

# LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

## The Love Music Trust: For schools, by schools...

– Jonathan Savage

The Love Music Trust (<http://www.lovemusictrust.com>) is the music education hub for Cheshire East. This short article is a reflection on the process behind the establishment of the Love Music Trust in 2012; an exploration of the philosophical basis on which it was formed; and a brief account of its work over the last year.

### Introduction

Before reading what follows, I would encourage you to watch a short video that captures, in ways that words will not, the sheer enjoyment and thrill of music-making that the Love Music Trust has

CLICK HERE TO WATCH



managed to initiate, sustain and develop across schools in Cheshire East this year. Reflecting on the process behind the formation of the Love Music Trust, it is hard to believe that just over eighteen months ago the idea for a new charity to facilitate music education services across Cheshire East was being discussed between the then Head of Music at Sandbach School, the Headteacher and myself. These discussions followed the announcement of an open application process for music education hub funding in November 2011. But before I go into details about

what happened from November through to the submission deadline in March 2012, it is necessary to go back a little further into the history of an educational institution.

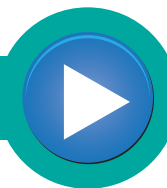
### Forming the Love Music Trust

Sandbach School is a school with a long and prestigious history. Originally founded as a Parish Charity in 1677, it has educated the boys of Sandbach since then in various forms – primarily as an independent school; then, in 1955, through a contractual arrangement with the local authority which allowed all boys in the town, regardless of ability, to be educated freely; and since 2011 as a Free School. Recently, Sandbach has become the municipal centre of Cheshire East, with the Local Authority offices and councillors moving to new-build offices in the town.

As a parent of two sons being educated at the school, I was aware of the high quality music education on offer through the school's curricular and extra-curricular provision. This was led and managed by the Head of Music, John Barber. In 2007, as part of the package of materials to support the introduction of the revised secondary National Curriculum (produced for the DCSF by the National Association of Music Educators (NAME) and CfBT), I had chosen Sandbach School as the location for a film about how musical networks can be built and developed through a systematic and sustained approach led by a dynamic teacher and with a

supportive senior management. You can view that film here:

CLICK HERE TO WATCH



The accompanying case study to the film emphasised that:

1. Pupils at Key Stage 3 benefited from working with a range of musicians. In this case, these included instrumental tutors and pupils from peer groups and other groups in the school.
2. Closer links between instrumental learning and classroom music were forged and maintained in Key Stage 3 curriculum activities. This benefits all pupils (i.e. not just those receiving the instrumental lessons).
3. The financial costs of developing these broader links were met through well-organised musical activities throughout the community.
4. The support and guidance of a senior management team created a climate in which musical networks were initiated and sustained for the benefit of pupils, as well as for the music staff's continuing professional development.

Here, in a microcosm, was, for me, a music education hub.

It was these thoughts that underpinned my conversation with John Barber following a rehearsal of one of the school's musical ensembles. He was enthused and, together, we presented our ideas to the school's Headteacher, Sarah Burns.

Without Sarah's sustained enthusiasm and commitment to lead this new venture, it is fair to say that the Love Music Trust would never have got

off the ground. Thankfully, she grasped the vision immediately and has proved a wonderful advocate for the Trust throughout its formation and beyond, into its first year of operations. During meetings in December 2011, we formed and wrote a vision document for the as yet un-named hub. We spoke privately with a few potential partners to get their feedback. But there was one massive potential hurdle to overcome.

The Local Authority music education service was delivered through a small team led by Chris Bastock. The Cheshire East Music Service had existed for many years, with a previous leader serving as the Chair of NAME. Clearly, without the express support of the Local Authority, our plans for a new music education hub, led by schools for the benefit of schools, were dead in the water.

So, it was with some trepidation that Sarah, John and I met up with Chris in early January 2012. We outlined our plans and shared with him our vision document. During that meeting we discussed his reservations, we issued assurances regarding our intentions and, to his credit, Chris grasped hold of the vision and became a powerful advocate for our plans too, particularly with his Local Authority managers.

Following this, of course, many further private discussions were held with senior Cheshire East Local Authority leaders. Working collaboratively with council officers, we established the various legal frameworks that were needed for the transference of staff, assets and other items to the new charity, subject to the successful application for Arts Council England (ACE) funding.

At this point, the end of January 2012, several key things happened. Firstly, we decided on a name for the charity. The Love Music Trust name was not the first one out of the hat. Original ideas

centred on a Latin phrase that we thought might appeal to Michael Gove! Thankfully, the door was firmly slammed on that idea. 'Love Music' came from about through a timely delivery of a Love Film envelope through the post one morning. 'Trust' was always a key word for us as a team. Amazingly, a search on the Companies House database revealed that both Love Music and Love Music Trust were available company names. We chose the later. It is remarkable what energy a name gives to a new enterprise. With a name in place, we went into full-steam consultation mode.

Our consultation spread far and wide across Cheshire East. We sought letters of approval from primary schools, secondary schools, FE and HE providers, private companies, musical ensembles and other prominent individuals across our county. With one exception, every organisation was supportive and every individual, bar one, was very happy to get behind our ideas. We discussed the idea with parents and young people too. All were supportive.

A key part of our plans involved this key phrase – 'by schools, for schools'. This phrase emerged during one of our planning meetings and seemed significant. It was noted and became something of a catchphrase. For example, the CPD strand within the Love Music Trust is characterised as being 'by teachers, for teachers'. I will return to this below in my concluding comments.

Finally, a lot of writing was done. From the beginning of February all the way through to the submission of our bid to ACE, we sketched, wrote and edited our ideas in response to the various questions that we were required to consider. We also debated key issues such as the Trust's governance structure, the consultative frameworks, quality assurance mechanisms, legal frameworks and relationships with key partners,

and much more besides. We established a steering group and its members' broader feedback was invaluable. This work was not for the faint-hearted. But it all helped shape our collective understanding of what was required to create and manage a new charity to serve the young people of Cheshire East effectively.

### The Love Music Trust philosophy

The Love Music Trust is underpinned by a simple philosophy. It is 'by schools, for schools'. This mantra came about due to our concerns that a potential division could emerge that saw music education as being something that was delivered to schools by external providers. At the time, there was a considerable degree of uncertainty regarding the position of music as a National Curriculum subject. This has partly been resolved by the recent publication of new Programmes of Study for Music. (However, we should all remember that this is not a 'national' curriculum in any normal sense of the word.)

The Love Music Trust itself is seen as being part of, both physically and conceptually, a school. Its offices are in a school. Many of its ensembles and groups are led within schools across the breadth of Cheshire East. It is governed by a group of Trustees, many of whom are also school governors (of which more below). It is closely associated with Sandbach School, a school with a rich history and a celebrated music department, but not led or governed by Sandbach School.

For those of us who worked in the early days of the Trust's formation and for the Love Music Trust today, music education is best facilitated and delivered by schools. Schools are the principal vehicle whereby all pupils, regardless of their parents' income, their race, creed or religion, can receive their core educational entitlement. A rich curriculum-based, systematic, coherent and developmental music education is crucial. I would go as far as saying that it is a human right. This curriculum offering, in turn, needs to work,

symbiotically, with a well-designed and delivered instrumental programme that covers a broad range of instruments and does so in a development way too. Grounding and supporting the work of the Trust in a school is the most logical step.

'By schools, for schools' was also the key determining principle in the governance structures that underpin the Love Music Trust. Trustees are drawn principally from the governing bodies of primary and secondary schools across Cheshire East. Initially, these include colleagues from the secondary schools with music specialisms such as Fallibroome Academy in Macclesfield, Malbank School in Nantwich and Poynton High School. Alongside these colleagues, the headteacher of Sandbach Schools is a trustee together with representatives from other key partners, including the Royal Northern College of Music (represented by Professor Martin Harlow), Manchester Metropolitan University (that's me!) and a representative from the Local Authority. However, the school-based colleagues form a majority on the board. Also, importantly, the trustees representing Sandbach School form a minority of the school-based trustees.

So, although the Love Music Trust falls within the overall governance structures of Sandbach School, Sandbach School does not 'own' the Love Music Trust in terms of its governance. It is independent. We felt that this was crucially important. The Love Music Trust is there to serve and support the Cheshire East musical community, in all its various activities (both school and community based). It is not Sandbach School seeking to broaden its empire.

### Moving forwards

Following receipt of Arts Council funding in May 2012, much work was done very quickly to get the Love Music Trust ready for the September 2012 opening. Legal issues were completed with the Local Authority and all existing Cheshire East staff

became Love Music Trust employees. At the time of writing, the Love Music Trust is just embarking on its second year of operations.

As of today, the Love Music Trust supports the curriculum and instrumental provision in 114 of 124 Cheshire East primary schools. In the vast majority of these it is delivering Wider Opportunities-type programmes of one year's duration. It has also recently completed project work in 18 out of 21 Cheshire East secondary schools. Follow on tuition, i.e. the year after Wider Opportunities, is provided through a commissioning agreement with an external organisation, and the vocal strategy across Cheshire East is being developed in conjunction with Ex-Cathedral and their Singing Playgrounds' programme. The culmination of this programme will see the Love Music Trust schools taking part in a celebration event at the Bridgewater Hall in July 2014.

In terms of extra-curricular ensembles, the Love Music Trust's wide range of ensembles showcase talented young musicians, providing encouragement and invaluable experience for young people with high musical aspirations. From inception the Love Music Trust's ethos has been to support existing provision rather than duplicating ensembles. Current partners include Congleton



Youth Orchestra, Co-operative Wind Bands (Crewe), Foden's Youth Band, Lions Youth Brass, Macclesfield Youth Brass Band, the One Connection Choir and Poynton Youth Brass Band. Alongside these well-established ensembles, the Love Music Trust has developed its own youth and senior choirs, junior and senior percussion ensembles, big band and other groups.

The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme that the Love Music Trust has developed is managed by Phillip Kennedy, a teacher of music at Fallibroome Academy in Macclesfield. True to the tagline of 'by schools, for schools', the CPD activities for staff, teachers across Cheshire East and others has been facilitated through links with local schools and by building on their various areas of expertise. It has been well received by all who have attended the various sessions.

On the 14th July this year, the Love Music Trust celebrated the end of its first year in style at Gawsworth Hall (near Macclesfield) with a truly sensational music filled day. Young musicians from across Cheshire East embraced the beautiful surroundings, giving inspiring, sympathetic, joyful, and uplifting performances throughout the day in three concerts.

This event marked an explosive finale to the first year of The Love Music Trust's operation. Plans are well ahead for the next year, and the one after that! Like every organisation, there are challenges ahead. Like many music education hubs, we are still awaiting news about future Arts Council England (ACE) funding streams. However, the Love Music Trust is working hard to bring in alternative funding revenue through its own service delivery and other fund raising activities.

As we know, music education is going through a significant period of restructuring across the UK. Much of this has been driven by political factors, many of which have, perhaps indirectly, questioned the position of music education as a central part of every young people's formal schooling. The Love Music Trust has an alternative vision. It believes that the best opportunity for every child to receive a quality music educational experience is when it is situated within schools, and delivered by schools, themselves. At every level of the organisation, it is seeking to empower schools to deliver an outstanding music education for all their pupils.

Where the Love Music Trust has led over the last couple of years, I do believe that others will follow. Private, profit making companies will seek to dominate music education services in the years to come. Random one-off workshops, short-term projects, hit and run performances and the like may capture the child's interest for a short while but the



short-termism and profiteering that approaches like this offer must be seen for what they are and resisted. They are no replacement for the sustained quality of music education that schools can provide through a well-designed curriculum and instrumental programme.

Music education is too important to be privatised. Whilst private companies working in this area can usefully enhance the core activities of music education hubs and their public funding, they cannot and should not replace them. As part of their core educational experience, every child has the right to a systematic, developmental and coherent music education. In my view this must

embrace and promote the interrelated musical processes of performing, composing, listening and appraising. Working closely and engaging with schools systematically, regularly and sensitively is the only way of ensuring that this can happen year in, year out. This is the important work that the Love Music Trust is undertaking in Cheshire East. Long may it continue.

Jonathan Savage is a Reader in Education at Manchester Metropolitan University and Managing Director of UCan Play, a leading supplier of music, audio and video equipment to schools and colleges.

[j.savage@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:j.savage@mmu.ac.uk)