



## **Chairman's Introduction to Annual Report – Youth Music**

Youth Music was set in motion seven years ago, with the commitment of an annual Arts Council Lottery award of ten million pounds; it was, and is, the only delegate distributor of Lottery funds. In its relatively brief existence, Youth Music has done much to redress the woeful erosion of support for every young person's right of access to music making. It is regarded as one of the major success stories in the advent of Lottery funding; it did not trumpet its arrival with eye-catching claims and promises – it simply got on with the job, and steadily built up a diverse but substantial body of achievement. The job was to address the 'non formal music' sector – a huge rank of endeavour sitting outside the formal provision of music in schools and from the music services – and to address the potential for young people, to the age of 18, having first access to music. For many, the formal sector is forbidding or inhibiting, and in too many cases there is no home based or parental motivation. The body of achievement, to date, points to some 1.5 million young people benefiting from work supported by Youth Music, a figure which should double in the next couple of years.

It was not easy to judge the real need, and potential take up, when Youth Music began. The reality has far exceeded initial estimates, and the expectation of support substantially outstrips the funds available. The annual allocation of £10m has not increased by any inflationary margin, let alone in scale of the constituency of vital involvement it now represents. That £10m is worth roughly £1.5m less today, than it was seven years ago, but it has triggered an annual growth in take up that has roughly doubled year on year. In a great many cases, these are children from deprived backgrounds whose alternative activity might be a lot less positive, for which the costs of policing would far outstrip the goodwill and commitment dedicated by so many remarkable people who lead and direct these Youth Music initiatives.

Of course there is a need to collaborate with schools, and especially with the music services, but little recognition had hitherto been given to the countless bands, clubs, choirs, orchestras, youth centres, arts centres and festivals which stimulate regular opportunity for young people to join in making music together. Usually run on a shoestring, with a raft of voluntary support, the need for expert leadership is crucial. Youth Music has pioneered several strands of support and recognition for such specialised amateurs. These are people with a combination of teaching and performing skills, well able to inspire and create music across a range of genres and in many different circumstances. Some 10,000 such musicians have been identified with a need rising all the time. It is heartening to see the specialist Higher Education system – the conservatoires and music departments of the universities – increasingly recognising this need in the development of dedicated modules and courses for their students.

Many of the established orchestras, performing groups and venues now embrace outreach and education departments and these, together with many music services, often join in the partnerships that are the Youth Music Action Zones – harnessing a wide range of musical endeavour interconnecting in the development and regeneration of the nation's provision of music making for young people. Youth Music welcomes the government's initiative in establishing a 'Music Manifesto', and is delighted to be working closely within a number of its programmes. These are early days, for the proof of this exercise will come in the case being made for recognition

by HM Treasury in the settlement for music in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Being essentially Lottery funded, Youth Music cannot sustain its many projects and programmes with continuing revenue support. Much of this activity has prompted matching and partnership funding (an estimated circa £28m since inception). Some of this funding would evaporate without the core basis which Youth Music's support has represented, some might grow. But the omens are not good; the oncoming Olympics will provide both opportunity and challenge for resources. Corporate funding and sponsorship has reduced in many areas, and even the flagship national youth organisations are finding times hard. Youth Music has achieved significant steps forward in advocacy for these bodies – notably with some relatively modest revenue commitment from the DfES. The sums are relatively tiny, but the rewards are enormous in every way.

A few years ago there was no Youth Music. It would be inconceivable now to view the landscape of music without it. I wish to thank all those who do so much, whose reward will seldom be great financially, but who do what they do in the passionate belief that music nurtures the good in society in a way that little else can. Their gain is measured in the millions of children and young people who have discovered that strength.

So too I thank the team at Youth Music – my fellow trustees, the staff and network of regional coordinators who have now built a unique service and database, with an unrivalled pool of expertise that any government should be justly proved of – so ably led by our Chief Executive – Christina Coker. In these seven years, a number of trustees have retired, having given devoted service in the formative period – Sir Simon Rattle, Lesley Garrett, Geraldine Connor, Professor Edward Gregson, Richard McNicol and George Benjamin. This year we have said farewell to two trustees who have made very special contributions – Rob Dickins, who brought about substantial funding, from the BRIT Awards, which enabled Youth Music to develop work in the UK outside of England (for which the Lottery funding is exclusively directed), and Anthony Blackstock, who has worked as Deputy Chairman and Chair of the Finance & Audit Committees. They have given freely of their time, with enthusiasm and shrewd counsel, and we are forever in their debt.

A huge foundation has now been laid – upon which we need to build growth in the resource available for Youth Music to consolidate this pioneering work.

**Gavin Henderson**  
**Chair**  
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