



THE HOLST FOUNDATION

# Provision for new music

A contribution to the debate

June 2011

## Contents

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Terms of reference and methodology</i>	2
<b>2. Composer promotion and support .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Background and history</i>	3
<i>Composer support</i>	4
<i>A hub or meeting place</i>	4
<i>The role of publishers versus 'going it alone'</i>	5
<i>Lobbying and advocacy</i>	5
<b>3. Performances, residencies and workshops .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>spnm Reading Panel and Shortlist</i>	6
<i>Embedded</i>	7
<i>Other residencies and workshops</i>	7
<i>Touring</i>	7
<i>A dedicated performance space</i>	8
<b>4. Repertoire information and access .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<i>Is a library needed?</i>	9
<i>Hard copy scores versus digital resources</i>	9
<i>Internet access</i>	10
<b>5. Participation in international networks .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>International comparisons</i>	11
<b>6. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7. Key findings .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>8. Appendix.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>About the consultation</i>	15
<i>Advisory Panel</i>	15
<i>Consultants</i>	15
<i>Consultees</i>	15

## 1. Introduction

The contemporary music of Britain is a rich and valuable component of her national cultural heritage. As such, it deserves to be nurtured and developed at home and promoted internationally at the highest level. It is a very active field within music, and its leading figures are known and respected worldwide.

Over the past two years or so an informal debate has been taking place among the members of the music community in Britain. This has focused on the decline of provision for emerging and unpublished composers and their access to performers, and there is a strong sense that important supports have been lost.

The present research was commissioned with the aim of making a timely contribution to this debate. It aims to set out some facts in relation to current and past supports for new music and it draws together the views of a broad range of interest groups and organisations. As is to be expected, agreement was not universal, but a number of key findings came through as common threads and several important issues were raised which require further investigation.

To keep the consultation within manageable limits, the research was centred on four areas:

- Composer promotion and support
- Performances, residencies and workshops
- Repertoire information and access
- Participation in international networks.

This report is intended for all who are actively involved in or concerned with new music. We hope it will serve to initiate a public debate between funders, organisations and the music community, with a view to achieving substantive change.

### **Terms of reference and methodology**

While the general terms 'Britain' and 'British music' are used in this text, the territory to which this report relates is primarily that of England. This is for practical reasons. There is considerable activity in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland but funding conditions and local needs are specific to those regions and it is beyond the scope of the research to cover the whole of the United Kingdom.

The research was carried out mainly through extended face-to-face interviews with key individuals: composers, performers, CEOs of major organisations, festival directors, broadcasters, funders, etc. A list of consultees is appended.

Terminology relating to contemporary music is always difficult. There is no single universal definition, so for the purposes of the present report the broad term 'new music' is used to mean 'music written today and at any time in the past 60 years in the classical or art music tradition'. It should be noted that this definition embraces a continuum of compositional styles from notated 'concert music' through improvisatory, electro-acoustic, mixed-media and other genres.

## 2. Composer promotion and support

### Background and history

Music is an industry: an ecology of composers, performers, publishers, record labels, festivals, promoters, venues and other interdependent elements. In order for new music to flourish, it is essential that what has been termed the 'dynamic triangle' of composer, performer and audience is healthy. The interdependence of this relationship must be recognised and each component nurtured. In most countries where there is a developed new music scene there is a range of interlinked supports to ensure that this 'dynamic triangle' functions as it should. Thus emerging composers and performers are supported to enter the profession, ensuring constant renewal; the work of established composers is publicised and focussed towards potential performers and programmers; and audiences are developed and enabled to engage with new music on various different levels. Many important service and support functions are unglamorous and painstaking, but they are necessary nonetheless.

While the nature of these supports may vary from country to country according to cultural, political and economic imperatives, the brief to support the new music sector is generally assigned to the national Music Information Centre (MIC). There are some 40 member-organisations around the world within the [International Association of Music Information Centres](#) (IAMIC). These provide a range of supports and services which enable composers and performers to carry out their work and engage successfully with audiences. Although performing groups, festivals and other bodies provide many opportunities for composers and performers, they do so first and foremost to fulfill their own mission. A well-functioning Music Information Centre, on the other hand, operates on a *pro bono* basis and, taking a holistic view of the sector, ensures that everything networks together coherently.

In England, the MIC role was formerly filled by the British Music Information Centre (BMIC), while in Scotland and Wales it is still carried out by the [Scottish Music Centre](#) and [Ty Cerdd: Music Centre Wales](#) respectively, both members of IAMIC. At the end of 2007, following protracted negotiations and in the belief that a larger, better funded and more visible organisation would achieve far more than any of the organisations individually, the boards of the British Music Information Centre, the Society for the Promotion of New Music, Sonic Arts Network and the Contemporary Music Network voted for a merger. Between them, these bodies had carried out a range of interlinking support and promotional functions, particularly for emerging composers. The process had been initiated by Arts Council England to bring together a larger consortium of music bodies but by the time of the eventual agreement the four remaining 'founder organisations' (FOs) above agreed to the merger based on a clear understanding that the new agency would embrace the core functions of their respective organisations.

[Sound and Music](#) (SAM) was created to be 'the UK's first national development agency, for sound and music, of international standing'.<sup>1</sup> The stated intention was 'to ensure the organisation would be fit for purpose to sustain the key activities and programmes of the FOs as well as SAM's new programmes and ways of working'.<sup>2</sup> Following a 12-month post-merger transition period, SAM became fully and formally operational as of 1 April 2009 and is currently the major organisation in the new music sector, in receipt of significant public funding. It was referenced in their responses by very many of those consulted in the research.

Other important contributors to the new music sector are the BBC, the major orchestras and new music ensembles, and organisations such as the PRS for Music Foundation and the Royal Philharmonic Society. NMC Recordings is an important contributor to the field of new music, and a number of charitable trusts such as the RVW Trust and the Britten-Pears, Hinrichsen and Holst Foundations are key funders.

---

<sup>1</sup> SAM Full Business Case, version 5.0, p. 4. This is Sound and Music's detailed business plan outlining the future for the new organisation. We are grateful to Sound and Music for making it available for the purposes of this research.

<sup>2</sup> SAM Full Business Case, version 5.0, p. 64.

## Composer support

There were a number of schemes run by the founder organisations which have not transferred to Sound and Music and which, in the absence of any alternative provision, have been identified by consultees for this report as leaving key gaps. One such is the 'Voices' (originally 'New Voices') composer support scheme which was set up by BMIC in 1999. This provided enhanced promotion and public profile for a selected group of some 45 young and mid-generation composers not represented by a publisher or record company. It provided a print, hire and distribution service for scores, parts and recordings, web pages for each composer, and a limited publicity and promotion service. It was made feasible through the staffing and infrastructural supports provided by the BMIC.

Although the original intention was that SAM would continue to run the Voices programme, this has not transpired. The reason for this is alluded to in a brief for research which SAM commissioned on the Voices programme in spring 2011:

'In 2008 BMIC merged to form Sound and Music, a new organisation dedicated to the promotion of new music, experimental music and sound art. With its expanded remit, SAM took the decision that provision of service programmes for individual composers, artists and producers, work that was characteristic of several of SAM's founders, could not be sustained in the new structure and that consequently a future outside of SAM should be found for Voices.'<sup>3</sup>

This reference to Voices as a 'service programme(s) for individual composers' is perhaps the nub of the issue. While the service of providing scores and information may have been very useful for the composers concerned (though not all placed a high value on this aspect) the main benefit within the wider music business was in giving collective visibility and promotional cachet to a cohort of emerging composers. A majority of those consulted for this report stated that a 'Voices type' scheme is very important for unpublished composers, and must be operated by someone. Performers and programmers in particular said that it served as a way of finding out who was up-and-coming, a benchmark of attainment and a filter that they trusted as an indication that someone had a track record and might, for instance, be ready for a higher-level commission. They now find it difficult to maintain awareness of talent coming through, and tend to hear new names in casual conversation with colleagues, which cannot be regarded as satisfactory.

## A hub or meeting place

Composers clearly expressed the need for a range of support services such as scanning, binding and production of scores and parts; advice on contracts and fee negotiation; 'what's on' type information; and an online shop. However there were differing opinions on whether these services should be available to all comers on a subscription basis, or to a selected 'A List' chosen for higher-level support and promotion in a similar way to the Voices scheme.

Composers also indicated their preference for these services to be located in a central hub or meeting place with expert staff to advise them on professional matters. This space would be open to the public, thus raising the profile of new music generally. Few if any of those involved in new music would argue against such a provision and it calls to mind the former role of the British Music Information Centre, and the roles currently carried out by the Scottish Music Centre and Ty Cerdd: Music Centre Wales. It should be noted that the founding brief for Sound and Music included a production facility for composers and performers, as well as a publicly accessible resource centre.<sup>4</sup> These services are not currently being provided.

The view was expressed that a new organisation should be set up offering these services and that it might be self-financing by membership subscription, perhaps with a proportion of royalties from sales and hire of music returned into the scheme, and a part-time administrator. If it is simply a 'print bureau' for composers this might be the case, but experience in other countries indicates that if the service is to gain any visibility or traction, it requires an infrastructure of qualified staff and suitable premises. Subscription and royalty income alone will not cover these costs.

---

<sup>3</sup> SAM: Voices Research Brief, 4 February 2011. We are grateful to Sound and Music for making this document available for the purposes of this research.

<sup>4</sup> SAM Full Business Case, version 5.0, p. 115.

The Music Information Centre model operating internationally has the benefit of providing even-handed support services and promotion to all involved in the sector, together with critical mass and collective visibility, the most important benefit. This means that composers and other artists can focus on their creative work while the staff of the MIC — better fitted to the role — take care of the business side. In the present financial climate, a new organisation would be very difficult to sustain financially, and as a stand-alone operation it would not be able to provide any real profile or effective promotion for the composers concerned. It would also be going over old ground but in changed times, in effect recreating the former BMIC/spnm models but without the recognition and track record established over long years by those bodies. A service like this is unquestionably necessary but to gain any traction it needs to be hosted by a larger, more visible and stable organisation.

### **The role of publishers versus 'going it alone'**

Britain is fortunate in having a number of large international music publishers who collectively represent most of the major composers of today. They carry out the promotional and business-support roles described above and their self-interest (in generating royalty revenue) aligns with the composer's need for commissions, performances and public profile. However the publishing industry is changing rapidly and publishers are of necessity cautious in signing early- and mid-career composers. Going forward, it is likely that fewer emerging composers will be taken on by publishers according to the traditional model.

Many respondents stated that, in today's digital age, composers can and should 'go it alone' with no need for an overarching support organisation to mediate — or perhaps get in the way. Technology provides increasingly important tools for artists and creative networks in all fields of the arts. In music, an individual can readily set up a self-managed web presence with all the necessary information together with downloadable scores and recordings, and self-promote through social networks.

Undoubtedly composers emerging from the conservatoires and universities today are enterprising, energetic and very digitally aware. Composers are, rightly, more entrepreneurial; they know how to use online tools and most have excellent web sites. This is very much to be encouraged; the more proactive a composer is on his or her own behalf, the better. However, no matter how good a composer's own web site may be, unless one already knows their name one cannot search for them in the information jungle of the Internet. While it is nowadays easier for creative artists in all fields to promulgate their work, it is also harder for them to be found in the overwhelming 'noise' of the Internet. It is also vital that composers safeguard their time to devote to their creative work — time to be composers, not promoters.

There is unquestionably therefore a benefit in composers being in some way 'co-located' as a group. This creates critical mass which is important not only on a national, but particularly on an international level. It can be achieved by providing a central web site which functions as the first point of contact on everything to do with new British music, and links together the individual web sites of composers, performers, organisations, and everyone connected with new music. This would be highly visible both nationally and internationally. (See *Section 4: Internet access.*)

### **Lobbying and advocacy**

Some of those consulted for this report expressed the desire for a strong, cohesive voice for the new music sector, which in the current financial and political climate was considered to be important to provide an overview of needs and developments. It should be noted that there is a partnership aspect as much as a confrontational aspect to lobbying and advocacy, i.e. working *with* government on high-level objectives as well as, on other occasions, advocating for change in the face of government policy. In both instances a unified voice is usually the key to real progress.

It was also noted that there is no forum where the new music sector regularly comes together to network and from which such a unified voice might emerge, although initiatives such as the symposia and conferences run by organisations including Third Ear and Orchestras Live make a useful contribution to this networking function.

### 3. Performances, residencies and workshops

For emerging composers there is an important period, usually of some years, between finishing formal studies at postgraduate level in a conservatoire or university, and becoming recognised as a professional composer with an established career and reputation. Even if a composer has not come through this traditional route but has 'emerged' at a more mature age, this is still the stage when hands-on experience of working within the demanding context of professional music-making is vitally important. One respondent described it as 'learning how to *be* a composer'. It is also the period when they must tout their wares and gain attention for their music beyond their immediate circle; the 'make or break' stage when the right performance opportunity, commission or competition win can mean real progress towards lasting success. For emerging performers, it is the stage when, if their interest is sparked in working with new music, it can build a lifetime's commitment to working with their composer peers.

A range of what might be called 'mentoring opportunities' is therefore crucial to fostering both composers and performers as they start their professional lives, enabling them to progress through different levels in accordance with their growing experience, in the process learning to understand one another.

The orchestras and performing groups consulted during this study all expressed the desire to connect in an active and strategic way with new music. All are very committed and regard developing new music not only as a responsibility, but as an important way of renewing their own creative resources. There is a generous willingness to give 'a hand up' to the next generation; in the young musicians with whom they work, they see themselves at the start of their careers.

For emerging composers and performers, the value of workshops and residencies lies in access and time: access to experienced professional musicians and the mentoring opportunities this offers; and time to think, work, refine their skills and reflect on their progress. To quote composer Mira Calix: 'Time with musicians — I don't know who would turn that down.'<sup>5</sup>

#### **spnm Reading Panel and Shortlist**

Many consultees referred to the former spnm Reading Panel and Shortlist, two inter-related opportunities which were for many years offered by spnm prior to its merger into Sound and Music. There was a general feeling that, while these schemes were in need of an overhaul to bring them up to date, they were in essence very useful and 'everyone got their start that way.' Sound and Music has not continued with either scheme although the shortlist was included in its original programme.<sup>6</sup> The reason given by SAM is that it had become too unwieldy to be useful and that the conservatoires are now taking over this function. The latter point was, however, disputed by a number of consultees including composers teaching in conservatoires.

A particular benefit of the reading panel and shortlist was considered to be their independence. They were open to all composers irrespective of age, levels of attainment or whether they had a conventional conservatoire training. All scores were submitted anonymously and received independent feedback from senior composers. If selected for the shortlist and a performance, this was a valuable opportunity for mentoring, exposure and promotion. It was noted that several now well-established composers with an unconventional background had come through this route. Both schemes also provided opportunities for performers, although they were mainly intended to support emerging composers.

For people in the industry, e.g. programmers, broadcasters and others the shortlist functioned, in the same way as the Voices programme, as a benchmark of talent for which there is currently no replacement.

---

<sup>5</sup> London Sinfonietta web site, 'Writing the Future' scheme. <http://www.londonsinfonietta.org.uk/project/writing-future>

<sup>6</sup> SAM Full Business Case, version 5.0, p. 108.

### **Embedded**

This is an artist development programme run by Sound and Music. It is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and provides residencies with leading 'national creative organisations'. These opportunities are open not only to composers at an early stage in their career but to creative artists in other disciplines such as film-makers, installation artists, digital and sound artists etc, as long as sound is a major element of their proposal. At the time of writing, residencies for 2011/12 have been offered in partnership with Apartment House, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and Manchester Camerata, as well as with the multi-disciplinary groups no.w.here and Pervasive Media Studio.

The Embedded scheme was widely praised. It was considered by the performing groups which partner with SAM to work well in that it enables the participating composers to learn from the inside how the profession works, while the performing groups make a real connection with the next generation of creative artists. The conditions of each residency differ according to the working pattern of the partner organisation, but all offer extended and close contact with the performing groups (across a year, a season, or intensively over some weeks) and this was felt to be a particular benefit. The downside is that only some 12 residencies are currently available, and as these are open to 'creators' in all art forms the scheme was described as 'a very good opportunity for very few composers'. The residencies are also suited more to those who are already fairly experienced. Given the close contact with highly-accomplished performing musicians, the composer must have enough experience to hold his or her own in a demanding professional atmosphere.

It was felt that the Embedded scheme is not a replacement for the spnm schemes, but a new model which should be operated in partnership with, and as a step up from, the reading panel/shortlist concept.

### **Other residencies and workshops**

In addition to SAM's Embedded scheme, a number of other valuable residency and workshop opportunities are in place run by leading performing groups around Britain. Several of those involved in running these schemes commented on their sense that a vacuum has developed since the founder organisations were disbanded, within which their work in this developmental area has gained a significance they had not anticipated.

Among the schemes cited by consultees as examples of best practice are the London Sinfonietta's Blue Touch Paper and Writing the Future schemes for composers and its annual LS Academy for conductors and instrumentalists. Other provisions are offered by the Aurora Orchestra and by Orchestras Live, and schemes are run by the BBC Orchestras, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the RPS/Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Royal Opera House among others. The PRS for Music Foundation funds several programmes such as the Composer in the House scheme in partnership with the Royal Philharmonic Society and the Adopt a Composer scheme for amateur groups in partnership with Making Music and Sound and Music. The British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA) runs annual workshops, masterclasses and mentoring sessions for composers. Dartington Summer School offers a wide range of courses and Aldeburgh Music runs residencies, masterclasses, opera writing programmes and annual composition courses.

### **Touring**

The former BMIC touring series, The Cutting Edge, was widely acknowledged as an important opportunity to hear and perform new music. Consultees said that while the series needed a facelift, it gave a platform to performers as well as to composers (of all ages), and enabled them to raise their profile by undertaking countrywide tours including a London performance. It encouraged active links between composers and performers, it was free of any curatorial filter and it served its audiences well in venues around the country.

The Contemporary Music Network's tours were for many years an important feature of new music provision throughout Britain although these, unlike The Cutting Edge, featured music by well-known composers and performers. With the demise of both The Cutting Edge and CMN, there is considered to be a very serious gap in provision for composers, performers and audiences. The work of Orchestras Live should however be noted in featuring the work of living composers and, where possible, new commissions in all its orchestral programmes and tours.



### **A dedicated performance space**

Composers strongly advocated for the provision of a dedicated space for new music in London which could also function as a meeting place and general hub for new music activity. They made the point that existing venues are expensive and they felt that none are particularly suitable for contemporary music in terms of atmosphere. They pointed out that many performers are based in London and, for those who are not, a London shop-window is highly beneficial.

Composers also expressed their preference for completely open access, i.e. no curatorial policy and no artistic director. It was felt that this approach would encourage the development of collectives of performers and composers, and give opportunities to the many entrepreneurial musicians who currently feel frustrated by what they see as 'gate-keeping' by artistic directors.

In the model proposed, the space would be available for a modest hire fee to anyone who could demonstrate sufficient support (from composers and performers) for the concert to take place. This might be the artists themselves or the various smaller promoters and agents currently operating. Interestingly, this model calls to mind the performance space formerly available in a very central location in the British Music Information Centre.

Performers and organisations expressed a different opinion. These groups felt that, as far as central London goes, there are already enough performance spaces. They find it difficult to maintain sustainable audiences for new music even in the well-established central London venues and felt it would be difficult if not impossible to finance a new venue and generate audiences for it. It was suggested that it might, however, be achievable for a venue situated in an accessible location outside the central Zones 1-2, such as the Shoreditch-Dalston corridor.

It should be noted that the question of a dedicated performance venue and meeting place for new music was debated intensively by the founder organisations as part of the Sound and Music merger discussions. It was concluded at that time that a space for new music was not viable either financially or in terms of generating audiences. The blueprint for SAM is, in fact, based very clearly on the concept of working 'with people rather than with a physical space'.<sup>7</sup>

The present research indicated that the question of a space for new music in London remains a very live issue for composers. However one consultee made the interesting point that the issue is not so much one of venue, but of 'platform and programming'. In a time of economic downturn, it may be more productive for all parties concerned — composers, performers, venues, artistic directors and promoters — to work together more openly and constructively towards partnerships. This would give added value to what is already there and is surely in the interests of serving the audience, until such time as investment may again be available to develop a dedicated new music venue.

---

<sup>7</sup> SAM Full Business Case version 5.0, p. 25.

## 4. Repertoire information and access

### Is a library needed?

One of the main functions of the British Music Information Centre was holding and making accessible the national collection of contemporary British music as a reference library of music scores, performance parts and audiovisual material. Although never adequately resourced this collection represented then, and still represents now, an important part of Britain's contemporary cultural heritage. While as with any 'national collection' — whether it be, for instance, music or artifacts or a seed bank — methods of access and modes of usage will naturally change over time, the value of maintaining such a collection for its intrinsic significance to the nation should never be in question.

Consultees supported this view, with performers and programmers perhaps placing more importance than composers on its being an accessible physical (as opposed to digital) collection. Performers emphasised that they find new repertoire or identify composers they want to commission by playing through new scores. If there is no central collection, they are limited to what is accessible through publishers or, given the growing number of self-published composers, a more chance-based awareness. It was also noted that young performers early in their careers can have their interest sparked for life if they can browse through a reference collection or are given scores on an inspection or promotional basis.

### Hard copy scores versus digital resources

In the humanities in general the orientation nowadays is towards digital access. Major libraries worldwide have been engaged for several decades in developing appropriate international systems and standards for digitisation. Amongst the members of the International Association of Music Information Centres (IAMIC) a move from 'hard copy' music collections to digitised resources has been taking place very actively across the last decade. Most Music Information Centres around the world have moved or are moving to providing digital resources online, with the physical score collections often transferred to that country's national library. With the almost universal use of composition software by composers, most new works nowadays are in any case 'born digital'. Users too prefer to access information and resources on their computer at home, even if the physical materials are located just around the corner.

A primary advantage of good digital resources is not only local and national access, but international access for overseas promoters, broadcasters, etc. Therefore, if good, searchable online access is available to an (ideally) current and growing digital collection of contemporary British music, that collection can probably be housed anywhere.

Prior to the merger, BMIC had digitised about ten per cent of its collection comprising some 2,500 full scores and score extracts, together with some 1,000 audio samples. This resource, together with the main hard copy collection, transferred to Sound and Music and the view was expressed by many consultees that it should still be available through SAM. SAM, however, points out that the cost of housing a large physical collection of some 30,000 scores and other resources on public access in central London, for relatively small visitor numbers, is prohibitive.

Sound and Music currently provides very limited access to these digitised resources as 'The Collection', an online catalogue of the former BMIC and Voices material located on its web site. The physical collection is stored off-site and it has now been decided that it will shortly be donated to the library of the University of Huddersfield. This move is seen by Huddersfield as giving added focus to its existing presence in new music through the Huddersfield Festival. It is understood that the library will maintain an active acquisitions policy but it is not yet known whether funding will be found to digitise a further part of the full collection and/or provide a comprehensive searchable online catalogue. The future accessibility of the collection is a concern and the conditions attached to the donation should be scrutinised to ensure that future access is guaranteed, irrespective of changing conditions or levels of commitment from the University Library in the future.

**Internet access**

The need for a central, easy-to-navigate and information-rich web site was agreed by all consultees to be essential as a first point of contact for new British music. This is particularly important for anyone seeking information from abroad. Artistic directors, programmers, conductors, performers and broadcasters in particular emphasised their desire for a central, reliable and independent web site for new music. These busy musicians, no matter how well disposed to new music, do not have the time to trawl the Internet researching information from a myriad of sources.

In virtually all countries around the world which are regarded as having good provision for contemporary music, there is such a central 'clearing house' on the Internet, generally operated by the national Music Information Centre. These sites serve as a gateway to both emerging and established composers, as well as to performers, repertoire, events, and a whole ecology of promotional and developmental work operated by the Music Information Centre itself as well as by other organisations in the sector.

In the original vision for Sound and Music the key objectives for its web site were set out in detail. As well as appealing 'to both a broad and specialist audience' it was to 'establish itself as the first port of call in our sector'.<sup>8</sup> All the elements that were pinpointed during this research as essential were included, such as searchable composer and repertoire information, digital distribution and print on demand, events listings, news, online shop, and so on. Consultees, however, expressed disappointment with the SAM web site as it currently operates and felt that it is hard to navigate, patchy in the resources it offers, and lacking in appropriate links to important material.

It has been suggested that a new, centralised music web site could easily be set up, using open source software and linking existing content such as composers' individual web sites. However the experience of the Music Information Centres internationally indicates that even in much smaller countries with relatively little new music activity, the demands of setting up and maintaining such a site are much greater than is generally realised, and keeping it up to date and accurate is a task requiring significant resources of time and expertise.

---

<sup>8</sup> SAM Full Business Case, version 5.0, p. 117.

## 5. Participation in international networks

Participation in international networks such as the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) and the International Association of Music Information Centres (IAMIC), as well as other significant networks, was considered by all consultees as vital. This role of 'broker' in relation to the promotional aspect of creating networks between composers, performers, programmers and audiences at an international level requires an outward-facing organisation that engages confidently with the world and communicates its mission effectively, in the manner of the best Music Information Centres internationally. A central point of contact, highly visible from abroad, can ensure that British music engages with the world, and the world with it. At national level, it can address some of the fragmentation experienced across the new music sector. Consultees also agreed that a 'champion' or 'sales person' is needed; a senior executive who 'joins everything together'; a trusted advocate who acts as ambassador for new music at home and abroad.

With the merger of the founder organisations, and in particular the closure of BMIC and spnm, this central networking role was planned to be taken up by Sound and Music. SAM has recently reconvened the British section of the ISCM after a lapse of some years, which brings important promotional and performance opportunities for composers. It also maintains membership of IAMIC. Consultees felt, however, that SAM is not currently providing a suitable point of focus or 'shop window' for new British music and identified this as a serious gap in provision.

The importance of a major 'showcase' for new British music was noted by a number of consultees. Examples such as, for instance, the Frieze Art Fair were cited from other art forms. The Huddersfield Festival currently functions as the major international showcase; high-level international programmers and media are invited each year to experience new British and European music. The London Sinfonietta's State of the Nation events functioned in a similar sense in the past.

### International comparisons

Across the worldwide network of Music Information Centres, those which are considered to function well combine an active promotional, 'outward' stance with an 'inward', developmental mission to nurture and support creative and performing talent, and develop audiences. Models that are widely respected both by their own and the international music communities include the [Australian Music Centre](#), the [Canadian Music Centre](#), CDMC in France, [FIMIC](#) in Finland and [Music Centre the Netherlands](#). All these organisations offer a range of services dedicated to promoting and serving new music, together with the composers, performers and audiences who engage with it. The range of musics they represent varies from country to country, some dealing with all genres of music including traditional, historical and all forms of popular music, with others focussing mainly on new music. Resources offered by these organisations include score libraries (with searchable online catalogues and downloadable digitised scores), sound archives and reference and research material of all kinds. Supports include promotional and developmental schemes at national and international level, as well as education work, publishing and recording, and a range of networking, advocacy and lobbying activities.

In recent years, mergers similar to that of Sound and Music have taken place in several countries, in most cases brought about by political or financial pressures. The [American Music Center](#) has recently announced a merger with Meet the Composer under the name New Music USA, with the American Composers Forum taking over its membership and professional development services. Music Centre the Netherlands (MCN) was formed in 2008 by merging the organisations Donemus, Gaudeamus, De Kamervraag, the Dutch Pop & Rock Institute, Dutch Jazz Connection, Netherlands Jazz Archive and De Jazzorganisatie. The Australian Music Centre has recently become a constituent part of the Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA); while FIMIC, the Finnish Music Information Centre, has taken an opposite direction and became independent from the Finnish Composers' Copyright Society (TEOSTO) in 2010. There are also smaller Music Information Centres around the world which function successfully as independent, stand-alone organisations.

There are pros and cons in respect of such mergers. The advantage of bringing several smaller organisations together under one umbrella is that a larger organisation can build a higher profile, attract more funding, and be more powerful. If each internal section is proactive and the management is attentive to the ecology of the organisation as a whole, a

departmentalised structure can be very good. On the downside, there is less direct contact with the clients/users and the time which, in a smaller organisation is spent in actually *doing* the projects, tends to be taken up with the demands of management, departmental budgets and internal structures. If there is too much direction from the top in such an organisation, one overarching goal can take over and a 'one size fits all' policy can dominate to the detriment of sectional interests.

Smaller organisations, on the other hand, are more flexible and closer to their users, and this is the model most composers consulted for this research advocated. Smaller organisations can keep in touch with the grassroots and be attentive to changing needs and circumstances. They can more easily make changes in policy, but the downside is that they are likely to remain 'below the radar' as far as government departments and funders are concerned. While diversity can be very good, on balance in the present era of changing cultural policy and uncertain economics, a larger organisation with a wider, more inclusive brief is likely to appear more credible to politicians and major funders and therefore to survive and thrive.

## 6. Conclusions

This report is informed by in-depth consultation with the new music community. While responses varied among the different interest-groups, overall the unanimous view was that developmental and infrastructural supports for new music in Britain have weakened, particularly in the last two or three years. While all respondents stated that the models formerly offered by BMIC, spnm, SAN and CMN required updating, clearly the transition to what was envisaged as a comprehensive service by Sound and Music has not proceeded as anticipated.

Much thought, energy and public money over several years was put into designing the new organisation that is Sound and Music. Unfortunately the general view was that SAM has lost touch with the sector, that it does not currently have a mandate from the music community and that it is 'not occupying the space it was intended to occupy'. Views expressed, whether from composers, performing groups, or other organisations, were located on a continuum from disappointment to dismay at the direction SAM has taken since its foundation. It is regarded as focussing mainly on large-scale, public sound art projects at the expense of its brief to develop and support new music as a whole, which was intended to be a core area of its work. It was questioned whether it is appropriate for SAM to adopt this curatorial stance and it was said that in acting as a producer it has lost sight of its developmental role.

SAM's mission was defined clearly in its founding documents and business plan and it embraced all the elements now identified by consultees as absent or functioning inadequately. Therefore the problem may not lie with SAM's mission so much as with how that mission is currently being interpreted and operated. A support organisation, as one respondent said, 'needs to be more than a telephone directory'. It needs to give expert advice, to filter, and to signpost. It needs to help users find the *right* answer, rather than a selection of approximately right answers. To do this, it must be trusted by the sector to operate in an unbiased way to the benefit of its service users and the public. While some recalibration is to be expected in the transition period following any merger, it seems that there may have been a deliberate change of policy and direction in Sound and Music during the last two years. If this is so, it has not been publicly communicated nor has the rationale behind it been expressed. Without a comprehensive review, it is too soon to condemn as a failure the concept of a large-scale umbrella organisation for new music in Britain. There are good international precedents to indicate that an organisation like this can function well, particularly when, as in this case, it is backed by significant public funding.

One of the positive outcomes that emerged in this consultation was the range of well thought-out opportunities that are still being operated by the major performing groups and orchestras in Britain to support emerging composers and performers. All these bodies expressed great willingness to further develop these activities and form partnerships to work together. Rather than trying to reanimate schemes similar to the former spnm Reading Panel and Shortlist as stand-alone projects, it would be more productive to look at ways of adding value to these existing schemes. The ideal outcome is a joined-up network throughout the country providing a continuum of coherent performance and mentoring opportunities at different levels, managed by stable, well respected organisations with good infrastructural support. There is an important brokering role to be played here by a central networking organisation or via a well-functioning Internet hub.

## 7. Key findings

This research has identified significant gaps in provision in several areas of the new music sector. In the current economic and political climate it is recommended that any solutions put forward build upon existing provisions and are designed to be realistic and sustainable for the longterm.

The following needs and concerns emerged on a consistent basis:

- 1. A support service for emerging composers is required, to confer collective visibility and promotional cachet at a national and international level.**
- 2. Access to a comprehensive, central repertoire collection of new British music is required, with a searchable online catalogue and availability of digital and/or hard copy scores.**
- 3. A central, information-rich web site for new British music is required, to function as the gateway to composers' and performers' web sites and link with relevant new music resources on the Internet.**
- 4. There is a strong desire for a dedicated, flexible space for new music in London, hosting performances and functioning as a meeting place and hub.**
- 5. There is a need for a nationwide touring network, including a London venue.**
- 6. The current range of performance and mentoring opportunities for emerging composers and performers should be linked into a coherent nationwide network.**
- 7. Active participation in international new music networks is essential, allied to a dedicated annual or biennial showcase event to raise the profile of new British music abroad.**
- 8. There is a need for a strong and cohesive lobbying and advocacy voice for the new music sector.**

## 8. Appendix

### About the consultation

This consultation report was commissioned with funding provided by The Holst Foundation. The research was guided by an advisory panel and carried out in March and April 2011.

### Advisory Panel

#### Joint Chairs

Colin Matthews, Executive Administrator, Holst Foundation

Nicola LeFanu

#### Members

Cathy Graham, Director of Music, British Council

Michael Hooper, Promotions Manager, University of York Music Press

Rosemary Johnson, Executive Director, Royal Philharmonic Society

Anne Rushton, Executive Director, NMC Recordings Ltd

Richard Steele, consultant and former Director of Artistic Policy, Royal College of Music

### Consultants

This report was written by Eve O'Kelly. To inform the research, face-to-face interviews were conducted with representatives of performing groups, organisations, and funders by Eve O'Kelly, and with composers by Michael Hooper.

Eve O'Kelly is an arts consultant and cultural manager. From 1990 to 2010 she was director of Ireland's

[Contemporary Music Centre](#).

### Eve O'Kelly Cultural Management and Research

Web: <http://ie.linkedin.com/eveokelly> Email: [eveokelly@gmail.com](mailto:eveokelly@gmail.com) Tel: +353-86-853 9963

### Consultees

Prior to the consultation, advice was sought from the following at a meeting in September 2010:

Julian Anderson	Composer	<i>Apologies were received from:</i>	
Philip Cashian	Composer	Michael Berkeley	Composer
Sally Cavender	Faber Music	Andrew Burke	London Sinfonietta
Michael Finnissy	Composer	John Casken	Composer
Michael Hooper	University of York Music Press	Cathy Graham	British Council
Rosemary Johnson	Royal Philharmonic Society	Gill Graham	Music Sales Group
Nicola LeFanu	Composer		
Stephen Newbould	Birmingham Contemporary Music Group		
Colin Matthews	Composer		
Eve O'Kelly	Consultant		
Anne Rushton	NMC Recordings Ltd		
Richard Steele	Consultant and former Director of Artistic Policy, Royal College of Music		
Giles Swayne	Composer		
David Wordsworth	Conductor and consultant		

Contd/



The following were consulted in March and April 2011:

**Consultees: Eve O’Kelly**

Richard Baker	Guildhall School of Music and Drama
David Bedford	British Academy of Songwriters and Composers
Andrew Burke	London Sinfonietta
Einion Dafydd	Arts Council of Wales
John Davis	Australian Music Centre
Mary Dullea	Performer
Susanna Eastburn	Arts Council England
Philip Flood	Sound Connections
Jan Ford	Orchestras Live
David Francis	Dartington Hall Trust
Paul Gompes	Music Centre the Netherlands
Jenny Goodwin	Music Publishers Association
Cathy Graham	British Council
Matthew Greenall	Sound and Music
Sally Groves	Sound and Music board; Schott Music
Clare Hewitt	Creative Scotland
Rosemary Johnson	Royal Philharmonic Society
John Kieffer	Sound and Music
Andrew Kurowski	BBC
Nicola LeFanu	Composer
Henry Little	Orchestras Live
Kathryn McDowell	London Symphony Orchestra
Graham McKenzie	Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival
Ed McKeon	Third Ear
Colin Matthews	Composer
Gill Maxwell	Scottish Music Centre
Peter Millican	Kings Place
Gillian Moore	South Bank Centre
Darragh Morgan	Performer
Stephen Newbould	Birmingham Contemporary Music Group
Mick Peake	Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival
Vanessa Reed	PRS for Music Foundation
Laurence Rose	CoMA
Anne Rushton	NMC Recordings Ltd
Chris Shurety	CoMA
Rosa Solinas	Arts Council of Northern Ireland
Richard Steinitz	Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival
John Woolrich	Composer

Contd/

**Consultees: Michael Hooper**

*Composers*

Kerry Andrew  
Richard Baker  
Darren Bloom  
Laura Jayne Bowler  
Charlotte Bray  
Elsbeth Brooke  
Nicholas Collon  
Laurence Crane  
Joe Cutler  
Michael Zev Gordon  
David Gorton  
Emily Howard  
Zubin Kanga  
Alison Kay  
Haris Kittos  
Mark Knoop  
Claudia Molitor  
Paul Newland  
Patrick Nunn  
Tim Parkinson  
Alexis Paterson  
Joseph Phibbs  
Alwynne Pritchard  
Matthew Schlomowitz  
Jeroen Speak  
Sohrab Uduman  
Sarah Watts  
James Weeks  
Michael Wolters  
Raymond Yiu

*Two composers wished not to be named.*

Although some of the views expressed by Hooper's consultees have been included in this report, most of his findings will be published in a subsequent report. There were a substantial group of composer consultees who believed the composer/performer community was best served by a physical hub which provided facilities and a meeting place, as well as hosting their central website. They did not believe in the value of an 'artistic director'.

ENDS