



Music Education Conference at Bath Spa University - 11th July 2007

“Everyone involved in music education should work together to provide the framework and focus needed to deliver a universal education offer to all children, from early years onwards, where they can take an active part in high-quality music making”

Central recommendation of the Music Manifesto Report 2006

Over 100 people attended a one day regional music education conference held at Bath Spa University. Apart from the colleagues in the surrounding area, delegates arrived from as far a field as London, Taunton and Tonypanydy (across the Severn in Wales!).

Teachers at all Key Stages, Teaching Assistants, instrumental teachers and advisory staff, joined together to have a highly successful day of learning, sharing and up-dating their knowledge and skills in music education, with a view to delivering quality music education in schools and local communities. Most colleagues completed evaluations forms and a word which stood out in many was ‘inspiring’ Most of the 13 different workshops were designed to be practical, and fully inclusive of all levels of ability.

Workshops

Delegates were able to choose three one hour workshops held at various sites around the university. Many of the Workshop leaders were praised for their high quality content and their enthusiastic delivery.

‘I feel inspired to start up a percussion group’

‘I am really inspired from what I have learned.’

‘Enthusiastic and passionate workshop leaders’

‘A very enjoyable day with a good variety of workshops’

Gamelan, (Andy Warn) Rhythms Around the World, (Andy Gleadhill) Ocarinas, (David Liggins), Exploring Improvisation (Nick Sorrenson), Singing in a Aural Tradition (Tina Brooks), I’m gonna sing (Kirsten Graham AST), Rhythms from Around the World (Andy Gleadhill) Audacity (Sven Rees AST & Simon Taylor AST), GarageBand (Ben England - Leading Teacher) Musical Futures (Ian Burton), Sibelius software (Mike Ennis) and the world famous Stomp!

Apart from asking workshop leaders from the local areas and further a field, we were keen to include AST and Leading Teachers in the conference who delivered one workshop and then were able to join in the rest of the day as delegates.



Keynote speakers were Dick Hallam (Music Adviser to the DfES) and Ian Burton (Music Development Manager for Nottingham & 'Musical Futures') who inspired with their visions and honest speeches about music education today and the future. To the amusement of the audience, Ian started his speech teaching us an African song to the accompaniment of a djembe.

'Two very inspiring speakers – thank you!'



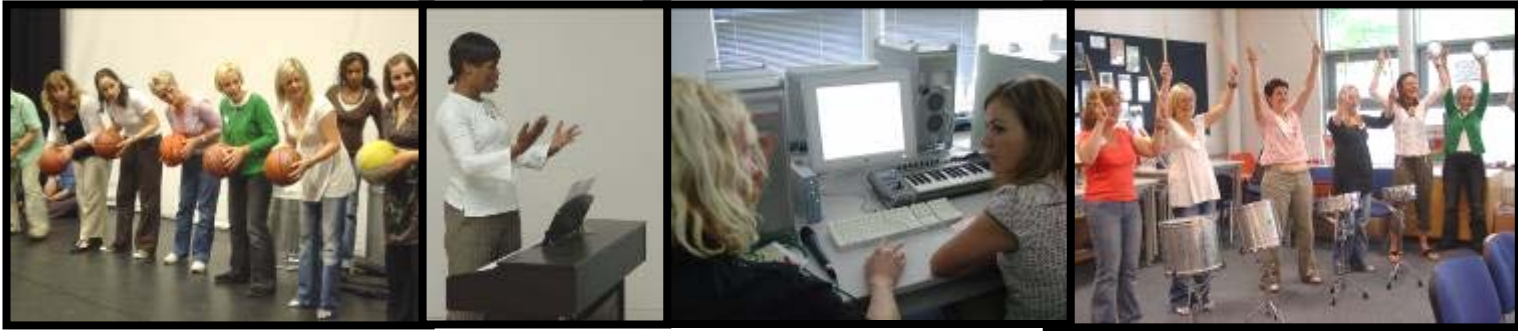
Delegates were able to try out new ideas and experiment – some were taken out of their 'comfort zone' and found that they could achieve things they had not expected. Co-ordination skills and active physical 'stomping' is not for the shy! Water bottles, basketballs, tubes, dustbins – music?!

One delegate expressed her delight at being able to play an instrument (the ocarina) competently in one hour, having never played one before and was keen to try back in school.



'Very hands on and loads of practical ideas to take back to the classroom'





Helping to make the day successful were the facilities of Bath Spa University and the staff behind the scenes. Apart from an initial panic when some tree surgeons arrived at 9.00am to remove a tree (which they managed in 20 mins!) the whole day went very smoothly. Time was given for delegates to 'work, rest and play'. Colleagues were able to reflect, discuss and network. An exhibition and trade stands were there for resources and ideas.

'workshops well sign-posted'

'An absolutely FANTASTIC day! Thoroughly enjoyed the workshops'

'Resources and materials on display are a good idea'

'A good forum for learning and connecting with people'



'We're not used to such fab lunches – almost fell asleep in pm!!'

'met lots of interesting people'



The day would not have been complete without young people making music. Delegates were serenaded during registration on the violin and flute by two university students starting their PGCE in September.



‘Great day brilliantly organised. Lovely aspects to the day – duet at start, children at lunch. Thank you’

Pupils from St Mary’s Primary School in Timsbury, Bath provided a delightful collage of music, entertaining us with their singing, and Samba Band during lunch time. The sun shone and it felt very Mediterranean soaking up the sun and music. As can be seen from the photographs, the children had a great time and were an asset to the whole day.



‘Good to see young musicians!’



Was really impressed with the excitement and vibe of the day





The day finished with a plenary from Martin Flatman who talked about the changes in store for the AST/ET programmes from September. It was left to Dylan Gwyer-Roberts (Bath Spa Secondary PGCE Tutor) to close the conference and thank everyone for their contributions and support.



“All music educators have a right to more support and greater access to regular high-quality professional development. They must be able to refine and extend their skills, engage with the changes in music learning and maintain their own musical performance.”

Music Manifesto Report Page 76 The workforce for music education

This initial regional conference has made a start in providing support and access to high quality professional development. Without committed financial backing, or previous experience of running such an event, it was a risky venture. But the feedback has shown that there has been a considerable latent demand and delegates have suggested future workshops and are already expressing their interest for next year.

Thanks are due to the sponsors – Trinity Guildhall, John Packers (Taunton) and Rock School who kindly supported some of the workshops and provided us with the delegate packs and the essential carrier bag!

The next regional music conference will take place at Bath Spa University on

Friday 11th July 2008

Details will be available in the Autumn term of 2007 on various web sites including the Bath Spa University site.

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As a ‘slightly’ weary music co-ordinator, today has been a breath of fresh air, reminding me exactly why I love music and why we must pass it onto children.

