



CO:NOISE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT EVALUATION

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Appendices not included due to sensitivity/GDPR	



Project Impact in Numbers

Activity	Participants	Audience	Sessions
Primary school workshops	55	-	2
Secondary school workshops	15	-	1
Community workshops	39	-	6
Participatory performance events	19	54	2
Online (web, social media)	-	704	-
Broadcast	-	5619 ¹	-
TOTAL	128	6377	11
Professional artists	2		
Volunteers	3		

Note: Online audience likely to include participants because we uploaded instructions for people to build their own instruments to our website, but it's not possible to estimate the age of website visitors.



¹ BBC Radio Cornwall five minute segment: calculated as most recently available weekly listening figures from Rajar divided by 7 days, and divided by 3 (morning, afternoon, evening) = $(118,000/7)/3 = 5,619$

Artistic Development

Key outcomes and learning

- Artists developed skills in creating instruments (particularly the use of electronics), leading group improvised performances, and delivering workshops
- We now have better instruments developed for workshops and performances that help reduce barriers to participation for children
- We increased, and evidenced, ideas and knowledge for how to reduce barriers to participation for children such as introducing gamification, conducting and visualization
- Using electronics to develop instruments requires more theory than estimated, which can limit development and/or cost time
- Artists gained unexpected interests in future work: Martin ignited an interest in working with children and larger group improvisation as part of his future practice; Matt gained an interest gamification and in developing more conducting skills to aid participation

Delivering and developing workshops with children

There were nine workshop sessions delivered in total. Most were run by both Matt and Martin, but due to scheduling, Matt ran a primary school workshop and a community workshop alone. We learnt that with careful planning, workshops can be delivered with one facilitator, but benefit from two facilitators as there is occasional need for one-to-one technical support.

Matt and Martin worked well together during the workshops and were able to reflect on work in an honest, open, and constructive manner.

We took feedback and our own observations to develop the workshops, and each workshop introduced a different way of doing things, and a new or developed activity. This means we have better workshop plans for the future, and scope to introduce other new ideas.

As we collected insights about how children responded to making instruments, we introduced new or updated instruments to each workshop, which provided good research to use in the future.

Delivering and developing instruments and participatory performances with children

Matt and Martin both vastly increased skills in instrument design and met the aim of developing instruments that were affordable to make, intuitive, easy to build, and sound instantly good. Instruments developed/researched were: 'Jumping speaker', various synthesizer modules (amplifier, oscillator, frequency modulator, ring modulator, tremolo, sequencer), magnetic tape head instrument, contact mic instruments, string drones. The instruments varied in their ease for children to make. For those that were more complicated, they are likely to be able to be made over a series of workshops and/or could inspire children to want to learn more. Those more complex instruments were an inspiring addition to our participatory performance 'noise stations'.

Much of the focus was on breadboard synthesizers because these could be easily adapted or added to by the children themselves, and children were surprised that they were able to make them – meeting the aim of developing ways to remove barriers to music for children.

Participatory performance activities provided lots of learning, and were developed heavily during the project. We were able to understand the best ways to help children be inspired and develop skills. Age, type of instruments, type of support (people, visual, or explanation) were important factors, and gamification became a new approach to take forward.

Developing as artists

Confidence in delivering music workshops has increased for both artists, particularly with larger groups of younger people, and in explaining technical tasks. Both have a better and more practical understanding of how to help young people overcome various barriers to taking part.

One artist (Martin Pease), gained a greater interest in working with children than he previously had, and he is now working out ways to turn his work as an artist into a sustainable career.

Both artists learnt that to achieve harmonious music in group performances, both gaming and the onstage support of parents (and likely, teachers) is important for primary/reception age children.

For secondary age children gamification, visualization, and the inclusion of experienced adult musicians is key to improving quality particularly for those who don't play an instrument. There is a benefit of including 'regular' instruments such as guitars if they are presented in a way that requires no prior experience, as this helps guide the sound of the performance for the audience to enjoy, and helps inspire those who may already be learning an instrument but could be at risk of stopping.

In future we need to allow more time for around learning about electronics because this did limit some of our work and impacted on development time.

'Martin was good at the workshops too so he's developed in confidence having been thrown in the deep end with the primary school the other week. He managed them well.... He also added his own versions of imagery to explain things (e.g. water and taps...)' – Matt Ashdown, Moogie Wonderland



Engagement with Children and Young People

"I had a great time! I loved the whole day. Really liked playing the string instruments and guitars like drums!" – workshop participant

I don't play an instrument because "Mum says it's too expensive" – workshop participant

Key outcomes and learning

- We have a greater understanding of the musical backgrounds of children in the area, with younger children having little musical background due to lack of opportunity
- Feedback shows most children who participated enjoyed the activities and developed an interest in building instruments, performing in groups, and experimental ways of playing music
- Workshop leader reports show that almost all children approached the activities with confidence as a result of our development work to reduce barriers to participation, and in group sessions, valued the social element of meeting other children.
- Teachers said they were very pleased with the workshops, and reported that pupils continued playing with the instruments they made at home; several parents told us that they plan to get more electronic components for their children to make more instruments
- Having parents and/or experienced musicians involved in the participatory performances alongside the children was reported to increase confidence in children to participate, experiment, and encouraged higher quality group performance
- Gamification, visualization and conducting helped the children perform to an instantly higher standard during participatory performances
- Secondary schools were difficult to get bookings with – evidence and promotional material will now help, as will taking a different approach such as networking or peer-to-peer recommendations between teachers
- Participants expressed surprise at their own ability, and at the ease of being able to make/perform on the instruments, according to feedback
- Separating the workshops into 'making' and 'performance' provides better clarity and particularly increases the quality of the performance workshop
- Having our own venue for workshops, performances and other future activities (such as a children's experimental orchestra) is a new aspiration based on practicality
- The events can benefit children with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities
- Four instrument building tutorials were added to our website, which parents had seen for their children to use – there is material for several more tutorials
- A radio station has confirmed it will play some of the performance recordings on air

Summarised feedback and thoughts after workshops with primary groups:

Having engaged with 55 year 5 children (aged 8/9) the evidence suggests that the majority do not currently play an instrument and the main reason being lack of opportunity/ access to one.

Those who do currently play an instrument mainly focus on guitar or keyboard - both being traditionally non-orchestral instruments, therefore not presenting much opportunity early-on to play in groups or orchestras.

The majority of the students circled 3 and 4 out of 10 for their electronic music knowledge - having very little awareness before the workshop.

Each workshop included a performance / 'jam session' which was vital for children to understand how to play together - making sounds or staying silent – supporting listening and performance. However, it would be beneficial to provide separate performance workshops to better develop group performance, improvisation, and experimental music making skills.

Feedback from the school and teachers was very positive and both teachers reported that the children had taken the instruments home and continued to play with them.

For the future: it would be great to see if after school clubs could be set up where more building of instruments could take place but also where more performance skills and experimentation could happen. One key development would be to look at visual score, where the children map out compositions visually and creatively and groups play together - creating noise and soundscapes.

Summarised feedback and thoughts after workshops with secondary groups:

St Ives School booked a session at the end of the project - we ran one workshop for 15 pupils (2 workshops for 8 pupils each wasn't possible). All were music students, but played at varying levels.

14 out of the 15 students enjoyed all elements of the workshop – there was lots of discussion about the activities, interest, and expressions of enjoyment. The performance element was a little discordant, and so it would benefit from being its own separate workshop. Several students expressed surprise at uncovering new skills and hadn't known how easy it could be to make an electronic instrument.

Feedback from the teacher was that she was very pleased with the workshop and the response from the pupils, and is interested in: future workshops, the idea of a 'synth building club' and an experimental schools orchestra.

"That was excellent, thank you! I'd love for you to do some more. We only show children how to use standard instruments and we can't do things on the music tech side of things, so this has been brilliant for the them. It's such a different side of making music that they are used to." – Annabel Williams, Head of Music, St Ives School

"This is much better than my other classes" - participant

"Wow, this is so cool!" - participant (after switching on their newly made synth for the first time)

It was difficult to get other secondary schools to sign up, and no schools in Penryn or Falmouth responded. We'll be able to use the evidence from this project to help in future. We learnt we need a different approach such as networking and encouraging teacher peer-to-peer recommendations.

Summarised feedback and thoughts after workshops with Community groups:

Over five community workshop sessions, 39 children took part (not including repeat attendance) and approximately 30 parents attended in support.

The children's feedback was overwhelmingly positive with 100% of collected feedback stating that they would want to do another workshop. 98% surveyed rated it 8-10/10 for enjoyment and/or expressed lots of enjoyment and interest.

Their suggestions of 'where it would fit' would be to include sessions such as the co:noise workshop in science class - as the link to electronics is really tangible and made fun.

Both boys and girls were fascinated by the technology and equipment and parents were really intrigued and supportive of their engagement – several commenting that they will get more components for their children to make more, and had seen the website tutorials we put online.



The performance element was difficult to coordinate within earlier workshops as it they were more of a drop in set-up - therefore the plans had to be flexible and more led by the flow of participants.

'Performance element needs focus although was best so far. I think we basically need to separate the workshops and do them as a series: 1: making 2: performing, rather than part of the same workshop. In the future this could be the start of a model for a route of progression. I'll test it out for Penryn on 14 Dec ... so it's more defined in expectation. Layout of the workshop was better.... we separated the performance instruments to prevent interruption.' – Matt Ashdown, Moogie Wonderland (feedback from 2nd Falmouth Art Gallery workshop day)

Learning from this, we advertised the next workshops as group sessions, and ticketed them so that parents knew to bring their children at a certain start time.

The community sessions in Penryn included a separate performance workshop, and a later performance in the evening where parents could and watch (the latter only saw two children from the workshops attend, likely due to too much time commitment for one day).

This dedicated time built in and advertised beforehand was really important to ensure that enough emphasis was given to the performance skills. This still needs more development and possibly would need a group/ club or regular drop in workshop set-up in order to support the children's performance development and engagement - this might benefit from having our own venue.

Children seemed to enjoy socializing together during the activities when the workshops were done with groups rather than drop-ins. BBC Radio Cornwall recorded and played a 5-minute segment about the project after interviewing Matt and recording demonstrations of the instruments.

Summarised feedback and thoughts after public participatory performance events:

The quality of the events was high for participants, who expressed enjoyment and a keen interest in making music in such a way (experimental and improvisational). They helped to increase our ability to reduce barriers to participation for children. The events can provide enjoyment for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities.

Conducting, visualization, symphony structures, breaks and gamification were as important to the success of the events as the instrument sounds/ease of use.

Parents played an important role in aiding group performance by taking part or supporting their children. Younger children with no onstage parent support were less group-focused.

Attendance varied and important factors were: ways to communicate the event; schools capacity to promote; secondary school workshops not happening in the same part of Cornwall as the events; location of venue; in-house venue marketing; whether workshops ran on the same day or not.

Technical set-up was challenging and presented a case for having our own space for activities.

We recorded some of the performance pieces, local radio (Source FM) airplay has been confirmed.



Partnerships and Future Project Plans

'Venue happy, enthused and impressed by turnout on a rainy day. Again, great to work with and very supportive' Matt Ashdown - Moogie Wonderland

'We had great feedback from your last workshop.. so looking forward to this one' Sarah Scott. Education officer Falmouth Art Gallery

Key outcomes and learning

- The project has enabled us to develop a model of a 'route of progression', with different entry points for children
- There is evidence that a childrens orchestra and/or an instrument building club would have a good impact on our work with young people, and we have started developing this idea for our future activities to help meet our organisation's mission
- We have built excellent relationships, and have already confirmed and had initial enquires for delivering workshops or other activities in 2020
- Engaging with older children was more difficult than younger children, and we have learnt we need to take a different approach to this – providing more regular activity, promoting the social aspects, adopting a participant led approach, encouraging involvement as a possible opportunity to be played on radio, a new marketing strategy.
- Continual monitoring and evaluation has been crucial to developing the work, and the organisation will now plan to continue working with an evaluation specialist and embed reflective learning journals into work going forwards

Activity design plans

Our research and development throughout the project has been extremely insightful for future activities. We have started to create ideas for a model 'route of progression' for participants, with different entry points: taster workshops (separated into making and performing); regular synth building club activities (schools and/or community); a regular children's experimental orchestra; public performances.

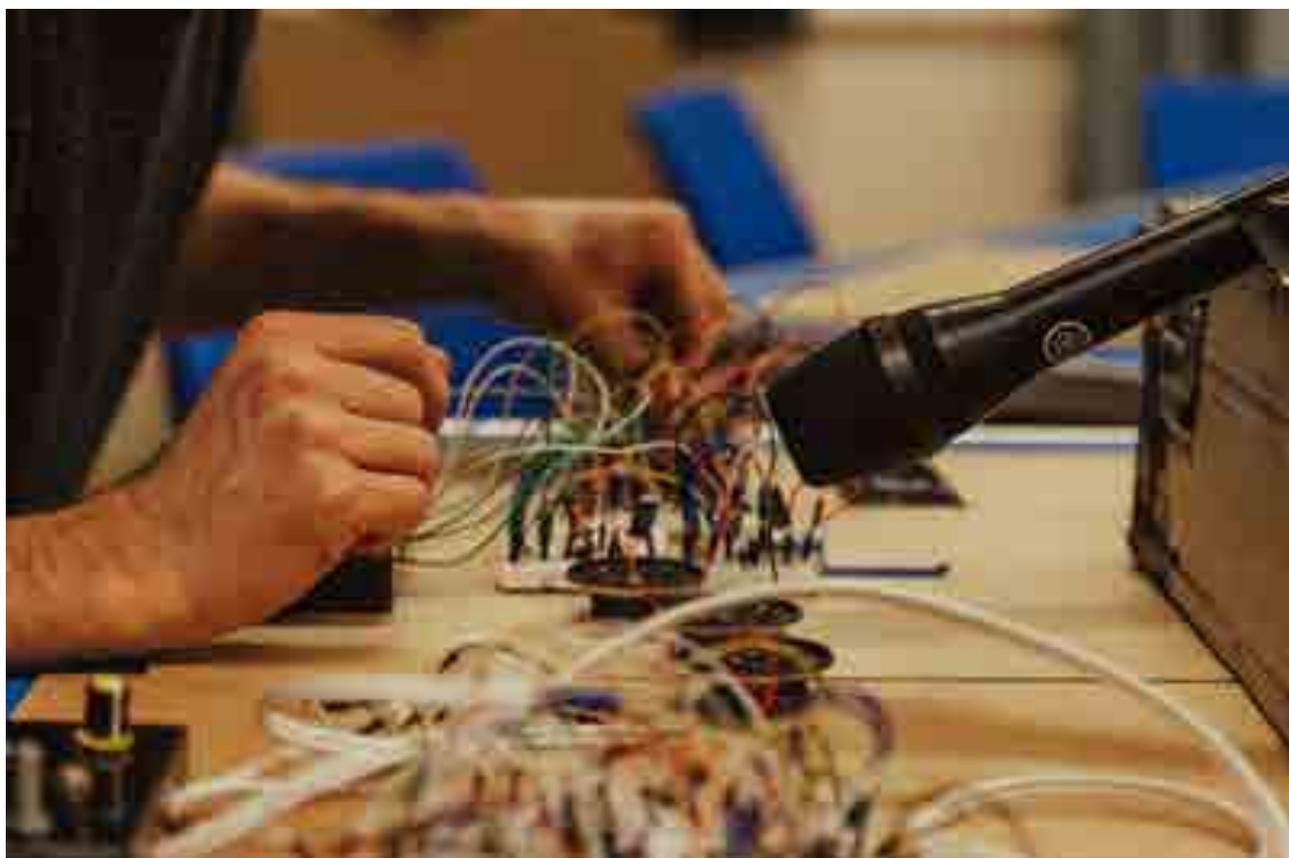
We have a better understanding of how to encourage parents to bring children to public performance events, and will use this going forwards. Well attended pilot activities before this project involved known artists, so there is an case for building on that as a way to increase audiences, while including the instrument and activity development we achieved in this project.

We need to engage better with 11 – 16 year old children. If the project was to develop/repeat, we have learnt that we need to:

- Find better ways to engage and network with secondary school teachers and treat it as a longer term process
- Focus on community workshops, and provide different entry routes for and regular activity to cater for different levels of musical interest or experience – the idea of an experimental orchestra or a weekly/monthly synth building club would be a logical next step for this – this could require our own venue

- Encourage and promote activities as a chance to make new friends and socialize, and adopt a participant-led approach where suitable
- Work with organisations / venues who already have this audience

We didn't originally plan for performance events to be structured like symphonies, but this worked particularly well and will now be used for future events, and will aid the idea of a children's experimental orchestra.



Partnerships & connections

We have made excellent partnerships with Falmouth Art Gallery, King Charles School, St Ives School, and all have asked for repeat workshops or other activities. We have connected with a number of families in the local community. Three local experimental musicians have expressed interest in being involved in future work, which will enrich the variety of our work. Martin Pease has expressed interest in future work with us after being involved in this project. Radio stations are interested in our work and have put our work on air, or confirmed to do so in the future. Our work with a freelance evaluation and engagement lead has been greatly beneficial, and we plan to work with her in the future.

As word got around towards the end of the project, and from our own networking, we had interest and enquiries from a number of organisations, and we have had requests for workshops in 2020 from the following:

Confirmed: Hypatia Trust (two workshops for girls and women as part of 'Women of Cornish Music: Past & Present' project); Falmouth Art Gallery (Women of the World festival).

Enquiries: Treverbyn Community Hall in Stenalees (youth club); St Ives School (repeat of workshops or other events); King Charles Primary (repeat of workshops); TECgirls Live (Truro -

STEAM event for girls); Germoe Primary School; Boskenwyn Primary School; Poltair School (secondary).

Organisational development

As an organisation, this is the first time we've had a chance to fully explore and develop participatory music-based work for children. Most of our work to-date had been focused on more visual performative work. Having gathered evidence and learning, and developed our participatory music strand, we are now confident that we can build on this as a permanent and important part of our work. We have gained new audiences, with children and parents keen to attend future music-based activities, so this has been a good test.

We have evidence that this work is needed and wanted by the community (including schools), and that we have a good solution to help address barriers to participation in music for children. The next step is to turn the work into regular work, and a childrens experimental orchestra and a synth building club is something that could aid that. To achieve this, we need to address logistics and capacity issues that such work would bring, and we will begin to work towards scoping the need, sustainability, and suitability of having our own venue.

Involving more artists will be important going forward – having a pool of artists with different experiences and availability will be beneficial, and we might need to increase our capacity for longer term work because we have seen that it can be difficult to schedule with artists having 'day jobs'.

The continual evaluation process, and use of different monitoring and evaluation methods has been very beneficial in developing our work. In the future, as an organisation, we would like to focus on reflection, and encourage staff or freelancers to write a reflective learning journal and be involved in reflection sessions.

