

Jazz Services' Will Michael Diplomas

Report on the 2010/11 awards

Introduction

These Diplomas are awarded annually by Jazz Services in association with the NMC/MEC Local Authority Music Education Awards Scheme which has been running for well over thirty years. Since 2006 specific recognition has been given to jazz in education: the Jazz Services' Awards Panel looks for evidence of commitment to jazz education within LEA and music service provision for schools, community education and adult continuing education.

The Diploma is named in honour of Will Michael who, until his death in 2008, was Head of Music at Chislehurst & Sidcup Grammar School. Will was a hugely respected jazz educator on the national stage and joint architect of this jazz education awards scheme; he was also an invaluable member of the Jazz Services Education Panel.

We are delighted to report an improvement on last year's low participation rate and this despite widespread experience of budget reductions and consequential retrenchment of provision. It is interesting to reflect on how, despite logistical obstacles, some music services successfully deliver notably good quality jazz education; for example, Aberdeenshire, with 13 pupils per square mile can stand comparison with Southampton which have 1364 pupils per square mile. And then there is the action of the East Riding Council in contributing £750,000 to provide the music service with a "state of the art" music centre! Thus there is much to celebrate, but equally, to be watchful of, given the prospect of a Government driven National Plan for Music Education in England. Jazz has to fight hard for a place in the sun and thus far has had no opportunity to influence the thinking behind the drafting of the Plan, which is to be implemented in 2012. But it would be churlish not to recognise the potential for all music genres to benefit from such a national commitment.

While strictly speaking this is an authority-wide scheme, the tendency has always been for the music service to make the submission seeking national recognition. So we suspect there are unsung heroes among classroom music teachers, the majority of whom tend to be fearful of jazz and improvisation, who effect invaluable introductions to jazz in the limited amount of time allocated to music in the average school week. So while we can't identify them, we thank them nonetheless!

On behalf of myself and my esteemed colleagues on the Jazz Services Awards Panel (Dr Catherine Tackley, Andrea Vicari and Bill Martin) we would like to thank:

- all those colleagues most of whom, above and beyond the call of duty, are spreading the jazz gospel nationwide;
- the National Music Council of the United Kingdom, of course!; and
- the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Scottish Jazz Federation for their support of the scheme.

Our report is set below.

Ivor Widdison
Chair, JSL Awards Panel

The **Aberdeenshire** Jazz Programme has now been running for four years and the Instrumental Music Service (IMS) is confident that it has affected all 153 primary and 17 secondary schools. The IMS co-ordinator is a well-qualified jazz musician and educator as are the principal jazz programme tutors, Richard Ingham and Richard Michael (recipient of the All-Party Parliamentary Jazz Award for Jazz Education in 2009).

CPD continues to be high on the agenda within the Jazz Programme, not least because the maintenance of good quality provision is a vital factor in securing continued Youth Music Initiative (YMI) funding by Creative Scotland (the Scottish equivalent of the ACE). To that end twilight sessions are provided on set days; and instructors are also encouraged to attend accredited jazz courses and to take their pupils through jazz examination processes. The IMS co-ordinator also delivered a jazz development course for two IMS staff members as well as the ABRSM jazz syllabus as INSET for both shire and Aberdeen City instructors. Further INSET was provided on accompaniment and composition using Garage Band.

The Jazz Programme covers listening to music of all genres, and students are encouraged to attend local jazz events. Performance is an important strand within the Programme and the two most important jazz venues in Aberdeen featured the Aberdeenshire Saxophone Orchestra, the Jazz Ensemble, Kemnay Academy Jazz Band and the South Aberdeenshire Big Band. Some of those also performed in high profile charity events as well as Music Centre concerts.

The Jazz Programme continued its three-way evaluations for every school visited, the pupil evaluations taking the form of a class activity the following day.

Successful commissions of jazz works were highlights of previous submissions, but unfortunately funding restrictions prevented major commissions in year, though pieces have been written expressly to encourage and enhance improvisational skills among students and IMS staff.

Bolton Music Service employ a jazz specialist who is responsible for the two jazz ensembles – the Bolton Urban Music Project, the junior one, which involves 20 students,

rehearses weekly and performs 6/7 concerts a year; and the Bolton Youth Jazz Orchestra, which involves 22 students, also meets weekly and performs a similar number of concerts a year. The same jazz specialist arranges the music for both ensembles and leads a team of four other Music Service staff.

East Renfrewshire are a very small (school population 16,000) education authority, and in common with most music services, the IMS is having to cope with funding restrictions. Nevertheless, the foundations already laid for jazz, and improvisation in particular, continue to be built on. We were struck immediately by the impressive statistic that out of a small pool of 13 (FTE) instrumental tutors four have obtained Advanced Diplomas in Jazz from the University of St Andrews. The knowledge, skills and understandings thus gained are passed on to fellow tutors; and of course pupils and students benefit in turn. The ubiquitous (in Scotland, at any rate!) Richard Ingham runs spectacularly successful improvisation days for instrumental instructors as well as introducing tutors and students to consumer friendly material on which to base improvisation. Those numbers and exercises now constitute a library resource for staff and students. A large proportion of tutors use music technology in all their lessons. For example, backing tracks, using lap-tops or MP3 players, are easily provided, so for the students, lessons come to take the form of a real session.

Weekly meetings of the two Authority-wide jazz big bands have been maintained. Drawing upon students from all seven secondary schools and senior pupils from many primary schools, both junior and senior bands are very much in demand for performances at civic events and elsewhere in a variety of out-of-school settings from theatres, hotels, halls, supermarkets to windy parks. From that pool of young talent a new seven piece “senior jazz combo” has been formed which also meets weekly at the music centre. The emphasis is on improvisation and they are now performing in venues less suitable for the big bands. The icing on the cake for IMS and their students must have been the full day of workshops and performances led by Brass Jaw.

And finally, we note the important contribution to the IMS made by the Friends of East Renfrewshire Music, a group of parents who fund-raise throughout the year. Without their support many musical activities would not take place.

The very rural **East Riding** have a valid claim to fame: against all the national trends the Authority have contributed £750,000 to provide the Music Service with a “state of the art” music centre. Service staff include several jazz specialists. The East Riding Youth Jazz Orchestra (ERJYO) participate in regular workshops, some of which are conducted by experienced and nationally recognised musicians, such as Mark Basseby. The ERYJO through its active members committee has raised funds for new equipment, including a CD library, loan-free to members. The Music Service has previously provided CPD to staff specifically to encourage the adoption of improvisation in all spheres of instrumental learning. It is unclear whether this practice is being continued; we hope it is!

Gloucestershire Music's (GM) commitment to jazz education includes a Jazz Centre which operates on a weekly basis, provides a range of activities and is home to the Gloucestershire Youth Orchestra (GYJO). The GYJO is part of a structured approach to developing jazz expertise. According to the website every member of GYJO can improvise. If that still obtains it's a genuine feather in GM's cap! GM provide regular support for improvisation in general and jazz improvisation in particular for GM staff and classroom music teachers. In addition to the activities provided at the Jazz Centre there are jazz ensembles at two out of the three regional music centres. The Jazz Centre has recently extended its' provision to include younger pupils who wish to follow-up their experience of attending taster sessions for primary school pupils. GM's Summer Music course also includes a jazz element. The submission acknowledges the benefits of a very good working relationship with the Cheltenham Jazz Festival and local jazz musicians. GM also has an adult programme which includes opportunities for good amateur musicians to rehearse and perform in the Colwell Arts Jazz Ensemble.

Kirklees look to the independent Kirklees Music School (KMS) to make the usual music service provision. Less usual is the sheer volume of jazz ensemble activity in Kirklees. Thus there are three music centre big bands, two swing bands, Huddersfield Music Centre Junior Jazz, Dewsbury Music Centre Blues & Riffs, Shelley Music Centre Jazz Collective & Adult Swing Band, Cleckheaton Music Centre Little Big Band and the Kirklees Youth Jazz Orchestra (KYJO); and jazz ensembles in the middle and high schools that are supported by KMS staff. KYJO draw on the cream of the most successful music centre groups, and members are given extensive opportunities to develop their improvisation skills. School pupils and students are able to hear live jazz performances at the Royal Northern College of Music and Huddersfield University, and there are discounted ticket schemes to local venues. Of particular interest is a partnership with the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival involving a Summer Course "Exploring Improvisation with the National Youth Jazz Collective and the South Asian Music Youth Orchestra. The course comprises rehearsals, master classes and workshops focusing on improvisation within the jazz and Indian traditions. Another fruitful relationship has been forged between the Marsden Jazz Festival and one of the music centres.

A perennial school music problem is the transition from year six to year seven. Included in **Lincolnshire's** strategies for addressing this is the rolling out of a Key Stage 3 Wider Opportunities Programme to three secondary schools and, within this, the provision of a Sound Start Jazz Programme "to engage secondary whole class tuition". We are pleased to note that this is proving to be successful. And in that same Wider Opportunities context, the locally commissioned piece to be used as a starting point for composition for whole classes, which was referred to in our report last year, has now been publicly

performed by 500 pupils and supported by the Lincolnshire Youth Jazz Orchestra “to provide the complexity and depth that was missing in a beginner level score”.

The main thrust of Lincolnshire’s submission centres on the Youth Jazz & Rock Academy (JARA) which continues to flourish by providing for young people in the age range 14-19 to come together over six rehearsal days to form four ensembles – a jazz orchestra, a funk/fusion group, an r&b group and a contemporary rock group. All trumpets, trombones and saxophone players play primarily in the jazz orchestra and then make up horn sections as required for the other groups. Peer mentors between 18-21, currently attending music conservatoires across the country, create a valuable link with higher education standards and practice. Academy tutorial staff includes several contemporary professional jazz musicians who also deliver workshops across the county.

Curriculum development training to facilitate the teaching of jazz in the Wider Opportunities scheme continued to be developed by Lincolnshire Music Service (LMS) staff. And within the INSET and CPD structure generally - and especially for non-specialist teachers/tutors – the contemporary strand to develop a measure of jazz expertise has been further developed.

The Youth Jazz & Rock Academy live recordings were again used for students’ GCSE and A level assessment. And students’ arrangements and compositions continued to be showcased in performance.

Five per cent of **Manchester** Music Service (MMS) instrumental tutors have taken ABRSM jazz courses. Thirteen per cent have practical professional jazz experience and include jazz styles and improvisation in their teaching sessions. While the submission makes reference to dedicated jazz ensembles, no details are provided as to the number, and there appears not to be any authority-wide jazz ensembles (but we are pleased to see that MMS is supporting more high schools with big band work, so perhaps it’s only a matter of time). Apparently, other ensembles use jazz repertoire. We are surprised not to see any reference to an association with the prestigious, City Council supported Manchester Jazz Festival.

Oxfordshire Music Service employ a very experienced and highly qualified director of the County’s youth big bands, who also leads jazz developments for the Service. There are at least three other experienced jazz specialists. Jazz ensemble activity continues to be prodigious with weekly rehearsals of the Oxfordshire Senior Schools Big Band I, Senior Schools Big Band II, Oxfordshire County Youth Big Band, Oxfordshire Youth Jazz Combo, Marlborough School Jazz Band, Abingdon Music School Big Band and the South Oxford Area Big Band; and two big band workshops a year. Every big band concert at the Centre for Music is recorded and used by students for A level and GCSE purposes. Jazz is part of Saturday morning music schools’ provision in three areas. The prize-winning Jazz Combo performed in the Oxford Jazz Festival following which they were interviewed by BBC Radio 3.

Perth & Kinross Eight pupils per square mile illustrates how thinly populated is this very large authority. The Instrumental Music Service (IMS) employs nine highly qualified jazz musicians to deliver jazz and improvisation as part of music lessons supported by international and nationally renowned jazz musicians, such as Nana Vasconcelos, Malcolm Edmonstone and Andrew Bain. Jazz INSET is provided in-house and through a close working relationship with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Scotland (NYJOS). The Perth & Kinross Big Band performs at many local and corporate events. The PYO Jazz Band attended advanced NYJOS workshops and undertook a short tour of Germany.

Southampton

We always welcome evidence of jazz actually being included in the curriculum of schools, so it was especially satisfying to note the Southampton Music Services' (SMS) involvement in the pilot of a new "Introduction to Jazz" interactive workshop for Key Stage 2 pupils. This was a partnership with school music co-ordinators to ensure that workshop content supported delivery of the National Curriculum.

The leader of the Southampton Youth Jazz Orchestra (SYJO) has developed teaching resources aimed at helping students obtain places at conservatoires. The high number of ex-SYJO players attending conservatoires is testament to their success. Workshops and collaborative events throughout the year included master classes by Soweto Kinch, Kenny Wheeler and Courtney Pine.

The SMS commitment to jazz education manifests most strongly in performance, notably through the highly successful SYJO and the Southampton Jazz Workshop (SJW). Their concert programme has introduced young people to a range of jazz styles and performance venues. Repertoire is diverse, eg from Gil Evans and Ellington to contemporary British composers such as Julian Arguelles; and ensemble members are encouraged to compose, indeed one such wrote an original work for SYJO to perform publicly, which featured Denys Baptiste.

Partnership working with Portsmouth and Hampshire is another praiseworthy feature of SMS's policy and practice. A particularly valuable example of that was a successful bid for "Find Your Talent" funding, as a result of which 76 trombonists participated in a weekend of workshops and performances with master classes by Bones Apart and the lead trombonist from the BBC Big Band. We hope the UK jazz community, still desperately short of trombonists, is appropriately grateful!

Tower Hamlets Arts & Music Education Service (THAMES) is very probably unique in England in having 77 per cent of the school population speaking English as a second language and 51 per cent registered for free school meals. Nonetheless, starting from scratch in 2006 the Service has grown seventeenfold with pupil numbers. Highlights of the year for jazz education included the Wigmore Hall Jazz Project. Led by Richard Michael, Tine May and two other jazz professionals, this involved Key Stage 3 pupils from five secondary schools attending a workshop exploring the building blocks of jazz

improvisation followed by a dedicated KS 3 concert with a number of pupils performing on stage at the Wigmore Hall. The project was supported by INSET for teachers as well as interactive resources. THAMES identified jazz, world music and improvisation as a key strand for development and turned to Serious and the Guildhall School of Music & Drama (GSMD) as key partners in the delivery of this work. Two joint projects with Serious and the GSMD were featured in the London Jazz Festival. THAMES staff includes a panel of nine teachers who have jazz qualifications. The Saturday Music Centre has introduced several jazz/fusion ensembles and some Centre students have attended improvisation workshops provided by the GSMD.

The good news from **Wigan** is that in future the Music Service (WMS) will have full responsibility for instrumental and curriculum music support. The not so good news is that Dr Ian Darrington, the indefatigable Director of the Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra (one of the finest youth jazz orchestras in the UK) and European representative for the International Association of Jazz Education, has retired. We welcome this opportunity to pay tribute to his outstanding achievements – something the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group did earlier this year with its Services to Jazz Education Award. The vital bread and butter activities in year included weekly rehearsals of WYJO, the Wigan Schools Swing Band and Wigan Youth Big Band – 80 students participating; the aforementioned ensembles taking part in improvisation and technique workshops lead by three world class jazz musicians and performed at international jazz festivals; eight education group performances at Wigan Jazz Club; and consolidation of the partnership with the Wigan International Jazz Festival with free entry to selected concerts for Music Service students and Music Service promotion of those events.

Devon's three Authority-wide youth jazz orchestras (Devon Youth Jazz Orchestras I,II & III) continued to flourish with high levels of recruitment. New members benefited from an integrated improvisation programme which provided experience of soloing within the big band context. The programme's emphasis on aural learning was further developed in demanding residential training given by Exeter School of Samba. As has become the custom, several members of DYJO I departed to continue their jazz education at conservatoires and other F/HE institutions.

We are especially pleased to note that the elite groups drawn from DYJO I, the two Jazz Ambassador ensembles, continue to excite interest and involvement among primary and special school pupils and indeed that there are now plans to involve the Ambassadors at two music centre hubs to demonstrate, enthuse and lead training sessions as precursors to full DYJO participation. As a standard part of their seasonal programme the DYJOs perform in many of Devon's school Local Learning Communities out of which partnerships with schools are formed. For progression purposes, monitoring and evaluation of all the groups is undertaken. That monitoring embraces wider concerns, eg the geographical reach of DYJO III, the most junior jazz ensemble, was found to be insufficiently wide and steps are being taken to remedy that. Meantime, DYJO's I & II perform at a variety of shows and festivals throughout the year.

The Jazz Explosion programme continued with workshops for Key Stage 2 pupils, with customised teaching materials and lesson plans published in advance on the Devon Music Service (DMS) website. The programme was targetted at clusters of primary schools around central community colleges in Devon.

No appearance at the Montreux Jazz Festival this year, but they are planning to go again in 2012 ! We pay tribute to the DMS staff who continue to ensure that Devon leads the UK so far as LEA jazz education is concerned.

Conclusion

We pay tribute to all the above-mentioned authorities for their commitment to music education and jazz in particular. We are pleased to award Diplomas to Aberdeenshire, East Renfrewshire, Lincolnshire and Southampton; and for the third year running, a Diploma of Special Merit to Devon together with a special trophy donated by Paritor Ltd, sponsors of the NMC scheme, in recognition of the fact that Devon have won five Diplomas on the trot, three of them “of Special Merit”!

IKW/ 22 October 2011