



Creating a More Inclusive Classical Music

A study of the English orchestral workforce
and the current routes to joining it

Executive Summary

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Key Findings and Recommendations

Introduction

In summer 2019 Arts Council England (ACE) appointed ICM Unlimited and DHA to undertake research into the diversity of the classical music workforce and talent pipeline. The aims of the project were:

- To improve the understanding of the current profile of the classical music workforce
- To examine talent pathways into the sector to understand what they might indicate about the diversity of the future workforce, and
- To explore what learning there might be to support collective action to increase diversity and inclusion in the workforce and the pipeline.

The study has focused upon musicians and learners within the Western classical symphony orchestra tradition, and on staff who work in organisations connected to this practice; where possible, the particular focus has been those learning and working in England. It has three main elements: a literature review, a data audit and analysis focusing on contemporary or recent data sources, and a survey of musicians and other staff working in classical music. Each of these elements has a separate, detailed report and this Executive Summary brings together key findings from across these three reports. Where appropriate, this report summarises findings across the three areas of the study; data sources and literature references are included. The range of material included across the study is significant, and so this report should be read as an introduction to those more detailed findings.

This work has been supported significantly by a steering group, comprising: representatives from the Association of British Orchestras (ABO), BBC, Conservatoires UK, and Musicians Union (MU), all of whom contributed datasets which are explicitly explored within this work, and also by a wider reference group comprising a broad range of other relevant sector organisations as well as individual musicians, including Music Education Hubs (MEHs) and those involved at all levels of the classical music pipeline including national youth music ensembles. In addition, a number of individuals and organisations in the sector have engaged directly with the research team and contributed data and shared their experiences and knowledge very generously.ⁱ

We hope that this study adds to those which already examine the presence, absence and experiences of musicians and other workers in classical music, and that it may prove a useful reference and reflection for those working in the sector, including orchestras, ensembles, conservatoires, MEHs, musicians, music educators, those working in concert halls, promoters, agents and the wider sector.

Demography of Classical Music

Gender

Female instrumentalists are in the majority amongst younger learners. Male instrumentalists are slightly in the majority in the workforce of the larger, established orchestras in England, though there is evidence that workforce balance has improved over time. Amongst those who access elite (by which we mean high quality, specialist and often competitive) training opportunities the balance between male and female instrumentalists fluctuates between different stages of

training, but it appears that female instrumentalists fair slightly less well in some competitive processes for elite training opportunities.

For some instruments, or groups of instruments, there is a strong relationship with gender, which can be seen in young learners and likewise reflected in the workforce. Gendered differences are, however, less stark amongst younger learners.

Though women make up a substantial portion of the workforce, they are less well represented in senior roles like orchestral principals, as solo artists, in artistic leadership roles and elsewhere; they also appear to be overrepresented amongst the educational workforce, but less well represented in other activities like recording and theatre work.

Women are in the majority amongst non-musicians working in classical music organisations, including in management roles, but in the minority in board/trustee positions.

Ethnicity

There is evidence of an ethnically diverse and representative group of younger learners accessing instrumental learning opportunities. Amongst those in elite training opportunities for young people, there is still a significant proportion of learners from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse groups overall. Within these training opportunities, however, some specific ethnic groups are underrepresented: for example, Black or Black British musicians are underrepresented at each stage within elite training opportunities. As the training stages progress, the overall intake becomes less ethnically diverse.

The classical music workforce is less ethnically diverse than those coming through conservatoires, and people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are underrepresented amongst musicians, staff, managers and board members.

Some instruments are learnt and played by a more ethnically diverse group than others, and there is some evidence of socio-cultural perceptions of instruments influencing choice.

Disability

The available evidence suggests that people with disabilities and long-term health conditions are significantly underrepresented in the workforce.

Where musical activities are optional, pupils with special educational needs are underrepresented; in elite training opportunities prior to HE even fewer pupils from this group are present.

Exploring disability and long-term health conditions amongst classical music learners and musicians is significantly limited by the absence of data, and by the different ways in which data is collected and categorised. For example, ACE National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) reported that they did not know about the disability status of 75% of their artistic workforce.

Socio-economic indicators

Across elite training opportunities there is evidence that young people who attend independent/fee-paying schools, come from higher income families and those who live in areas where young people are likely to go to higher education are significantly overrepresented.

Amongst the current workforce there is some evidence of a more diverse educational background, but data is quite limited and changes over time to the education system make any trends difficult to discern.

Experiences of the classical music sector: influences, identities and working practices

Family background and other influences

The engagement of young people with classical instrumental learning opportunities is significantly influenced by their family background.

Understanding which demographic characteristics mean that a family background will be more likely to promote classical music is complex: there is not one overarching factor, rather the intersection of different demographic characteristics seem to affect whether a young person might learn an instrument, and how they progress through training opportunities. Whilst the data available for a detailed analytical examination of intersectionality is limited, it would appear that the intersection of social identities and structures impacts upon access and uptake of classical music.

There is also evidence of a relationship between demographic characteristics and the type of engagement a young person might have with classical music: from their instrument choice through to their likelihood to consider and pursue training opportunities, a career and the type of activities they might undertake or aspire to in a career.

Experiences of training and working in classical music

Working practices for musicians are informal and 'precarious', with uncertain employment, low pay, unsociable hours and a strong element of networking. These practices affect the perceptions and capacity of musicians from different backgrounds to engage in a professional career.

Gender frames the way musicians develop and make musical and life choices, how they navigate the world of work and the way they are perceived and presented as musicians.

There is evidence of musicians, particularly those earlier in their career, viewing high profile performance activities as having greater value and prestige, and this influences what kinds of work musicians want to do. Class and gender, however, affect musicians' sense of themselves as suitable for 'prestigious' activities, and also whether they place value on traditional ideas of 'prestige'. There is evidence that musicians' views of the value of different activities changes as their career changes, and that they may over time find value in different kinds of activities, such as teaching.

In training and work settings musicians have experienced a range of barriers, discrimination and harassment. These are more commonly experienced by musicians who are underrepresented in the workforce and related to those protected characteristics. There is evidence of a culture of underreported incidents of discrimination and harassment, and evidence of a culture of non-disclosure around disabilities, health conditions, illness and injury particularly.

There are criticisms of the idea that classical music has 'universal' value. In practice, learners and those in the workforce experience complex hierarchies of value, in which some characteristics or experiences are felt to be in sympathy with classical music (e.g. a 'European

sensibility') and others are not. Instead, claiming 'universal' value for classical music is seen as a way of ignoring differences and contributing to some of the inequalities which this study explores.

Initiatives to diversify the workforce

With the notable exceptions of the Paraorchestra and Chineke! ensembles, there is limited evidence of initiatives which affect change in the diversity of the workforce in classical music, and it is likely that understanding of effective strategies for doing so are affected both by the limitations of the work undertaken – often at a particular point in time, with no information collected about what happens next – and by the availability of published evaluation of any such work in the public domain.

There is evidence that for some young people – irrespective of their interest in, and enthusiasm for, involvement in classical music – practical barriers to participation exist. These barriers included: the cost and distance of travel to activities, availability and accessibility of provision and whether the home environment was supportive to learning.

The only widely-used intervention to support equal opportunities in the employment of performers, screened auditions, does not appear to conclusively solve issues of potential unequal treatment for orchestral applicants.

Where orchestras have undertaken other activities aimed at providing work or work-like opportunities for underrepresented musicians, there is evidence that these are more successful (both for the individuals and in effecting broader change) where an organisation recognises and takes responsibility for supporting the individual and for reflecting properly on changes which might need to take place within the organisation at every level to better support a more diverse workforce.

In all such initiatives there is a clear need for organisations and others to consider how to involve those who are poorly represented or supported in their workforce to have a voice in determining how best to construct these interventions and what change is required.

Recommendations for further research

There are still gaps in our knowledge and understanding, and areas in which further or sustained investigation would be beneficial. These include:

- More work on areas like ethnicity, socio-economic status and disability which are, in comparison with gender, less well mapped and researched.
- Long-term tracking of attitudes and experiences, to understand the effect of any initiatives to diversify the workforce.
- Filling gaps in the current map of data, improving the quality and comprehensiveness of data collection in key areas and considering opportunities to standardise data collection to provide a more coherent picture of the overall pipeline.
- Tracking consistent indicators over time to explore trends and enable larger samples, and support more analysis of the intersections between different demographic characteristics.
- Explore further the relationship between instrument choice – as a key indicator of the type of early opportunity and influence which shapes a young person’s engagement with music - and demography, background, opportunity and circumstances.
- Track learners and musicians over time, creating a longitudinal dataset of individual experiences, to understand how they move through the system and what the opportunities, barriers and motivations are in the choices which they make.
- Ensure that qualitative data sits alongside quantitative material, so that the subtleties of experience can be explored, particularly amongst groups who are significantly underrepresented in any quantitative dataset.
- Encourage those organisations and groups undertaking meaningful work to support more diverse learners and progression into training and the sector to document their initiatives and share the learning of what works, and what doesn’t.
- Connect work on production (who gets to work in classical music) to work on consumption (who is in the audience), and engage with wider work looking at diversity in the cultural sector and elsewhere.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In summer 2019 Arts Council England appointed ICM Unlimited and DHA to undertake research into the diversity of the classical music workforce. The aims of the project were:

- To improve the understanding of the current profile of the classical music workforce
- To examine talent pathways into the sector to understand what they might indicate about the diversity of the future workforce, and
- To explore what learning there might be to support collective action to increase diversity and inclusion in the workforce and the pipeline.

This work has been supported significantly by a steering group, comprising: representatives from the Association of British Orchestras, BBC, Conservatoires UK, and Musicians Union, all of whom contributed datasets which are explicitly explored within this work, and also by a wider reference group comprising a broad range of other relevant sector organisations as well as individual musicians, including Music Education Hubs and those involved at all levels of the classical music pipeline including national youth music ensembles. In addition, a number of individuals and organisations in the sector have engaged directly with the research team and contributed data and shared their experiences and knowledge very generously.ⁱⁱ

This study reviews and builds upon work undertaken by other researchers and organisations. Classical music practices and the inequalities of opportunity and presence within those practices have become a significant focus of study only quite recently.ⁱⁱⁱ Researchers working in this area have argued that barriers to accessing and progressing in the profession are often couched as individual problems.^{iv} There is, therefore, a job to do to make inequalities which are repeated and embedded in organisations and systems visible^v, and to examine what can be done to change them.

1.2 Methodology

The research team worked with Arts Council England and its partners via a steering group, reference group and other connections, to map available existing literature and data sources, and develop a survey to access populations of musicians and other workers in classical music organisations.

Where possible, the study has sought to focus particularly upon:

- Musicians whose learning or whose professional practice is on one or more of a range of instruments typically associated with the Western classical symphony orchestra (but which may also appear in musical theatre pit bands, backing bands, or, in their historic form, in Baroque or other period instrument ensembles, etc.). In choosing this focus, we have largely excluded singers, conductors, composers and keyboard players working in classical music.^{vi}
- Learners of these instruments at all stages.^{vii}
- The non-performer classical music workforce in England and/or the UK.

This Executive Summary combines the findings from the existing literature and secondary data sources and the new workforce survey. Notably language, terms and categories vary

significantly across these different sources, and this study has taken place in a period in which intensified discussions are ongoing about the meaning and use of different terms. In this summary, where specific findings from individual sources are referred to, the terms selected by that data source are used. Where sources have been combined, or are providing a broader commentary, this report uses a set of terms which are agreed with Arts Council England and reflect input from stakeholders in the sector.

Literature review

The literature review brings together a range of sources, including academic literature and some grey literature (including independent and organisational research), which address the demography of classical music (see 'Diversity in Classical Music: Literature Review' for more details). Where available, material which covered instrumental learning across the population was examined alongside a range of literature looking at individual, and combinations of, demographic characteristics, both in training settings and the workplace. Literature on initiatives which attempted to diversify the workforce in classical music was also considered. Whilst the main focus of the review is the UK context, the findings also draw some relevant comparator material from the US and Europe.^{viii}

Data audit and analysis

The data audit and analysis brings together a range of existing data sources, some of which have not previously been publicly available in this format (see 'Diversity in Classical Music: Data Audit and Analysis' for more details). We sought to map the 'pipeline' for instrumentalists into classical music, endeavouring where possible to 'track' participation from first access opportunities through to those working professionally in classical music. In doing so, we have been able to compare demographics at different stages of development, and have also been able to consider the limitations and opportunities of this combination of datasets in answering questions ultimately about presence and absence in the workforce.

Workforce survey

ICM carried out a 10 minute online survey of those who identified as working in the classical music sector between 11th February and 16th March 2020 (see 'Diversity in Classical Music: Workforce Survey' report for more details). In total, 967 people aged 16 years and over completed the survey which was promoted via membership bodies, and other organisations and individuals in the classical music sector as well as by Arts Council England.

The survey aimed to reach a broad range of those associated with classical music, working on either a freelance or permanent basis, at the beginning of their career or decades into it, including:

- performing musicians within the classical music sector who work in or with chamber groups and/or other formal orchestral settings
- teachers and administrative and other support staff including learning and participation professionals associated with classical music organisations
- those whose instrumental background is in classical music but whose current work within the music sector takes place in other musical genres, such as instrumental

musicians working in pit bands, military ensembles and a broad range of popular music ensembles and contexts.

Composers, singers and pianists were asked not to participate in the survey, as were instrumentalists focused on specific genres other than classical orchestral music, e.g. saxophonists. Whilst it is recognised that these musicians may make a substantial impact on the overall diversity of classical music in its broadest context, the survey methodology chose to focus on developing a true picture of diversity within a more narrowly defined segment of the sector in order to identify the points where its diversity becomes diminished.

The survey represents the profile of a self-selecting group of those who work in the classical music sector. A sample size of 967 people is statistically robust, but this does mean that some of the sub-group sample sizes are relatively small, and that in relation to the actual size of the classical music sector the data only represents the views of a few. Therefore the survey results are not completely reflective of the classical music workforce and the following points should be noted. Based on a comparison of the profile of survey respondents versus population profiles from the data audit, the survey overrepresents younger females; Black and Asian people and those from other diverse ethnic backgrounds; those with a disability; those who identify as LGBTQ+; and underrepresents male brass, percussion, and string performers.

Reading this report

This report brings together findings from these three individual study elements and presents the main findings in three sections. It brings together multiple sources, many of which support or add value to each other in building up a picture of the talent pipeline and workforce in classical music. The first looks at the demography of classical music: who learns, trains and works in classical music, and who is absent at those different stages. The second brings together findings on the experiences of those training and working in classical music. The third looks briefly at available learning on initiatives which have sought to diversify the workforce. The report ends with some conclusions and recommendations, particularly for improving the collective understanding of the 'pipeline' into classical music.

2 The demography of classical music: presence, absence and choice in learning, training routes and the workforce

This section looks at the presence and absence of demographic groups at different stages, from instrumental learning and training opportunities into the workforce. It also examines what the literature and data suggests about the relationship between demographic groups and specific activities, including instrument choice and different types of work, and uses material from the literature review and data audit and analysis and workforce survey.

2.1 Gender

Female instrumentalists are in the majority amongst younger learners. Male instrumentalists are slightly in the majority in the workforce of the larger, established orchestras in England, though there is evidence that workforce balance has improved over time. Amongst those who access elite training opportunities the balance between male and female instrumentalists fluctuates between different stages of training, but it appears that female instrumentalists fair slightly less well in some competitive processes for elite training opportunities.

For some instruments, or groups of instruments, there is a strong relationship with gender, which can be seen in young learners and likewise reflected in the workforce. Gendered differences are, however, less stark amongst younger learners.

Though women make up a substantial portion of the workforce, they are less well represented in senior roles like orchestral principals, as solo artists, in artistic leadership roles and elsewhere; they also appear to be overrepresented amongst the educational workforce, but less well represented in other activities like recording and theatre work.

Women are in the majority amongst non-musicians working in classical music organisations, including in management roles, but in the minority in board/trustee positions.

Presence and absence at different stages

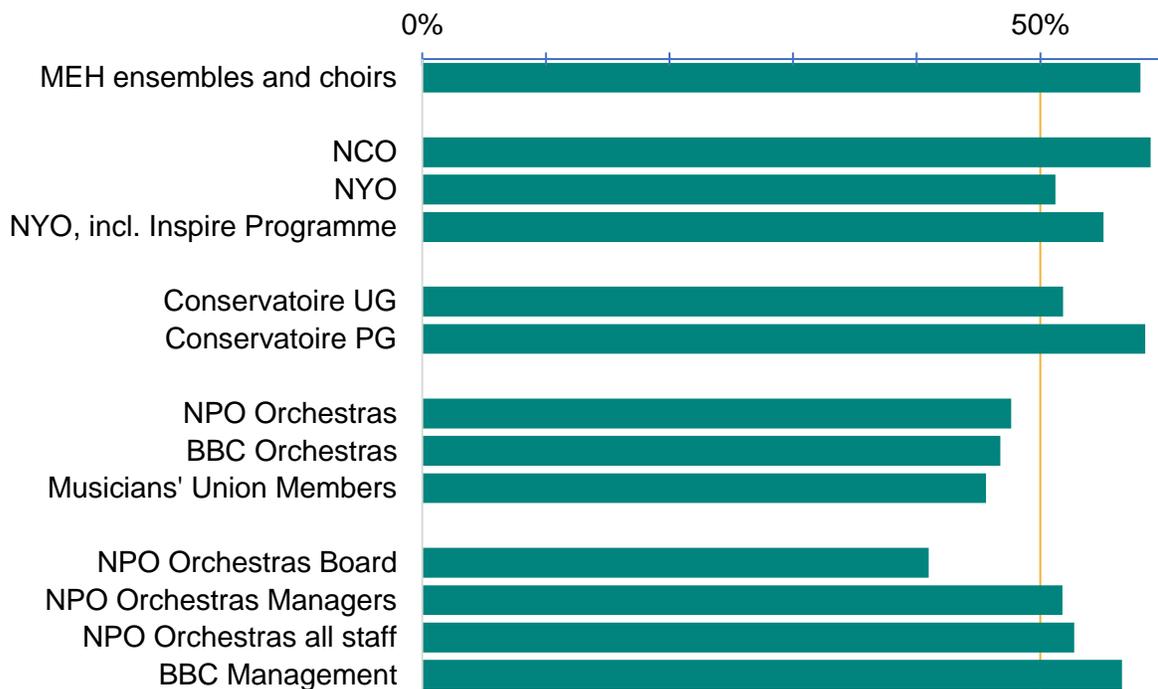
A range of literature and data sources provide a picture of the gender mix at different stages of instrumental learning, and in the classical music workforce. Some data sources include data on (or at least included the option of) non-binary, but some sources did not; where non-binary appeared in the data audit datasets the proportions are very small. Given the relatively new introduction of this category into many data collection systems, the presence of non-binary people may be under-reflected in the data this study has seen.

Whilst whole-class or whole-year-group provision for children and young people shows an even split of male and female learners, optional or elective activities tend to show more female participants with a roughly 60:40 split, for example in youth ensembles^x, learning instruments via local authority music services (in an older survey)^x, and in area-based ensembles and choirs run by Music Education Hubs (MEHs)^{xi}. This extends into membership of the National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain (NCO), but seems less prominent in National Youth Orchestra of

Great Britain (NYO) members and amongst undergraduate conservatoire acceptances (see figure 1 below) where female instrumentalists are only slightly in the majority.^{xii} Presence and absence amongst different instrument and instrument groups, however, varies significantly – there are instruments in which there is consistent gender bias across all data sets, and this is the case for both male and female instrumentalists.

Amongst musicians in the workforce, looking broadly at orchestras and at Musicians’ Union (MU) membership, male instrumentalists are slightly in the majority. Men are overrepresented on the boards of classical music organisations, but slightly underrepresented in the other areas of the workforce including amongst managers and across all staff in classical music organisations; this pattern is similar to that found in US orchestras.^{xiii} Clear differences between male and female respondents with regard to their role in the classical music sector were also revealed in the workforce survey. Men who responded to the survey were more likely than women to work with an orchestra and/or other large instrumental music ensemble (70% vs. 58%), more likely to play or perform with an instrument as part of their current role (58% vs. 46%), more likely to hold senior administration positions such as CEO (18% vs. 7%) or artistic director / senior programmer / music director (16% vs. 3%), and more likely to have been involved in the sector for a longer period of time (58% of men had been in the sector for over 15 years vs. 43% of women).

Figure 1: Female presence in learning, training and the workforce



See Appendix C for list of data sources.

Data from the US shows a rise in female musicians in US orchestras from 38% in 1978 to 47% in 2014.^{xiv} Historical data for Britain puts the proportion of women in British orchestras at 30% in 1990^{xv}, and so the data in the graph above – indicating that the proportion of women in the NPO

orchestral workforce at 48% and amongst the BBC orchestral workforce at 47% - suggests a similar increase over time to that seen in the US in the proportion of female musicians. Other studies of UK orchestras have found similar proportions of female and male musicians^{xvi}; however, it is worth noting that the data presented here, and in these other studies, focuses on larger, established orchestras in England or the UK and may underreport the gender balance of smaller or less regularly-performing ensembles.

The average length of service in orchestras for women appears to be less than that for men, and that the average age of women is lower than that of men^{xvii}, which is reflected amongst the members of the MU, where older musicians were significantly more likely to be male. Overall, this picture suggests an increasing presence of women in the workforce, though historical data suggests that female participants have been overrepresented in instrumental learning for a long time.^{xviii} Data on musicians in UK conservatoires found an overrepresentation of women in the mid-1990s, subsiding to a roughly equal representation of men and women by 2012/2013, so change is not necessarily taking place in a clear linear fashion.^{xix} Overall, this highlights the complexity of the notion of a pipeline: there are questions not only of who comes into the pipeline at the beginning, and who progresses and is able to access training opportunities, but also the span of a professional career to take into account when considering what the possible speed of changing demography might be.

The relationship between presence amongst learners and presence in the workforce is, therefore, not straightforward. Acceptance rates to elite training opportunities suggest that male and female musicians do not necessarily move through the 'pipeline' in the same way: men experienced higher acceptance rates across all courses in conservatoires.^{xx} Amongst musicians applying to study 'symphonic' classical instruments at conservatoires based in England men experienced slightly better acceptance rates than women for both UG study, and very slightly better rates for PG study; the offer rates amongst younger learners applying to the NCO are also slightly better for male applicants.^{xxi} Thus, the female majority which can be identified amongst learners appears not to translate into the workforce of musicians, and different acceptance/offer rates enable identification of some specific points at which some female musicians do not progress.

Instrument choice and types of work

The literature and data suggest some key relationships between gender and how engagement in classical music occurs. There is evidence of teachers framing their pupils' musical attributes in ways which are gendered^{xxii}, and data on instrument choice reflects these gender biases (across the literature there is some evidence of teachers, parents and specific circumstances, e.g. instrument availability, effecting instrument choice, though the balance of these influences is not well-researched). Data on gender and instrument from orchestras in the US and Europe demonstrates similar patterns.^{xxiii} In some cases individual instruments are strongly dominated by one gender (e.g. tuba for male instrumentalists, harp for female instrumentalists), and more generally there is a bias of male brass players and percussions, and female players amongst the higher strings and higher wind instruments; this is evident in data which ranges from young learners, through elite training opportunities, into the orchestral and wider workforce.^{xxiv} Amongst younger learners these gendered preferences appear less stark; however, it is worth noting that whilst those learning or training through particular opportunities (such as the NCO)

may sit alongside gender diverse peers, there is also evidence that their teachers, potential colleagues and possible role models are less diverse.^{xxv}

There is also some evidence of a relationship between gender and types of work for professional musicians. In orchestras women are underrepresented – even by comparison to their overall presence – in principal roles, and appear to be less prevalent in some more ‘prestigious’ orchestras^{xxvi}. They are also absent from artistic leadership roles, including conducting, underrepresented as solo artists on classical record labels, and – as noted above – underrepresented in more prestigious teaching opportunities like conservatoire teaching. By comparison, women appear more present amongst those undertaking general instrumental teaching (and whose careers focus on this kind of teaching)^{xxvii}, and more present amongst those reporting education as a key professional activity.^{xxviii} By comparison, men are in the majority not only of orchestral players, but also amongst those whose professional activities include recording and theatre work.^{xxix}

2.2 Ethnicity

There is evidence of an ethnically diverse and representative group of younger learners accessing instrumental learning opportunities. Amongst those in elite training opportunities for young people, there is still a significant proportion of learners from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse groups overall. Within these training opportunities, however, some specific ethnic groups are underrepresented: for example, Black or Black British musicians are underrepresented at each stage within elite training opportunities. As the training stages progress, the overall intake becomes less ethnically diverse.

The classical music workforce is less ethnically diverse than those coming through conservatoires, and people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are underrepresented amongst musicians, staff, managers and board members.

Some instruments are learnt and played by a more ethnically diverse group than others, and there is some evidence of socio-cultural perceptions of instruments influencing choice.

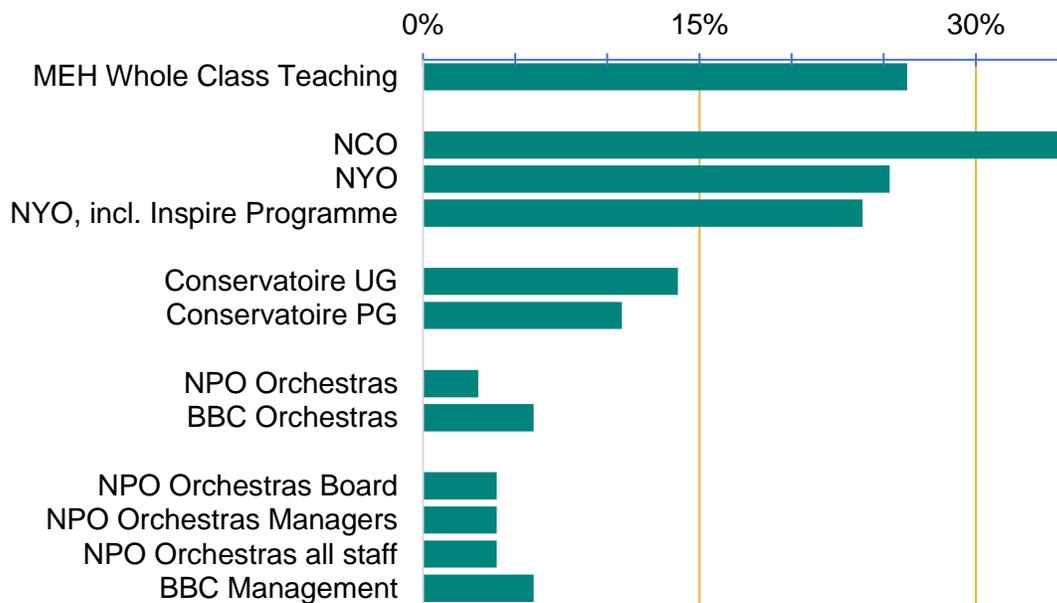
Presence and absence at different stages

There is evidence of engagement in instrumental learning provision through whole-class activities from a population of young people whose ethnic diversity is representative of that in the wider school population.^{xxx} Specific projects like In Harmony, where a notably higher level of ethnic diversity and in particular of Black or Black British participants is visible, largely reflect the demographics of the communities in which they take place and demonstrate some engagement with groups who are otherwise underrepresented in training opportunities and the workforce.^{xxxi} ^{xxxii}Notably, the membership of the elite training opportunities for young people (NCO and NYO) is significantly more diverse than that amongst conservatoire acceptances (see figure 2). However, UK conservatoire students were less ethnically diverse than the overall UK student population undertaking music degrees.^{xxxiii} Amongst the orchestral workforce in England only between 3-6% were Black, Asian or from other ethnically diverse groups, not including white ethnically diverse groups.^{xxxiv xxxv}

Comparing datasets which covers different age-groups is complex, because the diversity of the general population is different between different age-groups: in England the younger population is more ethnically diverse than older groups; by way of context, the Annual Population Survey year to June 2020 (Office of National Statistics) data estimates that in England 21.4% of those aged 16-19 are ethnic minorities in comparison with 16.4% of those aged between 16-64. Greater ethnic diversity amongst instrumental learners in comparison to those in the workforce may partly reflect population differences as well as differences of opportunity and preference.

The figure below presents ethnicity across the pipeline, and is limited therefore in the detail in which it offers about different ethnic groups due to the way in which workforce datasets collect and supply data (with very broad ethnic groupings). Where more detailed data is available, these findings are discussed in the following commentary, and further detailed graphs are available in the Data Audit and Analysis report.

Figure 2: Black, Asian and ethnically diverse (excluding White ethnically diverse groups) presence in learning, training and the workforce



See Appendix C for list of data sources.

Looking in more detail at the presence of specific ethnic groups, though Black or Black British young learners are accessing whole class teaching instrumental provision and learning through projects like In Harmony, musicians from Black or Black British backgrounds are underrepresented to the same extent in elite training opportunities like NCO and NYO, as they are in conservatoire training.^{xxxvi} This study could not access any longitudinal data for England or the UK on the presence of Black or Black British instrumental learners and musicians, but a study from the US found the proportion of African American musicians in orchestras averaged just below 2% for the 34-year duration of the data, where the proportion of other ethnically diverse groups increased.^{xxxvii}

Musicians from Asian or Asian British backgrounds are very strongly represented in the NCO membership, with musicians from a Chinese background being particularly prevalent, but are less strongly represented in NYO and amongst conservatoire acceptances.^{xxxviii} Musicians from mixed heritage backgrounds are also strongly represented amongst NCO members and NYO members and activities, declining slightly amongst UG and PG acceptances to England-based conservatoires via the Universities and Colleges Admissions System (UCAS).

Looking at non-musicians working in the classical music sector, data from orchestras suggests that the proportion of staff or board members who are Black, Asian or ethnically diverse (excluding White ethnically diverse groups) is underrepresented in comparison to the wider population and at a similar level to the diversity amongst musicians in those organisations.^{xxxix}

Findings from the workforce survey have not been included in this analysis as, in comparison with other data sources, responses received appear to overrepresent the proportion of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse groups in the sample.

Ethnicity and instrument choice

Some instruments are played by a more ethnically diverse group than others: string instruments, and particularly the violin, and to a lesser extent wind instruments show a more diverse group of players than other instruments. Studies on Asian and Asian American musicians suggest socio-cultural perceptions and values affect instrument choice, for example that instruments like the violin, piano and cello are seen as more 'prestigious' instruments partly because of the nature of repertoire and potential for a solo career.^{xl}

2.3 Disability and long-term health conditions

The available evidence suggests that people with disabilities and long-term health conditions are significantly underrepresented in the workforce.

Where musical activities are optional, pupils with special educational needs are underrepresented; in elite training opportunities prior to HE even fewer pupils from this group are present.

Exploring disability and long-term health conditions amongst classical music learners and musicians is significantly limited by the absence of data, and by the different ways in which data is collected and categorised. For example, ACE National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) reported that they did not know about the disability status of 75% of their artistic workforce.

Presence and absence at different stages

The available evidence suggests that people with disabilities and long-term health conditions are significantly underrepresented in the workforce. Comparing data between different datasets is challenging due to the absence of data collection in some areas, and also the range of different indicators, specific definitions or inclusions/exclusions which are used by different data collectors.

From the evidence available to this study we can begin to build a picture of inclusion and exclusion amongst children and young people. Amongst those accessing instrumental learning provision through whole-class activities, 2% had a Special Educational Needs (SEN) statement or Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan (a little under the national average for the school population in England). For those participating in In Harmony programmes, which works with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, the proportion of pupils who have a SEN statement or EHC plan are slightly higher across the different groups (3-5%).^{xli xliii} Amongst pupils engaging in optional activities such as area-based ensembles and choirs run by MEHs, the proportion of pupils with any SEN support was 3.73%, which is around a quarter of the national average, suggesting that once activities are elective pupils with SEN are significantly underrepresented.^{xliiii} Similarly data from NYO suggests very few participants (in one year of data there are none) with an SEN statement or EHC plan.

Where data has been collected, young people with disabilities and long-term health conditions appear underrepresented in In Harmony activities and NYO in comparison with the school-age population; however it is not clear how comprehensive disclosure may be in these datasets therefore may underestimate the overall proportion of participants with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

Amongst conservatoire acceptances for the instruments there are significantly higher proportions of musicians declaring a disability than amongst learners at an earlier stage, or within the workforce. Female conservatoire acceptances were more likely than men to declare a disability. The overall proportion of conservatoire applicants and acceptances reporting a disability has increased significantly in the last decade, with particular rises in people disclosing learning difficulties^{xliiv}, as well as categories such as 'mental health' and 'autistic disorder'.^{xliiv}

Orchestras who provide data to Arts Council England as National Portfolio Organisations reported that they did not know about the disability status of 75% of their artistic workforce. There is evidence to suggest that there may be some cultural issues relating to the disclosure of disabilities, injuries and health conditions which may affect the quality of data in this area. Where data is known both Arts Council England-funded orchestras and BBC orchestras report that 2% of their musicians have a disability or long-term health condition, which is significantly below the 19% of people of working age who report having a disability.^{xlivi} A slightly larger proportion of non-musician workers and board members in the classical sector report having a disability or long-term health condition.

Again, findings from the workforce survey have not been included here as, in comparison with other data sources, responses received appear to overrepresent those who identify as D/deaf, disabled or having a long-term health condition in the sample.

2.4 Socio-economic indicators

Across elite training opportunities there is evidence that young people who attend independent/fee-paying schools, come from higher income families and those who live in areas where young people are likely to go to higher education are significantly overrepresented.

Amongst the current workforce there is some evidence of a more diverse educational background, but data is quite limited and changes over time to the education system make any trends difficult to discern.

Presence and absence at different stages

Looking at the current education of learners and educational background of the workforce, the proportion of NCO members, NYO members and musicians and staff working with the BBC orchestras who attended independent/fee-paying schools is significantly higher than would be the case in the typical UK population. Comparable information was not available to this study on the wider classical music workforce, but data on UK conservatoire admissions to all courses shows a similar overrepresentation of students who had attended private school^{xlvii} and A-Level music entry occurs at a disproportionately higher level in independent schools.^{xlviii}

Attendance at independent/fee-paying schools nonetheless appears to be more prevalent amongst those in elite training opportunities like NCO and NYO than in the small sample of those in the profession who responded to our workforce survey. Though analysis is complicated by historical changes in the education system (e.g. decline of grammar schools), this raises some questions about whether the educational background of musicians has changed or is changing, and if so what the basis of any such change may be.

Analysis is further complicated by accounting for the specialist music schools^{xlix}, which take some fee-paying students and some sponsored in part or wholly by Department of Education's Music and Dance Scheme bursaries (and therefore capacity to pay fees is not a factor in attendance); these schools are sometimes clearly identified and separated from other independent and fee-paying schools in the data, and in other instances it is unclear how they may have been categorised.

Amongst NCO and NYO members there is evidence of students attending these specialist music schools or other Centres of Advanced Training (e.g. conservatoire Junior departments or other regional provision) and amongst these are students in receipt of bursaries (which are income-related) from the Music and Dance Scheme. There are also students in receipt of assisted places (which may be music scholarships) at other independent schools, so it is worth noting that within those reported as attending fee-paying schools there may be learners from lower income households. Finally, there are learners who benefit from direct bursaries (which are also income-related) from NCO and NYO.

A-Level music entries come disproportionately highly from areas in which young people are likely to go on to higher education.¹ Amongst students gaining admission to conservatoire study in the instruments this study focuses on, students from areas where young people are likely to go to higher education are disproportionately overrepresented; this overrepresentation is also

higher amongst postgraduates than undergraduates. This also means that admissions from areas where young people are less likely to go into higher education are underrepresented.^{li} Placing conservatoire students in a wider context, students from areas of low participation in higher education are also underrepresented in comparison with the general student population.^{lii}
^{liii}

There is some evidence that young learners from state schools fare less well in competitive processes for elite training opportunities, and that this is also the case for young people from areas of lower participation in higher education applying to conservatoires.^{liv} These findings include some small numbers but is echoed in material which looks at all admissions to UK conservatoires.^{lv}

As with the data on ethnicity and instrument choice, small numbers in some groups in the data make it difficult to determine whether there are strong relationships between instrument choice and socio-economic indicators; however, there is some evidence that tracking this over time may reveal relationships around some key instruments.

Taken together, these indicators suggest that elite training opportunities for those learning symphonic classical music instruments are very unevenly distributed across different socio-economic groups.

3 Experiences of the classical music sector: influences, identities and working practices

This section explores the experiences of musicians and others in the classical sector workforce and training routes, considering findings about the importance of family background and other influences, relationships between an individual's sense of their identity and perceptions of classical music work, and experiences of formal and informal working practices. It uses material from the survey and the literature review.

3.1 The importance of family background and other influences

The engagement of young people with classical instrumental learning opportunities is significantly influenced by their family background.

Understanding which demographic characteristics mean that a family background will be more likely to promote classical music is complex: there is not one overarching factor, rather the intersection of different demographic characteristics seem to affect whether a young person might learn an instrument, and how they progress through training opportunities. Whilst the data available for a detailed analytical examination of intersectionality is limited, it would appear that the intersection of social identities and structures impacts upon access and uptake of classical music.

There is also evidence of a relationship between demographic characteristics and the type of engagement a young person might have with classical music: from their instrument choice through to their likelihood to consider and pursue training opportunities, a career and the type of activities they might undertake or aspire to in a career.

There is evidence in the literature of the idea of being a 'musical family' as a predominantly middle-class construct, and which in some cases underpinned the presence of classical music at home.^{lvi} Middle-class families talked about the presence of music in the household, and the value of learning it in intrinsic and social terms that were simply assumed, and framed as 'natural'.^{lvii} The presence of parents or siblings who play instruments or who were otherwise engaged in musical activities was also a common circumstance.^{lviii} This relationship was also found in the workforce survey findings: the majority of respondents have or had parents who had an interest in classical music when they were growing up. Just over seven in ten respondents said that their parents had an interest in classical music when they were growing up (72%), while just under three in ten said that their parents did not have such an interest (28%).

The workforce survey also found evidence of a relationship between upbringing and class.

- Those with parents interested in classical music were more likely than those with parents who had no such interest to have been involved in the classical music sector for longer (54% of those with parents interested in classical music have been involved in the sector for over 15 years vs. 41% of those with parents not interested). This could suggest that

there are limited signs that parental education is now less of a factor than it was historically but supports the broader analysis of a relationship between a 'musical family' and engagement with the sector.

- The vast majority of survey respondents were in the higher social grades (ABC1) when they were growing up, and most have or had parents with higher education qualifications. Those in lower social grades and whose parents did not have higher educational qualifications were likely to be older.
- The survey also finds a link between class and access to training and development opportunities in classical music: respondents in the higher social grades – ABC1 – were more likely than those in the C2DE grade when growing up to have undertaken private music tuition (76% vs. 56%) and tuition through higher education (81% vs. 72%). The only opportunity that C2DE respondents were more likely to have undertaken was free music tuition at a state school (56% vs. 39% of ABC1).

This kind of background is indicative of supportive family circumstances for young people who might be considering pursuing a career in classical music, and the key role of families in helping young people to 'successfully navigate the pipeline' in this area.^{lix} These experiences sit in contrast to those of musicians from lower middle-class or working-class backgrounds who reported their parents feeling that classical music was not a 'safe' or 'secure' profession; the lack of familiarity and perceptions of risk meant that parents expressed concern or encouraged musicians to find other professions.^{lx}

Though middle-class and upper-middle-class backgrounds are, by and large, the norm amongst classical musicians, there is evidence of different experiences within this group. There is evidence that parental education, occupation and the period of time a family has 'spent' in the middle-class affects not just perceptions and experiences of classical music, but practical decisions like instrument choice.^{lxi} Where this intersects with ethnicity other considerations, including socio-cultural norms and expectations, also affect parents' choices and motivations.^{lxii} There are differences between the ways young men and women who are middle-class make decisions about whether to apply for instrumental training in higher education and pursue a career in classical music^{lxiii}, and there is evidence of family expectations of young men and women being differently influenced by ethno-socio-cultural factors.^{lxiv}

The absence of visible role models (e.g. women or Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse role models) amongst those learning instruments or progressing in HE can negatively affect the perceptions of underrepresented groups coming through the system.^{lxv} Also challenging is the significant visibility which musicians from such underrepresented groups experience, and the burden of 'standing out' and expectations and assumptions which come with it.^{lxvi}

Some literature reflects critically on the place of classical music in music education. There is evidence of the centrality of the classical canon and pedagogy in school and HE music curricula alienating and disadvantaging students from different musical and cultural backgrounds^{lxvii}; assumptions that students from backgrounds other than White/Western ethnic groups might 'prefer' or be more comfortable with music which relates to their ethnic or cultural background^{lxviii}; and perceptions of musicians from backgrounds other than such White/Western ethnic groups as unable to connect with and communicate the essential meaning or emotion of classical music.^{lix} This work raises complex questions about background and identity and the relationship between these factors and curricula choices; the dominance of classical music is

seen as problematic, though this critical literature does not argue for its removal – rather for a wider variety of music and pedagogical approaches to be valued and included.

3.2 Experiences of training and working in classical music

Working practices for musicians are informal and ‘precarious’, with uncertain employment, low pay, unsociable hours and a strong element of networking. These practices affect the perceptions and capacity of musicians from different backgrounds to engage in a professional career.

Gender frames the way musicians develop and make musical and life choices, how they navigate the world of work and the way they are perceived and presented as musicians.

There is evidence of musicians, particularly those earlier in their career, viewing high profile performance activities as having greater value and prestige, and this influences what kinds of work musicians want to do. Class and gender, however, affect musicians’ sense of themselves as suitable for ‘prestigious’ activities, and also whether they place value on traditional ideas of ‘prestige’. There is evidence that musicians’ views of the value of different activities changes as their career changes, and that they may over time find value in different kinds of activities, such as teaching.

In training and work settings musicians have experienced a range of barriers, discrimination and harassment. These are more commonly experienced by musicians who are underrepresented in the workforce and related to those protected characteristics. There is evidence of a culture of underreported incidents of discrimination and harassment, and evidence of a culture of non-disclosure around disabilities, health conditions, illness and injury particularly.

There are criticisms of the idea that classical music has ‘universal’ value. In practice, learners and those in the workforce experience complex hierarchies of value, in which some characteristics or experiences are felt to be in sympathy with classical music (e.g. a ‘European sensibility’) and others are not. Instead, claiming ‘universal’ value for classical music is seen as a way of ignoring differences and contributing to some of the inequalities which this study explores.

Demography and how the work works

There is evidence of a range of precarious working practices, including low earnings and the necessity for second jobs outside music/primary activities, which exist in the music profession (classical and otherwise).^{lxx} The relationship between the precarity of working conditions as a musician and demography is explored in some studies, and this report has already noted the perception of ‘musician’ as an insecure profession for lower-middle-class and working-class families.^{lxxi} Middle-class musicians were also found to be more comfortable with informal elements of ‘making a living’, like networking, and likewise in developing relationships with key influencers at other stages in the pipeline to the profession, for example, in seeking consultation lessons with conservatoire teachers prior to auditioning.^{lxxii} Musicians tended to accept

structures and practices which make making a living as a musician difficult and precarious, and tended to deny the possible impact of these on individuals; ultimately musicians ignored the structural failures which might contribute to or cause these precarious conditions, and instead might refer to 'luck' as being the reasons for success or failure.^{lxxiii}

There is a range of evidence which suggests that gender plays a strong role in how musicians develop, from an early framing of the choices and possibilities for musicians where boys and men are viewed as creative and girls and women as conformist and ornamental.^{lxxiv} Young men, for example, are commonly attracted to and found in the role of conductor.^{lxxv} Men taking part in music competitions are framed in the language of worthy contestants and women are noted for the 'appropriateness' or otherwise of their dresses.^{lxxvi} How women attempt to navigate these gendered spaces is complex, with evidence of women imitating the behaviour of male colleagues^{lxxvii} and negotiating practices like self-promotion with a strong awareness of gendered expectations.^{lxxviii}

The issue of irregular and unsocial hours, and the potential impact of a career in music upon other aspects of life (such as caring responsibilities), means that female musicians and those working in other aspects of the sector (e.g. HE music) in particular are concerned about how they might have children, if they want to, or experienced a significant impact upon their work choices and career structures.^{lxxix} There is evidence of a pay gap between male and female musicians^{lxxx}, supported by findings from the workforce survey where a quarter of women stated they had faced financial barriers such as low salaries or unpaid internships (24%) compared with 15% of men. Wider studies also identify a similar gender challenge in balancing caring responsibilities with precarious working conditions and irregular hours.^{lxxxi} Interestingly, when asked during the workforce survey, women were no more likely than men to say that being able to fit the work around their caring responsibilities was one of the most important factors when considering work in the sector (18% and 22%, respectively). However, when exploring the types of barriers experienced, one in ten women said they had faced barriers around being a parent or fitting childcare around work, compared with just one per cent of men.

Hierarchy and prestige in classical music

From two studies looking at the experiences of classical musicians, there is evidence that many come into the profession with a sense of hierarchy about different types of work: soloists at the top, instrumentalists in the middle and teachers at the base, and that this is particularly felt by early career musicians.^{lxxxii} This study has also found that prestige and networking is more of a concern for those in higher social grades and with parents interested in classical music, as findings from the workforce survey highlight:

- Four in ten of those in the social grades ABC1 said that the work being prestigious is one of the most important factors when considering working in the sector (41%), compared to three in ten of those in the social grades C2DE (29%). Moreover, over a third of those who were in the ABC1 social grades when they were growing up said that the work benefitting their profile is an important factor to them when considering work in the sector (35%), compared to around a quarter of those in the C2DE grade (26%).
- Similarly, four in ten of those with parents who had an interest in classical music said that one of the most important factors to them when considering work in the sector is that the work is prestigious (41%), compared to around a third of those whose parents were not interested in classical music (34%). Moreover, a greater proportion of those

respondents with parents engaged in classical music than those whose parents were not engaged said that factors relating to their previous experiences and the people they work with are among the most important.

Class and gender intersect in the way young people think about their aspirations in pursuing careers in classical music. One study found that both class (tending to come from the upper-middle classes and professional classes) and gender – being male – marked out a group who as young musicians already aspired to hold a ‘position of power or prestige’ in the music profession.^{lxxxiii} However, there is evidence of musicians’ views changing as careers progress, finding value in their teaching practice^{lxxxiv} and discovering that – as careers sometimes did not develop as they expected – both necessity and interest meant they explored areas other than performance and found agency and satisfaction in doing so.^{lxxxv}

Barriers, discrimination, harassment and disclosure

Examining the views of all respondents to the workforce survey, slightly more agreed than disagreed that they face or have faced barriers that restrict the opportunities available to them (40% vs. 36%). Among those who agreed that there are or have been barriers that restrict the opportunities available to them, the most commonly perceived obstacles relate to gender and money.

When examining barriers experienced by specific groups, the proportion who felt that there are or have been barriers is higher among:

- Female respondents;
- Respondents aged under 50;
- LGBTQ+ respondents;
- Disabled respondent; and,
- Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse respondents, particularly.

Indeed, around half of LGBTQ+ (48%), disabled respondents (49%) and Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse respondents (55%) agreed that they face or have faced barriers restricting the opportunities available to them.

There is evidence in the literature that some musicians have experienced sexual harassment, inappropriate behaviour and all of the nine types of discrimination defined by the Equalities Act 2010, with these experiences taking place in both education and work settings, and including activities perpetrated by peers, colleagues, teachers and those in authority. Levels of reporting of harassment or discrimination to organisations or others in authority are low: one study found that fear of losing work and workplace culture contributed to a reluctance to report.^{lxxxvi}

Looking at survey respondents in this study:

- Around six in ten LGBTQ+ survey respondents in this study said that they are open about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation with everyone (61%).
- A further third said that they are open with some people (34%) at their organisation and around one in twenty LGBTQ+ respondents said that they are open with no one (four per cent).

For musicians and music artists with disabilities, there is wide-spread experience of barriers to work, both physical (access to spaces) and other barriers (e.g. general lack of information and

support), with many musicians and artists withholding details of their health condition or impairment in case it would cause problems and many reporting disclosing issues and not being well-supported in response.^{lxxxvii}

When reporting their experiences, amongst disabled people who responded to the survey:

- Just over one in ten said they are open with no one at their organisation about their disability.
- Half of disabled respondents said they had not experienced any challenges as a result of their condition, but just under 4 in 10 (37%) said they had experienced stigma or a lack of understanding of their condition.

Musicians who experience injury and illness as a result of musical activities also sometimes hide or choose not to disclose injuries or impairments.^{lxxxviii} In the case of hearing loss, for example, a study found that:

- Whilst many musicians reported hearing loss, only around half of those experiencing it had sought professional help
- A substantial proportion did not know *if* they had suffered hearing loss.^{lxxxix}

There is evidence of musicians experiencing performance anxiety^{xc} or generally high levels of anxiety^{xc1}; some studies connect stress not only to the pressure of performance activities, but also to other factors such as anti-social hours, money problems and negative views of the profession more generally.

For young musicians with disabilities, knowledge and availability of adapted instruments and other specialist equipment is very limited from the music education and retail sector.^{xcii} The idea that disclosing a disability or health condition might be taboo or risk a difficult response is raised in several sources^{xciii} and is underpinned by evidence that for musicians in training the health and fitness of musicians is not necessarily discussed or ascribed much importance.^{xciv}

Music and value

Finally, there is a critique of the idea that classical music is a ‘universal’ language or ‘good’. There is evidence of learners and performers from non-Western ethnic backgrounds being framed as needing to learn a ‘European’ sensibility in order to perform and truly express the meaning of classical music.^{xcv} Similarly work which looks at the reception of performers (particularly by critics) identifies the way in which gender, ethnicity and disability substantially frame and effect how performers and performances are perceived.^{xcvi}

Elsewhere this study identified links between the family experience of classical music and the likelihood of training and working in classical music. More widely across different cultural artforms and activities there is strong evidence of the relationship between demographics and the likelihood of being involved in consumption (being an audience for) and production (being involved in the workforce for).^{xcvii} Who a person is – in terms of gender, ethnicity, class, disability and other factors – affects whether they listen to classical music at home, play an instrument, progress through training routes, the type of work they undertake, how they present themselves, how they are treated in the workforce and how they are received (by audiences, critics and peers). Their experience of classical music and its ‘value’ is inextricably bound up with who they are, and how others respond to that.

This critique, therefore, extends both to the idea of ‘universal value’ in the relationship between performers and audiences, and to the training and working practices within classical music, which are often unequal.^{xcviii} The idea that classical music has ‘universal’ value ignores differences and inequalities, contributing to some of the practical and everyday issues with diversity which this study explores.^{xcix}

4 Initiatives to diversify the workforce

With the notable exceptions of the Paraorchestra and Chineke! ensembles, there is limited evidence of initiatives which affect change in the diversity of the workforce in classical music, and it is likely that understanding of effective strategies for doing so are affected both by the limitations of the work undertaken – often at a particular point in time, with no information collected about what happens next – and by the availability of published evaluation of any such work in the public domain.

There is evidence that for some young people – irrespective of their interest in, and enthusiasm for, involvement in classical music – practical barriers to participation exist. These barriers included: the cost and distance of travel to activities, availability and accessibility of provision and whether the home environment was supportive to learning.

The only widely-used intervention to support equal opportunities in the employment of performers, screened auditions, does not appear to conclusively solve issues of potential unequal treatment for orchestral applicants.

Where orchestras have undertaken other activities aimed at providing work or work-like opportunities for underrepresented musicians, there is evidence that these are more successful (both for the individuals and in effecting broader change) where an organisation recognises and takes responsibility for supporting the individual and for reflecting properly on changes which might need to take place within the organisation at every level to better support a more diverse workforce.

In all such initiatives there is a clear need for organisations and others to consider how to involve those who are poorly represented or supported in their workforce to have a voice in determining how best to construct these interventions and what change is required.

There are many activities, programmes and organisations which provide opportunities for instrumental learning with groups who are less well-represented in classical music; however, there is little evidence of how and why young people make decisions and progress through different parts of the system or drop out.

The In Harmony programme targets pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds who are also underrepresented in classical music, and through the various published programme evaluations there is evidence of post-programme progression, and also of the barriers and challenges young people faced beyond the programme in continuing to learn an instrument. These barriers included ‘complex and challenging home circumstances’, and the study notes that some of the

young people were not in a position to control the circumstances which might support or inhibit their progression.^c

Screened auditions are perhaps the only employment-related intervention to promote a more diverse workforce within classical music which has received significant attention and public profile. The study^{ci} which underpins this profile has come under some significant scrutiny in recent years, particularly for its headline claim that screened auditions increased the likelihood of women getting orchestral jobs where the data to support this claim appears to be limited. Other studies have suggested that regardless of screened auditions, discrimination or advantage could be affected through other parts of the audition process, e.g. the pre-audition application stage in which factors such as having the right training pedigree were seen as important^{cii}; in addition, it is worth noting that in orchestras in the UK extended trial period typically constitute the final phase of selection processes.

There is evidence of orchestras undertaking programmes to support musicians from underrepresented groups to engage in work or work-like activities. Fellowship programmes have been used in US orchestras for musicians and a study found that participants from minority racial or ethnic backgrounds valued the fellowship experience, though orchestral membership was not always the end result or success marker. Orchestras were sometimes poorly prepared to receive fellows, with other musicians treating them with suspicion and some challenges around the way in which the ensembles sought to use them to connect with groups in their wider communities.

Overall, the study concludes that fellowships did not fundamentally solve problems in the pipeline in part because orchestras did not take much accountability for the success of fellowships, but expected fellows to fit into their existing practices; where orchestras had used fellowships to reflect and alter their practices they had made better progress on diversity. What fellowships generally achieved was to support musicians from underrepresented groups into the pool of potential orchestral musicians, and to enable them to be more competitive in seeking jobs in that area.^{ciii}

A UK orchestra – the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra – undertook a project designed to engage disabled people in the arts workforce, including provision of training placements for artists with disabilities and the development of a disabled-led ensemble. By comparison with the study on US fellowships, this project included a range of activities which sought to engender a wider organisational change including decision-making and addressing and exploring the views of audiences.^{civ} These issues of organisational culture are raised elsewhere in recent work on experiences of neurodiversity in the music sector^{cv} and of disabled musicians^{cvi} which reflect entrenched barriers to inclusion and a widespread lack of engagement and understanding from organisations with individuals and groups who are underrepresented.

Though the material on such initiatives is limited, a common thread is the necessity for organisations – and the system - to recognise that there are some fundamental aspects of the way they work which inhibit the potential entry and progress of underrepresented groups. Further to this, there is a growing call – including from Arts Council England^{cvi} – for organisations to recognise the importance of those underrepresented groups being included in decision-making and designing change in the system, for example in recent work on neurodiversity^{cvi} and on the experiences of disabled musicians.^{cix}

5 Conclusions

5.1 What have we learned?

This study has brought together a range of existing literature, secondary data and a new survey to explore the demography and experiences of learners, musicians and workers in classical music. In bringing together and adding to existing evidence and data, this report is able to more clearly evidence the current profile in relation to diversity within learning routes into and the workforce of the classical music sector. It makes visible inequalities of presence, and brings together evidence about opportunities, influences, motivations and working practices which affect if and where participation in learning and working occurs.

Looking at the pathways into the sector, whilst there is evidence of first access provision which serves a representative population of children in school settings, when activities become optional some groups are better represented than others. When activities are competitive, and part of the elite training system which supports instrumentalists in developing their practice, some groups fare better than others in gaining access to those opportunities and there is evidence that the way performances are judged in competitive arenas is often framed by characteristics like gender and ethnicity. Demographic characteristics affect instrument choice – which can also impact the competition for places in elite training opportunities and the types of work available – and also influence the types of work which different groups are more likely to pursue a career in, both in terms of perceived ‘prestige’ and in their day-to-day activities.

There is evidence of change amongst younger learners: instrument choices are, for example, becoming less strongly gendered. In the training ‘system’ there is a more ethnically diverse population than in the workforce. The extent to which such changes may carry through into the workforce at present is unclear, but may be being limited by unequal competitive opportunity, the lack of role models and the challenges posed by informal, unequal and unsupportive working practices. This is the space in which collective action from the sector could make a difference.

5.2 What are the gaps in our understanding?

There are still gaps in our knowledge and understanding, and areas in which further or sustained investigation would be beneficial.

Some demographic characteristics – e.g. gender – have been much more widely explored than others. It would be valuable to undertake further work in those areas where data and existing literature is more limited, and to consider how the lived experience of underrepresented groups might be heard and reflected upon. Numerical data can be very limited in its value where the presence of some demographic groups is very small, and thus statistical challenges are difficult to overcome. In addition, many of our findings suggest that the experiences of individuals in the classical music system are affected by more than one demographic characteristic: a more subtle understanding requires an intersectional framework, and it is this subtlety that will be required to examine some of the more complex questions about how and when young instrumentalists make choices about progression or dropping out.

There are a number of practical opportunities relating to data which could be valuable to address. These include:

- Longitudinal attitudinal tracking of those working in the sector to understand the impact of initiatives and to enable sector organisations to adapt and react at pace to address issues or barriers.
- Filling gaps in the current overall picture, e.g. adding in data on participants in the Department for Education funded Music and Dance Scheme and finding ways to build a more complete picture of instrumental learning in both independent and state school settings, via Music Education Hubs and other providers, to establish a better baseline of who gets to learn an instrument, and who carries on doing so.
- More exploration of the relationship between instrument choice and demographic characteristics, background, opportunity and circumstances. The patterns of instrument choice suggest some strong relationships with such characteristics, and these choices frame how children engage in learning and progression: some instruments are more competitive than others, their repertoire and training opportunities vary significantly and some offer different career options. These instrument-specific factors connect to a wider set of perceptions and expectations about roles like artistic leadership and creativity which appear to have a strong influence on who appears where within the workforce.
- Improving the quality and comprehensiveness of data collection in key areas, including amongst Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisations, Music Education Hubs, In Harmony, the Department for Education's Music and Dance Scheme and other programmes and activities which seek to support access to instrumental learning opportunities.
- Considering opportunities for standardisation of data collection across different parts of the system, supported by work with the sector to enable and encourage data sharing and building a collective understanding and addressing cultural issues within organisations around disclosure.
- Tracking consistent indicators over time creating a longitudinal dataset of the classical music sector, to explore possible trends and also enable larger samples to be analysed where appropriate.
- Where datasets allow – particularly where either better data collection or aggregation over multiple years enables larger datasets – more intersectional analysis is required in order to explore and understand better what influences presence and absence, progress, instrument choice and engagement in different kinds of work.
- Track learners and musicians over time, creating a longitudinal dataset of individual experiences, to understand how they move through the system and what the opportunities, barriers and motivations are in the choices which they make.
- Ensure that qualitative data sits alongside quantitative material, so that the subtleties of experience can be explored, particularly amongst groups who are significantly underrepresented in any quantitative dataset.
- Address questions of understanding about how widespread or common some practices and experiences are in the workforce and learning routes. Whilst existing data indicates, for example, hearing loss or experiences of discrimination, the self-selecting nature of survey respondents means that it is difficult to understand how prevalent these experiences are; different approaches, including longer-term tracking/indicators and

building a clearer picture of the overall population may enable these findings to be put into a clearer context.

This study has reflected only very briefly on the different types of work musicians go on to do in their careers post training. Correlations between some demographic groups and instrument choice suggest that musicians make choices (or are encouraged to frame their musical activities) very early: exploring further some of the other facets of learning and work may reveal similar relationships.

It was difficult to identify material which documented attempts to address diversity in the sector, and it is unclear whether this primarily reflects a lack of activity, or whether there are initiatives which have taken place which are undocumented, or whether any such documentation which has been produced remains unpublished. Much of the work which does take place to bring opportunities to a wider range of participants is for children and young people and does not necessarily take an individual learner through into training and professional opportunities. The sector must be encouraged to document interventions, share learning and – where possible – explore how to connect our understanding of how young people move through music education opportunities including (and perhaps especially) where these are revealing of initiatives which have not been wholly successful, but from which learning for the entirety of the sector can usefully be derived.

Finally, it is important to recognise that much other work is ongoing elsewhere, looking at patterns of presence and absence in other parts of the cultural sector, and at other sectors. This other research suggests similar patterns of presence and absence, indicating inequalities which operate across individual 'systems' of learning, training and work. In other literature looking at the wider cultural sector researchers are connecting patterns of consumption to patterns of production.^{cx} This study's findings (and those of others) about the importance of family background and experience with classical music to the careers of individual musicians echoes these connections: the inequalities in audiences and visitors are reflected in workforces, because much of the workforce comes from family backgrounds where that artform is already consumed, or to be otherwise pre-disposed to support engagement with it.

There is a job to do, therefore, in putting what is known about classical music into a wider context and considering how the causes of inequality can be examined within this wider perspective. Acknowledging this context is not a way to remove responsibility from the classical music sector or its constituent parts in considering how questions of presence and absence might be addressed, but it is an important element of considering what might need to be done in order for things to change.

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix A – Contributors to this study

The following people and organisations have contributed to this study, through membership of the steering group, contribution of data sources and engaging in discussions.

Steering Group Members

- Alan Davey (BBC)
- Chi-chi Nwanoku (Chineke!)
- David Ruebain (Conservatoires UK/Conservatoire of Dance and Drama)
- Dougie Scarfe (Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra)
- Gerry Godley (Conservatoires UK/Leeds Conservatoire)
- Janet Tuppen (BBC)
- Jo Lavery (Musicians Union)
- John Shortell (Musicians Union)
- Jonathan Harper (Paraorchestra)
- Mark Pemberton (Association of British Orchestras)

Contributed data and thinking, access to networks and engaged in discussions

- Association of British Orchestras
- Attitude is Everything
- BBC
- Conservatoires UK
- Drake Music
- Hackney Music Service
- Harrison Parrot
- Help Musicians
- Incorporated Society of Musicians
- London Music Masters
- London Philharmonic Orchestra
- Making Music
- Manchester Collective
- Music for Youth
- Musicians Union
- Music Mark
- Nottingham Music Hub
- National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain
- National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain
- Open Up Music
- Orchestras For All

- Orchestras Live
- Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra
- Royal Philharmonic Society
- Sage Gateshead
- Snape Maltings
- Sound Connections
- Southbank Sinfonia
- Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
- Youth Music
-

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6.3 Appendix C – Data Sources

The report 'Diversity in Classical Music: Data Audit and Analysis' details the data sources which have been gathered and compared as part of this study. That report contains detailed explanations of the scope of the key data sources. Briefly, they comprise:

- Data from Music Education Hubs on Whole Class Ensemble Teaching and area-based ensembles and choirs, from Fautley and Whittaker (2020).
- Data provided by the National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain covering the 2018 and 2019 members of the national orchestras (all age-groups combined).
- Data provided by the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain to Arts Council England as part of annual monitoring arrangements, covering both the 'main' orchestra and NYO Inspire activities for the year 2018/2019. Data is presented in this study in two combinations: for NYO's 'main' orchestra, and for both the 'main' orchestra and the Inspire activities together.
- Data on UCAS England-domiciled undergraduate and postgraduate applicants and acceptances via the UCAS Conservatoires scheme for conservatoires in England for 2016-2020 (five cycles), for a selection of instruments.
- Data from a range of orchestras who are National Portfolio Organisations with Arts Council England, via their annual monitoring arrangements for 2015-2018 (three years).
- Data provided by the Musicians' Union on their membership.

7 Endnotes

- ⁱ A full list of contributors is included in the Appendix A.
- ⁱⁱ A full list of contributors is included in the Appendix A.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Scharff 2015b and Bull and Scharff, 2017, note an absence of much work prior to theirs.
- ^{iv} For example Scharff 2015b.
- ^v Scharff 2015b calls for this; more widely, the task of making inequalities visible is echoed in the conclusions of wider studies of the creative and cultural workforce, such as *Culture is bad for you* (Brook, O'Brien and Taylor, 2020)
- ^{vi} The individual data reports include full details of specifications, search terms, inclusions and exclusions for different study elements.
- ^{vii} Where possible in this study, the data on learners is focused on those learning the instruments relevant to this study; however, amongst those learners experiencing their first access to instruments and musical activities, the population is necessarily broader, and therefore includes young people learning music in a way which involves a wider range of instruments, musical genres and approaches.
- ^{viii} Where literature from outside the UK is referenced, this study only considered material produced in English.
- ^{ix} ABO, 2014.
- ^x Hallam, Rogers and Creech, 2008 (Music Education Hubs were first constituted in 2012, prior to which music education in England was offered by local authority-run Music Services).
- ^{xi} Fautley and Whittaker, 2020.
- ^{xii} See Appendix C for note on sources used in the data audit and analysis.
- ^{xiii} A study of US orchestras found more female staff, and slightly more female executives (League of American Orchestras and Doeser, 2016).
- ^{xiv} League of American Orchestras and Doeser, 2016.
- ^{xv} Allmendinger and Hackman, 1995; this data point has been included here as one of the few which provides a dataset which is likely to reflect a combination of professional ensembles similar to those in our study, and provides sufficient distance over time that we might reasonably hope to see substantial change.
- ^{xvi} See Scharff, 2015b; and Sergeant and Himonides, 2019.
- ^{xvii} Sergeant and Himonides, 2019.
- ^{xviii} Hallam *et al*, 2008 citing a range of literature from the 1980s and 1990s; and Green, 1997, citing historical data from 1890 on female representation amongst music examination candidates.
- ^{xix} Scharff, 2015b.
- ^{xx} DeBoise (2019) and Scharff (2015b).
- ^{xxi} At present data on offer or acceptance rates at key stages is only available from two sources: UCAS data and NCO. This is not an indicator collected via the ACE NPO data survey, for example. However, there are various points in the system at which individual organisations may collect this data, including organisations working with children and young people (e.g. Centres for Advanced Training under the Music and Dance Scheme) and therefore it may be possible in the future to examine multiple 'gateways' and understand whether different sub-groups of applicants consistency experience better or worse success rates.
- ^{xxii} Green, 1997.
- ^{xxiii} Sergeant and Himonides, 2019.
- ^{xxiv} ABRSM, 2014; Hallam *et al*, 2008; data from NCO membership; Scharff, 2015b; Sergeant and Himonides, 2019; UCAS data for England-based conservatoires for England-domiciled UG and PG acceptances; data from MU membership.
- ^{xxv} Scharff, 2015b, find men overrepresented in conservatoire teaching; Higham-Edwards, 2019, highlights the absence of women in conservatoire percussion teaching and in orchestral percussion sections.
- ^{xxvi} Sergeant and Himonides, 2019
- ^{xxvii} ABRSM, 2014, surveyed instrumental teachers amongst whom only 4% reported teaching in a university or college and only a third also reported working as a 'professional performer'.

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- xxviii MU membership.
- xxix MU membership.
- xxx Fautley and Whittaker, 2020.
- xxxi In Harmony participation data.
- xxxii The ethnic groups referred to here reflect those used in the 2011 Census and commonly in England for statistical purposes; they are specifically reflected in several of the datasets, including data on In Harmony, the Music Education Hubs, National Children’s Orchestra and from UCAS Conservatoires. A brief glossary of the groups is available here: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/ethnic-groups>
- xxxiii Scharff, 2015b.
- xxxiv This figure is calculated amongst those for whom ethnicity is known in ACE NPO Orchestras and BBC Orchestras.
- xxxv Scharff, 2015b, found a lower proportion of musicians from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, though the study methodology (observing from orchestra listings) may have led to an under estimation of players from different ethnic groups.
- xxxvi See Appendix C for a list of data sources.
- xxxvii Overall the study of US orchestras shows a slow increase over 34 years in ‘non-white’ musicians, rising from 3% to 14% (League of American Orchestras and Doerer, 2016).
- xxxviii This change appears to be prefigured in data from data from the US study of orchestras, where a 70% increase in Asian and Pacific Islander musicians could be seen over a 34 year period (League of American Orchestras and Doerer, 2016).
- xxxix This is again similar to the findings of a US study which found that around 14% of staff were ‘non-white’ alongside 14% of musicians (League of American Orchestras and Doerer, 2016).
- xi Yoshihara, 2007.
- xii In Harmony participation data.
- xiii Pupils with SEN support and those with an EHC plan are more likely to qualify for free school meals than is the case with the general school population, indicating a correlation between SEN and low income households.
- xiiii Fautley and Whittaker, 2020.
- xlv The category ‘learning difficulty’ in UCAS data collection asks applicant to indicate if ‘You have a have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D’.
- xlvi UCAS, 2020.
- xlvii Department for Work and Pensions, 2020.
- xlviii Scharff, 2015b.
- xlvi Whittaker, Fautley, Kinsella and Anderson, 2019.
- lix Chetham’s School of Music, The Purcell School, the Yehudi Menuhin School and Wells Cathedral School all offer some supported places through the Department of Education’s [Music and Dance Scheme](#), as do other Centres of Advanced Training including regular (often weekend or holiday provision) at: Birmingham Conservatoire, Royal Northern College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Royal College of Music, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, The Sage Gateshead, Sheffield Music Academy, Yorkshire Young Musicians, Centre for Young Musicians, London, Aldeburgh Young Musicians (Suffolk), South West Music School.
- ¹ Whittaker *et al*, 2019.
- ⁱⁱ UCAS Conservatoires acceptance data, see Appendix C for details.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Scharff, 2015b.
- ^{liii} It is worth noting that access to conservatoire training is contingent on learning an instrument, but not upon having a GCSE or A-Level in music; and therefore A-Level cohorts and their characteristics may overlap with those learning ‘orchestral’ instruments, but there may be differences; this is an area in which better data on young, instrumental learners would be beneficial.
- ^{liv} NCO data for 2018 and 2019 members; and data on UCAS UG and PG acceptances, see Appendix C for details.
- ^{lv} Scharff, 2015b.
- ^{lvi} Bull and Scharff, 2017; Fulford, Ginsborg and Goldboart, 2011.

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- lvii Bull and Scharff, 2017; Irwin and Elley, 2011.
- lviii League of American Orchestras, Rabkin and Hairston O'Connell, 2016.
- lix League of American Orchestras *et al*, 2016.
- lx Bull and Scharff, 2017.
- lxi Bull, 2018.
- lxii Irwin and Elley, 2011.
- lxiii Bull and Scharff, 2017.
- lxiv Yoshihara, 2008.
- lxv DeLorenzo, 2012; Higham-Edwards, 2019; Bogdanovic, 2015.
- lxvi League of American Orchestras *et al*, 2016.
- lxvii DeLorenzo, 2012; Mantie and Tucker, 2012; and Moore, 2012.
- lxviii Mantie and Tucker, 2012.
- lxix Yoshihara, 2007; Yang, 2014; Scharff, 2018.
- lxx Payne and Taylor, 2017.
- lxxi Bull and Scharff, 2017.
- lxxii Scharff, 2018.
- lxxiii Scharff, 2017 and 2019; both studies focus on female musicians, but a similar pattern of ignoring structural issues and inequalities and ascribing success to luck is a finding in a study on inequalities across the cultural sector, in chapter 10 which analyses interviews with men in senior leadership roles in the cultural sector (Brook, O'Brien and Taylor, 2020).
- lxxiv Green, 1997.
- lxxv Bull, 2018.
- lxxvi McCormick, 2009.
- lxxvii Bogdanovic, 2015.
- lxxviii Scharff, 2015a.
- lxxix Scharff, 2018; Bennett 2005; Bogdanovic, 2015.
- lxxx Payne and Taylor, 2017.
- lxxxi Bain, 2019, on the music industry; McDowell, Gamblin, Teoh, Raine and Ehnold-Danailov, 2019, on the performing arts industries.
- lxxxii Bennett, 2005; Bennett and Hannekam, 2018.
- lxxxiii Bull, 2018.
- lxxxiv Bennett, 2005.
- lxxxv Bennett and Hannekam, 2018.
- lxxxvi ISM, 2018; Help Musicians, 2014; ISM, Equity and the Musicians' Union, 2018; Musicians' Union, 2019.
- lxxxvii Attitude is Everything, 2019.
- lxxxviii Bennett, 2005; O'Donnell, 2016; Scharff, 2019; Greasley, Fulford, Pickard and Hamilton, 2018.
- lxxxix Greasley *et al*, 2018.
- xc Help Musicians, 2014; Breda and Kulesa, 1999.
- xcI Gross and Musgrave, 2016 and 2017.
- xcii Youth Music, 2020.
- xciii For example, O'Donnell, 2016; Fulford *et al*, 2011; Youth Music, 2020.
- xciv Araújo, Wasley, Perkins, Atkins, Redding, Ginsborg and Williamon, 2017.
- xcv Yoshihara, 2007; Scharff, 2018; Yang, 2014.
- xcvi McCormick, 2009 and 2015; Green, 1997; Straus, 2011.
- xcvii For example Oakley and O'Brien, 2015; Brook, O'Brien and Taylor, 2020.
- xcviii Bull, 2019, argues, for example, that learning practices amongst young musicians in ensembles embed a specific set of class and gender values.
- xcix For example Yoshihara, 2007 and Scharff, 2018.
- c Hallam and Burns, 2018.
- ci Goldin and Rouse, 1997; and Goldin and Rouse, 2000.
- cii Fasang, 2006; League of American Orchestras *et al*, 2016.
- ciii League of American Orchestras *et al* 2016.

civ Sound Connections, 2018.

cv Universal Music, n.d.

cvi Youth Music, 2020.

cvii See, for example, Arts Council England's new Inclusivity and Relevance investment principle:
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/essential-read-inclusivity-relevance>

cviii Universal Music, 2020.

cix Youth Music, 2020.

cx For example Oakley and O'Brien, 2015; Hesmondhalgh, 2018.



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