

MAY 2022



## MEC NEWS

### Marc Jaffrey OBE remembers Angela Ruggles

I worked with Angela when I was the Music Manifesto Champion back in the 00's. She was my principal civil servant contact when I was an independent advisor to the Department of Education (and DCMS). She, Dick Hallam and I worked closely together over 3-4 years.

I know from that work, and the subsequent engagements she had with music, that the world of music education among others, owe Angela a huge debt. When I worked with her, she was the consummate professional civil servant and early on, was often justifiably and amusingly strict with me as I attempted to push the boundaries to drive change. But I soon realised she was quietly giving me a masterclass (alongside Dick Hallam) on how to push the government system effectively. If she was being resistant, she was basically telling me, 'if I'm not convinced, this tactic will never fly with those further up the food chain'. As our respect and trust grew, she began to give me greater insight to her own huge motivation, passion and belief in the power of music. And thrillingly, given her role, her belief in making change in a conservative (small c) system. Over time her role as gatekeeper became to me at least, more and more like co-conspirator, though never crossing any professional civil servant boundaries. She rightly took huge pride in her professionalism, even if the system sometimes frustrated her enormously.

Many of the successes of the Music Manifesto and what came after (notably Darren's recommendations) – effective cross departmental and sector leadership, Sing Up, systems change, recommendations and 320+ million of money – had Angela's DNA in it.

And I owe Angela a very personal debt of gratitude for pulling together (with the Permanent Secretary and I suspect Dick) the first ever Department for Education recommendation to the Honours Committee for my Honour. Every time I see those 3 letters, I think and thank Angela. Something I'm pleased I got to say to her at the time.

She will be missed. For John, family, and close friends, I hope her many achievements and passions provide some solace in the grief of her loss. Cheers Angela, go well on your journey, the music you can hear is playing for you.

### A New Ambition for Music Education in England - Phil Castang, Chair of the Music Education Council

With the imminent launch of the refreshed NPME, due between now and the end of term, many working in music education have been reflecting on their hopes and expectations. What follows is a speech made by MEC's chair Phil Castang at the APPG for Music Education, 1 March 2022.

I often meet colleagues from across the music education sector who tell me how wonderful music education used to be in the old days. There is a view that there was a golden time for music education. Depending on who you speak to it was the 70s or 80s, 90s etc... I grew up in the 70s (in primary school) and 80s (in secondary school). I went to good schools and had access to instrumental music lessons, which I hated and curriculum music, which I hated. It was not a golden time for me, and it was not a golden time for many of my friends who managed to carve out professional careers as musicians, despite, not because of the music education they had access to. It is rather frustrating that I learnt nothing about music at school because, I loved music and it would eventually become my career.

For every person I meet who tells me how lucky young people were back in the day, I meet 3 people who tell me that they weren't musical and didn't have any talent for it. For many young people, the German composers they were asked to take an interest in, were too alien from their own interests. And, if you happened to be disabled, the best you could hope for was to have someone shake a tambourine in your face. Surely all this suggests there were plenty of issues with the golden days of music education. So, whilst I recognise there were good things about music education in the past, I don't think it is helpful to hark back to the good old days, because they weren't good for everyone.

I have no doubt that my own experiences of music education are why I have spent much of my career advocating for inclusion in music education.

The current National Plan for Music Education which I, along with 119 other hubs have been implementing since it was launched in 2012, promised much and delivered, well, a mixed report.

Let's remind ourselves of the vision, which was to enable children from all backgrounds and every part of England to have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument; to make music with others; to learn to sing; and to have the opportunity to progress to the next level of excellence.

So why is it a mixed report? Well, you could argue, the world in which the plan was intended changed quite soon after it was launched. Local authorities went tight, school education narrowed its focus, and the world went digital. You could also argue that in order for any plan to succeed, those involved in its delivery need to be held properly accountable and that the accountability wasn't really thought through as there were no rules or laws demanding its compliance.

You could argue that when the NPME referred to "all children", many in the music education sector understood this to mean "all children that are easy to reach and can afford to take part".

Finally, you could argue that there wasn't enough money behind the NPME and as a result the investment ended up being spread too thinly with just a few pounds spent on every child.

Now, I accept all of these reasons had an impact on the effectiveness of the NPME, but this didn't stop high quality innovative music education being provided by many music education hubs and schools through partnerships with orchestras and conservatoires and concert halls and community music organisations.

At the heart of the plan was the idea of partnership. It was Aristotle, who said "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". Where this philosophy was carried out effectively, we see the greatest impact. We see the most expansive opportunities for children and young people, we see the strongest and most sustainable programmes. We see musical inclusion.

I believe 'collective impact' sits at the heart of an effective strategy for the delivery of music education in England. If we can harness and channel the totality of the current investment in music education, galvanising resources from MEHs, National Youth Music Organisations, CATs, National Foundation for Youth Music funded organisations, NPO funded organisations, schools, music charities, music industry, trusts and foundations, etc... etc... we might truly create a golden age for music education.

So, *my first hope* for the revised National Plan for Music Education is that the role of partnerships is restated and amplified.

After all, a sector that was built on the idea of being in concert and ensemble should know how to play together.

*My second hope* for the revised National Plan for Music Education is largely dependent on effective partnerships. Many children, particularly those, where there is a perception that they are hard to reach or expensive to provide for, have traditionally missed out on music. We must not let this happen again which is why inclusion must be hard-wired into the revised plan from the very beginning and not a foot note that is open to interpretation. No child living in difficult circumstances should forgo a music lesson because all the many organisations providing musical opportunities can't agree who's going to pay.

Hubs and schools need deeper more mutually reinforcing relationships, building on each other's strengths and budgets. But they can't do everything which is why partnerships with other kinds of organisations are critical to ensuring all children, means all children. Organisations that have particular expertise or are culturally better placed to reach different communities will make the difference.

*Finally*, perhaps an unintended consequence of the first National Plan for Music Education was the dismantling of the visiting music teacher career path and a loss of teacher pay and conditions for many experienced peripatetic music teachers. This happened because approximately 40% of the investment in traditional music services was lost in the switch from service to hub and large numbers of the workforce were made to go freelance or to accept zero hours (gig economy) style employment conditions. Whilst fixing this is beyond the scope of a refreshed National Plan for Music Education it is important that the whole sector takes this moment to get behind efforts to establish a best practice charter that recognises and promotes a better, more supportive set of working conditions for the many exceptional instrumental and singing music teachers, without whom, there would be no music lessons at all. In my capacity as chair of the Music Education Council I have spoken to many colleagues, and everyone seems in agreement that the sector needs to unite behind efforts to improve matters for visiting music teachers and that now is the time to do this.

*In conclusion*, ensuring an excellent relationship between music education hubs and schools is of vital importance to the success of the revised plan. We must acknowledge the many schools across England, with strong and confident music departments and the important role these schools can make to the 'whole' and in addition to this, we must acknowledge the many other important organisations that complete the music education ecosystem.

I never understood the NPME as being the entirety of what hubs must do, I interpreted the NPME as being a foundation on which to build the whole, local music ecosystem. Ultimately, I hope that whatever makes the cut in the refreshed plan, everyone working in music education will take this opportunity to unite together to build an ambitious, partnership driven, inclusive programme for all young people.

### MEC is seeking a new Treasurer and a new Secretary

The Music Education Council is seeking a new treasurer and a new secretary. It's an exciting time to be at MEC. With the imminent launch of the revised NPME there is significant work to be done. Indeed, across the whole of the UK changes in music education are occurring, so there's never been a more important time to support the music education sector. Get involved!

*To apply for the role of Treasurer or Secretary, please complete one of the following online application forms:*

· [Secretary - Application Form](#)

· [Treasurer - Application Form](#)

*Full role descriptions for the two roles are available by clicking on the following links:*

· [Secretary - Role Description](#)

· [Treasurer - Role Description](#)

### Ofqual survey

Ofqual has published two surveys to seek feedback from students, teachers, tutors, and home-educators on some of the adaptations to exam arrangements in summer 2022. They are interested in views about how these adaptations are working in practice from those who are using them.

The online surveys take 10 to 15 minute to complete and will be open until 11.59pm on Sunday 15 May 2022. They can be accessed via the following links:

· [Survey for teachers, tutors, and home-educators: https://ofqual.citizenspace.com/public/exams-2022-teacher-survey-pre-exam/](https://ofqual.citizenspace.com/public/exams-2022-teacher-survey-pre-exam/)

· [Survey for students: https://ofqual.citizenspace.com/public/arrangements-2022-student-survey/](https://ofqual.citizenspace.com/public/arrangements-2022-student-survey/)

### MEC Summer Seminar

The whole of the music education sector in England is waiting for the launch of the revised National Plan for Music Education. While we wait, MEC is reflecting on how we can be most useful. This also means we are not announcing the date for our summer seminar just yet. There are specific topics of debate that never seem to go away; how music education is funded, and teacher pay and conditions are just two of these. We would welcome your thoughts on what you would like us to cover in the coming months. We would also welcome news, opinion pieces and research so do get in contact.

Hopefully, the whole sector will join together to explore the implications of the revised NPME. Get in contact with your suggestions [phil.castang@MEC.org.uk](mailto:phil.castang@MEC.org.uk)

### MEC Reminders

**E-mails – check your JUNK MAIL!** Unfortunately it seems that some members inboxes don't like the [members@mec.org.uk](mailto:members@mec.org.uk) address, or the mailing service we are now using. Please check your junk mail folders and mark MEC as a trusted sender – don't fall into the trap of missing important news.

**Member Directory** - If you are a MEC Member please join our **members directory**. Just log into our members website, go to **My Account** then Contact Details. You will then see the section at the bottom of the page to be hidden or appear in our directories, click on that section and a popup box will open so you can change your preferences.

### Membership

Notification of membership renewal went out to all members in January.

The Music Education Council exists to ask the difficult questions. Your membership and active participation in MEC will help us set the agenda and influence the pace of change we need across all areas of music education.

If you have not yet renewed, please note that membership is now on a rolling basis – so if you join during September, your membership will run to September 2022. It is also possible for organisations to pay by monthly instalments – just contact us to ask for an arrangement.

[Go to our renewals page here --->](#)

### CONTACT US

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### IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



[www.musiqgroup.co.uk](http://www.musiqgroup.co.uk)

The Musiq Group provides practical and administrative support to the Trustees of the Music Education Council

### Remember:

- News you want to share with the whole music education sector?  
Contact [admin@mec.org.uk](mailto:admin@mec.org.uk) with MEC News Update Item as the title of your e-mail.
- Contact Chair Phil Castang via [admin@mec.org.uk](mailto:admin@mec.org.uk) to make sure matters that concern or interest you are on her agenda when she meets with key people about music education.

The Music Education Council draws its membership from across the entire music education and music industry sectors. Through its corporate members MEC represents tens of thousands of music educators across the UK. This gives it a unique picture of music education and is why Music Education Council is the umbrella body for all UK organisations connected with music education.