

IMS Prussia Cove

Inspiring Young Musicians

18th – 21st January 2019

An education project with MusicAbility, South West Music School and Cornwall Music Education Hub.



Introduction

In January 2019, *Inspiring Young Musicians* brought a group of talented students aged 13-19 years old from across Devon and Cornwall to work with four musicians from IMS Prussia Cove: Sini Simonen, Christel Lee (violin), Tim Boulton (viola) and Sarah Wiederhold (cello). A weekend of intensive chamber music coaching was followed by a series of concerts in local primary schools and a public concert in St Mary's Church, Penzance. This second iteration of *Inspiring Young Musicians* built on the success of our pilot project in 2018, strengthening ties with our partner organisations to create a truly collaborative project of lasting value and impact for all involved.

A very busy residential course was characterised by energy and enthusiasm from all involved, creating an environment of multi-generational music-making which inspired young people and musicians of all ages. The project took place in the same buildings that have hosted IMS Prussia Cove's seminars for 47 years, giving younger musicians the opportunity to experience music-making in this beautiful and remote part of Cornwall. Moreover, *Inspiring Young Musicians* was fundamentally informed by the spirit of the seminars, introducing a new generation of musicians to the values of musical excellence and integrity which have sustained IMS Prussia Cove since its inception. The project's value was demonstrated both by its dedication to these musical ideals, and by its ability to engage meaningfully with young musicians and even younger audiences.



Facts and figures

IMS musicians: 4
Coaching hours: 80
Schools visited: 8

Course students: 21
Works studied: 21
School students reached: 1,000

Students ages: 13-19
Number of concerts: 9
Schools students ages: 5-12

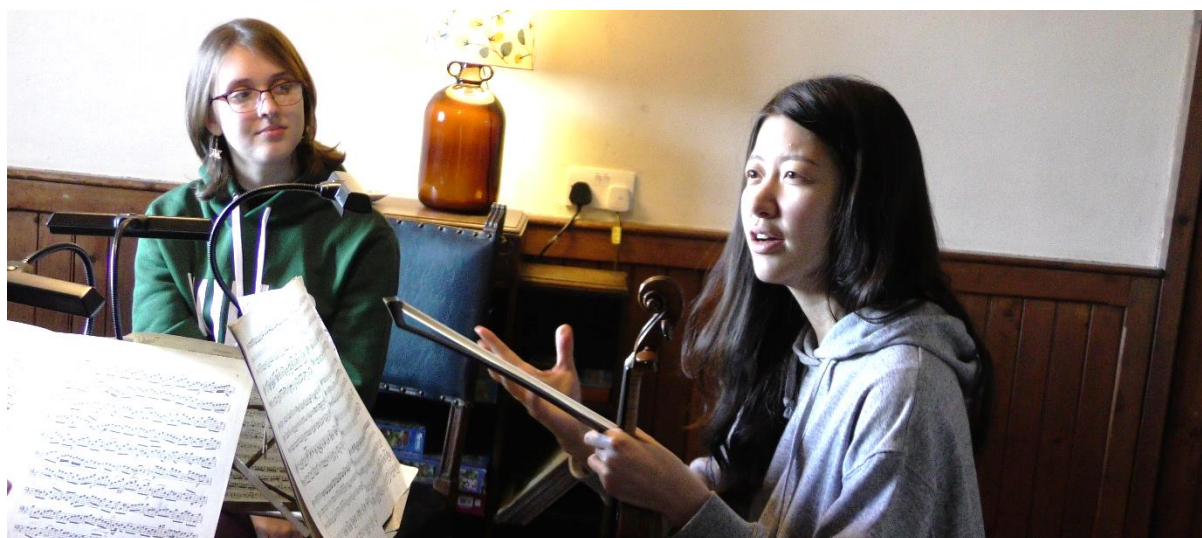
What Happened

Preparation at OCM

In September 2018 a group of musicians came to Cornwall to rehearse Dvořák's 'American' quartet during IMS Prussia Cove's Open Chamber Music seminar. The experience brought together exceptional musicians from across the world (Finland, USA, Germany and the UK) to share with and learn from colleagues in an environment dedicated to musical exploration and discovery. During the week they worked with music education specialist Patrick Bailey to create a series of education resources for primary schools.

Chamber music coaching

In January 2019 this group of musicians returned to Cornwall to coach a group of young musicians from Devon and Cornwall and from South West Music School. Over the course of the weekend, the students took part in intensive chamber music coaching sessions, studying a wide range of repertoire. The IMS Prussia Cove musicians played in many of the groups themselves, reflecting the IMS tradition of forming chamber groups in which musicians of differing ages and levels of experience play alongside each other. Students were also given the opportunity to rehearse without their coaches, developing essential skills of leadership and collaboration and learning to explore the music for themselves.



In-house performance

An 'open mic' night gave selected students the opportunity to perform to their peers and tutors in an informal environment. The IMS quartet also gave an in-house performance of Dvořák's 'American', allowing the students to observe world-class musicians perform in an intimate setting. The students found this hugely inspiring, and those who were studying the Dvořák came away full of ideas for their own performances.

Schools concerts

On the final day of the course, the IMS musicians and course students travelled in small groups to 8 primary schools in the local area to present short performances of the works they had studied during the weekend, reaching an estimated 1,000 primary school students in total. The concerts – which were organised by Cornwall Music Education Hub – were extremely successful, with confident presentations from the course students under the guidance of their tutors. They talked about why they enjoy music-making, as well as introducing their instruments, the composers and the music itself. The performances were engaging and relevant, and the younger students listened well and asked interesting questions.

Presentation coaching

Preparation for these concerts was greatly enhanced by a coaching session with Patrick Bailey, who joined the IMS musicians and students to help them consider the purpose and value of their performances. The course students discussed the experiences which had inspired them when they were younger, and they began to see the concerts as an opportunity to pass on their enthusiasm to younger students. They discussed how they might involve their audience, tell stories through music and communicate the joy of making music together. This was followed by a more practical session in which each group prepared and rehearsed the details of their presentations, working out how to put together a coherent and engaging performance.



Education resources

Two weeks before the concerts, the schools were sent the education resources created by Patrick Bailey with the IMS musicians in September. Four short videos giving insight into Dvořák's 'American' for young listeners were presented alongside lesson plans for use in the classroom. In the videos, Patrick talks about Dvořák's influences, the use of the pentatonic scale, and how a quartet works. The lesson plans provide a comprehensive resource in line with the current school curriculum which helps students listen to and reflect on a piece of classical music, create pieces of music inspired by Dvořák's 'American' and perform as an ensemble.

Public concert

Inspiring Young Musicians culminated with a free concert at St Mary's Church in Penzance, attended by family and friends as well as members of the public. Four student groups were selected to perform pieces they had had been studying, showcasing the best of the weekend's work with performances of Mozart, Beethoven, Weber and Haydn. All four groups included an IMS musician, performing alongside the students. This was followed by a complete performance of Dvořák's 'American' by the IMS musicians – a truly inspirational experience for the students and public audience alike.

Benefits

For the course students

These young musicians hugely enjoyed such an intensive weekend of coaching with the IMS musicians, gaining insight, enthusiasm and essential skills from these talented professionals. The students found it easy to relate to the younger IMS musicians and their relative closeness in age made the music profession seem more approachable. They enjoyed taking the opportunity to spend informal time with them, learning about life as a musician. In their coaching sessions, the

students learnt how to bring music to life with greater technical skill and musical passion, beginning to listen more intently and to find the music's character through discussion of phrasing, harmony and expression. Working towards the school concerts gave them a sense of purpose and the students enjoyed taking on the role of more experienced musicians to the younger students, taking ownership of the presentations to enthusiastically share their love of music. This experience also helped them to understand the music better, as they considered how best to explain it to others and how to communicate effectively through their performances.

For the primary schools

The primary school concerts gave a large number of young people in the local area an opportunity to experience live music-making of a very high standard, under the expert guidance of the IMS musicians. They were also able to see young musicians not much older than themselves perform, providing them with accessible role models to aspire to. This area of Cornwall suffers from high levels of deprivation, and in many schools there are currently no students taking instrumental lessons; the schools were therefore delighted to be offered a free concert during the school day and on school premises. We hope these concerts will inspire young students to start learning instruments, as well as making classical music more accessible for everyone. The education resources helped the schools to prepare for the concerts, creating a more meaningful experience for their students, as well as providing something of lasting value which can be used and re-used for years to come.

For the IMS musicians

The success of this project is demonstrated by the opportunities it has provided to learn at all levels, and although the main beneficiaries are the course students and primary school students, the younger IMS musicians also benefitted greatly from their experience. The course was led by Tim Boulton, who is not only an experienced performer who has been attending IMS Prussia Cove seminars for many years but also very experienced in music education work and the driving force behind many of the youth music opportunities currently offered in Cornwall. The younger IMS musicians therefore learnt a huge amount from both Tim and Patrick, by observing their teaching and through Tim's guidance throughout the weekend. All three musicians developed their ability to communicate with the students and benefitted from seeing real improvements in the students' playing over a short period of time, while leading the school concerts gave them a role of some responsibility. They all emphasised how much the course has helped to improve their teaching and presentation skills.



Feedback

Course students

'An enjoyable and valuable experience that has improved my playing when faced with challenging music' Emma

'I've never played chamber music and I found that I really liked it. The experience was great for learning music to a high standard' Anna

'This course was tons of fun. It was a great opportunity to share music with each other and inspire the primary schools we played to, it made me happy to share music like that' Gui

'This was my first course of this type and I have really enjoyed it. This was a great opportunity to show what we had such fun learning to the younger children. I found talent that I thought I didn't have in chamber music and enjoyed playing music with other people' Oliver

'Tiring but extremely rewarding, I learnt so much, can't wait for next year' Imogen

'I've learnt so much from the fantastic coaches. The schools concerts were really interesting and made me remember why I started playing. Hopefully this course will still run for years to come as it makes such a difference' Jake

'Very long and intense weekend but a great opportunity to play chamber music which I don't get very often. It's great to meet music friends who live quite far from me' Romano

'I feel as if my playing limits have been pushed and I'm now a more competent player. Playing with friends and amongst such skilled and beautiful players is so inspiring and encouraging. I only wish there were more courses like this!' Lauren

'I found that playing in front of the primary schools was such a good opportunity because I'd never experienced anything similar to this. I learnt how to keep the audience interested and make sure that what I was saying was relevant to my piece and audience. Playing with the coaches has made me aware about so many parts of chamber music' Alex

'The whole course really well organised and just generally amazing. It was great to hear the coaches play on the open mic night, I was really inspired by them' Helena



Primary schools

'Thank you very much for including us in this wonderful opportunity. All children and adults really loved the concert, it was absolutely wonderful how the children were involved and had a chance to ask questions, really inspiring' Giusi Manta (Pensans School)

'What a fantastic experience that was today! The children, and staff, absolutely loved it. The musicians were friendly and explained things very clearly to the children. It was a real privilege to take part in this programme, thank you so much! The teaching support materials were also useful [...] in my class, we all played together to create a dawn chorus! My hope is that a few more might now be having chats with parents to take up an instrument.' Charlotte Hocking (Bodriggy Academy)

'Thank you so much for arranging our visit from IMS Prussia Cove this morning. The young people who visited us were amazing. They spoke to the audience with confidence and played beautifully. Their passion for music was infectious and truly inspiring. To be sat in a hall full of children who were utterly transfixed was wonderful!' Andrew Orme (Breage Church of England School)

IMS musicians

'It was a really inspirational time. Tim Boulton is an amazing role model for how to be around young people and music. I feel like I learned so much from him in a short time, on how to communicate about what really matters, in music, in being together. It felt important to try and keep a balance of working hard with the kids yet always being encouraging and patient - finding the appropriate demand to each level. It felt like everyone discovered they were capable of more than they had thought. The school concerts worked really well, the schoolchildren were engaged and asked lots of questions. My young musicians all came up with great things to talk about and I think felt a sense of achievement to be able to hopefully inspire others to take up music. It was a fascinating responsibility and learning experience.' Sini Simonen

'The three days spent engaging and working with the students at IMS Prussia Cove was an enormous learning experience. It opened my eyes to the rewards of committing to young people. I realized my role was to empower and equip the students to feel confident to take on the responsibility of performing. I also realized the significance of creating a safe environment for the students to trust one another musically, addressing their strengths as well as carefully directing them to listen and hear more acutely. It was incredibly inspiring for me to watch Tim interact with the students [...] and I was greatly humbled and inspired by the passion and fervour of the students. The love and enthusiasm for music, the desire to share the joys of music, and the sense of comradeship they share in making music together was a moving reminder to me on why I make music.' Christel Lee

'I was very pleased with the way the course ran, in every way. The physical environment of Prussia Cove was enormously conducive to a sense of purpose, hard work, and a general sense of appreciation, and I think the young players really felt that they were drinking from the same cup of inspiration that has fed IMS for the last 4½ decades. There were many powerful personal achievements for the young players, who without exception rose to the occasion/s and excelled themselves. All three of my colleagues brought their musical integrity to the fore when supporting the students, each in their different ways with a strong musical direction, inspiring sound and personal kindness. Patrick's input on Sunday was excellently pitched – really engaging everyone imaginatively and focusing on making the schools performances inspirational and uplifting for the primary audiences. I really had the impression that all the schools concerts did just that – inspire and uplift. In summary, I think this is just the most inspiring sort of project and the best of learning experiences all round' Tim Boulton

Partner organisations

Inspiring Young Musicians creates a valuable opportunity for IMS Prussia Cove to work with arts and education organisations based in Cornwall and the South West. We are very pleased to have been able to put together this ambitious project for a second time and believe that by drawing on the different expertise and experience of the organisations involved we have created a meaningful project of lasting impact and value. We hope that the success of this project will pave the way for future collaborations with these partners.

MusicAbility embraces the unique and life-enhancing potential of music to stimulate a broad spectrum of educational, creative and health benefits within the community. Their mission is to use music as a catalyst for the development of personal abilities, cultural awareness and participation whilst generating social, psychological and physical integration (www.musicabilitycic.uk).

South West Music School is a Centre of Advanced Training and a music charity working with talented young instrumentalists, singers and composers aged 8–18 in the South West of England. They provide students with the same standard of music education as specialist music schools and junior conservatoires, whilst allowing students to stay in their existing education and continue to take part in other activities in their local communities (www.swms.org.uk).

Cornwall Music Education Hub is a partnership of music and arts organisations who work together to support quality musical learning for children and young people in Cornwall. The partnership is led by Cornwall Council and funded by the Department for Education through Arts Council England (www.cornwallmusiceducationhub.org).



IMS Prussia Cove

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