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- We present two of the case studies from the Promoting Societies' Development Project
- Sue Hudson and Lewis Orchard write of their Education project experiences
- Chris Thomas gives us a profile of Luton Music Club
(Please send your own society profile in 600 words to b.ranby@makingmusic.org.uk)

Free brochure can save you money

Many Societies use the Concert Promoters' Network brochure to book artists they could not otherwise afford, or to save money on artists they might book anyway.

We have worked out that the savings to Making Music societies in 2002-2003 were just over £30,000; in 2003-2004 they were around £32,500 and in 2004-2005 they were over £31,000. The final numbers are not yet in for the 2005-2006 season; however, definite bookings have achieved savings of in excess of £44,500.

In the 2005-2006 season, eleven artists reached bookings for six concerts or more (with one ensemble receiving 16 bookings, two others 11 bookings and another ensemble 9 bookings), another four artists had four or five bookings and only three have failed to receive any bookings through the scheme.

The increased use of the scheme in 2005-2006 is partly due to the improved design and layout of the brochure. But it is also the quality of the artists on offer. It is clear from the responses we have received from Making Music Societies that the scheme is valued.

Here are some of the comments on the scheme received from our Making Music Societies:

"Excellent scheme" *Rhyl, Kelso & Sounds Underground*

"The new brochure for 2006-2007 looks very interesting"
Ashford, Kent

"... an invaluable guide for promoters - not just the selected artists but also the adverts" *Teesside*

"The scheme is improving every year. The latest ... brochure is terrific and much improved" *Helmsley Arts Centre*

"I always use it" *Keswick*

"A wonderful help to be able to get such good artists and ensembles at competitive prices" *Oxshott & Cobham*

Even so, many societies who would benefit from using this scheme do not always do so and we encourage you to look closely at the quality of the artists in the current brochure.

CPC Web Goes Live

Our web has now gone live, thanks to Tomasa Sherwood:

www.makingmusic.org.uk/cpc

The web is integrated with the national web site and the Concert Promoters' Committee is now listed along with Area Committees in the page obtained via the 'Find a Group' button on:

www.makingmusic.org.uk

We would welcome suggestions for additional content of our web pages. We shall use the web to publish the list of artists for the 2007-2008 brochure as soon as they are known - towards the end of February/early March.

CONTACTS

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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.

Education Workshops

Two members of the Concert Promoters' Committee were asked to give between them, a balanced overview of putting on Education workshops.

Sue Hudson *Holmes Chapel Music Club*

All music societies are anxious to increase their younger membership and the best way is to provide a concert or workshop specifically targeted at the young in the hope that it will make them aware of the joy of live music making and of our societies.

For this reason many years ago our society started to have at least one children's concert or workshop every year.

Most musicians offer educational programmes at a favourable rate following a concert; our educational concerts are usually on the Sunday afternoon following the concert the previous night. Various grants are available but there is still a considerable cost to the society in money and time.

We have had all types of groups for the workshops: brass, string, percussion groups and medieval singers and instrumentalists. All held the attention of the audience (ages under 11) for the allotted hour and encouraged the children to participate. The children were shown instruments and sometimes played them. They heard short extracts from classical music to demonstrate the characteristics of the instruments. They were given clapping and singing tests that often tested the Mums and Dads more than the children! The children were more likely to participate if the artists were at floor level with them, preferably in a semi-circle.

Free printed programmes were produced, with descriptions of the players, pictures of their instruments and a list of works played.

Much publicity had to be done beforehand via the local schools. Every child was given a leaflet advertising the event. The local headteachers' association was a valuable link especially when the musicians wanted to go into the schools to prepare children for projects to do on the day of the workshop.

Lewis Orchard *Woking Concert Club*

There are a number of 'difficulties' which need to be identified, addressed and overcome if this desirable and potentially beneficial activity is to be undertaken.

1 There is usually a very restricted availability of pupils for such sessions during weekdays. Separate attendance by artists on a day or time to suit the school or college may not be possible and will in any case increase or even double their fee.

2 Timing and attendance both at workshops and the concerts themselves are largely, if not wholly, dependent on parents' set down and pick up times. One workshop organised by a promoting society found that the entire audience of pupils left the room abruptly half way through the workshop as parents arrived to collect their offspring!

3 The large number of parents who will attend a promoting society concert if their offspring are performing never return for other concerts in the season despite warm encouragement to do so.

4) Schools are increasingly asking for CRB disclosure for anyone talking to pupils. Thus any performers or society members present during workshops will need to go through the considerable bureaucratic procedure involved.

5) Experience suggests that whereas many pupils are willing to perform themselves, very few are prepared to listen to others performing, whether good amateurs or professionals. This may well relate to the virtual absence of music appreciation tuition in schools and colleges at the present time. Educational workshops would help to rectify this but there seems to be little or no time available in the contemporary pupil's day for such activities.

Promoter's Profile: Luton Music Club

The first things that surprise people about Luton Music Club are the number of concerts we present (21) and the mere fact that such an enterprising club should be in Luton of all places! The number of concerts is historical. The club started in 1946 as a musical appreciation society with an event every week of the year apart from Christmas and Vauxhall Fortnight (Wakes Weeks!) - nearly 50 programmes a year, mainly talks and gramophone evenings, with the occasional well-known speaker or live music concert. Luton is not Malvern or Cheltenham, that's for sure, but its reputation as a cultural desert is not totally deserved.

Apart from the number of concerts, running weekly on Monday evenings from end-September to end-March, with a Christmas recess, the other aspect of the Club's renown is its enterprising programming. Of course with a larger canvas than most clubs on which to present a season's programme, we can and should be adventurous. We can cover a very broad range of instrumental combinations and of repertoire. The latter includes much contemporary music which has earned us many awards from the PRS. But we try to programme audience-friendly contemporary works rather than more advanced styles which simply alienate people. By this policy, audiences have come to take modern music in their stride! We have also forged links with many composers over the years from Tippett and Lennox Berkeley to Adam Gorb and Eleanor Alberga. Among our vice-presidents are John McCabe, Michael Berkeley and Stephen Dodgson, who are all very supportive in various ways.

The Club is well-funded. We have excellent relations with the local authority which gives us over £4,000 a year under a 5-year Service Level Agreement. We also receive a regular £2,500 from a local non-musical charity. Apart from the PRS already mentioned we have also received funding over the years

from a wide variety of other trusts and foundations, and from Awards for All. If it shows a shadow of a promise, we'll try it!

Through my predecessor as Chairman John Thompson and myself, the Club has also had a long association with the NFMS/Making Music. We invariably attended national conferences and have sat on national and regional committees. National conference was always a source of inspiration and we never came away from one without a cluster of ideas, either from the formal sessions or simply talking to other clubs. John and I were also instrumental in helping to set up the Concert Promoters' Network, one of the best things Making Music has done for music clubs. We have used it a lot as it helps significantly to maintain quality in these hard economic times. I cannot understand any club not making use of the Network on a regular basis. We have also used the Young Artist Award over the years and have been delighted to see so many fine youngsters who played for us go on to greater things. Picking winners early has always been the name of the game for us and we can smugly point to many musicians who played here before they hit the big time!

Nowadays the Club, like many others, is regrettably suffering from dwindling audience and subscriber numbers. The reasons are many and various and not always to do with the music itself. For socio-economic reasons Luton is a difficult place in which to sell anything smacking of high art! This is not the place to go into this problem which is beginning to worry us more than ever and cause us to have radical thoughts about the future. Our marketing strategy is second to none, we like to think, but it seems that Isaac Stern was right - 'If someone doesn't want to come to your concert, nothing will stop him.'

Chris Thomas

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