

# Music policy



ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND

# Introduction

**We will support the development of music in order to achieve our ambition of putting the arts at the heart of national life and people at the heart of the arts. This means enabling artists and arts organisations to take creative risks and pursue new opportunities. Our policy summarises the context for music and the Arts Council's role. It sets out our vision for music and the priorities we have set to help us deliver it.**

**All our arts policies prioritise strengthening and developing the infrastructure for the artform. They identify particular areas of contemporary practice that we want to help develop. They confirm our support for individual artists.**

**Collectively the policies will help us deliver the six areas of our agenda for the arts: taking part in the arts, children and young people, the creative economy, vibrant communities, internationalism and celebrating diversity.**

**We are prepared to make choices – sometimes tough ones – about how we commit our funding to respond to the kind of ambitious thinking and high quality work that will take our priorities forward. We believe they will help us develop a confident, diverse and innovative music sector that is valued by and in tune with the communities it serves.**

Front cover:

English National Opera performs Act Three of Wagner's *The Valkyrie* at the 2004 Glastonbury Festival  
(© English National Opera)

Photo: Sarah Lee

# The context for music and the role we play

Music defies international boundaries. It is a global industry contributing almost £5 billion a year to the UK's economy. It covers a rich and diverse range of styles and cultures, more than at any time in our history.

The Arts Council is a relatively small player in the wider music economy of the UK. However, our funding has a significant impact, supporting organisations and partnerships and developing contemporary practice and new talent. We invest around £120 million a year in music. This includes £10 million for Youth Music, the organisation that supports young people's music making.

Our support for music has broadened alongside the artform. In 1975, the then Arts Council of Great Britain invested just over £8 million in 59 music organisations. Today we fund around 150 organisations and only 10 of those were funded by us 30 years ago.

We provide development grants to many more. These organisations reflect the diverse music culture of England today and range from community-based organisations to international flagships. We expect them to work in partnership with each other, their communities and the wider music industry to create the best possible opportunities for musicians and audiences and to develop the artform.



Mark Elder, CBE,  
Music Director of the Hallé  
Photo: Clive Barda/Arena PAL

More people than ever can now participate in music. Technology has made it possible for them to create, perform, record and distribute their own work. The Arts Council encourages the development of these opportunities and recognises the challenges they bring in areas such as intellectual property rights.

In today's technology-rich world the live event has become even more powerful. From Glastonbury to the BBC Proms, from melas to the local

concert hall, live music has the power to unite communities locally, nationally and internationally.

Over the last 10 years there has been a high level of creative development in the music sector. Government's increased funding for the arts together with the National Lottery has enabled us to support the development of world-class performing facilities. We gave structured support to ambitious strategies in the orchestral sector.



These have in turn brought about new educational facilities, broadcasting partnerships, youth choirs and youth orchestras, recording labels and touring networks. In an expanding global market, the English classical music sector is artistically vibrant and continues to attract strong audiences.

We support a more diverse range of music and in recent years have prioritised South Asian classical music, folk and roots music, world music and chamber music. We've invested in networks of promoters, touring circuits, artists and ensembles, sectoral development agencies, training initiatives and conferences to promote a healthier environment for a wider range of musical styles. There is now a stronger infrastructure to support high quality musicians across a wide range of musical styles.

Government has made a high profile commitment to music education in its Music Manifesto. The education sector and the music

industry, including the Arts Council, are working together to introduce a new generation of schoolchildren to musical participation and to support those who choose to develop their interest into a career in music. A national network of support for exceptionally gifted young musicians is being established.

Against this background, a new kind of music organisation is emerging. Typically it combines a range of services: promoting performances, supporting artists to develop at different stages of their career, creating new work, providing education and training and coordinating provision across a wide geographic area. Some specialise in a single music discipline, others operate across a wide range of musical styles. We value both.

In a complex national and international music industry there's an important role for the Arts Council to play as a catalyst for change or growth, an investor, broker of partnerships, a knowledge bank and a development agency.

Composer Jordan Hunt taking part  
in a creative residency at Aldeburgh  
(© Aldeburgh Productions)

Photo: Emma Hardy



# Our vision for music

Our ambition is to make it possible for audiences in England, wherever they live, to experience and be enriched by the best music from England and from around the world.

We recognise the role that music and the arts can play in creating vibrant communities and enhancing the quality of life. We will continue to encourage musicians to work across a wide spectrum of community settings including youth settings, healthcare and young offender institutes. We'll support those who are key to music making in their communities to connect into touring circuits so that they have access to high quality work. And we'll encourage the organisations we fund to play a leadership role in their communities.

To achieve our ambitions for music will require strong partnerships and a portfolio of funded music organisations that are ready for the 21st century. Artistic ambition and entrepreneurialism coupled

with excellent business planning, staffing and leadership are vital. We expect the organisations we fund to have effective business models and employment contracts that fit the needs of today's music industry. This will enable them to have greater artistic impact and to contribute fully to the creative economy.

Our most talented musicians need to reach the widest audience for their work nationally and internationally. If they are to produce work of the highest quality in a competitive global industry, they need an environment in which they can build their skills and develop their art. We'd like to see the connections strengthened between music organisations, promoters and producers, the commercial sector, national broadcasters, education and training providers. We are committed to working with partners in higher education and vocational training to anticipate the changing needs of musicians and support routes into the profession.

Technology is changing the way music is made and who makes it. It has the potential to increase the impact and reach of all music organisations. It is one of the ways that more high quality work reaches a wider range of people, engaging them as both audience and participants.

We believe there should be greater exploitation of existing and developing technology to extend the audience for music, to bring wider exposure for the music we fund and to unlock the wealth of artistic resources of the organisations we fund. We will develop our partnerships with national broadcasters and technology providers. Our ambition is for the majority of the work of our leading music companies to be accessible to the whole country through broadcasting and new and existing technology within the next 10 years.

We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to play a musical instrument. We will

encourage the widest participation in music, working with a range of partners to make music more accessible to people and to enable more people to buy an instrument. We want all children and young people to have an enriching engagement with world-class musicians. Our leading music organisations have the potential to play a more strategic role in education by coordinating a diverse range of high quality experiences, contributing to raising standards, inspiring and passing on their expertise to young people and creating opportunities for young people to work with outstanding artists.

We want to develop a more 'joined up' offer to enable all young people to find the support appropriate to their interests and needs, building on developments such as the new Centres for Advanced Training, Creative Partnerships, Youth Music, Young People's Arts Awards and the Music Manifesto.

Dennis Rollins performs at York Theatre  
Royal with North Stars Steel Orchestra  
as part of Yorkshire's Black History Month  
Photo: Paul Floyd Blake



# Our priorities for music 2007–2011

**To support a more confident, diverse and innovative arts sector, which is valued by and in tune with the communities it serves**

- We will fund a portfolio of organisations that are contemporary in their approach and committed to engaging people in their work in new ways. We will continue to review the organisations we fund and will prioritise those seeking to implement more sustainable business models and to develop partnerships that give their work greater impact and reach
- We will promote a climate in which musicians are encouraged to take artistic risk. We will prioritise opportunities for the most talented creative artists to develop their practice, learning new skills, taking time out for research and refreshment, and taking advantage of tailored development programmes here and abroad

**To enable more people to take part in the arts as both audiences and participants**

- We will work with a range of partners to encourage and inspire people to take part in music. We will launch a national instrument purchase scheme to encourage more people to own and play a musical instrument
- We will exploit the opportunities offered by technology and broadcasting. We will require our leading music organisations to develop distribution strategies to maximise the impact of, and access to, their work and artistic resources. We will also exploit opportunities to use technology to extend artistic ambition and creativity

**To enable more children and young people to take part in the arts**

- We will create greater access to music for young people. We will continue to support Youth Music. We will develop partnerships between the professional music infrastructure and the formal education sector, building on developments such as the new Centres for Advanced Training, Creative Partnerships, and the Music Manifesto

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