



Making Music, Making Communities

Findings from an online survey of Making Music member organisations,
investigating connections between leisure-time musical groups and their
local communities

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Foreword

Making Music is the UK wide membership organisation for leisure time music groups, supporting them with practical and artistic resources, celebrating their achievements and advocating for their needs.

Much research has been completed in recent years highlighting the significant and varied benefits of participation in leisure-time music groups for individuals, ranging from measurable health impacts (e.g. COPD), evident mental health improvement, and including better social links for isolated and lonely people.

This is useful evidence when we are making the case for leisure-time musical activity, but we realised there was no research from the UK which examined the impacts of the groups' existence on their local community, and how significant they may be.

Some of those benefits – taking as our starting point anecdotal reports – could be economical; others could be societal, impacting on cohesion and empowerment of communities, and place-making, attracting potential residents and businesses.

But the problem is that at the moment we simply don't know enough about what exactly those benefits are, and how they could be quantified. So we approached Professor Stephanie Pitts of the University of Sheffield, as we had come across some of her previous work in the field of voluntary music organisations.

This report is the result of a substantial pilot study Stephanie has undertaken as a consequence which begins to give us a clearly evidenced picture of what we think is the very significant social and economic impact of music groups on their communities. We very much hope this will lead to a more extensive piece of research as we continue to pursue these important questions together.

Barbara Eifler
Chief Executive
Making Music



1. Executive Summary

- Context

The benefits of participating in a musical group are well understood from previous research (e.g. Clift & Hancox, 2010; Creech *et al.*, 2014; Pitts, 2005; Pitts & Robinson, 2016): studies carried out with instrumental and vocal groups have repeatedly shown how music-making enhances wellbeing and sense of community, as well as developing musical skills and enjoyment. Much less explored, however, is how the presence of those musical groups impacts upon the people in that locality: put simply, does the variety of musical opportunities available in a town, city or rural area help to define the character of a place and to shape the lives of the people who live there? Making Music, as an organisation who support such activity across the UK, approached the Sheffield Performer and Audience Research Centre (SPARC) at the University of Sheffield, who have an established interest in investigating such questions – and so the joint project reported here began.¹

- Methods: a national online survey

A survey of Making Music's UK-wide member organisations was undertaken in December 2016, generating 559 complete responses from a wide range of organisations (see section 3 for details of participants; Appendix A for the survey). Making Music assisted in the promotion of the survey on their website and social media platforms, resulting in a response rate of around 17% of their member organisations.

- The leisure-time musical groups (LMGs) who responded to this survey were mainly vocal ensembles (62%), including choral societies and community choirs, alongside orchestras (13%) and a range of smaller or more specialist ensembles, including brass, wind and concert bands.
- The LMGs were mainly non-auditioned (70%), rehearsing weekly (85%), and giving between three and five performances a year (58%). Outside this traditional model, however, there was a great diversity of musical practice, including groups who did not give formal performances.

- Headline findings

- LMG members principally join their groups in order to enjoy making music together (92%), to challenge themselves and develop musical skills (87%), and for the opportunity to perform to an audience (85%). They place varying value on the social elements of membership, though a majority enjoy the chance to spend time with like-minded people (69%) and to give something back to the community (61%). *(See Section 3)*
- The finances of LMGs are a source of concern for some groups: most groups charge their members annual subscriptions of over £50 (76%), and many report facing increasing costs while feeling constrained from putting up ticket prices. *(See Section 4)*
- LMGs mainly rehearse weekly in church buildings including parish halls (47%), education buildings (29%) or community buildings (20%): these locations sometimes lead to reciprocal links including outreach and fundraising activities. *(See Sections 4 & 7)*
- The majority of the audience members for LMG performances are friends, relatives and other local supporters of the group (family/friends formed the largest category for 60% of LMGs). Members selling tickets was one of the highest influences on audience recruitment (42%), after distribution of posters and flyers (69%). *(See Section 5)*

¹ See www.sparc.dept.shef.ac.uk and www.makingmusic.org.uk for further details of both organisations.

- LMGs reported a decline in support from local media, including local newspaper reviews, but made extensive use of shared and reciprocal publicity with other LMGs. *(See Sections 5 & 8)*
- LMGs' connections with their local communities fell broadly into three categories:
 - **Commercial connections:** working with local businesses and sponsors was important to a small number of groups, but arguably under-represented in the survey, as few groups showed awareness of the increased footfall and expenditure in a local town that might be generated around an LMG concert by performers and audience members alike. *(See Section 6)*
 - **Educational connections:** here LMGs were more highly motivated, seeing an opportunity for their own growth and a responsibility to encourage the next generation of music-makers. However, some had been discouraged by lack of response from schools and other youth music groups, and had perhaps underestimated the effort involved in building and sustaining mutually beneficial educational relationships. *(See Section 7)*
 - **Reciprocal connections:** LMGs were most responsive when talking about relationships with local charities, and had clearer measures of success including funds raised and evident benefits to locally disadvantaged groups. Activities were generally location-specific, including performing in care homes, hospices and refuges, though were acknowledged to take a high level of resource and commitment, such that some LMGs felt they were working at capacity in these activities. *(See Section 8)*

- Key messages

- The findings presented in this report (summarised in Section 9) highlight the cultural, social and financial effects of leisure-time musical groups on their local settings, and the ways in which these could be enhanced through more effective communication between musical groups, educational settings and media organisations in any given locality.
- They show how musical groups can have a strong community presence, bringing people together over shared musical experiences, charitable acts and causes, and local identity and social cohesion.
- However, they also show that achieving these effects can be a demanding task for volunteer organisations, and that more explicit articulation of these goals could help with amassing support to achieve them and so increase the benefits of local musical activity.

PART 1: RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

2.1 The research questions

This research aimed to investigate the impact of leisure-time musical groups (LMGs²) upon their local communities. Anecdotal evidence from Making Music's work attests to the positive effects of local opportunities to participate in and attend voluntary arts events, but empirical studies looking beyond the effects of participation on group members towards the wider impact on communities remains sparse, and focused on broad trends of mainly financial benefits (e.g. Taylor *et al.*, 2015). This research sought a more nuanced understanding of musical participation, exploring its potential effects on audiences, family members and local schools and organisations, as well as its interactions with businesses and the local economy.

Beginning with the overarching question with which Making Music first approached SPARC – 'What is the impact of leisure-time musical groups on their localities?' – we developed three more detailed questions that addressed the various aspects of that potential impact, as perceived by responding members of those organisations:

- a) How do leisure-time musical groups (LMGs) perceive their roles and relationships with their local communities?
- b) In what ways do they consider themselves to be supported or hindered in their activities by other local groups or organisations?
- c) To what extent do LMGs feel a responsibility to their local community, and how is this manifest in their activities?

From this understanding of current activity and experience, the research aimed to infer the potential for development of community links through two secondary questions:

- d) What is the current impact of LMG activity upon local communities?
- e) What are the obstacles and drivers to increasing any positive impact that currently exists?

2.2 The research methods

The chosen research approach was an online survey of Making Music's member organisations, which used a mixture of tick boxes, rating scales and open-ended qualitative questions to gather data on the type of activity being undertaken (e.g. nature and frequency of rehearsing and/or performing), its costs and workings (e.g. hiring of rehearsal spaces), and its links to the local community (e.g. through business sponsorship, local media advertising, or partnerships with other organisations). The survey was designed in Google Forms, facilitating online distribution of the survey via social media and Making Music's membership email list. Paper copies were provided for the small number of respondents who requested these. The survey is provided in full as Appendix A. Ethical approval for the research was granted by the University of Sheffield, with agreement from participants for their

² This report adopts the terminology recently evolved by Making Music to encompass all voluntary musical activity, 'leisure-time musical groups' (LMGs). This has replaced 'amateur' in Making Music's mission statement and communications since this term, while having positive connotations for many people, is sometimes wrongly construed as a marker of quality in opposition to professional arts activity. The term also has little relevance to the jazz, folk and other groups with whom Making Music has begun to work in recent years, and so is used here with a similar intention to broaden the scope of this research in its future stages.

data to be used anonymously in the reporting of the research and, where relevant, in the advocacy work of Making Music.

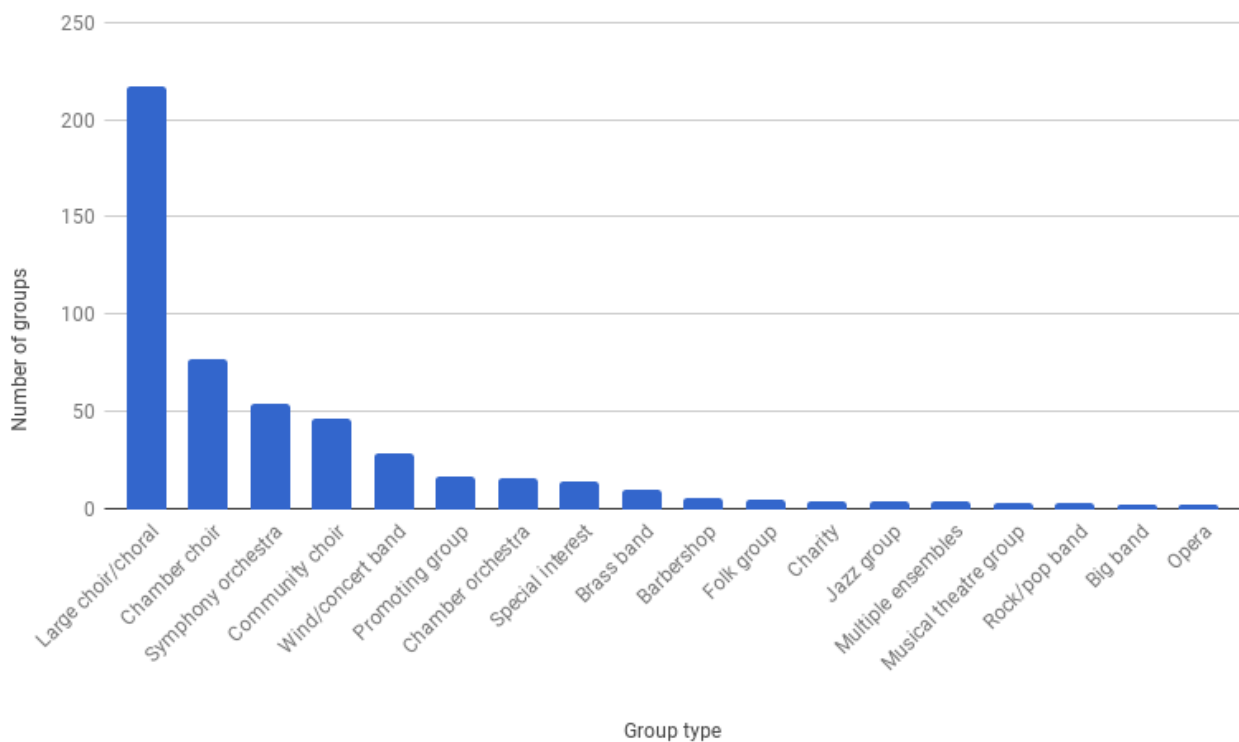
The survey was intended as the first stage in gaining an overview of relevant practices and the questions and topics that they generated, with a follow-up case study stage planned to investigate local 'musical communities' in greater depth. Carrying out such detailed work in Sheffield, as planned, was complicated – in ways entirely positive apart from the timing – by the growth of Classical Sheffield, an organisation recently established to promote awareness of the classical music scene in the city.³ In its exploration of ways in which leisure-time musical groups can support each other to develop and share audiences, the Classical Sheffield network holds much potential for future research; however, it was carrying out its own internal review at the time of this study, and so its involvement in this project would have risked interview and survey fatigue amongst members. The response to the nationwide Making Music survey, on the other hand, was far greater than anticipated, and so the first year of research has been concerned with analysing those responses, thereby creating a more secure foundation for the case study work which will follow next, funding and opportunity permitting.

2.3 The research participants

The online survey was distributed in December 2016 to Making Music's current membership of 3228 LMGs, of whom 58% are vocal groups, 28% are instrumental groups, and 14% are promoters (Making Music, 2017). Nearly 570 responses were received in a little over a month, indicating a high level of interest in the themes of the survey: these data were cleaned to remove incomplete responses and those few where ethical permission had been denied, leaving a final total of 559 responses. Once coded by group type, the responses were shown to be representative of the membership distribution of LMGs, with a predominance (62%: n = 346) of singing ensembles, and a variety of instrumental groups of different sizes and musical genres (see Figure 2.1). Responses came from performing members, treasurers, chairs and other committee members, and musical directors and conductors, with a small number of instances of multiple responses from the same organisation.

³ Classical Sheffield - <https://classicalsheffield.org.uk/> - has organised weekend festivals and pop-up events featuring amateur and professional groups in locations around Sheffield, aiming to reach new audiences for classical music and to support the wealth of leisure-time musical activity that is well-established in the city.

Figure 2.1 Distribution of responses by group type



These ensembles encompassed a range of auditioning, rehearsing and performing practices: the majority were non-auditioned (see Figure 2.2), rehearsed weekly (see Figure 2.3) and performed three or more times a year (see Figure 2.4), but there were many exceptions to this, including groups who rehearsed only in the run-up to performances, and others who did not ‘perform’ in a presentational sense at all. It should also be remembered that membership of Making Music implies a level of organisational solidity such that many types of community music making, including recently or loosely formed groups, will have been excluded from this survey. Consequently the survey represents the views of mainly established, regularly meeting ensembles, with a prevalence of notated, classically-oriented music amongst a range of practice which is diverse but not fully representative of leisure-time musical activity across the UK. To achieve greater coverage of all music-making in a specific location would require the depth of ethnography undertaken by Ruth Finnegan in her seminal work, *The Hidden Musicians* (1989/2007), which considered the musical practices of Milton Keynes: it is hoped that a future phase of this project will be able to accept the invitations of many survey respondents to engage further with their organisations and other local groups, and so to revisit such approaches across a range of locations.

Figure 2.2: Auditioning habits

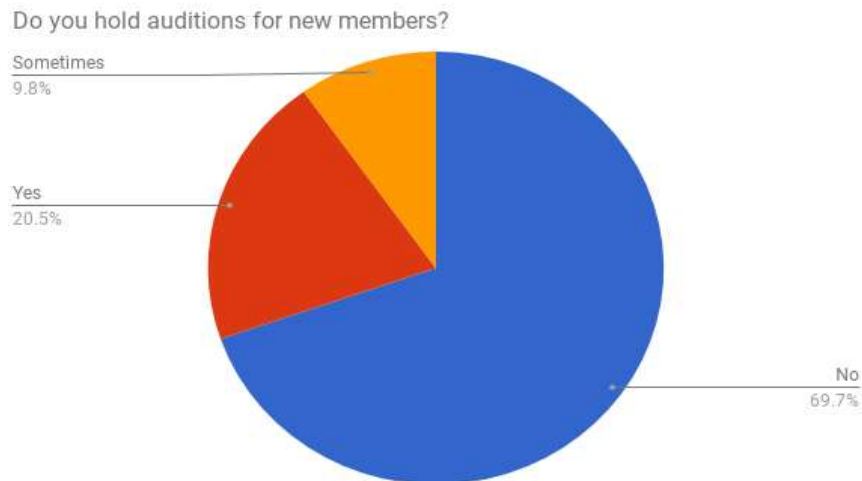


Figure 2.3: Rehearsing habits

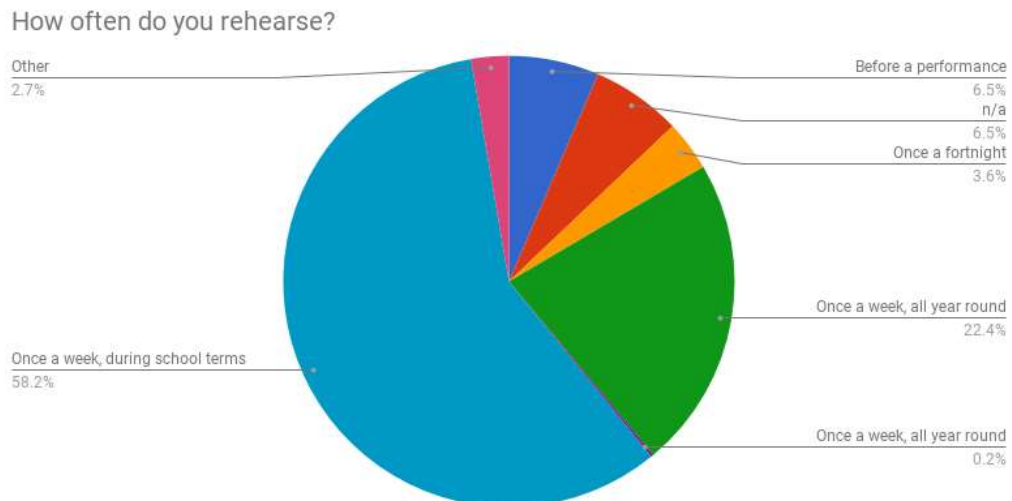
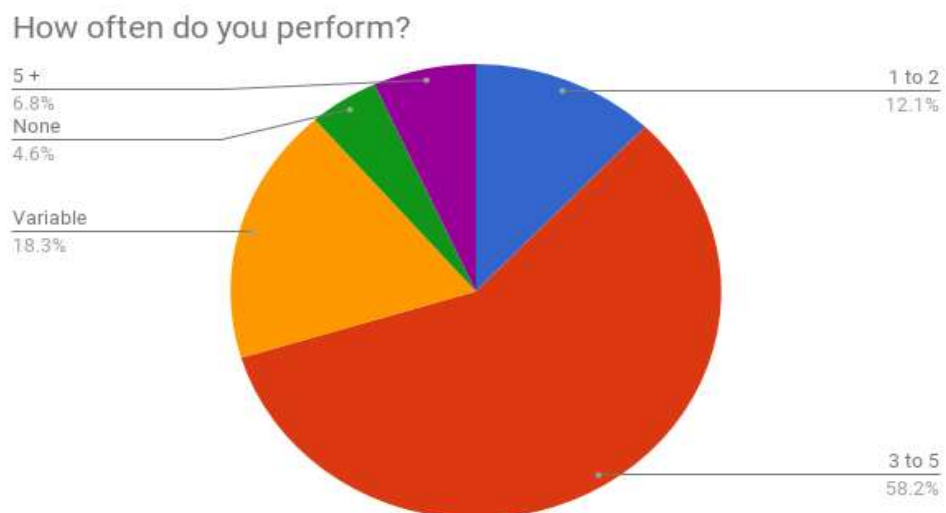


Figure 2.4: Performing habits (performances per year)



PART 2: THE EXPERIENCES OF LMG MEMBERS

3. The benefits of participation for LMG members

While the impact of leisure-time musical activity on participants was not the main focus of this research, a number of contextual questions were asked so that these findings could be cross-referenced with other studies on that theme. Respondents were asked to select from a range of motivations for musical participation, derived from previous studies (including Pitts, 2005) and to list any additional reasons in an optional 'other' category. The selected reasons for rehearsing, in decreasing order, are shown in Table 3.1: the small category of 'other' responses included some clarifications of the options provided (e.g. 'To meet new *and* like-minded people'), some additional reasons related to mental and physical health, confidence and relaxation, and a few 'not applicable' responses. Reasons for performing were considered in a separate question (see Table 3.2), and here the 'other' responses included fundraising, both for the ensemble and for local charities, and the provision of high quality music for local audiences.

Table 3.1 How would you describe the main benefits of rehearsing together in your group?

Selected reason	Number of responses	% (of 524 responses) ⁴
An opportunity to make music together	484	92%
A chance to challenge ourselves and develop our musical skills	453	87%
A way of getting to know new musical repertoire	417	80%
A way of being involved in musical performance	409	78%
An opportunity to have fun together	362	69%
A chance to spend time with like-minded people	361	69%
A chance to forget about other cares and demands in life	348	66%
A chance to meet people	315	60%
Other	61	12%

Table 3.2 How would you and your group's members describe the main benefits of performing together?

Selected reason	Number of responses	% (of 523 responses)
An opportunity to perform to an audience	446	85%
An opportunity to share the music we love	421	81%
A source of satisfaction after all our rehearsing	420	80%
A way to get a 'buzz' from performing	335	64%
A way to challenge ourselves and take musical risks	332	64%
A way of giving back to the community	321	61%
A bonding experience for members of the group	295	56%
A focus away from other cares and demands in life	262	50%
Other	81	15%

The balance of musical and social reasons for belonging to an LMG is evident in these responses, with a stronger emphasis on musical challenge and satisfaction than on group bonding and fun. This

⁴ Numbers of responses (shown in brackets in each table header) vary between tables because respondents had the option to omit questions in the survey.

is further explained by responses to the question ‘Do your members engage in social activities together around the rehearsals?’ (Table 3.3), where under half of respondents reported spending time together outside rehearsals, and several clarified that “only a small handful of us go to the pub after rehearsals” [314SO]⁵. Previous research with ‘lapsed’ players who had left LMGs found that a lack of social interaction could be problematic for new members, who often joined groups in search of like-minded friends but found that the music-making left little time for conversation (Pitts & Robinson, 2015). Two-thirds of the groups reported organising social events, so showing an awareness of the value of this non-musical group activity, and several of the ‘other’ responses to this question mentioned refreshments during or after rehearsals. One response summarised effectively how the purpose of LMG membership varies between groups and individuals: “I know some (but by no means all) of our members do go for drinks, meals, engage on social media, go to events and do many other things together, but some members don’t do any of these, they have other interests and just come to us to sing choral music” [352LC].

Table 3.3: Do your members engage in social activities together around the rehearsals?

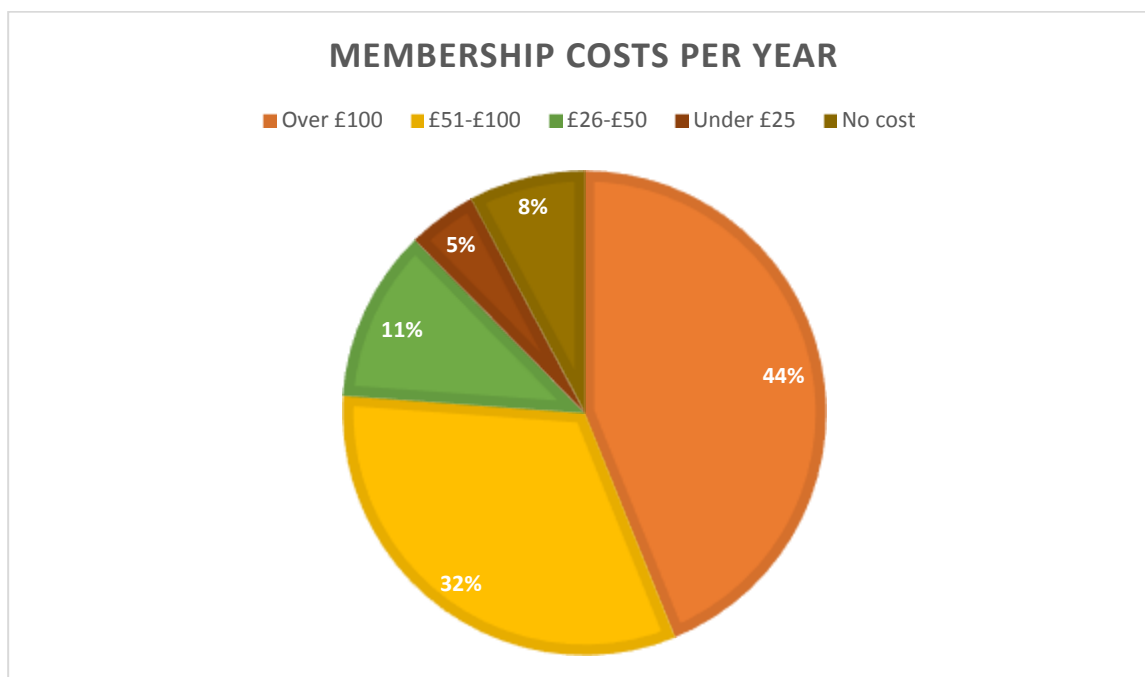
Selected response	Number of responses	% (of 499 responses)
Attending social events organised by the group	327	66%
Drinks in the pub after rehearsals	242	49%
Networking on social media between rehearsals	198	40%
Meeting up socially between rehearsals	181	36%
Eating together on the day of the concert	163	33%
Touring/performing away with the group	157	32%
Organising extra rehearsals together (e.g. sectionals)	135	27%
Other	84	17%

4. The costs of running and belonging to an LMG

Belonging to an LMG generally incurs a cost to members, in the form of termly or annual subscriptions (‘subs’), which contribute to covering the rehearsal expenses of room hire, music hire, payment of a conductor and/or rehearsal accompanist, and the equivalent costs associated with putting on performances. As with all responses in this survey, there were exceptions to this traditional model, with some groups paying their players rather than charging them, and others running their groups on a no-cost basis, inviting all-comers to free of charge community music-making sessions. Figure 4.1 shows 76% of respondents reporting membership charges of over £50 per annum (with 44% over £100), with some LMGs commenting on the efforts made to keep these charges as low as possible, in order to avoid the exclusion of younger and less affluent members (as explored further in Davis, 2016).

⁵ Responses are anonymous to comply with ethical approval for the project, and any identifying features of organisations and locations have been omitted. Each response has been assigned a number, followed by a code that indicates the type of group: ChC = chamber choir; CC = community choir; LC = large choir/choral society; O = opera group; B = barbershop choir; CO = chamber orchestra; SO = symphony/large orchestra; PG = promoting group; WCB = wind/concert band; BB = brass band; SI = single instrument (e.g. ukulele group, flute choir); RPB = rock/pop band; F = folk group; MT = musical theatre; no code = ensemble type not specified.

Figure 4.1: Costs of subscription or membership of LMGs



The survey did not ask for ticket income or other financial details, this feeling inappropriate for the first contact with organisations, however responses from people in chair and/or treasurer roles (n = 218) showed that the financial success of LMGs was felt to be a substantial responsibility. Growing organisations and their audiences was the most frequently mentioned priority in the open-ended questions, with comments relating to the need to grow membership, sometimes in the face of perceived competition from other local groups: “Growth in number of choirs [and] aging population both in audiences and members has had an effect on the society and its performances” [32LC]. Increasing subscription charges and ticket prices were both noted as unpopular choices for growing income, with the potential effects on excluding new, younger and less well-off members already noted in previous Making Music research (Davis, 2016): “Costs are making it difficult [and] concerts are making a loss. Members resent subs rise! Putting up ticket costs would hit players’ families” [110SO].

One cost facing most LMGs is provision of a weekly rehearsal venue, and here evidence emerged of a wide range of practices, some indicative of the LMGs’ contribution to other local organisations through their hire of premises, and others showing mutual support through discounted or free room hire. The venues used for rehearsing fell into three main categories (see Table 4.2), showing strong links between LMGs’ activities and the religious, educational and community buildings of their localities. Roughly half of the groups regularly used church halls (n = 152) or churches (n = 106) for their rehearsals, with charges varying widely from free use, to around £30 a week, through to over £3000 a year. Several respondents were aware that they were getting reduced rates, or were asked only to “contribute to heating” [295LC] or “make a donation” [300ChC], but a small number expressed concern that their local church or hall had increased charges recently: “Church Hall £1,800pa (although this is due to increase to £4,800pa in April!)” [538SO]. Schools were also popular venues for rehearsals, either in the hall or in specialist music rooms: only one respondent mentioned having to “clear desks for rehearsal space” [467SO]. Here again the costs were variable, at up to

£6000 a year, though also with many instances of free usage. The community hall settings adopted by 20% of groups included village and community halls, and seemed to be more consistently priced at around £30 for a two hour session. The private or commercial rooms used by the smallest number of groups were largely dependent on personal contacts, and included a few rehearsals in members' homes, sensitively described by one respondent as being "free to all members except [the host]" [380F]. Use of pub rooms was relatively rare, but here one of the clearest examples of mutual benefit was evident for the choir who rehearsed in an "Upper room in a bar/restaurant. Free as long as choir members buy drinks/dinner, including special choir dinners, e.g. Christmas dinner" [444ChC].

Table 4.2 Types of venue used as rehearsal spaces

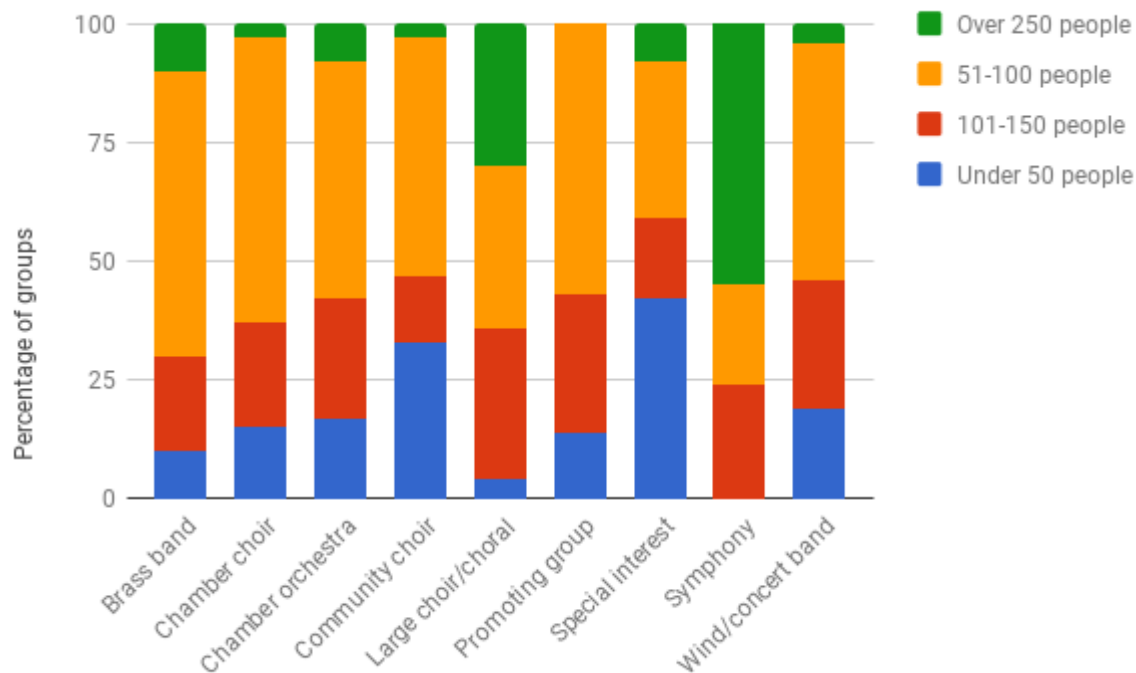
Type of venue	Number of responses	% (of 546 responses)
Church buildings (<i>including church/parish halls and churches</i>)	258	47%
Education buildings (<i>mainly schools, with some university and college halls</i>)	159	29%
Community buildings (<i>mainly community centres and village halls, with some youth club premises and social clubs</i>)	111	20%
Commercial/private buildings (<i>including members' homes, workplaces, pubs and arts centres/studios</i>)	38	7%

These results, although partial because many questionnaire respondents did not know or report the costs of room hire, suggest that the choice of rehearsal venue has a strong potential impact not only on LMGs' finances, but also on their local relationships. Rehearsing – and in many cases also performing – in a church building or parish hall could be seen as subliminal advertising to a cross-section of the community, and likewise, rehearsing in a school is one route into the educational links that were sought by many of the LMGs (*see further discussion in Section 7*).

5. LMGs and their audiences

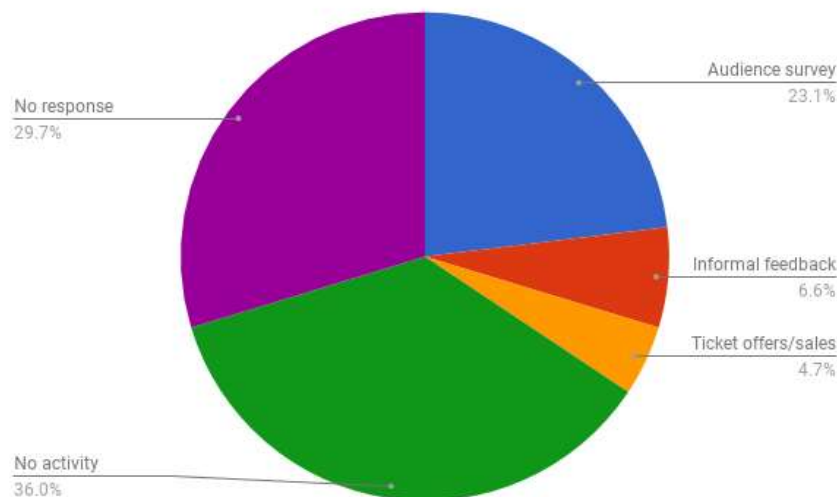
Performing for an audience topped the list of benefits of belonging to an LMG (see Table 3.2), and so attracting people to concerts and events was an important part of the musical life cycle for the majority of responding organisations. Not all responding organisations gave formal concerts, but most sought an audience of some kind for their music-making, even on an occasional or informal basis (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Audience size by group type



Despite some concerns expressed about the need to attract an audience, particularly for large organisations where the costs of putting on a concert are high, few organisations had carried out any deliberate investigation of their ‘market’, or who comes to their concerts and why (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Audience research activity reported by organisations



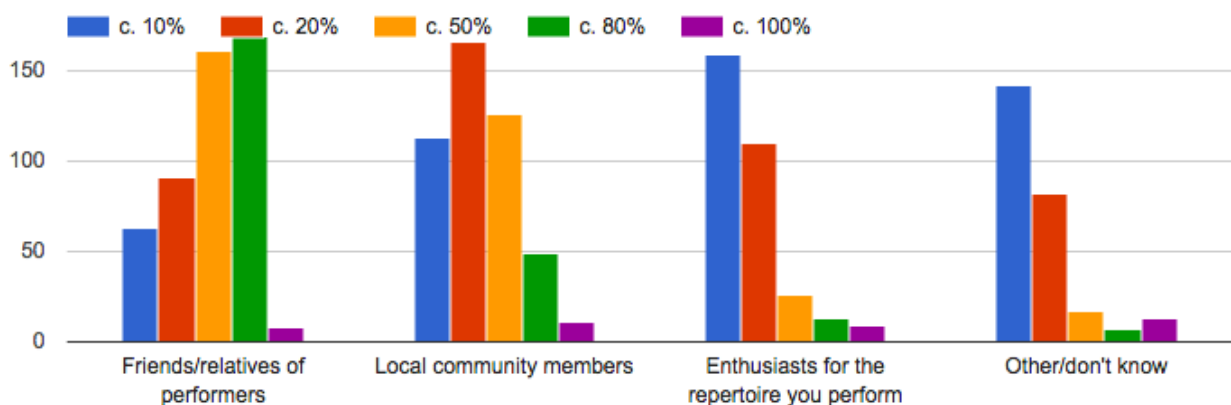
The groups most likely to carry out research were large orchestras (63% of whom had carried out a questionnaire survey), chamber orchestras (54%), chamber choirs (48%), and, least surprisingly, promoting groups (55%), whose main activity was organising concerts. However, very few LMGs wrote positively about their experience of surveying their audiences, reporting low return rates or responses that confirmed existing knowledge about those who were attending. Action that had been taken as a result of survey responses included the following:

- Modifying repertoire choices – including responding to requests for specific pieces, or for less/more familiar repertoire
- Changing approaches to advertising – such as reducing numbers of posters when few people had reported seeing them
- Addressing problems of accessibility – including improving seating arrangements and scheduling afternoon concerts for older audiences

Groups placed more confidence in ‘informal feedback’, despite its low reported use, commenting on how they know their audiences well and will take time to chat with them during interval breaks. Where audiences were small and/or local, groups felt well informed about their preferences and reactions, and where they were transitory (as for open air, community events), opportunities to find out more about the audience experience were felt to be difficult or unnecessary for the LMG to organise. Many groups reported that a high proportion of their audiences were friends and family, or local community members (see Figure 5.3), and this was reflected in the main strategies for ticket sales (reported below).

Figure 5.3: Estimated percentages of audience who are friends/relatives, local community, enthusiasts for repertoire, and other/don't know

Roughly what percentage of your audience falls into each of the following groups?



While groups appeared therefore to feel relatively confident that their existing audiences were loyal and satisfied supporters, they were alert to the need to attract new listeners and the difficulties of doing this in the absence of specific resources, skills or support. Groups used a variety of print and social media outlets to publicise their events, as shown by the responses to the question ‘How do you promote and/or sell tickets for your performances?’ (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: How do you promote and/or sell tickets for your performances?

Publicity strategy	Number of responses	% (of 404 responses)
Posters/flyers	280	69%
Members selling tickets	168	42%
Website	155	38%
Local magazine/newspaper listings	143	35%
Word of mouth	112	28%
(E-)mailing list	62	15%
Social media	54	13%
Cross-promotion with other groups	51	13%
Advertising/ticket sales done outside the LMG	54	13%
Local radio	41	10%
Friends/subscribers organisation	13	3%

Not all the responding LMGs give ticketed performances, and so some answers reiterated that position without describing publicity approaches or gave general answers like ‘advertising’: these were excluded from the count in Table 5.3, but do help to illustrate the variety of practices undertaken, with a trend towards social media and word of mouth advertising amongst those LMGs performing at free events. While the traditional media of posters and flyers are highest on the list of publicity strategies (69%), the strongest message is that LMG members themselves generate the majority of audience attenders. Word of mouth (28%) and members selling tickets to friends and family (42%) were the most successful approaches to attracting audiences, and some LMGs had organised schemes of member ticket sales, such as the choir whose “members are given a pack with promotional leaflets and tickets to sell” [228LC]. Use of websites appears surprisingly low at 38%: most LMGs had these, but a brief analysis of the language used on those sites suggests that they are aimed mainly at attracting new members, rather than audiences, and so featured less prominently as a publicity strategy for ticket sales.

It also appears that the term ‘promoting’ in the question may have been a distraction for some LMGs, as a later question asking specifically how groups engaged with local media yielded much stronger evidence on the usefulness of local newspapers, social media and cross-group promotions for attracting audiences (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5: How (if at all) do you work with local media to promote your concerts or your group?’

Media strategy	Number of responses	% (of 417 responses)
Local magazine/newspaper listings	312	75%
Social media	187	45%
Cross-promotion with other groups	121	29%
Local radio	89	21%
Local newspaper reviews	42	10%

Here the relationship with local print media was shown to be an important one for LMGs, with 75% of responding groups placing listings in local newspapers and magazines, or contributing longer features for publication. Making a musical event ‘newsworthy’ was known to be the way to achieve good local media coverage: “sometimes local newspaper and radio have covered a concert especially if it is something special e.g. the mayor is attending” [558LC]. Good relationships with local journalists were sometimes fostered through provision of free tickets to concerts, and in other cases

had been built up over time through personal connections, such as with “a supportive culture editor on the local paper” [275LC]. However, reviews of concerts were felt to be in decline, and several responses lamented the loss of an arts specialist reporter at the local newspaper in recent years. *(See further discussion of commercial and business relationships in Section 6)*

Sharing the effort of publicity with other groups was also a widely acknowledged strategy to improve coverage and reduce effort, and around a third of the groups (n = 121) reported exchanging promotional activity with other local musical groups, either through reciprocal advertising in their event programmes, or by re-tweeting or linking to online publicity materials. A few were also supported in this way by other local venues or organisations, including churches and libraries. Cross-promotion also included shared concerts, with a recognition that combining forces could draw in new audiences: “Sometimes we can team up with other groups for better concerts and marketing, e.g. for our recent Christmas show we had a local children’s brass band as the guest act, so both sets of friends and family could attend” [449LC]. *(See further discussion of reciprocal relationships with other LMGs in Section 8)*

PART 3: LEISURE-TIME MUSIC GROUPS & THEIR LOCALITIES

This part of the report turns in more detail to the relationships between LMGs and their localities, drawing on questions which asked directly about financial and in kind support from local groups and businesses, and on those which implicitly evidenced the connections between LMGs and other charitable and voluntary groups. Connecting with the local community was shown to be of variable importance to the responding organisations: there were relatively low expectations of financial support, but some frustration that in kind support was not more forthcoming in the form of publicity in local media, or concert attendance by local people beyond the immediate connections of the LMG members. Charitable and educational motivations to collaborate with other groups were qualitatively stronger drivers than financial partnerships, reflecting the main purpose of LMG membership as being to make music, rather than to run the organisation or publicise its activities.

6. Commercial connections: local businesses and sponsors

The survey asked about the financial relationships between LMGs and local businesses: whether support was provided by local businesses for the LMGs, and whether the groups’ activities generated custom for those local businesses. It was clear from the responses that this was a new consideration for many respondents, and evidence of such connections was frequently dismissed as being of limited importance: statements that “not much” business was generated were followed by lists of printing, refreshment and gift costs, suggesting that there might have been under-reporting of effects in some of the negative or blank responses. Some respondents, however, gave a clear account of how their events might impact upon local traders by “bringing 600-800 people into town centre who patronise local restaurants and shops” [63SO] and through expenditure by the LMG and its members: “Use local printers, interval refreshments onsite, people go out for food between rehearsal and concert. Buy conductor and soloist gifts locally” [155ChC].

Significant relationships were found through chi-square analysis between the likelihood of receiving support and providing local custom (Table 6.1), and also between the size of the LMG and the strength of connection with local businesses (Table 6.2).

Table 6.1: Significant relationship between custom generated for local businesses and support received by local businesses: ($\chi^2 = 36.36, p < .001$)

Custom generated for local businesses	Do you receive support from local businesses?		
	No	Occasionally	Yes
None/ very little	61%	13%	26%
Yes	34%	15%	51%

Table 6.2: Significant relationship between musical group type and whether support is provided by local businesses ($\chi^2 = 52.09, p < .001$)

	Do you receive support from local businesses?		
	No	Occasionally	Yes
Brass band	60%	0%	40%
Chamber choir	57%	19%	24%
Chamber orchestra	54%	15%	31%
Community choir	63%	13%	24%
Large choir/choral society	38%	11%	52%
Promoting group	7%	7%	86%
Special interest	82%	0%	18%
Symphony orchestra	27%	12%	61%
Wind/concert band	54%	19%	27%

These results show that promoting groups (86%) were best able to attract support from local businesses, perhaps seeing these commercial connections as an explicit part of their role to a greater extent than the performing groups. Examples provided included programme advertising and sponsorship from an optician, an estate agent, the local Rotary Club and various town trusts. Ensembles with the largest audiences (see Table 6.3) were also successful in securing business support, so creating another advantage for the established choral societies and orchestras who tended to attract these larger audiences to their formal concerts in traditional venues.

Table 6.3: Significant relationship between size of audience and whether support is provided by local businesses ($\chi^2 = 52.09, p < .001$)

Size of audience	Do you receive support from local businesses?		
	No	Occasionally	Yes
Under 50 people	68.89	6.67	24.44
51-100 people	57.42	12.9	29.68
101-150 people	38.68	19.81	41.51
151-250 people	24.3	16.82	58.88
Over 250 people	32.39	4.23	63.38

The responses of symphony orchestras suggest that members' employment connections and expertise were helpful in sourcing support, both financial and in kind, from local businesses and community organisations. Examples included "Christmas raffle donations by local businesses" [272SO], "occasional sponsorship of soloists (by individual benefactors)" [454SO], and "an advert from the employer of one of the orchestra" [94]. Orchestras were the groups most likely to mention grants and sponsorship, from sources including charitable trusts, local county councils and the John Lewis Foundation. By contrast, community choirs had more of a service provision relationship with

local charities, engaging in fundraising for other organisations and performing at care homes, local festivals and workplaces. This comparison shows a difference in organisational aims and performance agility – it being more possible to take a small choir into a care home than to muster a full orchestra – but perhaps also in the ‘cultural capital’ of different organisations, with orchestras more able to use their members’ business and social networks to leverage support for their activities. While the accuracy of this distinction needs further probing, the differences in the support accessible to different sizes and types of LMGs shows how a model of mutual support, such as that being established by Classical Sheffield, would particularly benefit smaller and more community-focused groups. Where several musical organisations in one locality might currently be competing for sponsorship and support, a collective attempt to demonstrate the power of these relationships between LMGs and the local community could have beneficial potential for all involved.

7. Educational connections: supporting local teachers and learners

The survey asked whether groups formed links with local groups of various kinds (schools, libraries, charities etc.), and here educational links emerged as the highest priority across the responses (38%), with local festivals also used for the recruitment of new members and audiences (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Does your group seek to make any connections with any particular community groups (e.g. libraries, schools, local festivals)?

Type of group	Number of responses	% (of 465 responses)
Schools/colleges	176	38%
Local festivals	123	26%
Community events	56	12%
Local charities	49	11%
Other LMGs	45	10%
Libraries	44	9%
Health/care settings	34	7%
Places of worship	26	6%
Music Hubs/Services	7	2%

Alongside these figures, which are relatively low in all areas other than schools and festivals, were a number of explanatory statements describing how forming community links had been tried “occasionally but it’s not been that successful” [299LC]. As with the other ‘extra’ activities of marketing and recruitment, finding time and resources to devote to building community links was reported to be too much of a demand for some groups, or something that “usually happens through individual connections of band members rather than organised committee based activity” [503J]. Such activity, where it succeeded, was deemed to be beneficial for the LMG, but was not wanted by all organisations: “No. We sing for our own pleasure. No stress.” [363CC].

While links with community organisations and institutions were therefore not widespread, the qualitative comments showed that they were highly valued as part of some LMGs’ regular activity. Supporting local schools, music teachers and young people was mentioned in reference to recruiting new members, changing the demographic of audiences, and securing the future of leisure-time music-making, with practical manifestations of this including the following:

- Sponsoring young players: e.g. *“We offer ‘scholarships’ (in effect free membership) to talented school age players identified through connections with local music teachers.”* [454SO]
- Advertising concerts to music teachers, schools and universities: *“We often inform music teachers in the area when a concerto relating to an instrument they teach is included in the next concerto programme, or when we are performing a work which might be of special interest, for example if it features in a music exam syllabus.”* [212SO]
- Sharing programming with youth and/or school ensembles: *“We invite school choirs to join in our bigger concerts.”* [319LC]
- Offering concerto and/or conducting opportunities to young players: *“We are in regular contact with our local University who often approach us to offer conducting opportunities to their students.”* [397SO]

Some LMGs reported obstacles to making contact with educational organisations, with one having “attempted to communicate with the local music education hubs but did not receive a single reply” [96PG], and several others judging that teachers and pupils were “too busy” with other priorities: “adult groups are seen not as a continuation of musical education but a distraction to hectic school activities that the school wants to showcase” [33WCB]. Variable success in making programming relevant was in evidence, from several LMGs who had “tried doing A Level syllabus programmes but not brought in great audiences” to one that had “made contacts with our local libraries, schools and churches. We now approach them with ideas for performances and they also contact us” [220LC].

The most effective relationships between LMGs and schools seemed to occur either through personal contacts, where “some of the players are instrumental teachers who will encourage pupils to come to concerts or join” [121SO], or through sustained partnership activity, such as “involv[ing] a different local junior school in our Christmas concert each year” [85LC]. Regular programming in conjunction with schools and competitive festivals was also a recurring theme, with examples including a “project with the town’s primary school to introduce them to working musicians and their instruments, once a term” [293PG], programming “a specific concert each year aimed at children” [549] and holding “an annual ‘try without commitment’ open rehearsal to interested young people aged 11 to 17” [392LC].

The markers of ‘success’ in these partnerships were implicit in the responses that talked (positively or negatively) about changes in audience size and demographic, and securing new membership for the LMG. Those who seemed most satisfied with the effort they were putting into educational activities were the LMGs who saw an immediate benefit, such as a soloist for a performance, or those who felt an ethical obligation to encourage young people into music-making: “Part of our mission statement as a charity is to ‘educate’ and we work closely with local schools. This year we put on a concert based upon the BBC ‘Ten Pieces’ and were joined in performance by 35 local secondary school musicians.” [236SO]. Another group reported that “We feel it is essential to encourage younger players and we are starting to work with the Head of Music at the school where we rehearse” [186SO]. With 29% of LMGs (see Table 4.2) rehearsing in education buildings, the potential for forming links with those institutions exists more widely, though this would require LMGs having “funding and appropriate people to run the project” [210SO] and overcoming the difficulty that it can be “difficult to work with schools as many of the choir work during the day” [219ChC].

8. Reciprocal connections: working with other LMGs and charities

The responses that detailed working with charities and other LMGs were notably more fully developed than some of those on business connections, suggesting that these reciprocal and charitable connections are a more familiar part of how LMGs think and talk about themselves. LMGs had clearer measures of success for these activities than for their business links, and there were some striking examples of the numbers of people reached or the funds raised through these kind of community-facing projects:

- Large-scale fundraising events: *“Concerts are often repeated in a local village with a profit sharing scheme. We run a biennial (approx) Big Sing in conjunction with a local charity to raise funds for them, or for a good cause. The first one for the Tsunami fund had over 1000 people attending; others usually around 400 or so – it varies.”* [143ChC]
- Multiple small-scale events: *“Since we began in 2014, our popularity has spread to the extent that we are approached directly several times per week by different care home managers / community event organisers and have now reached the stage where we have more requests for bookings than we are able to fulfil. This does not mean we'd ever rule out working with any new community group, just that our care homes & schools performances takes up almost all our free time just now.”* [192WCB]

While the quote above highlights a problem of capacity to fulfil all the requests that might be made of a group, the sense that ‘success breeds success’ was much more evident here than in discussions of audience development, member recruitment and business links, where comments were more likely to reflect discouragement at the effort involved in setting up or sustaining projects. Choirs of all sizes and types seemed to be the most active in charity and community work, with projects covering work in prisons, hospices, care homes, homeless shelters and addiction recovery programmes. Christmas carol singing was an annual community outreach link for several choirs, taking them into care settings and commercial venues, including shopping areas and garden centres, so combining promotional and fundraising work with sharing musical enjoyment: one choir described how singing in retirement flats “generates some income and is a welcome opportunity for residents who cannot get into the community to enjoy carols” [73LC].

Activities were specific to local needs and opportunities, including the community choir who meet “next to our local hospice and they have invited us to sing to the patients in daycare” [384CC], and the opera group exploring unusual venues in their vicinity: “we are developing connections with the skate park and other local groups connected to venues – we are exploring new possibilities to sing at historical sites” [225O]. This last example starts to show the continuum from community engagement to audience development, expressed more explicitly by the orchestra who “have a specific charity for each concert, who sell tickets for their own funds and have a stall/display at the interval of the concert. They gain funds and exposure, we gain audience members who may (hopefully!) become regular attenders” [535SO]. Connections with the community are therefore shown to be multiply beneficial, for the organisations who are reached, the audiences that might flourish as a result, and for the performing members themselves.

LMGs also reported on how they help one another, both through shared publicity and events (as discussed in Section 5), and through aligning their activities with those of other local groups, musical and otherwise. One example of supporting a leisure-time arts pursuit outside music was the link between a promoting group and a local art club who “are allowed to sketch performers throughout

the concert – provided they show us their work afterwards. It’s quite a challenge when you can’t ask someone to hold a pose, repeat an action!” [293PG]. Where local competitive music festivals existed, these had reciprocal benefits of challenging performers and publicising the LMG’s activities: “Members enter classes [...] and the choir has also performed in the competition – this is another way for people to discover us, and a great way to hear new repertoire and meet other singers” [268ChC].

Some LMGs reported responding to invitations from their local councils to perform at civic functions: these included bands and choirs who were involved with Remembrance Day and Christmas public events, and one chamber orchestra who had “represented the city at twinning event overseas” [60CO]. There were several affiliations with local National Trust properties, used as performance venues for both formal and ‘pop up’ concerts. A barbershop group reported that they organised concerts only occasionally, more often singing by invitation, “some paid, some charitable” [350B]. This comment highlighted the mixed economy of LMGs, with local relationships potentially different for those who organise their own series of concerts each year (typically large choirs and orchestras), compared to those who make themselves available for paid bookings (most often wind and brass bands): one concert band described their performance venues as including “Bandstands, Village halls, Churches, Fetes, Private Bookings. Either we are booked and paid, or perhaps once a year we hire premises, around £250, and expect to make a profit” [206WCB]. For the community choirs who most often give informal performances, the reciprocal relationships are different again (see Section 6). The extent to which different sizes and types LMGs operate as commercial or charitable organisations needs further exploration through the case study phase of this research, with a consideration of how clear LMGs are in these conceptions of their work, and how this affects the challenges of member and audience development.

PART 4: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this survey show how LMGs of all sizes, genres and varieties play a strong role in the lives of their members, their loyal audiences, and potentially their wider communities. There was evidence of LMGs being both receptive and proactive in their links with local businesses, schools and community groups, from responding to invitations to perform at civic events and in care settings, to setting up their own connections to support local young people and charities. Activities were in many cases closely connected to the needs of the local community, and had often come about through a link with a particular member or their employer, or the proximity of a rehearsal venue to an identifiable opportunity. There was undoubtedly greater scope for LMGs to pursue such community and business links, but an acknowledged restriction on the capacity and resources needed to explore those opportunities to the full. This report ends with a summary of the main findings and an invitation to further discussion on the implications of this research for LMGs and their communities.

9. Summary of research findings

This survey represents the first nationwide study of the impact of LMGs on their local communities, and while the planned next stage of research involving in-depth consideration of specific musical groups, locations and activities will provide additional insight, some initial answers to the research questions can be stated here:

a) How do leisure-time musical groups (LMGs) perceive their roles and relationships with their local communities?

LMGs have a range of potential connections with their localities, from the commercial links of being supported by businesses and councils through advertising, funding and status (see Section 6), through the educational links of encouraging younger players and providing input to school and community projects (Section 7), to the reciprocal links of working alongside other LMGs, charities and community groups (Section 8). These connections sometimes prioritise musical benefits, as when LMGs offer informal performances to disadvantaged groups, and at other times are financially driven, through fundraising with or for local groups – and the two priorities often coincide, arguably with the greatest mutual benefit to LMGs and their community partners. Connections with local businesses, charities, community groups and other LMGs were an end in themselves for some groups, but for others were a way of building reputation and reach, in order to facilitate the continued activities of the LMG. A strong message to come from this survey, therefore, is that clarity of purpose is an important factor in building such community relations. Linking with the locality can serve many useful purposes for an LMG, for recruitment, financial stability, members' satisfaction and enjoyment, and altruistic benefit to the community – and indeed these goals will overlap and have unexpected benefits as relationships thrive and community connections build over time. However, confusion of purpose, such as hoping that a one-off pop-up performance will necessarily yield a growth in audiences for formal performances, is an obvious source of frustration that could be avoided with clearer thinking on the aims of events.

b) In what ways do LMGs consider themselves to be supported or hindered in their activities by other local groups or organisations?

There were some examples of strong links between LMGs and specific local community groups, built up through personal connections arising from members' work or other activities, and illustrating the amount of time and repeat interactions needed to create a lasting relationship. LMGs generally felt less well-connected with local businesses, and although there were a few reports of small council grants and advertising sponsorship, support was more likely to be 'in kind', such as the display of posters for concerts or the use of local shops to sell tickets. A trend emerged of such support being in decline, particularly in relation to local newspapers, where arts reporting had been reduced in recent years such that LMGs were finding it hard to get coverage for events beyond the listings pages, for which there was sometimes an advertising charge. The greatest support came from other LMGs, and there were numerous examples of cross-promotion of events, sometimes relatively informally through shared email lists, and in other cases through deliberate programming of joint concerts to attract larger audiences. Levels of support, therefore, were low overall, and LMGs were relatively self-sufficient in their reaching out to local communities as potential members and audiences, with only a few examples of groups being regularly invited to contribute to organised community events.

c) To what extent do LMGs feel a responsibility to their local community, and how is this manifest in their activities?

Within the categories of commercial, education and reciprocal links, the latter two were an integral part of LMG life for many groups, but the financial drive of making commercial links was felt to be peripheral to all but the semi-professional and promoting groups. The sense of responsibility was musically driven, with a desire to encourage young players and provide musical enjoyment for residents of care homes and hospices a much stronger motivator than being aligned with local

businesses. For the majority of LMG members, the opportunity to make music is the primary purpose of their membership, and the organisational and financial aspects of running an LMG were sometimes described as a distraction from the main activity of collective music-making. A stronger sense of pride in the place of an LMG in its locality could be derived from groups' websites, which often made reference to the number of years or decades that a group had existed, and also to past concert successes or locally renowned conductors or soloists. This evidence beyond the survey suggests that there is more to be understood about how LMGs feel embedded in their local settings – and indeed the extent to which non-participating local residents are aware and passively supportive of LMGs' activities.

d) What is the current impact of LMG activity upon local communities?

The few responses that itemised the effect of a concert night on the local town centre – through increased footfall, spend in restaurants and bars, parking and transport fares and so on – suggested that this was an atypical way for LMGs to think about their activities, and that more could therefore be done to calculate this financial benefit and so strengthen the arguments for supporting the existence of such groups and events. With a high proportion of audience members being drawn from friends and relatives and the local community, the impact of LMGs on the cultural life of local residents is also likely to be currently underestimated, and there is interesting work to be done on investigating whether the consumption of LMG/amateur performance follows the same trends as attendance at concerts and arts events more widely. If LMG performances were a 'way in' to professional arts attendance, their contribution to the cultural life of the country would be far beyond the benefits to their members – and there would be much wider potential for reciprocal marketing and audience development. Classical Sheffield (reported on briefly in Section 2.2) is one organisation aiming to bridge the gaps between participants and audiences, professionals and amateurs, and there was some evidence in the survey responses of music festivals and community events doing likewise in other areas of the country. Currently, however, it is clear that the impact of LMG activity is being seriously under-represented in debates about arts funding, audience development and arts education, and there is potential for the lifelong musical enthusiasts that make up LMG membership to play a far greater role in shaping the musical future of the UK.

e) What are the obstacles and drivers to increasing any positive impact that currently exists?

The time, effort and expertise needed to foster community links was often cited as an obstacle to increasing the positive impact of LMGs on their localities, and was felt by some respondents to be a distraction from the main business of making music. There were several instances where LMGs' expectations of the 'success' of particular activities seemed unrealistic, with a risk that these expectations were limiting continued effort to achieve social goals. In surveying their audiences (see Section 5) for example, some groups had been put off by response rates that would be normal for a standard research project ("less than 50%" [229LC]), and similarly, the recruitment of new members from promotional activities (see Section 7) might reasonably be expected to have a small immediate effect. One potential impact of this report, therefore, is to share practice amongst LMGs and give a broader perspective on strategies for audience and member development that have worked for other groups, or where more time might usefully be invested for greater results. Greater understanding is also needed of how LMGs are perceived by their non-members and non-audiences in any given locality: in the same way that residents of a community might express support for its libraries and arts venues without necessarily using them, the latent support for LMGs could be

mobilised to demonstrate their impact even on non-users, as well as to understand the factors that limit greater engagement from currently under-represented groups.

10. What next?

From the many examples of thriving LMGs and good practice featured in this report, the following points of discussion are offered as a starting point for further investigation and potential changes in practice:

- *What are LMGs aiming to achieve through building community links?* The survey included successful examples of LMGs supporting the next generation of players through links with schools, providing musical enjoyment for disadvantaged community groups, encouraging new members through the visibility of the LMG, and securing sponsorship to support the costs of rehearsing and performing. However, there were also indicators of LMGs struggling to meet demand or achieve their desired results through activities of these kind, and the report shows a need for LMGs who are aiming to increase their community links to have a clearer vision for what they hope to achieve.
- *How could LMGs be more strongly connected with music education in their communities?* The hope of supporting young players/singers into lifelong musical engagement was prominent in the survey responses, and many LMGs had made effective use of their links with local schools, often initiated by members who were teachers, or by the sharing of rehearsing and performing spaces. As a collective national force, LMGs could have a strong role to play in advocating for musical education and participation, and Making Music is currently working with its members on overcoming some of the hurdles identified in responses where there had been limited engagement with schools.
- *How are LMGs perceived by local residents who rarely or never come into contact with them?* The survey responses hint at a latent support for LMG activity in local communities, where the presence of a music-making group might bring character and cultural identity to an area, even for those residents who are not actively involved. LMGs have some access to this knowledge through their audiences, who are predominantly friends, family and local community members, and through their wider network of non-attending neighbours and colleagues. Just as professional arts promoters seek to understand their missing audiences in order to have a wider reach and a clearer awareness of how they are perceived, so LMGs could learn more about how they are viewed in their communities, and so potentially about their local value and influence. Additional insight could be gained through mapping the overlap between different community groups, and so potentially sharing resources between them, drawing on the willingness and energy of socially-minded individuals⁶ to generate the publicity, recruitment and financial support that creates an additional pressure on LMG committees and members.

This nationwide survey has helped to clarify the questions and challenges facing LMGs, to provide evidence of their current value to participating members, audiences and local communities, and to identify the sources of support needed to mobilise their potential benefits to the individuals,

⁶ Robert Putnam's (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* shows how civic engagement in one area is often indicative of a willingness to engage in other ways: thus the members of other leisure-time groups could be a source of the support that LMGs feel to be lacking in raising funds, promoting activities etc. – and vice versa.

businesses, charities and community groups that make up their localities. Planning is now underway to begin a second phase of research that investigates more deeply the stories and experiences that lie beneath these survey responses, and so to form a more regional- and genre-specific understanding of how LMGs shape – and are shaped by – their communities.

Responses to this report are welcome via sparc@sheffield.ac.uk or info@makingmusic.org.uk and I look forward to continuing this process of discovery with current and future participants in the research.

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Appendix A: Online survey tool

Making Music survey - the value of musical groups to their communities

[Text extracted from Google Forms survey, distributed December 2016]

As part of a research project led by the Sheffield Performer and Audience Research Centre (SPARC), based in the Department of Music at the University of Sheffield, we'd like to ask a few questions about your musical group and its links with your local community. Quite a lot is already known about the many benefits of musical participation (although we'll ask some questions about how that applies in your organisation), but we'd like to know more about the difference it makes to a local area if there is music-making happening there.

Please answer for your group as best you can, and we'll ask you at the end if you'd be willing to talk further about these ideas through an interview or further research. We're happy to have multiple responses from groups, so please pass on the questionnaire if you think someone else in your group would also be well-placed to answer it. The questionnaire should take 20-30 minutes to complete, depending on how much you write, and you're welcome to skip over questions that you're not sure about or that you'd rather not answer.

All responses that you provide will be treated in confidence, and your group and its members will not be named in any publications arising from this study. We hope that the results of this survey will be useful to organisations like yours in helping you to explain to funders, audiences and potential new members the value of your musical activity.

If you have questions about the research, please get in touch with the SPARC Director, Professor Stephanie Pitts on s.e.pitts@sheffield.ac.uk

Required questions:

To comply with the ethical approval granted to this research by the University of Sheffield, please tick to confirm that you understand the nature of your participation:

- I understand that my responses will be treated in confidence, and that neither I nor my group will be named in any publications arising from this research
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I can leave out any questions that I would prefer not to answer

Now please tick to confirm that you give your consent for your answers to be used in one or both of the following ways:

- By the SPARC research team in their writing and presenting on musical participation
- By our partner organisations, Making Music and Classical Sheffield, in their advocacy for amateur music-making

* * *

Section 2: About your group

Please start by telling us a little about your group and its activities. Throughout the survey, if you're not sure about an answer, you can skip to the next question.

What is the name of your group? (This will help us read more about it on your website, if you have one, but we will not identify the group in our research reports.)

What kind of group is it? (please tick)

- Symphony orchestra
- Chamber orchestra
- Large choir/choral society
- Chamber choir
- Musical theatre group
- Wind/concert band
- Brass band
- Rock/pop band

- Folk group
- Jazz group
- Other:

Do you hold auditions for new members?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

How often does your group rehearse?

- Once a week, all year round
- Once a week, during school terms
- Once a week, in the 3-4 weeks leading up to a concert
- Once a fortnight

Other:

How often does your group perform?

- We don't give performances
- Once or twice a year
- Three to five times a year
- Variable amounts, depending on bookings/events

Other:

And please tell us your role(s) in the organisation:

- Performing member
- Musical director/Conductor
- Committee member
- Chair/President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

Other:

Please add clarifications to any of the answers above, if you feel you need to:

Section 3: About your rehearsals

How would you describe the main benefits of rehearsing together in your group? *(Please tick all that apply.)*

- An opportunity to make music together
- An opportunity to have fun together
- A chance to challenge ourselves and develop our musical skills
- A chance to forget about other cares and demands in life
- A chance to meet people
- A chance to spend time with like-minded people
- A way of getting to know new musical repertoire
- A way of being involved in musical performance

Other:

Do your members engage in social activities together around the rehearsals?

- Drinks in the pub after rehearsals
- Networking on social media between rehearsals
- Eating together on the day of the concert
- Meeting up socially between rehearsals
- Organising extra rehearsals together (e.g. sectionals)
- Attending social events organised by the group
- Touring/performing away with the group

Other:

Turning to the practicalities of rehearsing, please tell us the type of venue (e.g. church hall; community centre) where you rehearse - and (if you know) how much this costs the organisation.

What are the other costs (approx.) of putting on your rehearsals (e.g. paying a conductor and/or pianist, hiring music)?

What are the costs to members of rehearsing with your organisation?

- No fees/subscription costs
- Under £25 a year
- £26-£50 a year
- £51-£100 a year
- Over £100 a year

Section 4: About your performances

If your group is a performing organisation, please tell us now about the impact of your performance on members and the wider community. (If your group doesn't give concerts or performances, you can skip over these questions.)

How would you and your group's members describe the main benefits of performing together? *(Please tick all that apply.)*

- An opportunity to perform to an audience
- A way to get a 'buzz' from performing
- A source of satisfaction after all our rehearsing
- A way to challenge ourselves and take musical risks
- A bonding experience for members of the group
- A focus away from other cares and demands in life
- A way of giving back to the community
- An opportunity to share the music we love

Other:

Please tell us the type of venue (e.g. school hall, theatre) where you perform and (if you know) how much this costs the organisation.

What are the other costs (approx.) of putting on a concert (e.g. paying a conductor and/or musicians, publicity, refreshments)?

Do any local businesses, charities or other organisations directly support your concerts (e.g. through advertising in the programme, sponsorship, fundraising etc.)?

Are you aware of your concerts generating any custom for local businesses (e.g. use of local printers or photographers, buying flowers/gifts for soloists etc.)?

Section 5: About your audiences

How do you promote and/or sell tickets for your performances - and how successful are these approaches?

What is the approximate size of the audience for one of your performances?

- Under 50 people
- 51-100 people
- 101-150 people
- 151-250 people
- Over 250 people

Other:

Roughly what percentage of your audience falls into each of the following groups? *[Options: 10%, 20%, 50%, 80%, 100%]*

- Friends/relatives of performers
- Local community members
- Enthusiasts for the repertoire you perform
- Other/don't know

Has your group tried to find out more about your audiences? If so, please tell us about this, including any action you took as a result.

Section 6: Outreach and recruitment

If you have recently done any work to recruit new members to your group or your audiences – or intend to do so in the future – we would be interested to hear about this.

To the best of your knowledge, how do new members find out about joining your group?

Does your group seek to make any connections with any particular community groups (e.g. libraries, schools, local festivals)? If so, please tell us more about this.

How (if at all) do you work with local media to promote your concerts or your group (e.g. local newspapers, social media groups, cross-promoting other groups/festivals)?

Section 7: Some concluding thoughts

In case we've missed anything earlier in the questionnaire, we'd like to ask for a few concluding thoughts...

Is there anything else you'd like to add to your responses before finishing?

If you would be willing to take part in a short interview or discussion group about your organisation's activities, please indicate that by leaving your name and email address here:

Just before we finish, we'd like to know a little more about your group to help us compare answers across different types of organisation. Please tell us the approximate age profile of your membership: *[Options: 10%, 20%, 50%, 80%, 100%]*

- Under 25
- 26-40
- 41-60
- 61-75
- Over 76

What proportion of those members live locally to where the group rehearses? *[Options: 10%, 20%, 50%, 80%, 100%]*

- Within 15 minutes' travel time
- Within 30 minutes
- Within an hour
- Over an hour away
- Other/don't know

How closely does your group fit the ethnic diversity of your community?
[Scale from 1/not at all representative to 5/very representative]