

New Audiences - Case Studies from the Promoting Societies' Development Project

The development programme has now drawn to a close, and the reports and case studies are almost complete. The case studies will be published on the web for general reference, but we plan to feature them in this newsletter. Making Music subsidised many projects in this programme.

Paul Abbott has now left Making Music to work at the Barbican; we wish him all success in his new job and thank him and Orla Lonergan for the legacy of these Case Studies.

Douglas Music Parbold

Douglas Music Society wished to use contemporary music in its programming in order to:

- Attract a younger audience
- Attract a wider section of the community to the Society's concerts

The Society developed the idea of a Jazz-Celtic Fusion evening to be promoted on 29 April 2005, featuring 6 musicians from the BBC Philharmonia's Education and Community department. They designed and printed 1,500 visually attractive flyers which were distributed locally and featured a photograph of the musicians performing onstage. Local press was contacted and personal invitations sent to reviewers. An advertisement was placed on the Society's website.

The musicians conducted two half-day school workshops for 29 year 6 pupils. The flyers were distributed by the musicians at the school. Through the workshops, four compositions were devised, one of which involved the students performing onstage at the evening event with the musicians.

The Society took the decision to lower its ticket prices for the event, from £9, £8 and £3 to an across the board £4.50. This decision was a risk, as it allowed only for a full-house of 150 attendees, against a regular audience of 50 - 100. This risk paid off - the performance saw a crowd of 161 audience members, of which 86% were first-time attendees.

- The school workshops were excellent, not only musically and educationally, but also strategically in inducing family attendance.
- The reduced price compared favourably with other local leisure activities, thus offering affordable family prices and attracting an audience from a wider catchment area.
- A new relationship was developed with a local school through the project.
- Media coverage at a local level was excellent.

Brighton Early Music Festival

Brighton Early Music Festival is "particularly keen to dispel the stuffy early music image"; Artistic Directors Clare Norburn and Deborah Roberts keep their programming approach dynamic & innovative by linking jazz and world music to their early music presentations.

The Festival's 2005 season included Manjiri Asnare Kelkar performing early music from India, and Alva, an early music / folk crossover group. These performances brought in a different and highly diverse audience, including a substantial number of regular members. Clare Norburn comments that in the festival's short 3-year history they have managed to build up a certain level of trust from their audience. She believes that change and risk are positive; audiences will follow confident programmers, and taking a chance elevates them above the diminishing audiences related to a more repetitive approach.

The Directors decided to take a new approach in marketing the above artists for the 2005 festival. Postcards were created to promote the two specific events and sent to venues and media that wouldn't take more traditional early music marketing. It was felt that diverse performances require diverse publicity. As a result each group performed to near-capacity audiences, and the Festival is looking to build upon their success for 2006.