

Report highlights positive impact of community engagement not just to society but also on professional musicians' wellbeing

London Music Masters in collaboration with the Royal College of Music publishes report on impact of community engagement

Read the full report – Finding meaning in music - [here](#).

Music education charity **London Music Masters** has published the results of a research paper examining the impact of community engagement on professional musicians. Performing musicians remain linked to negative well-being indicators - with orchestral musicians in particular showing a greater tendency to suffer from performance anxiety, injuries and stress during their careers, especially managing portfolio careers. Whereas there is numerous data on the impact on the community, this is the first study of its kind into the impact on the health and well-being of professional musicians.

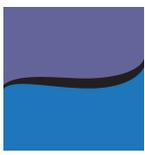
Conducted by **Sara Ascenso** and her team at the **Royal College of Music**, the research collated in conjunction with LMM's partners - **London Philhamonic Orchestra** and **London Contemporary Orchestra** - reveals that it is as beneficial to the community as it is to the professional musicians themselves.

The remits of the new research was split into three primary categories – identity, skills and wellbeing. The report concludes that music education projects can *“offer a platform for personal growth, professional development and full enjoyment of what it means to be a musician. Crucially, they encourage freedom, self-expression and creativity, empowering musicians to develop their individual voice.”*

Through enlarging the contexts and human encounters around music-making, musicians build a stronger sense of personal meaning and gain a clearer perception of their crucial role in society. Not only are they able to experience the impact of music in a more direct way and come closer to their most primary motivations for music-making, they feel strongly part of the narrative of both present music education and the future of music performance. In particular, these opportunities breakdown the orchestra musicians' routine and boredom which present significant barriers towards their optimal psychological functioning. Above all, it is seen as a vital investment in the future of classical music.

As Sara Ascenso explains:

“Community engagement projects have the potential to strengthen the sense of identity through fostering higher meaning and through motivating a reality check and higher self-expression. These projects also represent a prolific laboratory for developing new skills, or consolidating



existing ones, be it personal, interpersonal, musical, cognitive or related to teaching. Finally, community projects serve as a forum for increasing psychological wellbeing, both through the so-called hedonic route (feeling good) and eudaimonic pathway (flourishing) and through enhanced social wellbeing"

Rob Adediran, LMM's Executive Director, believes that the sector should bring more community engagement projects into the planning process to ensure that the musicians are exposed to the full benefits of their careers. He explains *"as this report shows, there is a huge professional development need amongst our musicians that can be met by music educators everywhere! By including musicians in our community work we are offering an invaluable service and an opportunity for growth."*

"Because I love doing it, it was more of a joy to discover my own self working with kids. That is my dream, to discover more through music. It's a double learning experience – I learn from them as well"

Hyeyoon Park (violinist)

"I have to be quite analytical about music, I take elements of it apart and think about how I can teach that to a child and how I can make that piece of music engaging."

Sarah Hill (LMM learning teacher)

Outline

Fifteen musicians partook in this research, 6 female 9 male, with an age range of 26 to 57. The participants were from the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO), the London Contemporary Orchestra (LCO) and LMM teachers. The instrument families represented within the group were strings, woodwind and brass. Each musician was interviewed one-to-one by lead researcher Sara Ascenso and focused on two primary areas: 1) history of community engagement and 2) thoughts on the value of community work for each musician, individually and as a group.

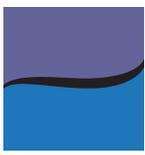
"It's about as far away from what I do in a Symphony orchestra as I could get."

Graham Sibley (Tuba player)

London Music Masters | Learning and Artists

LMM: learning

Since 2008, LMM has worked with **over 1000 primary school children** and their families on a weekly basis. For most of these children LMM provides the only option for high quality musical instrument tuition that is both accessible to families on a low income and affordable for state schools. Its graduates regularly win places in junior conservatoires and national youth ensembles as well as music scholarships to state, independent and specialist music schools.



LMM board and London Assembly member **Shaun Bailey** explains: *"In areas of economic deprivation and low morale, music plays a vital role in breaking down restrictions of background, wealth, and culture. The discipline of playing an instrument teaches numerous transferable skills. Inspiring a child to pursue excellence reinforces their self-belief and drives their ambition."*

LMM has trained over 25 graduates from leading European conservatoires (Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, Paris Conservatoire) to be instrumental teachers, and their teaching is being recognised as some of the best of its kind in the country. In partnership with the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music, LMM is developing a training module for group string tuition for undergraduates.

LMM: artists

Launched in 2009, the innovative LMM Award was conceived as an alternative to the traditional violin competition. Its aim is to support and nurture the careers of the very best young musicians from around the world. The musicians (all violinists) are invited to accept the award by a panel of distinguished performers who have received recommendations from conductors, teachers and musicians from across the globe. As an indicator of the quality of the recipients our award holders have gone on to become BBC New Generation artists and recipients of the Borletti-Buitoni prize as well as winning plaudits from audiences and critics alike.

The award comprises mentoring, recital and concerto opportunities, and commissions of new works.

In addition to all of these things the Award Holders are given time to develop a practical understanding of community outreach by working with our schools and in the communities around the schools. For London Music Masters it is vitally important that the next generation of young soloists is as comfortable performing off the concert platform as they are on it.

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