A RESPONSE FROM SOUND AND MUSIC
30 March 2012

One would expect the merger of four significant organisations to be complicated and in its first three years Sound and Music recognises that it has not fully achieved the leadership role the new music sector has needed and deserves. We also recognise that there is a great deal of work to do going forward and want to work with composers and musicians to achieve this.

However there is also a need to be factually accurate about the work that Sound and Music has achieved and in the context of this response, in particular the work that it has delivered with the contemporary classical music sector – its composers and musicians.

In the past three years Sound and Music has taken significant strides in developing work for and with composers, particularly through key programmes and initiatives including Embedded, the Artist Toolkit, a Minute of Listening, and the Sound and Music Summer School. Key activities have included:

- With intensive **Embedded** residencies across a diverse range of institutions—BCMG, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, no.w.here, Pitt Rivers/OCM, and Apartment House — Sound and Music has supported over a dozen emerging composers with bespoke and intensive opportunities to develop new work supported by mentors such as David Lang, Peter Wiegold, Oliver Knussen and David Horne. In the future Sound and Music will promote stronger profiles for these composers, through performances and digital profile and will engage intensively with a further 12 composers each year.
- The **Sound and Music Summer School** at the Purcell School reaches 75 young composers aged 14-19 with an inspiring and intensive week full of collaboration, learning, creativity and the opportunity to work with composers and musicians from a wide variety of musical traditions, from classical and jazz to world and new media with tutors such as David Horne, Kerry Andrew, Alison Cox, Kuljit Bhamra and Aidan Goetzee.
- The **Artist Toolkit** was created as a practical base for professional development advice, relevant to composers, available free of charge on-line. Over 20,000 people have accessed the Artist Toolkit since October 2010 and we are now rolling out the philosophy of this Toolkit through peer learning groups in events such as 'Counting In'. A recent example happened in the Barbican during the Jonathan Harvey Total Immersion weekend in which 100 early-career composers participated. A half-day of discussions exploring career models in the world of modern composition, brought together industry figures for a panel discussion and practical presentations.
- A **Minute of Listening** is a creative learning project through which Sound and Music aims to enable every child in the country to gain access to a huge diversity of music and sounds, including new notated music. To date, 20,000 children have participated and a survey of 700 teachers in 70 schools gave an overwhelmingly positive response, contributing to significant national press attention of why children are more receptive to contemporary classical music: http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2012/mar/25/children-difficult-music

These are positive programmes that will fulfil their potential over the coming months and years. We fully recognise that there is a need to broaden the reach through consultation and the delay in putting in place this consultation is simply an issue of timing in an organisation going through significant change.

In terms of this context, Sound and Music is currently adapting to a 42% reduction of its Arts Council Grant (March 2011). As a result Sound and Music has undertaken a significant organisational and operational review, which has included changes of leadership at both executive and board levels,

and a major staff restructure. Recruitment of a new team is still in progress with the appointment of a new Chief Executive able to lead the organisation to its full potential, the current main priority of the Board. This restructure has been carried out in the full knowledge that there is a needed and vital complementary role for Sound and Music to play in, and with, all stakeholders across the sector.

The document *A New Direction* lays out the framework of how Sound and Music will work with, and consult, the wider sector. It was designed to enable Sound and Music to develop an encompassing programme and support the methodology of operation. Its content will be determined by a new leadership team. However, in reference to the contemporary classical music sector, it drew heavily on the recommendations of the Holst report including raising the "visibility and promotional cachet to a cohort of emerging composers"; giving "a hand up to the next generation" through workshops for "emerging composers and performers"; finding a new home for the British Music Collection (now at Huddersfield University); "a central, information-rich website", and "active participation in international new music networks". Plans also include showcasing work from the Higher Education sector; a three year strategic partnership with New York's MATA festival for emerging composers with dedicated funds for commissioning and premieres of British Composers in the USA; and a New Music platforms scheme providing 10 composers with workshops, opportunities and performances.

A new and detailed business plan will follow and consultation will be needed to maximise the impact of a renewed Sound and Music. A new CEO and team will take responsibility for this development and the first priority they will undertake will be full engagement with the composers, musicians and artists that the organisation should represent. It is vital from the Board's perspective that this consultation takes place when a new leadership team is in place, not during a transitional phase, and meaningful consultation will be the first priority of this newly mandated team.

As Trustees we are absolutely committed to ensuring a positive future for Sound and Music. We look forward once the new team is in place to seeing Sound and Music provide the role it needs to, and to provoking meaningful debate about the sector's needs in consultation with key funders such as Arts Council England.

Signed:
The Trustee Board of Sound and Music: Michelle Wright, Interim Chair, David Aspinall, Simon Emmerson, Cliff Fluet Christopher Fox, and Debra King

Further information:

Sound and Music:

- Has secured the future of the BMIC score and recording collection through a new partnership with Huddersfield University, and the British Music Collection is now housed in a purpose-built area in the University's music library
- Provides 'view on-line' and download access to more than 2,500 scores through the Collection area of the website
- Remains a member of International Association of Music Information Centres (IAMIC) on the same terms. Sound and Music's repositioning as an organisation working internationally with music across all genres places it in a stronger position to represent the UK than previously
- Has revived the British Section active membership of ISCM and is coordinating the call for works for the ISCM World Music Days Festival in 2013, taking place in Vienna and Bratislava
- Provided substantial financial support for Thomas Adès/London Sinfonietta 2011 tour of *In Seven Days.*
- Facilitated the UK premiere of Richard Barrett's *Construction*

Feedback on Sound and Music work to date:

1. Quotes from a Minute of Listening

"The children were very engaged by the sounds they heard and it often sparked whole class discussion and some children wanted to find out more about certain countries/people. Some of the ideas in my class were fantastic and very imaginative! This helped some of the quieter children express themselves and feel free to."

"Children's concentration levels have gone up and had an impact on behaviour straight after lunch because it cuts out the noise. Children are really thinking about music and where the sound comes from. Children are looking forward to it every morning."

"To have dedicated time to simply listen gave children the opportunity to focus on the complexities of some of the sound clips. Also, the discussion that arose, particularly when the children had differences of opinion with regards to the emotions provoked by the sounds, were very valuable."

2. **Feedback from Embedded**

"There's a great mix, and just the right dose, between the composing part, working with musicians, observing the orchestra in rehearsal and concert, observing learning projects (and eventually taking part), rehearsals and concerts of own work, contact with mentors, and SAM's professional embedded days. The structure seems to be progressing organically."

"Finally, through my year long residency as ... apprentice composer in residence I have had many opportunities that I otherwise could have only dreamed of; including attending many informative rehearsals, meeting numerous notable composers, conductors and musicians, travelling to New York to work with one of my most respected composers."

"This scheme is a fantastic opportunity for the orchestra to spend some quality time working closely...throughout the year in a variety of contexts, building a much deeper relationship than a straight forward commission process. It's also a fantastic opportunity for the audience to gain a closer understanding and appreciation of contemporary composition".

3. **The Sound and Music Summer School**

“This course has changed my life”

“At the beginning I thought: How am I going to compose a whole piece in a week? At the end I thought: How did I compose a whole piece in a week!”

“It was an amazing week. I loved meeting people with the same interests as me.”