

# Education Workshops - Case Studies from the Promoting Societies' Development Project

Developing education initiatives does not have to be an arduous task. **We hope to be able to provide more advice if you will all fill in the enclosed questionnaire please.** It is always worth discussing potential projects with visiting and local musicians and educators. And try investigating local venues and find out if future events might provide some thematic inspiration!

## *Birmingham CMS*

Birmingham Chamber Music Society wished to develop an education-based project to work with young people in developing compositional skills while extending their audience. Through meetings with Birmingham Music Service and Birmingham Conservatoire Junior Department, a project formed around a local open-air exhibition by Yann Arthus-Bertrand, entitled *Earth from the Air*.

Eighteen young musicians aged 14-17 from the Birmingham area took part in the project. Five creative composition sessions took place between November 2004 and May 2005, led by composer Liz Johnson, in which each group devised, wrote and performed music based on photographs at the exhibition.

Students were initially asked to select a photograph from the exhibition and discuss the photograph with colleagues. Groups then worked on ways of translating those features into musical form involving only their own instruments. This process led to focused group improvisation and open composition, which was new to most students. Students were encouraged to rely on and develop their innate musical and listening skills while performing as chamber ensembles, and therefore without a conductor. The performance was recorded onto CD and distributed to the participants.

As a result of the project:

- 100% of the participants noted that their confidence as composers and performers had improved as a result of the project.
- The creative project idea was attractive to local trusts. Applications were highly successful, raising over £2,300 for the project.
- A CD was produced that can be used in future project developments
- Participants and new audience members have made further contact with BCMS.

## *Plymouth Jazz Club*

Plymouth Jazz Club aims to bring jazz in all its forms to the West Country. Although the bulk of the Society's membership prefers Traditional & New Orleans jazz, the Society decided to investigate their networks to increase its capacity for audiences across a broader spectrum through facilitating a joint education workshop and contemporary jazz concert.

Saxophonist Tony Kofi was contacted to discuss a concert and workshop ideas. Initial contact was made with the Plymouth Arts Development Officer and Plymouth Music Action Zone (PMAZ). Discussions with PMAZ revealed that they offer excellent resources along with a recording studio, large venue capacity and excellent media and school contacts. PMAZ offered to design and print flyers, contact schools and promote the entire event to local radio. In addition, they agreed to host the education workshop and provide necessary backline for the evening performance.

The project took place on Sunday 5 June 2005. Tony Kofi and his group led an afternoon improvisation workshop for 20 students aged 13 - 18. The 5 tutors introduced the students to a Thelonius Monk Blues entitled Blue Monk, demonstrating various improvisation techniques including rhythmic phrasing and scale choices. Fourteen of the students performed Blue Monk that night onstage with the Kofi Quintet, in front of a packed audience. The event received excellent media coverage in local newspapers and radio and provided a steep learning curve for the Society.

If your society is considering running an education event, it may be worth investigating other organisations in your area. Youth Music has a range of outreach centres, or "Music Action Zones" around England. Such centres can provide excellent partnership opportunities. [www.youthmusic.org.uk/Action\\_Zones.jsp](http://www.youthmusic.org.uk/Action_Zones.jsp)