



# The Musician

Journal of the Musicians' Union  
Spring 2020  
[theMU.org](http://theMU.org)

## **Orchestra Conference**

Constructive debate on a range of topics at the fifth MU event

## **Musicians' Passport**

The MU's campaign to protect musicians working in Europe

## **Fergus McCreadie**

The bright star of Scottish jazz talks of his style and influences

## **Health And Wellbeing**

Advice and support to help musicians stay healthy at work

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**Musicians'  
Union**



# The Challenges Ahead

How your Union is working for you to address the problems and challenges of the new post-Brexit landscape that lies ahead...



© Joanna Dudderidge  
**Horace Trubridge,  
 General Secretary**

**Welcome to the first edition of *The Musician* magazine for 2020. Is it too late to wish you all a Happy New Year? Probably, not just because New Years Eve feels like aeons ago, but also, our concerted efforts to try and retain the UK's membership of the EU have failed. As soon as we heard the results of the General Election we started the essential work of persuading MPs and civil servants that musicians need to be able to move themselves, their road crew and their equipment around Europe without the burdensome administration and expense of unnecessary bureaucracy.**

What we are proposing is a 'Musicians' Passport' that would last for a minimum of two years and allow the freedom of movement of services and goods for UK musicians working in EU member states. During a debate on the matter in parliament in January, the DCMS minister, Nigel Adams, spoke in support of this proposal, but to date we have not had any indication from the Home Office that they will accede to our request.

#### **Making new provisions**

I don't need to remind you what a nightmare touring in Europe will become if we cannot secure a Musicians' Passport or something very similar. We are already hearing about cancelled tours due to the uncertainty of the situation once we have formally left the EU at the end of the year. The cancellations are not only in respect of UK bands looking to perform in EU countries, but also in respect of artists from EU countries who were hoping to tour in the UK - in many of these cases with the support of UK musicians. Rest assured, your Union will do everything in its power to persuade this government that there has to be a 'carve out' for UK performers.

Following on from the devastating results of the General Election was more bad news in the form of the Conservative government formally announcing that it would not be implementing the EU Copyright Directive for a Digital Single Market (DSM). Though far from perfect, the Copyright Directive contains a number of articles that would have been beneficial to performers and songwriters alike. Not least amongst the

useful elements of the Directive was the proposal that a performer should receive remuneration which is proportionate to the success of the recording that they contributed to. This, for us, opened the door for subsequent and further payments to session musicians who performed on recordings that have gone on to be very successful. As you know, at present session musicians receive no further payments from record companies regardless of the success of the recording that they played on. With the record labels coining it in from the massive success of streaming, this situation has to change and the MU is already engaged in talks with the rights owners and other stake-

**"I don't need to remind you what a nightmare touring in Europe will become."**

holders to establish a mechanism for non-featured performers to be better rewarded when the recording they contributed to enjoys significant success.

#### **Looking forward**

So, we didn't have to look very far to find the issues that should top this year's work agenda. We have had some successes already this year with the reduction in business rates for small venues, but there is lots more work to be done, particularly in the area of music education. Please support us in any way you can so that we can end the year with the profession in a better place than it was at the end of 2019.

My very best wishes to you all.  
**Horace Trubridge**



**TO HEAR MORE FROM HORACE,  
 VISIT THEMU.ORG**

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Photo: Joseph Branston. © MU

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Photo: Jonathan Stewart. © MU



## MU Contributors



### Clive Somerville

A journalist, broadcaster and editor, Clive has written for HMV, *The Sunday Times* and BBC Radio, and presented an Arts review radio show. **p47**



### Katie Nicholls

Katie is a freelance journalist and editor whose features and reviews have appeared in titles such as *Mojo*, *The Guardian* and *Kerrang!* **p38**



### Henry Yates

Henry is a freelance writer from Gloucestershire who has written for titles as diverse as *Classic Rock*, *Total Guitar*, *NME* and *Record Collector*. **p20**



### Neil Crossley

A journalist and editor who has written for *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Financial Times*. Neil also fronts the band *Furlined*. **p26**



### Roy Delaney

Roy has written for *Metal Hammer*, *Classic Rock* and *Melody Maker*, and is the lead singer and drummer with the two-piece punk rock band *Hacksaw*. **p40**



### Nick Hasted

Nick has covered music and film for *The Independent*, *Uncut*, *Classic Rock* and *Jazzwise*. He has written biographies of Eminem, The Kinks and Jack White. **p28**



### George Hall

George has written widely on opera and classical music for such publications as *BBC Music Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *The Stage* and *Opera Now*. **p16**



### Neil Churchman

Neil is an experienced journalist in broadcasting and print. A former BBC national newsroom assistant editor, he now writes on music and the media. **p32**

**Cover:** Eleanor VS.  
 Photographed at **St George's Bristol** **Photo:** Joseph Branston. © MU



**BREXIT AND YOU** The MU is fighting to protect musicians' right to travel when working in the EU post-Brexit. We want to hear from you about how Brexit has affected your working plans for 2020. #WorkingInTheEU bit.ly/2AzdUAV

# frontline

Spring 2020

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

## Grassroots Venues Benefit From Cut In Business Rates

Hundreds of grassroots music venues across England and Wales received a significant boost to their fortunes on 26 January when the government announced it would be slashing business rates for small and medium-sized music venues by 50% in England and Wales. The announcement follows four years of intense campaigning by the Music Venues Trust (MVT), as well as organisations such as the Musicians' Union and UK Music, which along with MVT make up the Music Venues Alliance.

The MVT estimates that 230 small and medium-sized music venues across England and Wales will benefit from the move, releasing £1.7m back into the grassroots live music sector and saving each site £7,500 a year. In a sector that has seen the closure of 35% of its venues in the last decade, this is hugely encouraging news.

"This is a much-needed and long overdue boost for grassroots music venues," said Music Venue Trust strategic director Beverley Whitrick. "Music Venue Trust has been working hard with government on this issue for the last four years and it is a huge breakthrough for us and the members of the Music Venues Alliance. We'd like to thank our partners at UK Music and Musicians' Union for their support and help in getting this over the line."

Nathan Clark of the Brudenell Social Club in Leeds was among the numerous grassroots



Adia Victoria playing at a well-loved grassroots venue – the Brudenell Social Club in Leeds.

© Richard Nicholson / Shutterstock

venue owners expressing their delight over the government's announcement. "We are overjoyed to hear this much-overdue news of support to music venues. This reduction of business rates supports an ability to reinvest, helping new and emerging artists, creating accessible events, and further supporting a vibrant, but financially-strained environment for the wider community."

Going forward, the Music Venue Trust will be writing to all local authorities in the UK with a list of Music Venues Alliance members in their area, to ensure that Grassroots Music Venues access this relief. The MVT will also be contacting government in Scotland and Northern Ireland to ensure that a matching relief is offered to that available in England and Wales.

"We are overjoyed to hear this much overdue news of support to music venues."

**Nathan Clark,  
Brudenell Social Club, Leeds**

## EC Casual Vacancy Election Result

### Independent Scrutineer's Report

This report is issued in accordance with the Trades Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 as amended.

**Executive Committee, Midlands Region**  
1 to be elected

**Millicent Stephenson**  
Elected unopposed

In accordance with Section 53 and MU Rules, 'Nothing in this Chapter shall be taken to require a ballot to be held at an uncontested election'. The number of members nominated in the by election for the Midlands Region does not exceed the number to be elected, and a ballot is therefore not required. I am satisfied that there are no reasonable grounds for believing that there was any contravention of a requirement imposed by or under any enactment in relation to the election.

I am satisfied that the arrangements made with respect to the production, storage, distribution, return or other handling of the voting papers used in the election, and the arrangements for the counting of the votes, included all such security arrangements as were reasonably practicable for the purpose of minimising the risk that any unfairness or malpractice might occur. I have been able to carry out my functions without such interference as would make it reasonable for any person to call my independence in relation to the union into question.

I have inspected the register of members and no matters were revealed which should be drawn to the attention of the union in order to assist it in securing that the register is accurate and up to date. I was not requested by any member or candidate to inspect or examine a copy of the membership register. The MU did not appoint an Independent Person under Section 51A of the Act.

**Anne Hock, Managing Director, Popularis**  
27 November 2019



Photo: Jonathan Stewart. © MU

## Members Success At UK Americana Awards

Yola Carter, Jade Bird, Joan Armatrading and Siân Monaghan were among the winners at the fifth UK Americana Awards, the culmination of a three-day conference and festival organised by the Americana Music UK (AMA-UK), which took place at various venues in Hackney, east London.

Armatrading was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award, while Carter won both UK Artist Of The Year and UK Album Of The Year for the Dan Auerbach-produced *Walk Through Fire* album. Jade Bird won Best Selling Americana Album for her self-titled 2019 debut, while drummer Siân Monaghan won Instrumentalist Of The Year.

The AMA-UK is a professional trade association representing American roots

music in the UK, with a membership that encompasses musicians and other professionals such as promoters, labels venues and festivals. This year's event was co-sponsored by the MU and featured an array of impressive live performances. Highlights included Billy Bragg performing alongside Peter Donegan, son of skiffle innovator Lonnie Donegan, who was honoured with the Legend award.

The awards ceremony was hosted by broadcasting legend Bob Harris, who received the Outstanding Achievement award. In his acceptance speech, Harris – a proactive and hugely influential advocate of Americana in the UK – referred to the “very beautiful world” of the genre and the “warmth” of its community.

### Industry Stats

78,000

People who have signed the Musicians' Passport petition to date – and it's rising fast.

£86.7m

The figure that licensing company PPL announced that it collected in international monies in 2019.

£1

The cost of the first six months of Musicians' Union subscriptions for first-time members joining now.

For the latest news on how the Musicians' Union is helping you visit [theMU.org](http://theMU.org)



**SUPPORT THE MU** Encourage your friends and family to sign up as MU Supporters at [theMU.org/supportthemu](https://theMU.org/supportthemu)

## MU And NEU Launch Charter For Visiting Music Teachers

The MU and the National Education Union (NEU) have created a Charter for Visiting Music Teachers, which sets out what visiting music teachers (VMTs) need from schools to do their jobs efficiently.

The Charter is a free resource for all schools to use and share. It includes practical advice on what VMTs need, from building access information to pupils' additional needs, as well as information on employment issues. To download a free copy of the Charter for Visiting Music Teachers visit [bit.ly/381vnlH](https://bit.ly/381vnlH)

## On The Blog

Don't forget to visit the blog in the Learn section of the MU's website for help and advice from members and Officials. Session pianist Henry Newbury talks about forging a career as a pro musician; there is advice on what to do if you are the victim of sexual harassment at work; and details of the work being done to attain Musicians' Passports.

For all this and more, pay a visit to [musiciansunion.org.uk/Learn/Blog](https://musiciansunion.org.uk/Learn/Blog)



© Jane Austin

## Collaboration with Zimbabwean MU

MU General Secretary Horace Trubridge had an extremely useful meeting with the President of the Zimbabwe Musicians' Union, Edith Katiji, at the Musicians' Union headquarters in London in February.

Edith, who is currently staying in London to study, outlined the work of the Zimbabwe Musicians' Union and informed Horace that one of their most pressing problems at the moment is the very serious issue of sexual harassment.

Horace was able to update Edith on the extensive work that the Musicians' Union is carrying out in this very important area, which he hopes will prove valuable to our colleagues in Zimbabwe in the future.

## Musicians' Union Tax Savings Guide

The annual edition of the Musicians' Union Tax Savings Guide, is now available from the MU website. We hope you find the information useful, but please note that it is for general information only and no-one should take action, or refrain from taking action, without obtaining professional advice. If you are experiencing difficulties with HMRC, NI Contributions, VAT, your band finances, or just need some financial advice, you can get help from HW Fisher, by contacting [mediahelpline@hwfisher.co.uk](mailto:mediahelpline@hwfisher.co.uk) or by visiting [hwfisher.co.uk](https://hwfisher.co.uk)

Please note that it is essential you are up to date with your MU subscriptions to enjoy this (or any other) benefit of Union membership.

## Union Tributes

We note with great sadness the passing of the following Musicians' Union members:

- Pat Benham** (guitar)
- Steve Donnelly** (guitar)
- Stan Harding** (drums/vocals)
- Kenneth Howell** (trumpet & flugelhorn)
- Douglas Milburn** (saxophone)
- Nick Singer** (banjo)
- Jim Wollen** (drums)

Full tributes can be found at [theMU.org](https://theMU.org)

## Dates For The Diary

### 8 Apr

**What:** Get Business Ready: Day Of Workshops  
**Where:** Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance, London SE8  
**Info:** [theMU.org/events](https://theMU.org/events)

### 22-25 Apr

**What:** Brighton Music Conference (electronic music & networking event)  
**Where:** Various venues around the town  
**Info:** [tinyurl.com/qu3ypkd](https://tinyurl.com/qu3ypkd)

### 23-25 Apr

**What:** The Wide Days Music Convention  
**Where:** Teviot Row House, 13 Bristo Place, Edinburgh EH8 9AJ  
**Info:** [widedays.com](https://widedays.com)

### 1-3 May

**What:** Sound City+ Music Business Event  
**Where:** Cunard Building Liverpool L3 1DS  
**Info:** [plus.soundcity.uk.com](https://plus.soundcity.uk.com)

### 7-9 May

**What:** Focus Wales 2020 New Music Conference  
**Where:** Various venues across Wrexham, Clywd, North Wales  
**Info:** [focuswales.com](https://focuswales.com)



## Your Voice

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

### Fight For Your Rights

How sad to fight for rights that we have enjoyed for many decades. 90% of my music income is from live concerts in the EU. European promoters and music managers always pay. No euro gigs = more poverty for British artists.

**Darren Sangita**  
@darrensangita

### We'll Be Back

Sharing music tonight with our fellow Europeans in Rouen. Friends across Europe: this is not the end. We'll keep the flag flying, and one day we'll be back.

**Ralph Wyld** @RalphWyld

### Sign The Petition

This is vitally important, knowing first hand the importance free movement had on my professional music career. Sign and share. Let touring musicians travel. Support musicians working in the EU post-Brexit. Sign the MU's Petition!

**DAVIESKREYE** @XgeekedgeX

### Peace Of Mind

Well done MU – Their guide to mental health is superb – and not only for young freelancers.

**Katherine Wren**  
@kathviolaplayer



MPs and MU officials discuss the Musicians' Passport in Westminster.

Photo: Jonathan Stewart. © MU

### Rates Relief

Congratulations to the The MU, the Music Venue Trust, UKHospitality, UK Music and all who have campaigned tirelessly for a reduction in business rates for grassroots live music venues and pubs.

This is game-changing support for towns and cities at night!

**Amy Lamé** @amylame

### Funding Tips

Just been to an excellent MU workshop, hearing Remi Harris's experiences and advice on music funding. Thanks!

**Richard Ward**  
@richwardmuso

### Tell Us About Your Worst Gig

Share your best stories about your nightmare engagements...

We've all heard stories about other people's terrible gig experiences, and have probably got plenty of live performance nightmares to tell ourselves. So if you've got a tale that you think would make our collective hair curl, we'd love to hear it. And it might just be used in a future story in *The Musician*. Send in your stories to:  
**themuician@themu.org**

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# Working To Protect The Rights Of Composers

MU Deputy General Secretary Naomi Pohl reflects on deals for media composers, an attempted rights grab by the Discovery Network, and how the Union and its members can fight back.



**MU members who compose music for TV, film, videogames and other media may be aware of the threat of a rights-grab by the Discovery Network, which hit the press internationally at the end of last year. The network, parent platform of channels such as Animal Planet and TLC, planned to require composers to agree to a total buy-out of their rights, meaning that they would not receive any royalties via PRS or equivalent performing rights societies internationally when their works were broadcast.**

Composer Michael Giacchino likened Discovery's plan to that of a gig economy company such as Uber, where workers are offered paltry per-job fees on zero hours contracts. He said the plan would have meant a 90% drop in income for composers and commented that Discovery's plans would "not only affect composers. It would dramatically affect the income of musicians, recording engineers, studios and affect the purchase of music gear, music and sample software".

Essentially, the Discovery Network was threatening to engage composers on a US 'work for hire' arrangement, which means the copyright in commissioned works belongs to the commissioner rather than the writer. This is a major threat to composers' livelihoods and the fundamentals of copyright, which should enable authors to benefit financially from the use of their works.

Graham Davies, CEO of the Ivors Academy, explained the impact on composers worldwide: "This has created such a strong reaction and fear because these back-end royalties sustain the composer. While there is some protection in the UK industry from PRS having an exclusive performing right assignment, composers are being pressured to sign contracts that undermine this. We must reverse this situation by educating and empowering composers to say no to these deals and stand up for their rights."

## **Know your rights**

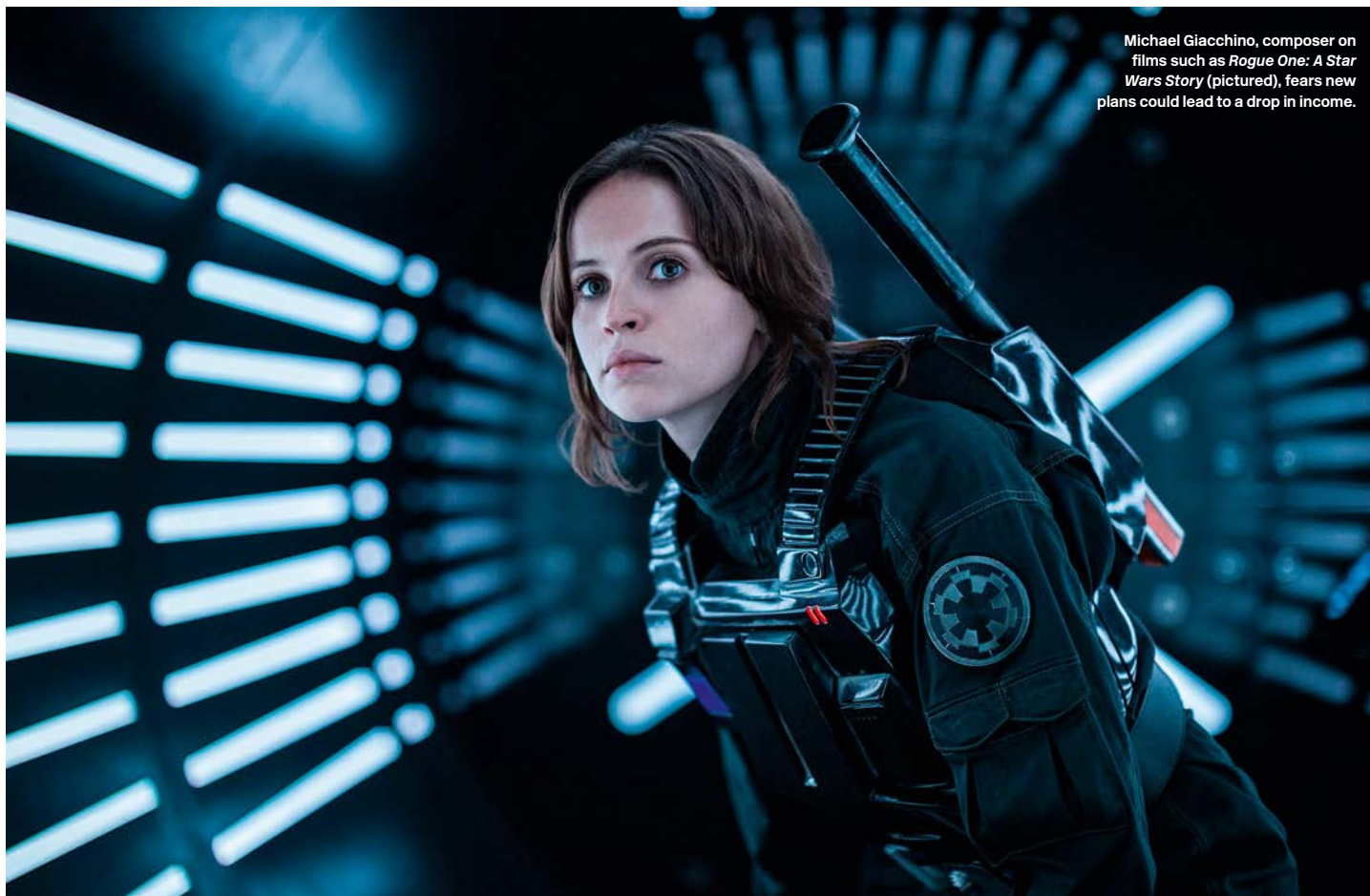
We understand that PRS for Music has written to Discovery and some other broadcasters to remind them that any attempts to obtain performing rights from its members would be unenforceable. Composers on the MU's Music Writers' Committee have told us over the past decade that their income from media work has decreased significantly.

Until the Discovery bombshell, the primary issue in the UK has been the increasing prevalence of package deals where the composer is given a lump sum budget to create the music. The budget is for the creation of the recording, so the composer is required to deliver more than the score for the soundtrack. They also have to use their pot of money to pay for studio time and engage session musicians.

The budgets have been more and more squeezed and this leads to less work for session musicians, and smaller fees for composers. In extreme cases, composers

**"The budgets have been more and more squeezed and this leads to less work for session musicians, and smaller fees for composers."**

Michael Giacchino, composer on films such as *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (pictured), fears new plans could lead to a drop in income.



© Jonathan Olley / Lucasfilm Ltd / Kobal / Shutterstock

face the choice of electronically producing the music to ensure they receive a fee, or surrendering their fee in favour of recording with musicians. As with any deal, the fact that composers will accept bad deals or low budgets perpetuates the issue. But the bargaining power lies with the commissioner.

#### Diminishing returns

Discovery backed down on its proposal following global pressure from composers and representative bodies, and is still paying for its collective licences. However, its attempt to buy-out rights signals that deals for composers are at risk of diminishing further unless we draw a line in the sand. Prior to starting at the MU, I worked for the Writers' Union negotiating deals for TV script writers.


Those minimum terms agreements negotiated with the BBC, ITV and other broadcasters guarantee a significant upfront commissioning fee, as well as repeat and reuse fees, plus royalties via collective licensing.

Composers are authors and should be getting similarly favourable deals. The upfront commissioning fee should cover the time spent working on the music as well as the grant of rights for an initial broadcast. At present, the fees paid to composers are in many cases insufficient to cover the labour, let alone the creative input and any rights package.

#### Working in partnership

The only way to address this issue is through collective action. As a Union with real clout and good industrial relations with UK broadcasters, we can lead the way and represent composers in negotiation. This is something we will be working in partnership

with the Ivors Academy on. Watch this space. As our founder Joseph Williams said "The union we require is a protecting union, and one that will protect us from amateurs, protect us from unscrupulous employers and protect us from ourselves."

This is a good opportunity to inform our composer and songwriter members that experienced MU Official Kelly Wood is now looking after our Music Writers' Section. If you need advice or want to get involved in our work in this area, you can reach Kelly at [writers@theMU.org](mailto:writers@theMU.org) 

# The MU Orchestra Section Conference

Despite the shadow of Brexit, a spirit of quiet optimism pervaded the fifth Musicians' Union Orchestra Section Conference.

Report by Glyn Mon Hughes

**Serendipity or coincidence? Staging a conference contemplating the future and considering prospects for individual musicians, orchestras and ensembles just hours before the UK departed the European Union helped focus minds.**

The conclusion of the fifth Musicians' Union Orchestra Section Conference, held in Manchester, was that change is inevitable. Maybe more difficult to ascertain is whether change is always good.

MU General Secretary Horace Trubridge addressed delegates, saying his optimism was buoyed up by the expanding Union membership, with some 2,000 new members on the books compared to last year. "Join for a pound was a gamble but it paid off," he noted. "We now have 32,000 members and we're on our way to reaching the 'golden plateau' of 36,000 members. In addition, only 6% who joined for £1 cancelled their membership."

New schemes to boost membership include GFAP – Graduates for a Pound – which has grown out of the MU's student membership scheme that will offer new graduates six months' membership for £1. There's also the

**"We're on our way to reaching the 'golden plateau' of 36,000 members."**

**Horace Trubridge**

XFAP scheme aimed at those who ceased membership up to five years ago. In the same way as the GFAP scheme, those rejoining can enjoy six months' membership for £1.

However, Brexit soon surfaced. "It's bad news," said Horace. "Nigel Adams (minister of state at DCMS) quoted us heavily, saying it was essential for musicians to have freedom to travel. Our profession will suffer if we do not have freedom of movement so we must work to ensure there is some kind of Musicians' Passport in place."

Horace also drew attention to the Articles in Copyright Amendment saying that "your remuneration should be proportionate to the success of that particular recording" while acknowledging that achieving that goal might be difficult since recording companies are "difficult, even impossible, to negotiate with".

## **Airline instrument policy**

The perennial problem of taking musical instruments on flights remains a thorn in the side of performers. According to Kelly Wood, MU Live and Music Writers' Official, musicians are still forced to put instruments in the hold, despite paying for a seat to accommodate the instrument. There are frequent reports of damage, despite being in hard cases. "It can be expensive for musicians to pay for priority boarding, so it is worth checking airline policies and fees regarding instruments," she advised, adding that "airline policies are erratically applied". One delegate suggested that members boycott those airlines that force musicians to put instruments in the hold. The delegate asked if it would be possible to get orchestral management backing for this.

New and updated directives affecting musicians were noted. Changes to CITES – the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna – means moving or selling some instruments could be hampered and a 'passport' will need to be issued. While obtaining the passport is straightforward for an employee there could be difficulties for freelancers. A new exception has been granted for the movement of dalbergia rosewood, though new, tougher, rules on the export of ivory could affect musicians. Kelly noted that there has been a call for the Union to support a blanket exception for instruments.

## **Classical tariffs**

Changes to the classical tariff imposed by PRS, following on from similar moves in the popular music sector, could have a detrimental effect, warned Kelly, adding a call for a clear definition of which items of classical music are deemed out of copyright.

All photos apart from where noted: © Joanna Dudderidge





Panelist Cynthia Fleming (far left), Liz Sharp asks a question (left) while other Conference attendees add to a debate (top).

"We also need a definition of what they regard as 'classical,'" she added.

The main business of the first day related to sustaining a healthy performing career from conservatoire to retirement. The first panel looked at issues around conservatoires and graduates, looking towards launching musicians onto a healthy career, while the second considered issues affecting current professionals and the move towards retirement.

Cynthia Fleming, former leader of the BBC Concert Orchestra, thought it "fascinating to see people in the formative years of their careers," she said, "but stresses and strains can begin when they are about 12." Alison Loram, violinist and research scientist and a practitioner at the British Association for

Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM), trained as an Alexander Technique teacher. "I am constantly looking at how mental and physical issues react," she revealed. "These can be age or gender based, the instrument played, physique and so on."

Looking at musicians' needs from 18 to the end of life is central to Joe Hastings' work. "We are seeing the needs of older musicians come to the fore," he said. Joe is head of health and welfare at Help Musicians UK. The Musicians' Hearing Health Scheme has helped 13,000 musicians pass through the programme in the last three years, with 15,000 waiting access. The organisation also operates Music Minds Matter, combatting mental health challenges, and is undertaking research with the British Tinnitus Association. For people facing retirement, Hastings talked about 'key

transition points'. "We have to consider the impact on people's mental and physical health at that stage," he said. "There's also the question of access to pensions and other financial considerations."

### Educating the educators

The feeling that educators need educating was forcefully expressed. "As soon as someone hears Alexander Technique they switch off," said Alison. "Teachers don't think they need it, but I know that all of us are not doing things in the right, or best, way. So far, no member of a conservatoire staff has come to me. For a lot of musicians, performance anxiety does not help the situation. Pressures are learnt at an early age yet we do not →

Vasily Petrenko conducting Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in Elgar's *Serenade For Strings*.



“Even for literate and curious people, classical music is still considered elitist.”

**Michael Eakin**

always equip teachers to cope with what it is to be a musician. A child can be in a brass band competition aged eight – and the damage can be huge, so we really need to treat players as if they are elite athletes.”

There was divergence, however. “Many section principals are teaching and they understand the pressures of being a musician,” said Fleming. “But we are working with 12 to 18-year-olds who are worried about stress, often because parents are so competitive. As a result many children cannot consolidate their technique and, with so few places in conservatoires and then in orchestras, they simply cannot compete

either mentally or physically.” Possible solutions included teaching students about failure and the shock that might follow.

**Effective training**

Some delegates suggested that there can be poor management at conductor level while many musicians feel it is not their place to become involved in management. Panel moderator Alex Gascoine from the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and vice chair of the MU Executive Committee wondered how to train managers to schedule effectively and train conductors to make those schedules work.

Understandably, wellbeing was at the forefront of many discussions. Cassie Raine, co-founder of Parents and Carers in Performing Arts, talked about issues

**Elitist Issue**

Michael Eakin, chief executive of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (RLPO), talked about spectacular concerts as well as outreach work. “We are not good at conveying the idea we are a fundamental part of the city. We have to ask what funders expect in return for their input. Yet it is pretty transparent if an organisation is doing something just for cash.”

Eakin emphasised that the organisation delivers to the community beyond the audience, but warned “we cannot take public funding for granted”. That said, the ‘arm’s length principle’ attached to funding is still there, “but the arm has become a lot shorter”. Eakin added that many orchestral musicians are keen to apply their skills in a range of settings. “For many, orchestral music and classical music are not part of their hinterland. Even for literate and curious people, classical music is still considered elitist, hoovering up a lot of money. That’s a problem.”



Joe Hastings, head of health and welfare at Help Musicians UK, addresses the MU Orchestral Conference.

often forgotten. "There was the orchestral player who was the carer for their partner and had to wait until that partner died to be able to go back to work. Someone coming back to audition after maternity leave is well supported, but a carer is often forgotten. That's why job-sharing is such a valuable development."

It was a view echoed by BBC Symphony Orchestra steward Daniel Meyer. "It has been a massive success because it has led to an increase in the number of women staying on."

### Breaking the silence

There were numerous calls to work in flexible ways and a great deal of talk around 'breaking the silence', to combat the physical and mental stresses of being an orchestral musician. "Do we have the confidence to be who we are?" asked David Rimbault, RLPO violinist and MU steward. "There's a feeling the show must go on, despite mental health or anxiety issues and the stigma attached."

BBC Philharmonic steward Paul Turner highlighted that while people can work until they are 70, that should not be a given. "I am lucky I am in a pension scheme. But it's in the management mindset that we work until 50, then move on."

Fleming talked about the need to teach young people that they will need to retire at some point. "It's not just playing an instrument: there are other things ahead," she noted. David Rimbault highlighted the need to schedule a proper preparation time for retirement. "We cannot rely on charities and outside organisations," he said. "If we do not join the dots, players will get older, injuries will get more and our problems will increase. British orchestras are at the top of the pyramid, but we must ensure these issues are addressed and don't become taboo subjects."

### Social fabric

The second day's debate considered whether orchestras are deemed a fundamental part of the social fabric, or whether the concert is the bolt-on to education activities. According to Debbie Jagla, MD of the Orchestra of the Swan, "our vision is entirely driven by survival. Year by year we lurch from funder to funder. We need to partner with others. Classical itself will not wash. We need to introduce the

likes of tango and salsa. That probably shows there is a lack of diversity in the sector. But, when we evaluate all we do, from rural community events to next generation projects in conservatories, we have a complete smorgasbord of activity."

The search for creativity and artistic freedom was a topic discussed by Carys Williams, the relationship manager, music including Education Hubs, for Arts Council England. "We seek creative people, creative communities, and a creative culture and country."


### Encouraging diversity

Diversity also appears to be key to a more secure future. "We have to move with this as a sector," said Eakin. "The Arts Council publishes data of all organisations with 100-plus employees relating to gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so on. We are nothing like as bad as we are perceived to be."

That said, there were impassioned messages to talk to local authorities who had halted funding, and exhortations to look at what had been done in the past to build a better future. "Concerts are the shop window," said Debbie, "there is a lot behind that window."

Other questions included why head teachers did not think music was a part of our social fabric; the position of music in the English Baccalaureate; plus why musicians cannot get involved in social work and what stops them being involved in community work.

"We are scraping the surface," said Adrian Lee. "Impact can be very profound. We cannot do this work just by saying 'go in there and do it'. We have to think about content, pricing and transport. We must make it easy for people to get to events."

Dumbing down? Orchestras plugging the gap because there is little music provision in schools? Working to ensure music is part of the curriculum? The debate could have raged on. Surely a question for many other pages. 

# Northern Lights

A strong rapport and a willingness to “dive into different genres” are notable features of Manchester-based string ensemble, the Levaré Quartet.

Profile by George Hall

Back in 2017 four students at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester came together to form a string quartet, which is now starting to make waves on the national scene.

Its four members come from different backgrounds and different countries – England, Wales, Brazil and Lithuania – but a strong feeling of rapport has seen the members of the Levaré Quartet develop their artistry and begin to command attention in what is one of the most demanding of all musical endeavours.

#### Musical youth

Like his three colleagues, violinist Didier Osindero is a now a third-year student at the RNCM but still only just 20 years old. He grew up in Hertfordshire, although his parents are from Nigeria. “They’re not musical, but my sister began playing the piano when she was six. I wanted to learn an instrument too, so a year later, when I was four, I started on the violin.”

After that he had regular weekly violin lessons and eventually got involved with the musical community in Hertfordshire.

“I began at the Junior Guildhall when I was nine years old, then I went on to the Purcell School of Music, and finally I moved to Manchester to study at the RNCM.”

“My dad always encouraged me to learn an instrument.”

Mateus Dandalo

His fellow violinist Mateus Dandalo comes from Brazil. “My dad is a non-professional musician. He had a rock ‘n’ roll band when he was younger and always encouraged me to learn an instrument. I began lessons when I was 10 because my parents had heard of a local music school run as a social project for the community.” Also a musician, Mateus’s brother had already come to the UK to study. Mateus joined him when he was 18 years old.

The quartet’s viola player is Emily Davies, originally from Aberystwyth, but brought up in Welshpool. She began violin lessons when she was seven but switched to the viola four years ago. Like most of the others, she doesn’t come from a particularly musical family.

Finally, the group’s cellist is Julius Jonusas, who hails from the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius. He began to study his chosen instrument at the local arts school at the age of six. “Then when I was 15, I moved to Manchester to study at Chetham’s School of Music. After that I went on to the RNCM, and there I met the other players.”

#### Choosing conservatoires

Manchester has achieved worldwide fame as a musical centre in many different genres, and can boast three major orchestras – the Hallé, the BBC Philharmonic, and the Manchester Camerata – while the city has been home to a conservatoire since 1893.

In fact, all of the UK’s major conservatoires – in London, Manchester, Glasgow, Cardiff, Birmingham and so on – have international reputations, drawing students from all over. →







“You can play it as you like, how you feel it. That’s very inspiring.”

Emily Davies

For Emily, “it was all the opportunities that are here in Manchester – it’s such a big city”. Didier sensed that in terms of the music colleges he visited, “the atmosphere seemed the most friendly, while the teaching has been really good – I think all of us study with excellent teachers. It is also a place where you can go down a variety of artistic routes, allowing you to explore different options and different styles of music. You get to do a lot of projects with amazing musicians coming in from all genres of music. That was a big selling-point for us.”

In Mateus’ case, “My brother had told me how many internationals were studying at the RNCM, from more than 60 countries, and how welcome they were”.

Julius also believes that Manchester in particular and the north-west in general is a growing community with a rising professional standard of music. “It’s a perfect time to be a part of that. Some of the colleges in London, Berlin or America, for instance, are perhaps more traditional in their approach. Maybe there is more freedom and diversity here.”

#### Winning the Weil prize

Following their first rehearsals, the quartet gave their first informal concert in December 2017. Their first official concert took place at the college’s annual and intensive Chamber Music Festival four months later, and they went on to win the prestigious Weil Prize for chamber music performance.

At this early stage the group still had no name, but it soon became necessary to find one. So they had a meeting to come up with some ideas and to see what worked. “I thought of Levaré,” explains Mateus, “which means upbeat in Italian”.

In terms of repertoire, is the Levaré Quartet currently specialising in any particular area? “Not at the moment,” says Didier. “We try to play as much as we can, ranging from Haydn to Bartók and Webern. At the moment we’re working on a Schoenberg string quartet, but

All photos: Joseph Branstetter, © MU



## Getting Along

The Levaré Quartet initially came together in October 2017, as cellist Julius Jonusas explains. “In our first year we each had an audition with Donald Grant, deputy head of chamber music at the college, and he put all the students into groups accordingly. From that point we just stuck. We liked playing with each other, and that’s why we’re still together.”

Violinist Didier Osindero echoes this feeling of instant rapport. “We clicked as soon as we started playing together. Because there are so few of you and you are working so intently together, with chamber music it’s particularly important that you get along.”

“We rehearse for maybe four days a week or more, for two hours each day or more, so we really do spend a lot of time with each other – and outside of rehearsals as well. So it’s more than just a vehicle for playing music.”



we also did a jazz performance with Gwilym Simcock a couple of months ago, and we’ve performed our own arrangements of folk music. If a promoter requests a particular piece, or extends an opportunity to try something different, we’re keen to do that”.

How does Julius see things going forwards? “At this stage, whenever we are offered a performance we dive into different genres of music, so we are exploring a wide range of repertoire that we are interested in.”

#### Learning from the greats

Their studies, of course, continue. Julius says the quartet is still learning from “great tutors, such as Donald Grant” – a former RNCM student violinist and now a member of the well-established Elias Quartet, formed at the RNCM back in 1998, and a member of the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists scheme. The

Clockwise from left:  
Didier Osindero, Mateus  
Dandalo, Emily Davies  
and Julius Jonasus.



Gorton Monastery and Manchester Cathedral. Thus far the quartet's dates have all been in the UK, but this will surely change, and inevitably like many musicians the Levaré are worried about the impact of Brexit on such crucial matters as foreign bookings, visas and travel. "That's definitely one of our big concerns," Emily confirms.


One of the intriguing characteristics of the group is its blend of nationalities. Does that bring something special to their music-making, or to their discussions, or even to their way of relating to one other?

Didier believes that with colleagues from different cultures and different backgrounds, no two people will come up with the same ideas, even within rehearsals. "It does make for an interesting blend. It also allows for spontaneity. For example, when we did the folk-tune arrangements, we selected folk-tunes from each of the countries we represent. We decided to try to make each of the arrangements as traditional to the culture from which they came as possible, using rhythms from Brazil, Lithuania, and so on."

#### Looking to the future

As young musicians, the Levaré Quartet are naturally interested in the support and benefits offered by the Musicians' Union, and recently took out student memberships.

While none of the four knows what the future has in store for them, they are all hoping that they will have a future as the Levaré Quartet. As Mateus notes, "I obviously do solo stuff in my individual lessons, but I want to concentrate more on chamber music and to have this group, and maybe orchestral playing as well".

Like the other members of the quartet, Julius hopes that the group can stay together after they graduate. "Perhaps with the help of our tutors and their connections, we can establish a residency somewhere," he says. "As long as we are able to live comfortably and afford our lifestyles, all of us would ideally prefer to pursue the quartet career, because it's a pleasure to work as a group and we get along well. You never know what career choices we might have to make, but at the moment our goal is to focus on that." 

Elias Quartet's recordings on the Wigmore Hall Live label including a complete cycle of the Beethoven quartets. "Czech chamber music player Petr Prause, a former member of the Talich Quartet, has also been a great inspiration to us," confirms Julius.

"When you get a piece together you can take it to the tutor," says Emily, "and they show you some of their ideas and help you shape it. But then you can go to another teacher, and they might say completely different things. At the end of the day, as they say, it's what *you* feel, it's *your* interpretation – so you can play it as you like, how you feel it. That's very inspiring."

As part of their development and training, the ensemble have been coached, as Emily recalls, by several distinguished chamber groups, including not only the Talich and the Elias, but also the Michelangelo Quartet, the Sitkovetsky Trio and Trio Gaspard.

#### Selecting the repertoire

For Emily, one highlight for the quartet was providing music for the Player of the Year award at Old Trafford, home to Manchester United. "That was pretty cool." But she also singles out a recital at Wigton in Cumbria in October 2019 "because it gave us a chance to choose our own repertoire, which is a really good thing to do". They picked Haydn, Beethoven, Bartók and Webern.

Other memorable appearances have included the Malvern and Solway Arts festivals and, in and around the city itself, at the Midland Hotel,

# Across The Border

Touring Europe could soon be a logistical nightmare. Henry Yates investigates the MU's Working In The EU campaign...

Report by Henry Yates

From the minstrels of medieval Europe to the provincial runaways of rock 'n' roll, musicians have always been hardwired with a desire to roam. But international touring is far more than a romantic notion: it's also a vital income stream that keeps modern musicians afloat. As such, the implications of Brexit are deeply troubling for anyone who plays live in the EU, and have sparked one of the MU's most pressing campaigns to date. "When we started out, everyone was dismissing it," notes Campaigns & Social Media Official Maddy Radcliff. "Now they're saying, 'Wait, this is really worthwhile'."

The UK music industry will spend 2020 anxiously eyeing the calendar. January's so-called 'Brexit Day' - when the UK officially left the EU after 47 years - was the symbolic line in the sand. But for the rest of the year, it will be largely business as usual for touring musicians. Free movement across the continent. No checks or charges. UK passports and drivers licences still valid. Supposedly seamless passage through the EU channel at airport control.

The true impact of the 2016 referendum result will not be felt until the transition period ends on 31 December 2020. Every last shred of legislation is on the table and up for debate, but following a UK Home Office policy statement that suggests musicians coming from the EU should fall under similar requirements as non-EU musicians, the MU has stepped up its demands for the government to account for musicians' needs

in its post-Brexit negotiations. This move could shut the UK's touring musicians out of the lucrative EU market unless they bear the time and expense of myriad travel documents. At a time when live work and merch sales can represent a make-or-break slice of a band's profits, it's a prospect that has sparked the MU's Working In The EU campaign, calling for a dedicated Musicians' Passport that enables players to work and travel freely across the EU. If that call is unanswered, then as Isle Of Wight festival boss John Giddings recently told *NME*: "Brexit is going to do serious harm to touring in Europe".

## Uncertain future

It's easy to take for granted the freedoms that modern touring musicians enjoy. "It's pretty simple to go out and play in Europe at the moment," says Henrik Steenholdt of Northampton rockers Empyre. "Our last trip abroad ran smoothly, paperwork was minimal and costs were relatively low. It wasn't much different, process-wise, to flying to Scotland to play some gigs."

Ask a veteran musician, however, and they'll darkly recall the barriers to international touring before the UK joined the European Community in 1973. Chief amongst these was the ATA Carnet: a paid-for legal document introduced in 1963 that allows temporary movement of goods outside the UK (in the case of musicians, that meant instruments and merchandise). Even now, the ATA Carnet is required for around 70 countries worldwide, and still lingers in pockets of Europe. "If you're a DJ in Gibraltar and you want to take your equipment over the border to Spain, you have to fill in a carnet," explains Maddy. "Or, if you've got a truckful of instruments, equipment and staging, and you're going to Switzerland, you need to get one. We know anecdotally from a lot of artists that if they're planning an EU tour, they just don't bother playing those countries, because it's not worth the extra cost."



The MU attended the Performers Alliance All Party Parliamentary Group drop in, to alert new MPs to the Musicians' Passport issue.



All photos apart from where stated: Jonathan Stewart. © MU

## Westminster Drop-In Event

On 4 February, MPs were invited to a drop-in event at Westminster, where MU representatives stressed the urgent need for a Musicians' Passport. "The aim of the event was to continue the conversations with MPs we already know are onside," explains Maddy Radcliff, "while informing new MPs elected in December of the problems facing musicians – and the solution, which is the Musicians' Passport."

"I am proud to support the MU's campaign for musicians working in the EU," said Labour's Thangam Debbonaire, Shadow Minister for Exiting The European Union. "Now, for the last three-and-a-half years, and for as long as it takes to get the government to agree – which needs to be in the next few months. A previous culture minister agreed with us when we discussed the Musicians' Passport with her. This government must honour that."

At present, it's feasible to route a tour itinerary to bypass the negligible Swiss market. But without action being taken at the highest level, it's likely the ATA Carnet will be reintroduced across all EU member states from January 2021. "The carnet existed before the EU," says Maddy, "and the expectation is that it will exist afterwards. Certainly, we know that in the Brexit no-deal advice, the government were advising people to get one."

### High cost

Costing £325.96, the online application process for the ATA Carnet is laborious enough, requiring the document-holder to list every item they are carrying. But this is just

the tip of an administrative iceberg. Musicians may also require working visas for each country visited, arrange multiple insurances, apply for an international driving permit and a green card covering touring vehicles, while paying import/export tax on merchandise and perhaps even social security in EU member states. "Asking musicians to pay all that, every single year, is problematic," says Maddy. "Then you've got orchestras with coachloads of gear, and everyone has multiple instruments. So those costs can add up really quickly. Plus, people forget that musicians' work is often speculative. You might be going to Europe to write songs with someone, or to play unpaid showcases.

"People see Ed Sheeran earning millions," Maddy continues. "But the truth is that most musicians earn below the average income, and anything that eats into that means taking away money from food, rent and paying the bills. Technically, yes, they still have the ability to go on tour, but in the real world, only the people who are already very successful →

**"Brexit is going to do serious harm to touring in Europe."**

John Giddings

British blues star Jack J Hutchinson claims that touring Europe could soon become prohibitively expensive for smaller touring bands.



## A Musician Writes...

As a rising star of British blues-rock, Jack J Hutchinson is wary of how post-Brexit legislation might affect his career. "Gigging internationally is a key part of how my band operates," he says. "We've visited various places across the EU, including Spain, France, Germany, The Netherlands and the Czech Republic, and part of what makes it so appealing is the flexibility to move from place-to-place at no cost to the band, except for fuel and a ferry ticket. Having to apply for individual visas, at great cost, will seriously affect our future tour plans. Essentially, it might make touring the EU unviable, because the profit lines are so fine. It might also deter promoters who cover travel as part of the package from booking UK bands, simply because it'll be cheaper to book local acts. Bizarrely, it might be cheaper in the future to tour South America than France! How can that possibly be right? The government needs to put in place a Musicians' Passport as soon as possible."

Jack J Hutchinson's latest album *Who Feeds The Wolf?* is out now. Sign the petition for a Musicians' Passport at [Change.org](https://www.change.org)

will be able to do it. Anyone who's not already successful won't be able to compete and their jobs will stop being financially viable. Voices will be lost. The people whose stories we hear through music are going to only be the people who can afford to do it. And that immediately excludes minority voices of every kind."

### One rule for the rich

This was a view echoed by Mark Davyd, CEO of the UK Music Venue Trust, in an *NME* interview, while criticising established musicians for not doing enough to flag up the issues. "You get Roger Daltrey going on TV saying, 'Everything will be fine after Brexit', because he used to play in Europe in the 1960s. Then you've got James Blunt saying it doesn't matter and won't affect him - and you know what? He's right. With the amount of money he makes from touring, he won't even notice. This is basically a tax on new and emerging musicians."

For the performers who can afford to tour beyond the domestic circuit, the frustrations will continue every time they hit an international border. With merchandise falling under the bracket of exported goods, tour parties would potentially be subject to the same time-consuming checks as, for instance, a juggernaut loaded with dishwashers. Individual flight cases might have to be opened, boxes of t-shirts turned out and inspected.

This would put enormous pressure on a musician's touring itinerary, says Maddy. "Right now, if you get in a car, you can drive almost overnight to the next venue. There's a very quick turnaround. But musicians could lose the ability to do that, because you're dependent on waiting times at the border and whether or not they decide to search you. You don't necessarily know how long it's going to take. It adds logistical issues. It could potentially add time, and time adds other expenses - food, hotels, that kind of thing."



The MU's Maddy Radcliff and Bambos Charalambos MP hold promotional Musicians' Passports (above). Bristol MP Kerry McCarthy talks to the MU's Isabelle Gutierrez (left).



Faced with these profit-sapping hurdles, it's been estimated by outgoing UK Music CEO Michael Dugher that a musician would need to play at least ten shows at 800-capacity venues for a European tour to stack up financially. "The ending of free movement with no waiver for musicians will put our fast-growing live music sector at serious risk," he wrote in a 2018 open letter to Theresa May. "The costly bureaucracy will make touring simply unviable for many artists who need to earn a living, and it delivers a hammer blow to the development of future, world-leading British talent."

The problem is glaring, but what's the solution? Unlike the labyrinthine machinations of Brexit, the MU's proposal is simple: a

dedicated Musicians' Passport. The document envisaged by the Union would be free, last for a minimum of two years, replace visas and carnets, be valid in all EU member states, and allow musicians, road crew and management to pass quickly through border control.

Critically, the system would be reciprocal, with EU musicians able to play in the UK without obstacles. "I think all of that is really important," says Radcliff, "because it enables musicians to do their jobs."

#### Damaging growth

If this all sounds obvious, the challenge is to get the proposal onto ministers' desks at a time when they're already fielding the concerns of countless other UK industries. Perhaps the best leverage to get MPs' attention is the hit to the UK economy, with UK Music's recent *Music By Numbers* report calculating that the domestic music industry contributed £5.2 billion in 2018, while the live sector contributed £1.1 billion – up 10% on the previous year. In the same period, industry employment hit an all-time-high of 190,935, while export revenue was £2.7 billion. Music tourism contributed £4.5 billion, while overseas visitors to UK live events hit 888,000.

"It's really important that our members actually take action."

Maddy Radcliff

"Those kind of figures," says Maddy, "show how financially important the industry is." At the time of going to press, almost 80,000 supporters had signed the petition for a Musicians' Passport – with a surge of 10,000 signatures after the Conservatives' election win in December and the realisation that Brexit is now unavoidable. There is a sense, too, that some of those in power are paying attention, with the MU's proposals welcomed at several party conferences, MPs debating the issue in parliament last month, and ministers meeting with Union representatives at a Westminster drop-in session on 4 February. "It's absolutely essential," said the former Culture Minister Nigel Adams, "that free movement for artists is protected post-2020."

#### Make yourself heard

The key to pushing on to a positive result, stresses Maddy, is for grassroots working musicians to make their collective opinion heard. "It's really important that our members actually take action. They can sign the petition on [Change.org](https://www.change.org), and every person that does that is another person who is saying, 'Actually, I really care about this' to government. And that's really important, to show the strength of feeling and the weight of support.

"Make sure you're opted in to receive news emails from the MU," she advises, "so when we have actions, you get it and can act quickly. Plus, write to your MP. They'll do something when their constituents put pressure on them. They're ultimately accountable to their constituents, and it will push them into supporting this campaign if hundreds of people write and say, 'I'm a musician, the Brexit negotiations will put my future and my job at risk – this is why. Please support the Musicians' Passport, here's all the information'. And when you do tell them the story, make sure you tell it from your own personal point of view – because that's what will stick with them." **mu**

# Ways To Stay Well

Assistant General Secretary,  
Phil Kear on the MU and  
BAPAM's vital occupational  
health education.

**It's fantastic to see a number of pages of this edition dedicated to the health and well-being work overseen by our Education and Training team. Their work in this area appears much needed, too...**

I recently had the pleasure of chairing the fifth annual MU Orchestras Section Conference, where half a day was set aside for discussion on maintaining a healthy career from conservatoire through to retirement. I was shocked by the sheer variety and frequency of both physical and psychological issues reported by members and panellists alike. To the uninitiated, orchestral musicians would not usually appear near the top of a list of dangerous careers, but I think I'd now have to disagree!

## Long term partnership

Our National Organiser, Education and Training, Diane Widdison, has been patiently walking me through all the partnerships she has painstakingly brokered, over a long period of time, with organisations offering support to musicians in times of medical or financial need. One such organisation is the British Association of Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM).

BAPAM is a healthcare charity giving medical advice to people working and studying in the performing arts, through

**“Their dedication to providing the best possible care to patients was tangible.”**



© Joanne Dudderidge; © Hybrid Images / Getty Images



**It's easy to forget both the physical and mental strains that playing an instrument can have on the human body.**

direct provision of information, clinical assessment and referral, and through broader education, training and research. It was founded in 1984, and is funded by Help Musicians UK, PPL, PRS, Equity and the MU, alongside donations from members of the public. This funding allows them to provide free clinic appointments at their sites in Belfast, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Cardiff, Birmingham or Leeds.

Knowing that I had been suffering with pain and stiffness in my hip for a number of years, Diane very kindly offered to speak to BAPAM Director, Claire Cordeaux, to see if an appointment could be arranged. Just a few days later I attended their London clinic to see orthopaedic surgeon, Nikos Reissis.

## Best possible care

Whilst awaiting my appointment, I witnessed BAPAM's administration team at work. Their dedication to providing the best possible care to patients was tangible. I was even more impressed upon meeting Nikos. He was friendly and engaging and showed utter conviction in BAPAM's mission as specialists in healthcare dedicated to performers. We spoke for almost half an hour about my general health and the background to my condition followed by a physical examination. Nikos took the opportunity to convey his gratitude

to the MU for the work we do for musicians' health, and our ongoing support for BAPAM. He also impressed upon me BAPAM's need for publicity to ensure continued funding.

In all I spent 90 minutes with Nikos. An appointment of this length with a highly experienced healthcare professional would be impossible under the NHS, and unfeasibly costly through private healthcare. I was diagnosed with early signs of osteoarthritis in my hip and advised to begin swimming regularly in order to keep the condition under control. After two years of pain and uncertainty it was amazing to finally have a definitive diagnosis. I have been swimming for a couple of weeks now and am starting to see real signs of improvement. I am extremely grateful to Diane, to Claire and especially to Nikos for their help.

If you are one of the many members currently suffering health issues, please don't just put up with it. BAPAM are ready to help, providing a free, unparalleled service, delivered by a dedicated and talented team. The MU is rightly proud to support and promote such an incredible organisation.

**Phil Kear**

**See p42-45 for advice on how musicians can stay healthy throughout their careers.**



# MU Notices

Vital information on MU business for all our members...



Photo: Joanne Dudderidge. © MU

## 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](http://theMU.org) to check your details.**



Photo: Dan Pearce. © MU

## MU Members' Diary 2021

Want to receive the MU Diary for next year?

In order to continue receiving the Musicians' Union Diary, you will need to let us know by visiting **theMU.org/diary** and completing a very simple request form.

Before you embark on this action, please note that you will need your membership number handy in order to confirm the request.

You must do this by midday on **Friday 27 April 2020** to be sure of receiving your Diary in September of this year, when it will be delivered to you alongside your autumn edition of *The Musician*.

We are introducing this approach to ensure the Union's print resources are focused appropriately on those members who prefer to receive a hard copy of the Diary, and in keeping with our policy of environmentally-friendly communications.

If however you no longer want to receive the Diary, you have no need to take any action.

**If you would like to still receive a copy of the MU Members' Diary please visit: [theMU.org/diary](http://theMU.org/diary)**

## Fair Play Focus

# The Glad Cafe

Glasgow's popular cultural hub and non-profit social enterprise fully endorses the MU's Fair Play Venue scheme...

"If we like it and we think our audiences will like it, we'll book it," says Kim Blyth of The Glad Cafe, a buzzing eatery, venue and cultural hub established in 2016 in the Shawlands area of southside Glasgow. The venue was set up as a social enterprise in 2016, with any profits made going into The Glad Foundation, a charity that provides local people with affordable music tuition. It hosts gigs six nights a week, with Mondays being reserved for community-based music making.

The venue attracts national and international touring acts, and is a committed champion of local artists, many of whom secure support slots to the bigger name bands that grace its stage. Their booking policy is pretty eclectic. "The shows we programme are often indie/alternative, experimental, electronic and folk, plus some jazz and classical, also," says Kim Blyth, venue manager at The Glad Cafe. "However, the programme is really varied and we're not tied down to specific genres."

### Fair treatment

Like most venues on the MU's Fair Play Venue database, The Glad signed up to the scheme in a bid to help combat the practice of

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Lavinia Blackwell, front woman of Trembling Bells, is a regular at The Glad Cafe.

**The Glad Cafe**  
1006A Pollokshaws Road,  
Glasgow, G41 2HG

**E: [info@thegladcafe.co.uk](mailto:info@thegladcafe.co.uk)**

**CAPACITY:** 120 standing  
**ABOUT:** This cafe/venue/cultural hub in the southside of Glasgow specialises in indie/electronic/acoustic and experimental music  
**CONTACT:** Kim Blyth

**GETTING A GIG:** Artists can email Kim at [kim@thegladcafe.co.uk](mailto:kim@thegladcafe.co.uk) providing a bio and online links to their music

**"If everyone is excited to make the show happen, it shows on the night."**

**Kym Blyth, The Glad Cafe**

pay-to-play. Blyth says she has heard some "worrying stories" from artists of their pay-to-play experiences, particularly from artists who are "quite young and just starting out", and believes the fair treatment of musicians is paramount to a healthy and vibrant live music scene.

Glasgow has a rich music heritage and its distinctly adventurous and innovative spirit is reflected in the booking policy. Blyth says she is interested in hearing from anyone who is interested in playing the venue, and adds that they are particularly keen to hear from artists who are pushing boundaries and whose work is "not necessarily defined by one genre".

#### Local knowledge

Musician Emily Scott of the Glasgow band Modern Studies is a big fan of the venue. "The Glad Cafe is a venue close to my heart as well as my home. It's a bit like base camp for Modern Studies. We often play there first or

last on a tour and we love it. It's relaxed and low-key, and the cafe and green room are easy places to hang if you're waiting on a sound-check. There's a real ethos of listening in the venue," she adds, "and I've always found the audiences so warm and respectful. The sound is great, the food is fantastic, but the people are the best."

#### Working together

Like many in the industry, Kim Blyth highlights the importance of artists, venues and promoters working together for the greater good. "Good organisation and clear communication between venue and artist/agent/promoter and plenty of promotion," she says when asked how best to ensure a successful show where band, fans, venue and promoter all benefit. "Ideally, it's best if shows are booked well in advance, leaving a good amount of time to get the word out there. If everyone involved is enthusiastic and excited to make the show happen, it shows on the night!" **MU**

**To access the Fair Play Venues database, visit [bit.ly/2jM4cUq](http://bit.ly/2jM4cUq) To nominate a venue, email [live@theMU.org](mailto:live@theMU.org)**

Scottish indiepop legends **BMX Bandits** have graced the stage at The Glad Cafe.



© Harrison Field

### The Musician



#### ALEX NEILSON, GLASGOW-BASED DRUMMER

"The Glad Cafe has made inestimable contributions to the cultural life of Glasgow.

As a music venue, its mission statement was to combine high quality artists of international renown with the best local talent. But it's done so much more than that. It provides a platform for people of all backgrounds and abilities to engage with their creativity. It's ceaselessly enterprising in the ways it does this, providing employment, entertainment and solidarity for so many, and it is helping raise the self-esteem of the area and the cultural profile of the country."

### MU Regional Organiser



#### CAROLINE SEWELL, MU REGIONAL ORGANISER, SCOTLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND

"We are delighted to count The Glad Cafe as one of our Fair Play Venues. It's one of the City's favourite small venues and is consistent in its quality and diverse programming. They are not afraid to challenge important issues and promote diversity through their creative events programming, which showcases emerging local musical talent as well as internationally known acts, and spans genres and musical styles incorporating indie, electronic, world and folk music. This small venue packs a serious punch."

### The Venue Manager



#### KYM BLYTH, THE GLAD CAFE, GLASGOW

"A comment we regularly get from artists is that they love how warm and friendly the space is. That's something we really pride ourselves on. Myself and Joe, our creative director, really try to make sure that everyone coming into the space feels at home and our team of sound engineers work really hard to provide the best possible sound, while making the artists feel looked after. We're also really fortunate to have lovely audiences, who are always so attentive at shows and create a welcoming atmosphere."

# Free Spirit

Since his first lesson at the age of 12, jazz has possessed the young Scottish pianist Fergus McCreadie. But now aged 21 he is broadening his horizons in some style...

Profile by Nick Hasted

**Three years after he realised he liked jazz, Fergus McCreadie was named BBC Young Scottish Jazz Musician of the Year. The pianist was 15 then, and would win the award a second time, as he applied monastic devotion to a music that had become an obsession. Now also a 2019 BBC Young Jazz Musician finalist, with a folk-jazz album of limpid beauty and rhythmic thrust called *Turas* to his name, at 21 McCreadie is already a significantly promising musician, whose open-minded evolution as a player paints a healthy picture of jazz education's effects, coupled with his own gently expressed inner drive.**

Growing up in a small town called Dollar, Fergus absorbed his mother's love of classical and world folk music. "She also put all this jazz on my iPod, saying 'You need to listen to this,' and I thought, 'Why would I?' Unfortunately jazz has that vibe in our Western culture that it's this complicated art music. Whereas in reality it can be very simple and joyous," he notes.

#### Jazz epiphany

McCreadie was 12 when his piano teacher encouraged him to try a summer jazz course, and he had his epiphany. "It was the first time I ever saw a jazz piano player," he remembers. "I saw two of them playing a piano at the same time, and I knew that was what I wanted to do. From then on my choice was easy. It was because of their freedom. I just remember looking at them

**"Jazz has this vibe in Western culture that it's this complicated art music."**

**Fergus McCreadie**

and they were loving it. I wanted to have that feeling on stage. Because I was quite a shy child. So the idea that I could get behind a piano and have fun without having to talk to anyone really appealed to me."

"It took me out of the world a bit," McCreadie adds. "I was into this very romantic notion of jazz as something that happens in a smoky club. I was listening to it, and pretending I was in a club in the 1950s in New York. I really liked the older jazz stuff then, and I would listen to it and wish I'd been there the first time that this amazing music was created."

Pianist giants of the past became staging posts to his development. "Listening to Oscar Peterson was just like listening to pure happiness," he explains. "And Bill Evans expressed melancholy and romanticism. Then I started listening to Keith Jarrett, and that's the piano-player I like the most, and I always will. Because he'll walk out on stage and he'll have prepared nothing, and go on to make an hour-and-a-half of the most amazing music. He's a special musician because he lives his musical life so intensely. He's released about 70 albums and every one's been really honest. He's never bowed to commercialism, and he's always trying to channel his inner self. That's something I really aspire to, that idea that he's never bowed away from who he is."

#### Single minded

The short period between beginning to play jazz and becoming an award-winner was productively intense, as McCreadie's Damascene conversion to the music allowed little distraction. "On that summer course," he recalls, "I learned that if I wanted to be able to be free, I needed to practise a lot, so I became a complete practice-head. Instead of playing sports, I'd sit at home and play piano, and practise as much as was possible. Because I really wanted it, you know? I had a great, Glasgow-based piano teacher called Ewan Stephens, who told me how to play →



Regular college collaborators David Bowden and Stephen Henderson joined with Fergus to create the Fergus McCreadie Trio (above).



## Fergus McCreadie: The MU And Me

"I've been a member of the MU for the last two years. You maybe forget that it's there, but then when you need it, it's absolutely there for you in the best way possible. There have been a couple of times when I've been sent a funny contract, and I can have a browse through the MU website and check it. And I can check pay rates.

"Just the fact that there this is a union that has established firm amounts that artists should be paid for the rate of work that goes into recording or playing a show is great.

"I've never had to go to the MU for direct help, but being part of this whole British music community through it, and just having it there as a resource to go to are incredibly helpful things. I feel that if the worst happens, I know the MU are going to be there. Musicians' careers are unpredictable, so it's really helpful to have."

a melody, simple stuff that really helps. And I was part of the Fife Youth Jazz Orchestra, and every Thursday night I got to jam and talk with musicians of my own age. It's a community thing, jazz. And being in a community that young was really important."

But jazz soon became a solitary passion. "It was just jazz and nothing else," he says. "It was almost unhealthy. All I listened to, all I played, and all I thought about was jazz. It was my life. There was stuff at school where I thought, 'Okay, this is good. But jazz is better'. It wouldn't be unfair to say that I was narrow-minded. I've come to believe it's really

important for a musician to be informed by other music, and other creative fields – all art should inform the thing you do."

### Deep learning

Leaving his musically sparse small town for Glasgow's Royal Conservatoire of Scotland blew McCreadie's mind open a second time. Though studying jazz at first, he couldn't ignore the city's wider riches. "There was a big traditional music scene," he recalls, "and if I went for a beer with other jazz musicians after college, if there wasn't a jazz jam on, we'd go to a trad session." A second musical romance now seized him. "If jazz music is the smoky club," he considers, "folk music is the highlands pub up in the middle of nowhere, where locals play these tunes that are hundreds, if not thousands of years old. You can hear history in it. I used to jam with



“All I listened to, all I thought about, all I played was jazz.”


Fergús McCreadie

that strong, was the point where I thought, this is it. We felt connected to each other, and also to the setting. And that’s something I’ve really strived for since. I want to be connected to not just the music, but where you are and what’s happening that day, in the world and in the audience. When you’re playing and improvising in the right mindset, everything’s connected, and the good stuff happens.”

Memories of teenage walking in the countryside around his hometown were stirred as McCreadie wrote *Turas*, which means ‘journey’ in Gaelic. “I write music, then wait and meditate on it till a title really makes me nostalgic about that tune,” he explains. “As a family we went to Mull all the time when I was younger, and with the flow of that tune and the idea of waves crashing on beaches and high mountains, and it being peaceful but also tempestuous, that piece became *Mull*.”

#### Keeping busy

Since graduating in July 2018, being a professional musician has agreed with McCreadie. “I was quite lucky, because I was plunged straight into it. At that year’s Edinburgh Jazz Festival, I had eight different gigs. I was playing loads.” His trio gig internationally, and he also plays frequently with drummer Graham Costello’s band Strata, and saxophonist Matthew Carmichael.

“It’s become more of an expression of myself,” he believes. “I wouldn’t say I’m the best at talking. But I feel like myself behind the piano. That’s it, really. Even sitting playing scales is like pouring a bit of myself out. It’s a nice feeling when you give something to the rest of the world, and the more you give away the more people are going to respond to it. I’m always trying to give more of myself away when I play.” 

a folk fiddle player at RCS, Charlie Stewart, who went on to win the BBC Young Trad award. And when he plays, you can hear all the musicians who came before him.”

McCreadie the adolescent jazz absolutist was history by his second year of college. “I started taking classical lessons, practising folk tunes, and playing covers at functions. While not the most glamorous gigs, playing that very simple chart music of the last 20 years was really helpful. Gradually Glasgow’s strong, wider music community made me branch out. The big thing was that it was a community. People were writing music all the time, doing gigs, hanging out and talking about music. A lot of my biggest composing and playing influences have been my peers. We all lived and breathed the scene.”

The academic training that has become routine for jazz musicians is sometimes blamed for highly-skilled uniformity,

comparing poorly to the unschooled originality of the freewheeling, romantic sounds the teenage McCreadie loved. But his experience doesn’t sound so unlike the lessons exchanged after hours by the likes of Charlie Parker at Minton’s – Harlem’s bebop hothouse in the ‘40s. “In its own weird way, it was the same,” he agrees. “We had to write essays, and do exams. But that wasn’t our main focus. The scene itself became the focus.” Bassist David Bowden and drummer Stephen Henderson were regular collaborators at RCS, and obvious choices when McCreadie needed a band to play at the 2015 Edinburgh Jazz Festival. “I write the music, and I suppose I am the leader on paper. But when we play we’re all in charge. The music and the common improvisational thread leads us.”

#### New direction

The Islay Jazz Festival in 2016 was the catalyst for the trio’s future direction. “Something just clicked. That was the first night I did quite a lot that was folk and jazz influenced. Being in such a rural Scottish place where the vibe was

# Understanding The Work Of The MCPS

What does the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society do to ensure that we receive our royalty payments?

Report by Neil Churchman

**It all began with the arrival of the player-piano at the start of the 20th century. With songwriters' income from traditional sheet music facing a threat from a new and disruptive technology, law-makers in the US ruled that piano-roll producers would have to pay composers for the use of their works on the upstart medium. Mechanical copyright – so-called 'mechanicals' – was born.**

Fast-forward more than a century, and the recorded music ecosystem has evolved almost beyond recognition, from wax cylinders, through vinyl, tape, CD, download and now streaming. But mechanicals, and the principle they represent – that composers must be properly remunerated for the sales of their intellectual property – have survived and thrived. Mechanical royalties are due to the copyright holder every time a piece of recorded music is reproduced and sold, via any technology. Crucially, mechanical royalties are payable on streamed music.

## Don't miss out

In the UK, mechanical royalties are collected and distributed by the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society, or MCPS. It is part of PRS for Music, which, as the name suggests, is an umbrella group incorporating the better-known performing rights collecting agency, PRS. On streaming services such as Spotify,

**“Mechanical rights deliver significant revenues to creators.”**

**Paul Clements**

Apple and Deezer the mechanicals generate as much as the PRS rights. It's a 50-50 split. Miss out on the mechanicals, and you can miss out on a hefty proportion of your potential royalty income. For permanent downloads, the weighting is even more in favour of mechanicals, with three quarters going that way and a quarter channelled through PRS. For physical sales, the current rate is 8.5% of the price paid per unit by a retailer to a record label. Other routes to earning mechanicals include ringtones, covers, soundtracks and karaoke tracks.

It's no accident that many musicians are more familiar with the performing aspect of royalties, says MU Live and Music Writers Official, Kelly Wood. “A lot of people start off in the live arena, doing small gigs and that's how they come across PRS, and they understand the royalties generated in that context. But mechanical royalties are often introduced when you get a publisher or a team around you, so it's not as common as understanding that you need to sign up for PRS,” she says.

## Value for money

Paul Clements is chief executive officer of the Music Publishers' Association group, which runs MCPS. He agrees that mechanicals haven't enjoyed the same recognition as the more high-profile performance-linked royalties. “Because PRS as an acronym is the only word you hear, you associate *all* royalty flow with performing rights,” he says. “But mechanical rights are extremely important and deliver significant revenues to creators of music, and that's something we take both pride in, and lobby hard for with government.” It costs £100 to sign up for MCPS as a writer. For a budding singer-songwriter scratching a

If you're creating any kind of music for release, sign up to MCPS to ensure you get all you're owed.

© SunnyGraphy / Getty Images

living from gigs and DIY CD sales, it may seem an expense too far. However, if a track suddenly takes off it will be money well spent, because mechanical royalties can be hard to claim retrospectively. The MCPS has produced a helpful guide to show how relatively few plays can reap the cost of a lifetime membership. For instance a single play on a BBC1 show, six on Sky 1, or five on Radio 1, will all bring in more than £100.

## Fine detail

With more than 27,000 members on its books, the society aims to cater for the full range of composers and writers in a fast-changing industry. “The vast majority of writers still sign up to publishing deals,” explains Paul Clements. “But we have a growing subset in the UK who are signing up to us directly for administration services.”





## Mechanical Royalties And You

Here are six important factors to consider when you're signing up for the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society...


- Never underestimate the importance of mechanical copyright. Not bothering about it can halve the royalties you could potentially receive.
- Educate yourself. PRS for Music has an extensive website, full of relevant information for composers and songwriters, and there are many excellent online workshops about copyright.
- Think seriously about joining MCPS as early as possible. An unexpected overnight hit is fine, but not if you are unable to get all the royalties you are entitled to.
- Don't forget that, despite the surge in streaming, physical sales of CDs, vinyl and even tape cassette, still reap impressive mechanical royalties.
- Make sure that you make use of the MU's resources. The Union has experts and lawyers on hand to guide you through the complexities of royalties.
- Even when signed up with a rights collector like MCPS, keep a close eye on where your music appears. Breaches of copyright inevitably occur, and MCPS and PRS can help bring offenders – unwitting or not – to book.

One of them is Anna Neale, a singer and songwriter who also lectures about the music business at the University of Kent and Brighton's BIMM Institute. She says that, for DIY-ers like herself, some of the eligibility criteria for MCPS membership can be obstacles to joining. Those rules require would-be members to be commercially released by a record company that doesn't belong to them. And those whose music is reproduced online or on film and television, must provide cue sheets confirming that their music has been used in a production.

Anna, who has been campaigning for a simplification of the process, complains it's a "glass ceiling" that can stop independent artists and writers who want to remain true to their grassroots from joining. "For instance, I did radio jingles, and I do library music, and they never, ever give you a cue sheet. It's like trying to get blood out of a stone. There are all these barriers in place, and I don't think writers understand how important those mechanical royalties are. They are the thing

that generates more money than anything else at the moment. They are where the money is. And they can make the difference between a sustainable career and an unsustainable one."

### Collect what's owed

The MU's Kelly Wood has another take on the importance of mechanicals to the industry as a whole. She says the cultural significance of musicians having access to the full range of royalties cannot be underestimated. "Missing out on mechanicals income makes it harder for people to sustain a career. We don't want to end up with just wealthy people making music, people to whom it doesn't matter whether they pick up their royalties or not. You'd end up with quite a different culture – a completely different scene." 

**Find out how you can join the MCPS at [prsforsmusic.com/join/writer/join-mcps](https://prsforsmusic.com/join/writer/join-mcps)**

# New Horizons For Opera North

The Leeds-based company is using its Arts Council funding to broaden its outreach and education work within the wider community.

Report by Duncan Seaman

Phil Boughton is a man well accustomed to the debates going on within the music world about public subsidies and the lack of diversity in classical music. As director of Orchestra and Chorus at Opera North, the largest Arts Council-funded organisation outside London, he recognises the Leeds-based company is “an easy target for people to take a pot-shot at” for the £10m grant it receives, but points to the vast range of work it is currently doing to “break down the barriers and this mystique that opera seems to have still, even within the wider industry”.

Key to that strategy, Boughton says, is Opera North’s outreach and education work, which is aimed at embedding the company in the community, “be that with schools, be that with community partnerships, because we want people to understand the benefit of an opera company and what that can do”.

## Extending the reach

It also extends to programmes like Resonance, which is specifically aimed at encouraging BAME artists to engage with the company through residencies. Resonance offers professional musicians and composers the opportunity to develop new ideas, collaborate with performers from other disciplines and to take their work in new directions.

“We want people to understand the benefit of an opera company.”

Jo Nockels

Now in its third year, it is overseen by Jo Nockels, head of projects at Opera North. “It was aimed at extending the reach of Opera North and the sorts of people it works with and commissions, and the types of music makers who are able to engage with the resources we’ve got here,” she explains. “It’s funded by the PRS Foundation in part as well, so we thought it would be really important that it was an open call process to attract all sorts of people who are outside our existing networks of artists and contacts to get involved with our work.”

Free rehearsal space and grants to cover fees up to £3,500 are offered as part of the residency. Opera North receives between 25 and 30 applications per year, with five or six residencies on offer. Applications are open to musicians from the North and Midlands, and judged by a panel from Opera North as well as artists who have previously undertaken residencies. “So it’s a panel which is 50% peers and that’s been amazing,” says Nockels, “because it gives us a different perspective and real musical expertise from those people.”

## Extensive support

Nockels says that Resonance works with a “really broad” range of musicians. “I guess it’s for early to mid-career artists. In any given year we tend to have a mixture of people who are maybe doing their first project as an independent artist, and people who are established and need the residence for a particular project. It’s quite varied the amount of experience that the artists have, and we can do that because it’s so artist-led that we can just respond to the individual needs of that person.”

Phil Boughton, director of the Orchestra and Chorus at Opera North, wants to break down the barriers to the artform.



© Tom Atber © Justin Slee

Two of the most recent projects have involved rapper Testament’s musical telling of the story of Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman to run for the US presidency, and jazz singer Nishla Smith’s song cycle about her great aunt in 1930s Malaysia. The Resonance programme, Smith says, “combined extensive support and resources with the freedom to push myself and explore new ideas”.

## Clear goals

“When we worked with Testament,” Nockels says, “he’s had shows on at Manchester Royal Exchange and the Leeds Playhouse. He was very clear about what he wanted to achieve with the week, and he knew where he was going with the project after that. In a way it was space and time and the resources to really develop the project that he wanted to do, but it was the first time he had really written musicals so we teamed him up with Jim Holmes, who conducts opera here and musicals. They did a session on the structure of musicals.”



## New Space

Opera North is currently in the midst of an £18m Music Works redevelopment project, which will double the number of performances in the Howard Assembly Room, create a separate entrance to the venue, away from Leeds Grand Theatre, and improve public access. It is due to open in 2021.

Jo Nockels says the changes represent a huge opportunity to open up Opera North to Leeds and to have activity in lots of spaces at the same time. "I can feel it becoming a real hub of lots of exciting activity. Practically speaking, we'll have more time in the Assembly Room to make more work and there will be other spaces in the building where community groups can work and where we can develop more residencies. It feels like a big change on the horizon."

Charlotte Perkins says: "Our pupils will be using that space regularly as well. We audition children from In Harmony every year to join the Children's Chorus, or some of them will take part in future orchestral activity. It's a huge strand of work that's going to be developed within the new building so we're hoping that with the appropriate concerts and the appropriate programmes that they will be involved there as well."

Testament, in turn, credits the support he received to being "key for my development in the world of musical theatre".

Nishla Smith's project "was a different sort of thing", says Nockels. "It was the first time she had moved across from being a singer and a writer of music into staged work. So we were quite hands-on with that project and quite involved in going to our store so she could raid our props, and working with our technical manager from the Howard Assembly Room all week on how to do projection mapping of the visuals that the artist she was working with had made."

### Greater involvement

Opera North went on to support a second residency with Nishla Smith, run jointly with the Leeds Playhouse. This developed into a full production that was featured in the Leeds Playhouse's Furnace Festival.

Some of the artists in the Resonance programme have gone on to have a greater involvement with Opera North. Nockels says the company is in the final stages of producing a concerto for sitar and orchestra, with Jasdeep Singh Degun. The award-winning sitarist participated in one of the first batch of residencies, and then came up with an idea that was too large for a residency. "So it ended up as a commission from the Orchestra here," says Nockels. "We want to do that, to build people into the work of the company deeply in the longer term."

The next group of residencies will take place in March and April 2020. "We've got a really exciting batch of people coming to work here this year," says Nockels, "from all sorts of backgrounds and kinds of music, from soul to South African music to Coptic Christian song and Arabic music."

### In harmony

Central to the ethos of Opera North is its education outreach work within the local community. The company's largest



# “We’ve got a really exciting batch of people coming to work here this year.”

Jo Nockels

programme is In Harmony Opera North, which aims to deliver an inclusive programme of high quality music education and performance opportunities to encourage young people from all backgrounds to engage with the arts.

Launched in 2013 with funding from the Arts Council and the Department of Education, In Harmony Opera North has centred on the children and community of Windmill Primary School in Belle Isle, south Leeds. It is now resident in six schools in south and east Leeds: four primary schools, an alternative education provision, and a secondary school, The Ruth Gorse Academy, which many of the pupils from the primary schools go on to attend.

Charlotte Perkins, In Harmony Opera North manager, says: “Now that pupils at the Ruth Gorse Academy are able to attend the extra-curricular orchestral and choral activity that In Harmony Opera North provides there, we can take them from their first exposure right through to a more advanced engagement with music, allowing those who are really enthusiastic and committed to take their musical journey as far as they can. The fact that it’s easy to access, being based in a secondary school at the end of the school day, and that it’s free, helps to

remove many of the barriers which might put some of our pupils off pursuing their learning as far as they’d want to.”

## Schools project

In Harmony is targeted at schools in some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas of the city, where the community is also very ethnically diverse. One of the schools has over 40 different languages spoken within it.

Perkins hesitates to say whether Opera North is effectively filling a gap in music education that the schools themselves have been unable to provide due to cutbacks. “I think it’s slightly more complicated than that,” she says. “In Harmony is so embedded within the schools it works in that our aspirations go beyond excellent music education. It’s about the whole of a child’s development, the entire school, and its wider community.”

Not every school would want or need a programme such as In Harmony, Perkins acknowledges, but she says they should have the facilities to teach music and the arts well. The scheme works in schools with high pupil premium levels, and they pay for it using some of that money from the DfE. Opera North sits

on the governing body for the schools it works with and contributes to setting the direction of the schools’ vision.

## Richness and aspiration

Twenty-five music specialists are now employed to deliver the In Harmony programme in schools, working with children from Nursery and Foundation level upwards. Every pupil at the school takes part, including those with special education needs and disabilities that attend resourced provision. From the age of seven pupils learn one of nine orchestral instruments, which are provided by the programme. They also sing in a choir weekly. Musicians from the Orchestra of Opera North go into the schools on a regular basis.

## Orchestra workshops

Perkins says: “When we launch in a new school the Orchestra will come into the school to introduce the art form, and will run a series of workshops for the children, so they are able to be exposed to the different instruments and the different sounds of an orchestra. Regular performance is an important part of the

Marie Claire Breen in Opera North’s Big Sing *Wonderland Restored*.



Opera North’s In Harmony initiative is targeted at schools in disadvantaged areas.





All photos: © Tom Aber

programme. At least once a year they're doing a high profile concert somewhere like Leeds Town Hall, and they'll also perform more frequently at settings within their local community, often alongside members of the Orchestra or Chorus of Opera North."

Schools that have taken part have witnessed improvements in discipline and behaviours for learning across the board. "It's so hard to be able to attribute that improvement to any one thing," says Perkins, "but we monitor and evaluate rigorously and have seen increases in academic results in the schools that we work in. We have a lot of feedback from teachers and from school leaders about the change in focus and resilience, particularly within pupils in the school settings."

#### Diverse talent pipeline

Longer term, the company hopes that In Harmony will provide a diverse talent pipeline for Opera North. It recently appointed Murray Grieg, the orchestra's previous principal trumpet of 30 years, as head of instrumental learning "to look at how we can support our exceptional team of music educators to be able to lift those results even higher," says Perkins.

For Phil Boughton, addressing the issue – recently raised by the cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason – about encouraging greater diversity in classical music will take time, but programmes such as In Harmony are leading the way. "It's a slow burn," says Boughton, who in his younger years was himself a beneficiary of Humberside Council's "fantastic music support service", with free peripatetic music lessons that helped him get grade eight distinction in trombone.

"A lot of work has been done. Conservatoires' recruitment and diversity figures are much better than they were ten or 15 years ago, but still a lot of students that go through those places are from a similar background in socio-economic terms. I think it's as much a socio-economic issue as it is an ethnicity diversity problem, because if you can't afford it you don't do it, regardless of the colour of your skin or your beliefs or outlooks, and that's where In Harmony has the opportunity to level the playing field significantly." **mu**

## Broad Scope

Initiatives to broaden diversity in the classical music world are welcomed by the Musicians' Union, says Matt Wanstall, Regional Organiser for the MU's North of England Region, especially if they help overcome suspicion about the amount of public funds directed towards companies such as Opera North.

"I think when you look at the range of other projects they do, particularly when you look at Resonance and In Harmony, it's really important that people understand the relevance of that work and the barriers it's trying to break down," he says. "From an MU point of view, I think it's hugely positive. Within classical music as a whole, diversity is a huge issue. When we look at the new Arts Council ten-year plan, as expected that's very much a part of that, and I think it's important not just for opera companies but for music across the board, in terms of representing the changing make-up of our communities."

Matt accepts the high cost of learning an orchestral instrument is a barrier for children from disadvantaged backgrounds but adds: "When you look at diversity within music generally, and classical music particularly, it's not just socio-economic, it's also about how you identify with certain types of culture."

"I think that's important where you've got the current practitioners and artists, like with the Resonance programme where you've got younger artists making a breakthrough, you've got programmes that are specifically connected and appeal to them. Also you've got interesting subject matter; it's not just run-of-the-mill stuff. That is part of opera and classical music remaining relevant."

# Tools Of The Trade

Double bass player Mark Lewis shares tips on how to work with his instrument...

Report by Katie Nicholls

Double and electric bass player, music producer and filmmaker, Mark Lewis, clearly has many strings to his bow, hopping between tours, documentary making and mixing and mastering for a variety of artists. 2020 is looking busy with a tour of Australia with Grammy-nominated soul singer, Yola, a raft of UK shows with Americana artist Danni Nicholls and a stint with rising roots star Elles Bailey. As well as time spent with his own band, the Chorlton Country Club.

Mark's duties with Yola are, in the main, on double bass, rather than electric. With an upright standing proud in the region of six feet tall, touring can pose some interesting issues.

## Size matters

"I've got a double bass that folds up, which means ease of travel." More commonly seen in America and Canada on the Americana scene, Marks tells us that they're made "by a guy in Nashville. It's called a Chadwick folding bass and mine's serial number 511 so there's a reasonable amount of them in the world. All of the bits of the bass are stored inside. The finger board comes off and that goes in a holder inside the case. The end pin has a specific holder inside, and the neck, when it folds in, that's got a spring-loaded clasp that goes around it. It's all designed to be securely held in place so it can take a bit of a beating from the luggage handlers! You don't have to

**"Cases are very important. Get decent quality cases you can trust."**

© Adam Birkett Photography



Mark Lewis with his ingenious Chadwick folding double bass.

worry about it in the back of a van... It's been a game changer because if you want to fly with a double bass you need one of those giant, seven-foot tall flight cases, or in the past you used to book seats for them and put them in upside down."


## Take it to the bridge

Considering the size and heft of a double bass, it's somewhat surprising that Mark reveals that the upright requires very little in terms of repair. Aside from watching for loose connections on the pick-up, keeping an eye for wear and tear on the bridge feet and stashing a spare bit of gaffer tape in the pocket for rattling tuning pegs, it seems to be a low-maintenance instrument. In fact, Mark only has to change the strings every two years: "They get better with age."

It's not been an entirely incident free ride: "The one time that I did rent a folding bass it was in Nashville for the last Americana fest. It was a bit more road worn and there was something wrong with the bridge feet, so every time I put this thing together it was like the bridge was toppling over. When it came to the actual show, I managed to get it to sit – a

double bass bridge just sits under tension – and the bridge collapsed on the last song of the set. It went 'bang!' like a shotgun and you could just hear it fold to the floor. The whole room was in shock."

## A case in point

Mark says that the majority of fix and repair duties are focused on the case, rather than the instrument. "Cases are very important. Get decent quality cases that you can trust. When the case gets a bit bashed about by airlines, or general use, it needs fresh fibreglass. My dad used to have a boat made of fibreglass, so he got some rolls of fibreglass tape and a resin and we put these layers of tapes on the inside to shore it up. We've done it a couple of times over the past few years. I've met a bluegrass player who said he was on his third case so I'm going more for an approach of maintaining." 

**For more information on Mark's work, and links to his Chorlton Country Club project, go to [marklewisproducer.com](http://marklewisproducer.com)**

# Why I Joined The MU

We asked three musicians why they joined the Union and why they treasure their membership.



## KATE THOMAS

Why did I join the MU? In all honesty? It was for all the insurance! But then I got to know you a bit better and now I seriously wouldn't be without you! I have really benefitted from all your networking events, workshops and advice from your specialists. After attending a workshop that you had on sync I got back in touch with the guys from Music Gateway, who ended up taking me to the Midem music conference in Cannes – so I certainly don't regret joining! I feel supported and strong which is of paramount importance for an independent artist. So I say thank you and bring on the next workshop!

Kate Thomas is a London-based singer-songwriter who performs regularly at jazz, roots and world music venues in and around London playing her eclectic blend of jazz, Latin and world music. Kate is currently performing her show *A Journey Through Bohemia*, which is a place where both standards and original music meet. She received support from PRS for Music to perform at the ASCAP Expo in Los Angeles. Most recently Kate released a nu-jazz single *How Did I Get Back Here Again* that is currently piquing the interest of jazz radio stations and publications. You can find out more here: [katethomasofficial.com](http://katethomasofficial.com)



## OSCAR YORK

I joined the MU because I chose to pursue music professionally, starting as a music student this year at Southampton University. I realised the MU would help me achieve my ambitions faster and better by providing connections, legal support, access to insurance for my instrument, and advice to build my career, which is essential for a young musician. I grew up in London, and every time we were in the West End we would end up wandering down Archer Street, and I would hear my dad recount stories of my great grandfather picking up gigs there, and about the venues in Soho where my dad and grandfather played. So I am the fourth generation of members of the MU in my family, and look forward to receiving the support that is so invaluable to someone like me who is just starting out.

Oscar York is drummer from London. He is currently a music scholar at Southampton University. He has played around London with young, British Indie pop/rap artist Arlo Parks and is currently about to start playing with the Southampton-based band, Myriad. In music education, he promotes RSL Awards exams and recently has done workshops in Greece and Singapore. For further details: [oscaryork.com](http://oscaryork.com)



## ANNETTE WALKER

"I had known about the MU for some time, but only recently contacted them when I had some queries regarding an unusual dancer-musician recording contract. Their advice really helped me with the finer details, and I was able to see the benefit of their support. So I decided to join, not only for my work as a pianist, but also for tap dance projects. There are times when my tap work is more musician-based than dance, and I hope to be able to pave the way for others to recognise the relationship of tap dance as a percussive instrument within a band."

Annette is a dynamic and multidisciplinary performer who has been in a variety of shows, from theatre, circus and dance, to television, film and the concert stage. With a background in classical piano, she completed a Diploma in Jazz and Popular Music at Goldsmiths, and often plays in bands. As a tap dancer specialising in jazz improvisation, Annette featured in the BBC Proms 2019 Duke Ellington's Sacred Music concert at the Royal Albert Hall. She regularly hosts the Renegade Stage workshop at the London Tap Jam and is passionate about the connection between dance and music. Find out more about Annette's work at: [annettewalker.co.uk](http://annettewalker.co.uk)

# MUSIC INDUSTRY ACRONYMS

As musicians, we are bombarded with seemingly endless lists of letters and numbers on a daily basis. But what do they all actually mean?

The world of industry is awash with acronyms, some useful, others verging on pointless, and the music profession has more than its fair share. Here are some of the most common acronyms that musicians may encounter in the course of their daily working lives...

**A&R – Artist and Repertoire**

The person whose job it is to find new talent, and be the artist's contact at the company.

**AAC – Advanced Audio Coding**

An AAC file delivers a better quality sound at a similar file size, but still doesn't challenge the MP3 as the standard digital music format.

**ABO – Association of British Orchestras**

**AFO – Association of Festival Organisers**

**AIF – Association of Independent Festivals**

**AIFF – Audio Interchange File Format**

Apple's version of a WAV file.

**AIM – Association of Independent Music**

**AL – Artist Liaison**

**ATA Carnet – Admission Temporaire/  
Temporary Admission**

A legal document enabling the temporary importation of equipment to countries without paying customs duty.

**BACH – British Association of Concert Halls**

**BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic**

**BAPAM – British Association of Performing  
Arts Medicine**

**BOC – Box Office Commission**

**BPI – British Phonographic Industry**

The trade association of the UK's recorded music industry.

**CAE – Composer, Author and Publisher**

A nine-digit unique identifier, used to identify rights holders.

**CISAC – International Confederation of  
Societies of Authors & Composers**

**CO – Change Over**

**COBO – Care Of Box Office**

**CRM – Customer Relationship Management**

**DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service**

**DI – Direct Input/Injection**

**EAN – European Article Number**

A European barcode that has one extra digit over a UPC (Universal Product Code).

**EqA 2010 – Equality Act 2010**

Legislation that protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

**EPK – Electronic Press Kit**

**Es&Ds – Extras and Deputies**

© hobo\_018 / Getty Images







You'll have to hope that the TM has ensured that FOH have sorted out the IEMs in the S/C.

**FLAC – Free Lossless Audio Codec**  
A lesser-used digital media file type.

**FEU – Federation of Entertainment Unions**

**FIM – The International Federation of Musicians**  
The global organisation for musicians' unions and equivalent representative organisations.

**FOH – Front Of House**

**GBOR – Gross Box Office Receipts**

**ICE – International Copyright Enterprise**  
An organisation with the collective aim of developing the world's first integrated music copyright, licensing and processing hub.

**IEM – In Ear Monitors**

**IFPI – International Federation of the Phonographic Industry**

**IP – Intellectual Property**

**IPi – Interested Parties Information**  
Identifiers used to identify rights holders.

**ISRC – International Standard Recording Code**  
A twelve digit alphanumeric code given to every registered song internationally.

**ISWC – International Standard Work Code**  
An eleven digit alphanumeric code given to each song registered to any PRO worldwide.

**KBPS – Kilobits Per Second**  
There is usually a number preceding this acronym, and the higher the number the better, or larger, the quality of the file.

**LC – Label Code**  
A four or five digit code given to a record label to identify who has released a given record.

**LGBT+ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual plus**  
The + is an inclusive way of representing the range of sexualities and gender identities included in the community.

**LX – Lighting**

**MCPS – Mechanical Copyright Protection Society**  
The organisation that collects and distributes mechanical royalties on behalf of its members.

**MHHS – Musicians Hearing Health Scheme**

**MMF – Music Managers Forum**

**MPA – Music Publishers Association**

**MPG – Music Producers Guild**

**MUPS – MU Pension Scheme**

**NPO – National Portfolio Organisation**  
Arts Council-funded bodies with a collective responsibility to protect and develop England's national arts and cultural ecology.

**PDs – Per Diems**  
Daily expenses payments.

**PLI – Public Liability Insurance**

**PPL – Phonographic Performance Limited**  
An organisation that collects revenue for those who own the master recordings of a song and the performers on it.

**PRS – Performing Rights Society**  
PRS for Music collects songwriters' and composers' royalties from radio, TV and online broadcast, as well as live performance.

**P2P – Peer to Peer**  
Platforms that enable the transfer of data between two computers over the internet.

**PRO – Performing Rights Organisation**  
Organisations that look after your performing rights and all the information that pertains your individual songs.

**RSM – Royal Society of Musicians**

**S/C – Soundcheck**

**SOLT – Society of London Theatre**

**TM – Tour Manager**

**UPC – Universal Product Code**  
A specific type of barcode widely used for tracking products in stores.

**VPL – Video Performance Limited**  
Part of the PPL, VPL is the organisation that collects royalties for artists whose work is broadcast on TV and video channels.

**WAV – Waveform Audio File**

**This is an initial guide to acronyms in the industry. A more comprehensive list will be available online at [theMU.org](http://theMU.org) – if you would like to recommend any entries, please email [TheMusician@theMU.org](mailto:TheMusician@theMU.org)**



Musicians shouldn't be afraid to ask for help if they need it.

# A GUIDE TO: STAYING HEALTHY

The life of the musician means that they often put off health and wellbeing issues until it's too late. Andrew Stewart provides tips on how to stop that happening...

**A career in music, viewed from the outside, can appear blessed. Yet for many on the inside its spiritual and occasional material rewards can easily be hijacked by workplace-induced anxiety and depression, the pain of performing while injured, addiction, concerns about money, or worries about finding the next gig. Musicians were once expected to suffer in silence, an odd condition given the very audible nature of their profession.**

The days of telling someone trapped in the headlights of stage fright or mired in depression to 'stick it on your face and blow' may not be completely over. But recent campaigns to address mental health problems and raise awareness of wellbeing at work are beginning to eclipse old prejudices against anyone unwilling to ignore red-flag warnings from body or mind.

The MU is alive to the many threats to the health and wellbeing of its members, from the strains of working harder well beyond the time when past generations would retire, to the pitfalls of the touring lifestyle. The Union has forged partnerships with four organisations able to help individuals address problems long before they spiral out of control, and provide expert advice or financial support at times of crisis. The quartet comprises the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM), Help Musicians UK, Music Support and the Royal Society of Musicians (RSM).

"We want as many people as possible to know what they offer," says Diane Widdison, the MU's National Organiser - Education & Training. The Union, she continues, works to

help musicians find the most appropriate support. BAPAM, for instance, offers free clinics to professionals in the performing arts, while the RSM can provide financial help in tough times. "Getting a combination of funding and support from these organisations can make a massive difference," she notes.

#### Self care

The MU is a founding partner of the Musicians' Hearing Health Scheme, which offers practical assistance to anyone concerned about hearing loss in the workplace. The scheme's package of audiological assessment and ear check-up, and set of custom-made, specialist musicians' ear plugs, together worth over £250, is available to Union members for only £30. Those experiencing symptoms of focal dystonia or a repetitive strain injury, meanwhile, should find relief through BAPAM, whose clinical pathways exist to treat the health of performing artists.

BAPAM also has a number of help resources on its website to advise musicians on how to keep in peak condition even when the demands of the job make this difficult. For example, the charity suggests ways of looking after yourself on tour and how to maintain a work life balance. BAPAM has also started producing guidance for organisations and practitioners on a number of issues that affect musicians, such as hearing conservation, vocal rehabilitation, and mental health and wellbeing services, which again are really useful for ensuring members are signposted to the correct services for treatment.

"We're not experts in mental health at the MU," says Diane, "but are often the first port of call for people who are in a bad place. That's why it's so important that we can refer our members to our partners."

**"We're often the first port of call for people who are in a bad place."**

**Diane Widdison**

Growing awareness of the burdens affecting musicians has inevitably increased demand for clinical and other interventions. From 2018 to 2019, BAPAM saw a 40% increase in patients, part of a long-term upward trend. "We will need to do more in future," observes its director, Claire Cordeaux. "Part of that will be about teaching people techniques to help themselves. Many live with and manage chronic conditions once they've learned how to recognise the warning signs and know what to do about them. We want to help people prevent problems before they escalate into career-threatening conditions."

#### Ask for help

"We're working with Music Support to provide bespoke mental health first-aid training for musicians," reports Diane Widdison. The first sessions were held at the end of January and are set to expand as part of Music Support's extensive national programme of workshops and training. "People are more open to recognising they need help and sharing their concerns. Music Support's approach means there's always someone ready to listen."

Help Musicians, formerly known as the Musicians Benevolent Fund, has listened to and helped thousands of musicians since →

Musicians can be liable to all manner of work related issues, from hearing trouble to mental health issues to physical strains.

© South\_agency / Getty Images; © Joanna Dudderidge



**ERIC MTUNGWAZI**  
Managing Director,  
Music Support

“Music Support’s helpline is open to any musician, from any genre, every day during core office hours. We have a pool of a dozen regular helpline volunteers and around 20 who run our Safe Hubs backstage at music festivals, where artists and crew can speak confidentially about anything. Our trained volunteers have personal experience of the music industry and of the issues that Music Support covers. There’s real power in peer-to-peer support and a story of hope that comes from the authenticity of our volunteers’ experience and ability to listen.”

“People now wonder why we didn’t think of a mental health and addiction support helpline for musicians before. There’s been an increasingly good dialogue over the past year with different welfare and benevolent organisations around how we can work together and make it easier for those who need help to get it.”

its foundation almost a century ago. Its promotion of health and welfare has been strengthened in recent years by the launch of the Musicians Hearing Health Scheme and the pioneering Music Minds Matter programme.

The latter grew from a 2016 study commissioned by Help Musicians from the University of Westminster and MusicTank. Anyone reading this article concerned about their mental health may be surprised, then reassured to discover that they are not alone: over 71% of the 2,211 self-selected respondents to the Music Minds Matter survey reported an experience of panic attacks or high levels of anxiety. Over two thirds, meanwhile, reported experiencing depression.

Help Musicians collaborates across the industry to support musicians and those who work with them. “Our partnership with BAPAM provides a range of health services, including a healthy touring package for wellbeing on tour developed through the Do It Differently fund for independent musicians,” notes Claire Gevaux, director of programme at Help Musicians. “Most recently we supported an initiative that will see mental health first aid training being delivered across the industry by the charity Music Support, which is a very positive step towards building a safer working environment for musicians.”

Help Musicians has seen evidence of a shift in culture, with musicians taking greater responsibility for their wellbeing. “We understand that the challenges musicians face in their career and personal lives are often interconnected,” Gevaux observes. “We look at what a musician needs as a whole, through an integrated programme of support incorporating health and welfare and creative funding. This person-centred approach means we can provide support that’s tailored to suit individual need, spanning creative, business, health, and welfare issues. We continue to develop preventative support to improve working conditions, sustain careers and create positive change for musicians.”

**Act early**

BAPAM connects performers with clinicians from a broad range of backgrounds, whether surgeons and general practitioners or physiotherapists, psychologists and psychotherapists. The charity offers free clinics in London, Glasgow, Cardiff, Birmingham and Leeds to those who make a proportion of their living from the performing arts, or are studying to become performing arts professionals. Its clinicians are qualified



Diane Widdison, MU National Organiser, Education & Training, (above) highlights the broad range of assistance available to musicians.

“People are more open to recognising they need help and sharing their concerns”


**Diane Widdison**

unexpected costs in old age and funeral expenses, and helps ameliorate hardship arising from being unable to work. Its assistance, delivered in confidence, also runs to counselling, financial advice, rehabilitation or making referrals to specialist practitioners.

#### Financial help

The RSM's chief executive Charlotte Penton-Smith notes that small grants disbursed at the right time can prove life-changing. “Paying for a few sessions of hand therapy could prevent an injury from ending someone's career. It makes good sense to help musicians return to work quickly and efficiently. We will do all we can to get people back to work. If they can't, we can help them change career or, where appropriate, prepare for retirement.” A new partnership with BAPAM, she continues, is set to examine the Society's approach to case work and determine how they can enhance each other's work.

The vocational nature of being a musician, where an individual's identity is so fundamentally defined by their calling, can be both blessing and curse. “People are absolutely dedicated to their art,” notes Penton-Smith. “It can be devastating to find that they can no longer sing or play. We're able to provide long-term financial assistance to those whose health conditions mean they will never work again.” The RSM, she adds, often directs applicants to Help Musicians for careers advice, a service informed by compassion for anyone forced to let go of that which has determined their sense of self.

“Although each of the charities and support organisations for musicians has a different focus,” Charlotte Penton-Smith concludes, “by working together and sharing knowledge I believe we can deliver the best help possible and be a great force for the music profession.” 

to diagnose problems and refer individuals for appropriate treatment through the NHS or other specialist individuals or services.

Claire Cordeaux explains that treating physical, psychological, vocal and hearing problems is central to the charity's work. “We see a group of people that most GPs would never see as a group,” she observes. “We concentrate on providing the pathways they need to reach the right specialists, receive the right diagnostics, and provide their doctors with context for why it's important they should receive specific treatments. Our clinicians report back on many problems that could have been avoided so we can develop our work around health promotion.”

Founded in 1738, with Handel and Arne among its early members, the Royal Society of Musicians offers financial assistance and advice to British-based musicians. The charity recognises the precarious nature of freelance life and responds to requests from those in need. It makes grants to professional musicians, whether active or retired, others professionally involved in the world of music, or their families and dependents. The Society's investment capital and income from annual membership fees, bequests and fundraising generates sufficient cash to cover, among other things, healthcare costs,

## Essential Contacts

Your first ports of call for health advice

#### British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM)

7 - 9 Breems Buildings,  
London WC1B 5HJ  
[bapam.org.uk](http://bapam.org.uk)

For health-assessment clinic appointment bookings, or to register for free with BAPAM: 020 7404 8444

#### Help Musicians

7-11 Britannia St, London WC1X 9JS  
[helpmusicians.org.uk](http://helpmusicians.org.uk)

020 7239 9100

Health & Welfare for working and retired musicians

[help@helpmusicians.org.uk](mailto:help@helpmusicians.org.uk)

#### Help Musicians NI

Oh Yeah Music Centre  
15-21 Gordon Street, Belfast BT1 2LG  
028 9023 3162

#### Help Musicians Scotland

The Briggait, 141 Bridgegate  
Glasgow G1 5HZ  
0141 404 9502

#### Music Support

69 Caversham Road, London NW5 2DR  
[musicsupport.org](http://musicsupport.org)

Helpline number: 0800 030 6789

Head office number: 020 39486777

#### Royal Society of Musicians

26 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 6BT  
[royalsocietyofmusicians.org](http://royalsocietyofmusicians.org)

#### WE ARE HERE TO HELP

If you have any issues with health and wellbeing in your work please contact your MU Regional Office. For contact details please see p2 of this issue.

# ASK US FIRST

It is in the interest of all MU members to read this list carefully.

If you are offered any work or agreements by any of the parties listed below, please consult the MU contact shown before you accept. Where no specific MU contact or office is listed, please contact MU In-house Solicitor Official Dawn Rodger on **020 7840 5516** or email **dawn.rodger@theMU.org**

- **Achim Holub**
- **The Akademia**  
Jamie Pullman 020 7840 5532
- **The Convent / Matt Roberts / Charlotte Roberts / August Templar**  
Jamie Pullman 020 7840 5532
- **Earcandy**  
Natalie Witts 020 7840 5552
- **Fest Camden**  
Ben Benson 0121 236 4028
- **Gatecrasher Classical Limited / Rampant Lion Music Limited / Simon Raine Thrall / Scott Bond**  
Ben Benson 0121 236 4028
- **Geronimo Festival / Geronimo Events Ltd**  
Ben Benson 0121 236 4028
- **Jan Mulder / Miller Music USA**  
Phil Kear 020 7840 5557
- **Jonathan Gilbert aka Jonny Gilbert**  
Sam Jordan 020 7840 5553
- **London Community Gospel Choir / MVLS Records**  
Geoff Ellerby 020 7840 5559
- **London Music Centre (teaching agency)**  
Natalie Witts-Kilshaw 0207 840 5552
- **MB-Xperiential Limited / Guildford Jazz Festival**  
Sam Jordan 020 7840 5553
- **Neil Eckersley / Speckulation Entertainment Ltd / Wonderland the Musical Ltd**
- **The Parrot / Nicky Caulfield**  
Jamie Pullman 020 7840 5532
- **Oren Rosenblum**  
Barry Dallman 0161 236 1764
- **Productions at Southwark Playhouse**
- **Ross Dorrance t/a Skinny Music**  
Sam Jordan 020 7840 5553
- **Thomas Simmonds**
- **Steve Robertson / Good Times Roll Ltd / Escape From Reality Ltd / Hi Res Agency Ltd**  
Ben Benson 0121 236 4028
- **Tom McLean / Cherry Pie Music**  
Chris Walters 020 7840 5554

The latest edition of the Ask Us First list can be obtained from the 'Advice & downloads' section by logging into [theMU.org](http://theMU.org)

## MU STANDARD CONTRACTS

Members are strongly advised to obtain written confirmation of all engagements.

The MU produces Standard Contracts for engagement and these are available from your Regional Office or at [theMU.org](http://theMU.org)

Members should always use an MU Standard Contract, wherever possible, as these will provide evidence of the conditions of an engagement if a dispute arises.

The MU cannot always assist if a contract does not cover you. Where MU contracts are not used, written evidence is essential. A letter or note should specify the date, time and place of the engagement, the fee, and that the engagement is subject to MU rates and conditions. The letter or note should be signed by someone authorised to do so.

## FOREIGN CLAIMS

Members are strongly advised to submit written contracts for professional activities abroad to the Union before they are entered into.

When undertaking professional activities with a contracting party based abroad, members are also reminded that they ensure fees are paid upfront before the contract is performed and that an advance is obtained against any future royalty payable.

Members should be aware that requests for legal assistance in relation to claims abroad must be considered against the MU's criteria for legal assistance. Such claims are often not cost effective to pursue and if no upfront payment is obtained, members may remain completely unpaid for their services.

## CONTRACT ADVISORY SERVICE

Throughout their professional life, musicians are often required to enter into complex and often long-term agreements.

It is vitally important that musicians receive expert advice on the terms and implications of such contracts. This service could be obtained, at a cost, from one of the many solicitors who specialise in music business matters.

However, MU members may be invited to enter into an agreement while not having the means to pay for such legal advice. To cater for such circumstances, the MU offers members a Contract Advisory Service (CAS), which, in the vast majority of cases, is available at no cost and grants up to an hour of our specialist solicitor's time. Please contact your MU Regional Office for further information.

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](mailto:TheMusician@theMU.org)

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

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



# reviews

Reviewers: Keith Ames,  
Roy Delaney and  
Clive Somerville

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.



CHRISTOPHER HOLLAND

**C**hris is best known as the keyboard player in the Jools Holland's Rhythm and Blues Orchestra where he can be found skilfully supporting his bandleader brother. Since 1999 he has been releasing a series of delightful albums under his own name and generating deserved acknowledgement of his tasteful writing and artistry.

Sunshine, good vibes and an overwhelming feeling of positivity are delivered with every track, especially on the stand-outs *Beautiful Fantastic Planet* and the co-write with Chris Difford, *On Blackheath*. Meanwhile *Hotter Than The Sun* is surely the missing classic from the summer of 1976 with its upbeat arrangement, memorable harmonies and

feelgood setting. Chris says, "I loved creating this album. I wanted to try and capture the sound and feel of some of those beautifully crafted songs from the mid-70s to the early 80s era. That was the music that I grew up listening to and it has inspired me ever since. But *Golden Hour* is all about the future as well as referencing what has gone before."



▶▶ **CHRISTOPHER HOLLAND**  
*Golden Hour*

Chris's latest album boasts superb songs of English summertime delicacy and mature reflections on life, love and imagination. Echoing the classic easy listening sounds of the mid-to-late-70s. [christopherhollandmusic.com](http://christopherhollandmusic.com)

## classical



» **DARRAGH MORGAN & JOHN TILBURY**  
Morton Feldman  
For John Cage

Morgan (violin) and Tilbury (piano) interpret Morton Feldman's sparse work refreshingly well. Abstract and cinematic, this work creates evolving textures with a feeling of stillness.

[diatribe.ie](http://diatribe.ie)



» **BERKELEY ENSEMBLE**  
Septet, Op.20,  
Clarinet Trio, Op.11

The much-loved ensemble returns with polished performances of Beethoven's Op. 11 Trio, and the original scoring of his grand Septet Op. 20 for wind and strings.

[berkeleyensemble.co.uk](http://berkeleyensemble.co.uk)



» **ROBIN MICHAEL & DANIEL TONG**  
Complete Works  
For Cello And  
Piano

The duo have created an atmospheric double CD of Beethoven's works from across his lifetime, on period instruments: Michael on a cello and Tong on a fortepiano. Magnificent.

[tinyurl.com/robtong](http://tinyurl.com/robtong)



» **ANDREW SCOTT**  
Andrew Scott  
Plays Laurindo  
Almeida

Scott's tribute to the revered composer pays homage to his solo arrangements. Intricate, melodic versions of much-loved standards show that he's fully realised his ambition.

[tinyurl.com/scottplays](http://tinyurl.com/scottplays)

## acoustic



» **EIRA LYNN JONES**  
Forgotten Dreams

A truly magical collection of harp solos, in memory of fellow player Helen MacLeod, recorded in Stockport's St Thomas Church. As head of harp at the Royal Northern College of Music, Eira chooses pieces that inspire her students, alongside paeans to the Scottish Highlands.

[eiralynnjones.com](http://eiralynnjones.com)



» **JOHNNY CAMPBELL**  
From Hull And  
Halifax And Hell...

Recorded live on the Faroe isle of Nólsoy, Johnny's traditional English folk guitar and warm anecdotes delight the friendly crowd who are clearly loving every last second of it.

[johnnycampbell.bandcamp.com](http://johnnycampbell.bandcamp.com)

## rock



» **MATT GUNTRIP**  
Archaeology  
Of Love

Guntrip takes a temporal look at love for his latest accomplished offering, with help from the fine, soaring vocals of Cloudy Galvez.

[mattguntrip.com](http://mattguntrip.com)



» **DAWN SANDELLS**  
Mama's Kitchen

The Welsh Wolverine debuts a fine case of reggae-tinged, smouldering blues here, with her soulful, raw-edged vocals drawing comparisons with Janis Joplin. Along with her finely honed band, Sandells seems born to the blues.

[dawnsandells.com](http://dawnsandells.com)



» **SOUR KIX**  
Gone

Fresh-faced muscular pop rock from the impossibly young Woking band. Amelie's budding voice strengthens with each new release, while the dynamic four-piece band unleash meaty riffs behind her.

[sourkix.com](http://sourkix.com)

### STAND OUT

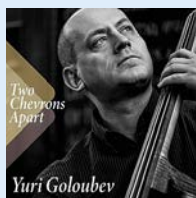
This month's international highlights include a dark release from a German multi-instrumentalist, and a collection of jazz from a fine Russian bass player.



» **PATRICIA DE MAYO**  
The Apricot Tree

The German artist's arabesque tapestry of oud, piano, recorder, bass and percussion accompany her plaintive vocals to create tales of love, loss and displacement. The track *Deep Impressions* is based on the post-mortem of Ruth Ellis.

[patriciademayo.com](http://patriciademayo.com)



» **YURI GOLOUBEV**  
Two Chevrons Apart

The double-bass maestro brings an album of adventurous chamber-jazz that simply astonishes. His bright, flowing bass blends seamlessly with attentive tenor sax, piano and drums to create a consummate modern jazz quartet.

[yurigoloubev.com](http://yurigoloubev.com)



## folk



» **KATHIE TOUIN**  
Facing The  
Falling Sky

Orkney-based Californian Touin draws on the inspiration of her remote island home to create this powerful, reflective album. Birdsong, barking dogs and seals all meet the man-made intrigues of Theramin, Stylophone and wooden frog.

[kathietouin.com](http://kathietouin.com)



» **WOODLAND  
ROOTS, HENRY  
FOSBROOKE**  
Mighty Tree

A regular Martin Stephenson collaborator, Henry breaks out on an album of his own songs, telling tales of love and mother Earth using reggae rhythms, African percussion and didgeridoos.

[logtagon.com](http://logtagon.com)



» **COUNTER'S  
CREEK**  
The Careful  
Placement  
Of Stones

This debut album of jazz-folk fusion marries traditional instruments such as whistles, banjos and jaw harps to proggy progressions and meandering melodies with great effect.

[counterscreekmusic.com](http://counterscreekmusic.com)

## singer/songwriter



» **IAIN FORBES**  
Rip My Heart Out

Scottish singer-songwriter and virtuoso guitarist Iain delivers ten songs in his restful and vulnerable voice, with laid back swingy fringes. The stumpy *The Happy Boy* and melancholy *Absent Friends* stand out.

[iainforbes.com](http://iainforbes.com)



» **SERIOUS CHILD**  
Time In The Trees

With the finely bearded West Sussex songwriter Alan Young at their centre, Serious Child offer up a delightful indie folk sound – the highlight being the collaboration with botanist Dr Mark Spencer on *Brambles*.

[seriouschild.com](http://seriouschild.com)



» **SIMON JAMES**  
Happy Ever After

A collection of quietly intense Americana featuring songs of sadness and loneliness from a British troubadour who's not afraid to share his best songs here with the up-and-coming UK country star Sam Coe.

[johnspringate.com](http://johnspringate.com)

## jazz



» **THE GAZ  
HUGHES SEXTET**  
Plays Art Blakey

Joyfully celebrating the work of the Jazz Messenger himself, drummer Hughes plays the pick of the Blakey songbook in laid back style, alongside musicians the calibre of sax player Alan Barnes and pianist Andrzej Baranek.

[gazhughesmusic.com](http://gazhughesmusic.com)



» **ROBIN PHILLIPS**  
Re-Versed

Robin's intriguing project to rediscover the lost verses of jazz standards restores the full meaning to many that had fallen victim to time. This warm and witty interpretation shows great understanding, allowing us to reconnect to these timeless classics.

[repmusic.co.uk](http://repmusic.co.uk)



» **MARK CHERRIE  
QUARTET**  
Joining The Dots

Steel-pan maestro Cherrie brings a Trinidadian lilt to this beautifully-judged collection, blending self-penned tunes with thoughtful interpretations of Herbie Hancock, Hendrix and Nirvana. An adventurous and uplifting album.

[markcherriequartet.com](http://markcherriequartet.com)

## pop



» **MOODBAY**  
Ghost

The third single from the Darlington-based, moodpop duo is a trippy ride through processed hooks and beats. A sleek take on 90s R'n'B, the sax of BBC Young Musician Award Winner Alexander Bone adds a soulful nod to its ancestry.

[moodbay.com](http://moodbay.com)



» **JOHN SPRINGATE**  
70

The prolific Glitter Band member releases yet another collection of bright and optimistic pop tunes. The glam tinged *Living The Dream* and the jangle of *Love At First Sight* are the highlights.

[johnspringate.com](http://johnspringate.com)



» **DA  
MANAGEMENT**  
Still Managing

This veteran rock'n'pop act beautifully cover the great songs from the 50s, 60s and 70s, including *Blue Bayou*, *Rockin' Robin* and *To Love Somebody*.

[tinyurl.com/damanage](http://tinyurl.com/damanage)



COVER  
STAR

# Songs And Verses

Smooth vocals, intricate songcraft and real emotional depth are defining features of Bristol-based singer-songwriter and musician Eleanor VS.

**You started playing at the age of nine. At what point did you realise you were going to make music your life?**

I always thought I'd at least do music on the side, but I was 18 years old when I really decided to go for it.

**Which person has influenced you most in your musical career so far?**

My dad. He's also a musician, so he gets it, and he's influenced a lot through his support, advice and belief.

**You often perform with other musicians. Do you prefer that collaboration to performing solo?**

I like both equally. I'm quite a meticulous person, and when I perform alone there are fewer things out of my control, so I like having that freedom. Not having to worry about the balance that the audience is hearing, whether I can hear myself, or internally panicking because the violinist is playing an amazing solo, and she's really into it, and so is the audience, but I've lost count of how many

bars we've played and I think we should get back into the song now. But I love playing with other musicians because - with the right people and instrumentation - it elevates the impact of the songs. And I enjoy their company and contribution.

**Can you please explain what the 'VS' initials in your name stand for?**

They're the initials of my two middle names. When I was thinking about a stage name, I noticed the abbreviation and decided to use them as a play on words of 'versus' and 'verses'.

**You grew up listening to gospel, R&B, jazz, alt rock and pop. How would you define your musical style now?**

I wouldn't. I'm sure there are hints of genres, but I like to mix things up and I don't really mind what the result is.


**When did you join the MU and why?**

I joined about seven years ago, because as I mentioned, my dad is also a professional musician, so he told me about the MU, all the benefits, and suggested that I join since I'd be working in music too.

**What inspires you to write, both lyrically and musically?**

Every single thing I go through - writing lyrics helps me to understand myself. Nowadays I don't get inspired so much musically, so I have to be disciplined, sit myself down and make myself build chord progressions and melodies.

**What are your plans and hopes over the next year for your music? Do you have anything interesting planned?**

I'm recording a new album, so I hope that that does some good in the world. I'm also hoping to play more shows. 

**For more information about Eleanor VS. please visit [eleanorvs.com](http://eleanorvs.com)**

# Have you registered for your MU benefits?

While membership of the MU offers a wide range of free services, there are a number of benefits that you need to register or apply for.

## MU website

To fully access our website – **theMU.org** – you will need to register on your first visit using your membership number.

## Contract advice – before you sign

Receive professional advice on the terms and implications of any complex agreements via our Contract Advisory Service. Contact your Regional Office to find out more.

## Instrument and equipment insurance

For £2,000 worth of free musical instrument and equipment cover. Register by calling Hencilla Canworth on **020 8686 5050**.

## Partnership advice

If all the members of your group are already MU members, or

decide to join, we can offer free partnership advice and an agreement. Contact your Regional Office for more information.

## Motoring service

The MU Family Motoring and Accident Aftercare Scheme provides 24/7 cover. Members must enter discount code MU24 to obtain free membership of the scheme. Register now via telephone or the web. **mu.totalmotorassist.co.uk**

## Help Musicians UK

Charity offering practical, positive support to emerging, professional and retired musicians, whatever the genre. **helpmusicians.org.uk**

## Medical assistance

The British Association for Performing Arts Medicine delivers specialist health support to musicians. Visit **bapam.org.uk**

## Music Minds Matter

A comprehensive mental health support service providing advice, information, resources, and professional and clinical services for musicians in need of help. **musicmindsmatter.org.uk**

## Music Support

A charity for individuals in the UK music industry suffering from mental, emotional and behavioural health disorders. **musicsupport.org**

## Musicians' Hearing Services

A range of hearing related services for MU members. For an appointment, call MHS on **020 7486 1053** or visit **musicianshearingservices.co.uk**

For full details of all the benefits of membership see *Members' Handbook*.

## MU Sections

To join, contact the relevant MU Official.

### Live Performance Section

Dave Webster  
National Organiser  
Live Performance  
60–62 Clapham Road  
London SW9 0JJ  
T 020 7840 5512  
E [live@theMU.org](mailto:live@theMU.org)

### Music Writers' Section

Kelly Wood  
Live & Music Writers' Official  
60–62 Clapham Road  
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### Orchestra Section

Jo Laverty  
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### Recording & Broadcasting Section

Geoff Ellerby  
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Recording & Broadcasting  
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### Education Section

Diane Widdison  
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Education & Training  
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London SW9 0JJ  
T 020 7840 5558  
E [teachers@theMU.org](mailto:teachers@theMU.org)

### Theatre Section

Dave Webster  
National Organiser  
Live Performance  
60–62 Clapham Road  
London SW9 0JJ  
T 020 7840 5512  
E [theatre@theMU.org](mailto:theatre@theMU.org)



**Are you due a royalty payment from the Musicians' Union for the use of any of your recordings in television programmes, films or adverts? Are you the next of kin of a musician who used to receive royalties from us?**

The Musicians' Union pays royalties to a growing number of musicians for the secondary exploitation of their recordings. In most cases we know which musicians performed on the recording and already have their contact and payment details, so the royalty income can be distributed straight away. However, there is a certain amount of income we have collected that we cannot distribute as we have not been able to identify who

performed on the recording; or we do know the names of the musicians but we have been unable to trace them or their next of kin. If you can assist the Musicians' Union with line-up information or contact details, visit **theMU.org/Home/Advice/Recording-Broadcasting/Royalties**. Here, you will be able to find more information on the types of royalty income we collect, as well as lists of musicians and recording line-ups we are currently trying to trace.

**[theMU.org/Home/Advice/Recording-Broadcasting/Royalties](http://theMU.org/Home/Advice/Recording-Broadcasting/Royalties)**

Musicians'  
Union  
**MU**

#BehindEveryMusician