and he would instantly be like, 'Is it this?' Before we got there," she continues, "Simone was constantly saying, 'We're going to crack the code' and we were like if we hear that phrase one more time... what does it mean?' But he was absolutely right. I think it was day three there was a point where we managed to capture the vocals in a way that we've never done before. It felt entirely representative of what we do, so when the album goes out we can say, 'This is absolutely what we do and we're so super proud of this' rather than, 'Oh it's cool, it does sound different'."

With life currently on hold, as it is for the rest of the world, the band reflect on how this new

album mirrors the zeitgeist of our times.
"This album is a reflection," says Tara.
"A year-and-half long diary entry of what we experienced. We talk about love and loss, but the overriding theme is one of hope and asking for help and of second chances, of rebirth, to right wrongs... in the dark time that we're in there is a lovely symmetry with the album that we have done."

Looking ahead

The band will be soon be having a live album launch party, so check the website for updates (**thewanderinghearts.com**). In the meantime, the lockdown offers the opportunity of contemplation. "For us this whole situation makes me feel like we just need to live in the moment," says Chess. "If you think too far forward you end up disappointed that things didn't happen. Now I'm feeling like, 'Let's just do everything we can within our power to give this record the chance that it deserves."

THE PRODUCERS

Born and raised in the Catskill Mountains, some may best know Simone Felice as the former drummer in folk-rock outfit the Felice Brothers. Since leaving the band in 2009 to form The Duke & The King he's gained a reputation for sprinkling production magic, working from his mountain-top studio with bands such as The Lumineers, Jade Bird and Bat For Lashes. Composer/producer/engineer David Baron has joined Simone to work on projects including Jade Bird and The Lumineers. As a keyboardist, he also brings his unique collection of synths, so The Wandering Hearts took advantage of some of the rare instruments in the studio, "David is a synth wizard," says AJ. "He also has really cool instruments, including a celeste (small upright piano), which used to belong to Thelonius Monk. It was awesome!"

A GUIDE TO:

Live Streaming

Lockdown doesn't have to mean losing your live profile. **Henry Yates** explains how to create a buzz and build your audience, without once having to leave the house...

When the government announced the closure of the UK's music venues in March, it seemed like the end of the road for the majority of artists who rely on live work as their main income stream. The challenges that await the sector on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic should not be understated. Yet as many musicians have already demonstrated, the frustration of lockdown needn't end a musician's momentum.

As well as the opportunity to write material, improve technique and action long-delayed administration – from accounts to building a website – innovative musicians have used

self-isolation to create an entirely new model of live music. But successfully livestreaming a show on social media isn't as simple as switching on your webcam and strumming through your setlist. From promotion to equipment, here's how to do it the right way.

Get the word out

Livestreaming has taken off in a big way, and with everyone from Coldplay's Chris Martin to countless amateur singer-songwriters embracing the format, you can no longer rely on the novelty factor to bring digital footfall. As ever, promotion is king. Market your event on social media, giving plenty of notice, dream up an engaging name or theme, and complement it with shareable photos.

Approach the promoters of your cancelled shows to ask if they'll help direct ticket-buyers to your social channels. Currently enjoying success with his Who Feeds The Lockdown? virtual tour, bluesman Jack J. Hutchinson advises using innovative promotions to hook in casual punters. "I recently launched a call-out for people to contribute to an online performance of my track Sleep, Awake, Obey!"

he explains. “I'm essentially putting together a virtual rock crowd.”

Know your platforms

It's possible to livestream your show on any of the major social media platforms, but it's worth doing some digging to find out which has the most suitable features and tech spec. YouTube, for example, offers the best video quality and lets your content stick around after the event – but you'll need a dedicated channel and a minimum of 1,000 subscribers to go live.

Other sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram share a maximum video quality of 720p, and they all have their pros and cons, offering a range of tools for notifications and scheduling. Just remember: you'll need specialist software such as ManyCam to stream simultaneously on multiple platforms.

Go where your fans are

You should already know which social sites your fanbase favours, so make plans to livestream your show on the most relevant platform, at a time that doesn't clash with other major events like government briefings.

“For my live streams, I do them on Facebook,” explains Canterbury-based roots singer-songwriter Luke Jackson, who enjoyed acclaim with last year's Journals album.

“This is because, out of all my socials, my Facebook definitely has the most traffic and engagement. If it’s different for you and Instagram or YouTube is your busiest platform, I'd suggest you use that. Of course, if you have the necessary equipment to stream onto all of the socials at the same time, that’ll give you the broadest audience available.”

Think about production values

A one-person livestreamed performance gives you nowhere to hide, so make sure your production values do your material justice. “There's a good app called Switcher Studio that allows you to sync the cameras of up to nine iPhones or iPads together,” says Andrew Hayes, who with drummer Matt Brown, plays sax and electronics in Bristol-based experimental heavy jazz duo, Run Logan Run.

“There's free software called OBS for computer, but unless you have high-speed internet and

a powerful computer, I wouldn't recommend it, because it will be glitchy. You can also get a TRRS to headphone/microphone adapter cable and this will let you plug a feed from your mixer into the iPhone to get good quality sound."

Don't break the bank

At a time when musicians' budgets are squeezed tighter than ever, and deliveries from gear companies are often delayed, be reassured that a professional livestreamed show can be achieved with a bare-bones rig. Fundamentally, all you need is a steady broadband connection, a smartphone or computer with camera and mic plus, ideally, the Google Chrome browser.

"You don't need to spend hundreds of pounds on flashy equipment," says Hutchinson. "Most modern smartphones have cameras that can do the job – I just use my iPhone 8 and iPad Mini. For audio, I use an iRig Pre interface with a Shure SM58 for vocals and iRig HD 2 for guitar."

Set the scene

The goal is to give fans a taste of the atmosphere they'd experience from watching you at a physical venue, so it's worth spending a little

time preparing the backdrop and lighting for your livestream. Landscape is generally the best orientation, provided everything in the shot fits your brand.

"I do my live streams from the front room," says Jackson, "because it's more open than any other room in my flat and also has wooden floors, which makes for a nice acoustic. I'm lucky to have a girlfriend who is a makeup artist, so I'm able to use some of her equipment, like a ring light and softbox. Even without these, I think getting the right lighting contributes a lot to a live stream. I'd suggest using a lamp to light you from in front, not behind."

You can't be too prepared

Once you've started your livestream, it's embarrassing and amateurish to stop and iron out the kinks in your rig. Much better to record a dry run, then watch it back with a critical eye on the audio and visuals (which will likely be compressed by the website). Before you start filming, turn your mobile to 'do not disturb' to stop unwanted notifications, close any apps you don't need to minimise lag, and most important, find the optimal mic placing.

“If you get too close to your smartphone's microphone, the audio will clip,” warns Jackson, “but if you get too far away, it won't pick everything up. I'd suggest recording a little video of you singing and playing your loudest and softest, seeing how it sounds from the range where you've positioned yourself – and going forward from there.”

Consider pre-recording

A big pull of a livestream is the immediacy: if you get it right, it can feel remarkably close to an in-the-flesh show. But if you're less confident in your live chops, then pre-recording your set in advance will take the pressure off, letting you edit mistakes and post whenever it suits you. Plus, pre-recording means you can upload footage to YouTube, even if your subscriber numbers haven't hit the 1,000-subscriber threshold needed for livestreaming.

Perform with a purpose

Unlike Chris Martin – who took some affectionate criticism for his unrehearsed set – it's vital to play with the same attitude and professionalism you would on a 'real' stage. Imagine yourself in a packed club, and focus on the camera lens as if

it were the front row. On the flipside, remember that livestreaming allows an intimacy that isn't impossible in a live setting, so harness this to bring your audience close and turn casual viewers into committed fans.

"It's crucial to engage with viewers during the live stream," says Hutchinson, who also hosts Q&A sessions over a 'virtual pint'. "Even if it's just acknowledging that someone is watching, or replying to questions, remember this is more conversational than your average gig. Relax and have some fun!"

Remember the bottom line

Livestreaming might be chiefly a means to spread goodwill, build your profile and keep your live skills ticking over, but keep your antennae up for chances of financial remuneration. Don't be shy about discreetly referring viewers to your merchandise pages, and if you're pushing people onto a SoundCloud page, make sure it features the recently introduced donation button.

"We took donations using the PayPal donate button," says Andrew Hayes of Run Logan Run's recent livestream. "We were surprised by

how generous people were, giving more than we would typically expect to receive in the hat at a gig."

Make your footage work harder

Livestreaming implies a never-to-be-repeated event that will vanish after the encore, but if you pin the footage to your website and social channels, you'll pick up viewers who couldn't make it first time around. "We did our first live stream direct from our website and also on Facebook Live," say Jon Whitley and Jay LaBouchardiere, of the award-winning Dorset folk duo Ninebarrow.

"During the live broadcast, we had around 2.5k watching via our website and around 500 watching on Facebook. We left the content live for 48 hours afterwards and by the end of the two days, we had over 10,000 unique views across both platforms, with just under 160,000 total minutes watched."

Luke Jackson's Journals is out now, see ***lukepauljackson.com****. For more details on Ninebarrow see* ***ninebarrow.co.uk****. Jack J Hutchinson's latest album* Who Feeds The Wolf?

*is out now. Run Logan Run's Kōan is out now, see **runloganrun.com** for details.*

GETTING IT RIGHT

Like many, Abi Moore found live streaming to be a rapid learning process...

"It was really challenging," says singer-songwriter and choir leader Abi Moore of her first live stream. "I got really stressed and nervous about all this new gear I hadn't practised using, and so I just threw in the towel and set up my usual gigging PA system (a Bose L1) in the room, but not plugging in my guitar. That way, I got the nice natural feel with a setup I knew well, and I had more control of the vocal and guitar levels."

"The response was good, I was surprised to see people there who commented on how they'd seen me at X gig or Y festival, and people commented on their

favourite songs or how a song had been a soundtrack to a time in their life. That stuff is lovely to read."

For more information on Abi visit **abimoore.com**

TOP TIPS
Essential advice for live streaming a gig

Getting Inventive
You will build much more buzz if the gig that you are livestreaming has a shareable hook, theme or promotion. From the outset, think of an idea that allows fans to be more than passive viewers, whether you let them choose the setlist or post real-time questions.

Prepare The Space
Ensure that you choose the most inspiring room in your house – or garden – and light it up professionally. Be aware of the backdrop, too, removing anything that doesn't fit your image as an artist.

Test Your Rig
Soundchecking is vital. Film a dry run and assess what could be improved. A bit of mic positioning will work wonders.

Build A Rapport
Show your personality and encourage friendly interaction, and you'll have an army of loyal fans when lockdown ends.

Pin The Footage Online
You may find that more fans watch after the event than in real-time. Just be aware that if you're using Instagram, your stream will vanish 24 hours later.

Keep It Steady
Avoid wobble by ensuring that you use a

tripod, whether shooting on a phone or dedicated video camera.

THE MU IS HERE TO HELP

For a wide range of advice on working as a musician please contact your MU Regional Office. For contact details please see p2 of this issue.

A GUIDE TO:

Vocal Health

The voice is arguably the most personal instrument of all – but also one of the most injury-prone. **Henry Yates** looks at how singers can maintain good vocal health – and get help when they need it

It's the nightmare scenario for any singer. You step up to the microphone, facing an expectant producer, keenly aware of the ticking clock and the financial pressure. You deliver the opening line – and are immediately aware that something is wrong. "The thought of my voice going away was awful," says London-based singer Matt Faull, who was diagnosed with a swollen vocal cord in March 2019. "If I'm a singer and I can't sing, what do I do?"

Of all the injuries that will affect around 75% of musicians over their career, damage to the voice is perhaps the most personal. "The voice is inside a singer's own body, and it's much closer to your self-identity," says Dr Jenevora Williams,

a renowned vocal rehabilitation specialist and singing teacher, who works with London's Voice Care Centre and the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM). "If you've injured your wrist as a violin player, when you put your instrument in its case it's not so much at the foreground. But when you've got a voice problem, it's there all the time."

Cause and effect

Vocal health specialists consider most injuries to fall under three categories. 'Misuse' refers to a singer using incorrect technique, perhaps with small factors, like slight jaw tension or off-centre body alignment, often with a slow build-up over time. 'Overuse' results from a punishing schedule. 'New use' can be when a singer is placed in an unsettling situation – for example, a West End singer performing in elaborate headgear. There are also examples of direct trauma, like a tennis ball hitting the neck, as well as non-abuse related illnesses such as reflux. "But running through these is anxiety," says Williams. "When we're anxious, worried, wound-up – we hold our bodies in a state of tension, not in the easy, fluid, balanced way we normally would. And that always affects your voice."

Perhaps it's no wonder that tension is a recurring theme among singers. As the focal point of many musical ensembles, the pressure to deliver is huge – and the safety net practically non-existent. As Diane Widdison, the MU's National Organiser of Education and Training points out: "Many of our members do not have one employer who has a duty of care towards them over any health and wellbeing health issues."

Mindful of the bills, and keen to promote a 'can-do' reputation, many singers struggle on. Others don't address their voice issues – until it's too late. "Pain is actually not a common symptom," says Williams, "because we don't have that kind of sensory feedback from our larynx. Before they start to feel pain, singers will notice their voice isn't functioning so well. The symptoms of a damaged voice could be a loss of range. You might lose your high notes or get a hole in the middle. You might find you can't sing quietly or loudly. There could be issues with stamina or recovery time. So the day after a gig, you'll be knackered, whereas when you're fighting fit, you bounce straight back."

Help at hand

But singers should be aware they are not alone. One of the music industry's most respected charities is BAPAM, which leads struggling artists through a logical healthcare pathway, providing experts at every juncture. "We offer free clinical assessments, and hold a list of clinical specialists in performing arts medicine," explains director Claire Cordeaux, "and anybody who's earning a living through being a performer is eligible for our service. In vocal health, singers experiencing problems must first get an assessment at a specialist professional voice-user clinic, including a laryngeal endoscopy with stroboscopy (slow-motion examination of the vocal cords). Without looking at the vocal cords, nobody can tell what treatment is needed. We work with singers to ensure they are seen by the right specialist to get a treatment plan delivered by recognised therapists."

The good news is that – in the overwhelming majority of cases – singers who get the right initial diagnostic and treatment advice restore their voice and gain the knowledge to prevent injuries in the future. "There's lots you can do,"

says Williams. "Be really aware of your voice and what it feels like, and when it gets tired, you should be pacing it. Frequent mini breaks during practice are more important than long ones. It's also about being aware of what you do when you're not singing. Going to a loud social situation like the pub, you're going to up your effort in your speaking voice – and significantly tire it out."

A healthy day-to-day lifestyle, she adds, can counter problems before they arise. "Obviously, don't smoke. Reflux can affect your voice, because the acids and enzymes from the stomach creep up the oesophagus and wash around the back of the throat while you're asleep. There's keeping stress at bay, using breathing and mindfulness techniques. But other things don't help. Honey and lemon tastes nice, but what you swallow doesn't go anywhere near your larynx. The harmful effects of dairy and coffee – that's generally a myth."

There's more truth, says Williams, in the emerging philosophy that musicians should strengthen their bodies like athletes. "There is research, actually, that looked at the rate

of reduction of inflammatory markers on the epithelium of the vocal folds. To put that in normal language: when the vocal folds within the larynx get bashed around, they get slightly swollen. This research found that swelling reduced faster in people who are physically fit, because of their overall metabolic function. The CO2 and O2 exchange in the muscles is more efficient, and the whole system will clean itself up more quickly."

Sing Smarter

Even backstage, there are strategies to put in place. "With a warm-up," says Williams, "you should start with very gentle sliding exercises, normally on some kind of buzz or hum, starting low and gradually extending through the pitch range. Next, you should be opening onto valves, and warming up the tongue with articulatory exercises. Then, extending to bigger pitch glides, moving through your whole range, so you're getting the blood flow to the muscles you're going to be using, ready for more vigorous work."

A sensible regime gives you the best possible chance of sailing through your career without injury. But just as important as following these

preventative measures, stresses Williams, is to seek help when you need it. "We don't hear about a lot of the vocal injuries out there. People keep it a secret, because there's still an idea that if you have a voice problem, you're at fault in some way. Whereas, if a football player tears a hamstring, they'll be given rehab. There's still a massive stigma for singers around this. But it happens to everybody at some point in their career."

During the COVID-19 lockdown, as diagnostic clinics are temporarily suspended, BAPAM is offering interim free sessions with their Vocal Rehabilitation Coaches to help manage in the meantime. Call 0207 404 8444 for details. Learn more about BAPAM's services at ***bapam.org****.uk and visit* ***voicecarecentre.co.uk*** *for further information. For more on Jenevora's work, see* ***jenevorawilliams.com***

A SINGER'S STORY

"I'd been singing in the Night Fever Bee Gees tribute show for eight months without a single problem," remembers Matt Faull. "But on the last day, it definitely didn't feel right, and when I went for an audition two weeks later, it was as if I was skating on ice. I just couldn't navigate anywhere in my voice. My first move was to contact the Voice Care Centre, who immediately recommended an endoscopy from a specialist voice ENT to find out what was going on. My whole panic was 'Am I going to be a worse singer?' But I've actually got a bigger range now than before the damage. I stepped in for a cruise ship gig in January, and I couldn't have sung that two years ago. But I was fine. So to come out of a vocal injury, and do the hardest, most strenuous thing I've done, and be fine afterwards – that's a great sign."

Reviews

A look at some of the new albums, EPs and downloads released by MU members for 2020, together with links for more information on the featured artists.
Reviewers: Keith Ames, Roy Delaney and Clive Somerville

ED O'BRIEN
This solo project by Radiohead member Ed O'Brien has been a long labour of love for the guitarist, with some songs on the album having been first created as far back as 2009. The idea to break out into songwriting for his own voice came soon after he spent a year living in Brazil with his young family and absorbing its sights and sounds.

After demoing the songs in 2014 and realising that he had the confidence to sing these pieces himself, he quickly hired Flood (New Order, Nick Cave, The Killers) to produce, and encouraged musicians the calibre of Omar Hakim, Laura Marling, Adrian Utley and Colin Greenwood to

play for him. Two years on, the first fruit of the project emerged with the song Brasil, a shape-shifting eight-and-a-half minute epic that begins with delicate guitars, slides seemlessly into minimal rave, before building to a massive festival dance number. This set the blueprint for the album as a whole, divided as it is between either gentle folksy tunes, or more elaborate beats and rhythms. Quite a statement for a solo debut.

ED O'BRIEN
Earth

O'Brien's debut was always going to be compared to Radiohead, but while it does share some similar atmosphere and familiar complex structures, much of the music here shows a minimal warmth and deep humanity entirely of his own.
eobmusic.com

FOLK

HAMISH NAPIER
The Woods

A collection of Scottish tunes commissioned by

Cairngorms Connect. Napier, a Strathspey musician, has penned 21 melodic love letters to the locale, complete with field recordings. His sleevenotes are an education in themselves.
hamishnapier.com

SIOBHAN MILLER
All Is Not Forgotten

The gifted Midlothian singer brings a well-judged collection of original and traditional songs. Her gossamer vocals run as threads through it all, creating something breathtakingly beautiful.
siobhanmiller.com

WILL POUND
A Day Will Come

Harmonica ace Will travelled around the 27 member states of the EU to collect or be inspired by their traditional music. Polish poet Bodhan Piasecki vocalises his ideas over the melodies, while Evelyn Glennie and Liz Carroll guest.
willpound.com

SEEFIN
When The Rain Blows Away

This highly experienced string trio, comprised of Brendan Popplestone, Sherry Robinson and Nial Lynch, bring both jazz and classical edges to their Irish and continental influences.
seefin.info

BLUES

RAPHAEL CALLAGHAN
Blue Lies

The Liverpool singer and slide-guitarist has enjoyed a 50-year career, playing with Alexis Korner and Bonnie Rait along the way. This new album, all eerie slide, falsetto vocals and harmonica, also features Skip James and Charley Patton covers.
raphaelcallaghan.com

DREW HAMILL
Sonic Resistance

A varied collection of songs from the north coast of Ireland. One minute Drew is playing some slick guitar blues, the next some skippy coffee bar jazz, before it turns into

an indie rock wigout, all delivered in his distinct Portrush accent.
drewhamill.com

ROCK

THE GRAVITY DRIVE
The Wildlight

Duo Ava and Elijah Wolf have carved out an intriguing niche for this album, somewhere between pop and the more introspective side of goth-rock.
thegravitydrive.com

MIRACLE GLASS COMPANY
MGC2

Ten slabs of edgy, driving alternative rock from Edinburgh. Imagine a glam rock Kasabian with cool psychedelic fringes. A band to watch out for in the future, for sure.
miracleglasscompany.com

ANDREW VAN GARRATT
Dedicated To Nobody

A lucky thirteen cuts of stomping pop rock from this versatile performer, often either with an anthemic eighties edge, or a stark underground industrial feel.
andrewvangarratt.com

ACOUSTIC

THE RESTARTS
Music In Our Underpants

Lockdown is creating some incredibly creative outlets for artists – none less than for Kieran from punk stalwarts The Restarts and his husband Collin, who release ever more unhinged covers from their London flat each week. Brilliant fun!
tinyurl.com/restartsjuha

BAHA YETKIN
The Pearl

This Turkish-born, London-based oud player likens his 35 years of musical experience to a grain of sand becoming a pearl, and these 12 tracks display the many layers of musical

influence that he's picked up along the way. Quite fabulous.
bahayetkin.com

STEVE TYLER
The Enduring And The Ephemeral

One of Britain's finest hurdy gurdy players, Steve layers its sound over many other less-heard instruments, such as the psaltery, cittern and hammered dulcimer, into swirling sonic soundscapes and deeply trancy medieval folk grooves.
stevetyler.bandcamp.com

SINGER/SONGWRITER

KIRSTY MERRYN
Our Bright Bright Night

Waterfalls, haunted beaches and ruined convents set the scene for wraiths, thieves and sly old foxes, towards the dawn of an uncertain future. Phil Beer and Sam Kelly guest on this atmospheric set.
kirstymerryn.com

STEVON RUSSELL
Lean Out

Forging his own genre – Nu Wave Phlegmenco – this accomplished guitarist gets creative with found sounds and curious lyrics to create a strangely compelling collection of songs.
stevonrussell.com

SAM SLATCHER
Chaos & Solitude

Sweet acoustic indie pop songs with a big lick of English folk, Sam's friendly yet fragile voice and gentle percussive guitar give you an entirely warm and wistful musical experience. Charming from start to end.
samslatcher.com

JAZZ

GEOFF MASON QUARTET
GMQ

Offering favourite tunes from a trio of jazz masters – Monk, Coltrane and Hancock –

trombonist Mason pushes the envelope on pieces not always associated with his instrument. The spontaneous 'live' feel shines through.
geoffmasonjazz.co.uk

JAMES HAMILTON JAZZ ORCHESTRA
Lost Tapes

Creating an album from forgotten recordings as well as a live track from an 'unknown gig', Hamilton's warm, soundtrack-esque arrangements are fully in the moment, and performed with orchestral precision.
james-hamilton.co.uk

ANDREW CLEGG
Silk Road

Like sunshine in a jar, Andrew's gloriously bright guitar merges the Spanish traditions with a Latin American feel, and sends you instantly to a warmer and happier place. Its jazzier corners make you think both Django and Paco de Lucia, but this player's got a feel all of his very own.
andrewcleggguitar.co.uk

ROOTS

DAVID FOLEY & JACK SMEDLEY
Time To Fly

Musical partners since 2008, and one-half of folk quartet RURA, Foley (wooden flute, guitar) and Smedley (fiddle) have created a lively instrumental offering, flowing as naturally as a highland stream in spring.
foleysmedley.com

GIGSPANNER
Natural Invention

Peter Knight and the band have reached back as far as the 15th century to create a richly textured album from the archives, awash with sea shanties, pastoral paeans and social intrigue.
gigspanner.com

VICKI SWAN & JONNY DYER
Sleep Deprivation

A tribute to travelling musicians, the 10 tracks – jigs and reels, a waltz, and more – are a road-tested dancefest designed to play as one

continuous track.
swan-dyer.co.uk

Stand out
This month's highlights include an atmospheric release from a British classical pianist, and a delightful collection of delicate folk-tinged pop

MARK BEBBINGTON
Francis Poulenc, Piano Concerto & Concert Champêtre

This acclaimed British pianist opens his Resonus Classics account with a varied offering of works by the 20th Century French composer. An atmospheric and strikingly original performance throughout.
markbebbington.co.uk

AMY DUNCAN
The Hidden World

Amy's delicate vocal and precise diction

drift gracefully over a broad musical canvas. Everything from the Indian drums on the opening title track, to the English folk guitar on I'm Not An Alien evoke glacial shivers down the listener's spine.
amyduncan.co.uk

To submit an album or download track for review, send recordings and PR material to: *The Musician*, 60-62 Clapham Rd, London SW9 0JJ or email **TheMusician@theMU.org**

You should also forward your cover artwork and/or photos (minimum 300dpi resolution) to: **keith.ames@theMU.org**

We try to help as many members as possible, and preference is given to members not previously reviewed.

Statutory MU Notices

Important news for members...

Members are advised that with effect from June 2020, the following statutory notices will no longer be sent to members by post, and will now be available from the MU website at **theMU.org**

- **Summary financial statements**
  Available in June each year (the latest full Accounts remain available upon request).

- **Executive Committee election results**
  Available in November each year, except in the case of a casual vacancy. See MU Rule IV.

The above notices are required under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (Amended).

The following will also be published on the website.

- **Regional Committees**
  Calls for nominations and election results.
  See MU Rule III.

- **Section Committees**
  Calls for nominations and election results.

Those members who wish to receive paper copies of these communications should contact their Regional Office.

The publication of the above notices will also be brought to members' attention by email. It is therefore important that members ensure the Union has their latest email address on file.

Please visit and log into our site at **theMU.org** to check your details.