

Discussion of some SRP 2020 Report recommendations

Education and the Recorder

(Pamela Flanagan, Sandra Foxall, Evelyn Nallen, Sheila Richards, Tessa Rolph, Naomi Wellings, Bob Whitmarsh)

Note: This discussion was not structured around the report's recommendations.

Schools – have to buy in music tuition as they generally do not have the expertise or time (note the new music education hubs)

- Schools have to see recorder teaching as a priority or it won't happen
- Individual teachers frequently see it as a low priority and may pull the child out of that music lesson
- Generally limited to lunchhours or after school due to curriculum pressures (but that short time period makes it uneconomic for qualified recorder teachers)
- Very limited opportunities for further recorder opportunities in secondary schools
- Detrimental for children overall in that they may not have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, or continue playing, and are less likely to participate in any musicmaking in the future

Playing the recorder enables people to learn about rhythm, to play and enjoy music in small groups, it is inexpensive, music is available online, a conductor is not needed, and (with time) a high personal standard can be achieved.

Problems:

- There is a smaller pool of young adults who had the opportunity to learn to play the recorder whilst at school
- Teachers don't have to learn the recorder as a standard part of their teacher training (except Scotland / Ireland)
- Initial teaching may rely on general primary teachers with virtually no musical skills
- Attitude of teachers to the instrument (and its general image)
- Teaching in large groups (or even whole classes) does not achieve substantial results and is not value for money in terms of quality.
- Teaching to a higher level can only be achieved in very small groups or by individual tuition
- Competition from other instruments offered to primary age children
- Parents view other instruments as more "useful" than the recorder due to perceived lack of opportunities (ie could lead to a musical career eg orchestral playing)

- Children may be put off instrumental playing in general at a young age if they don't / are unable to make noticeable progress on other instruments due to their lack of maturity (this is less likely with the recorder)
- Recorders don't (can't) play in orchestras
- Lack of role models in the media

Further opportunities for recorder players:

- Recorder groups (SRP and others)
- Competitive festivals
- NYRO

The best musicians move abroad because of the lack of status given to musicians in the UK

ACTIONS

Need to improve the image of the recorder and recorder players:

- Promote the fact that the recorder can be played to a very high standard
- Need images in the media of good recorder players (including 8 year olds playing well)
- Utilise the success of Charlotte Barbour – Condini in the BBC Young Musician competition
- Possible video clips of Charlotte and other good young players on the website
- Initiate a video competition for website, eg feature a video of a good school group each month
- Utilise YouTube to promote the recorder (but must be good quality)

Contact with organisations:

- Letter to the new music education hubs pointing out benefits and potential of playing the recorder (cf Charlotte)
- Letter to music colleges exploring poor status of instrumental education in schools
- Explore and utilise all regional music contacts eg for NYRO use, or to advertise possible annual Blow the Dust off your Recorder branch or regional sessions
- o Music for Everyone (East Midlands – Angela Kay)
- o Cobweb Orchestra (North-East – Andy Jackson / John Hawkes)

- Local (competitive) music festival organisers (via BIFF)

Competitions

- Potential for a competitive consort competition to stimulate continuing interest in playing (NB previous ERTA national competition for consorts cf Barbara Law)
- Potential for a national under-18s competition

Potential lost generation of recorder players

- encourage grandparents to teach their grandchildren