

Aberdeenshire Youth Music Sessions (AYMS)

The new Aberdeenshire Youth Music Sessions introduced in 2022/2023 is three two-hour sessions and saw 270 pupils take part. Our consultation with all service users in March 2023 showed overwhelming support.



Fees for participants attending AYMS sessions was £6 per session, however, there were no fees for Young Leaders or for families that are eligible for Free School Meals. All AYMS projects were staffed by IMS Instructors employed by the Council.

The AYMS sessions ran in March 2023 Term 3 and June 2023 Term 4 in blocks of three sessions over 3 weekends. They culminated in a presentation for parents and invited guests where they watched a rehearsal and informal performance.

The projects were aimed at pupils in the earlier stages of tuition up to Grade 4. A wide age group participated ranging from P3 – S6. More advanced pupils were invited as Young Leaders, which proved to be very successful, with 12 Academy musicians participating in this role.

The Young Leaders supported the project in a variety of ways included supporting the groups by playing alongside the young players as well as housekeeping tasks such as setting up equipment, handing out music and welcoming visiting guests for the presentations. 6 adult volunteers also supported the projects in a similar way. A Concert Band and 2 String Ensemble sessions were available for 2022-23.

AYMS projects were popular, attracted very good numbers and received excellent feedback from parents and participants. It is our aim to consult with all AYMS attendees after each session. Wider feedback from all others service users who may have been unable to attend the events was carried out in March 2023. We plan to consult with all service users on the project annually to ensure we can identify barriers to attend.

Numbers of participants for the AYMS projects 2022-23

In March 2023 there were 166 participants including young Leaders and Volunteers and in June 2023 there were 127 participants including young Leaders and Volunteers. Below is a table showing the breakdown in groups and areas, of young musicians who took part in the sessions.

| | Junior String Ensemble Central | Concert Band South | Junior String Ensemble South |
|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| March 2023 | 30 | 53 | 65 |
| June 2023 | 26 | 45 | 38 |

Feedback on learning

Participants feedback on their learning was focused around being led by a conductor and as part of an ensemble. 50% of respondents indicated they learned new music skills or gained knowledge.

- The learning qualitative feedback on the day tags – how many said.
 - Conductor
 - Playing as a group
 - Learning new skills or knowledge.

“The conductor was great, and the helpers helped with counting. I thoroughly enjoyed my first band and want to come back for more.”

Flavour of comments from March 2023

How to play in a group, how to keep up reading music, how to do dynamics, how to listen to a conductor, how to perform music.

A good opportunity to learn from teachers and other students what cannot be learned during own lessons or in school.

It has inspired me to play more I and get involved more.

They are great! Opportunity for kids to play with others and listen to other instruments and socialise. And motivates practice.

Instrumental
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Staff Comments

It would be good to have more rehearsal sessions also more of these concerts for pupils who are shy

Really good to get band concerts going again. Helped with my timing and confidence, makes me want to play more. Family really enjoyed end result too when came to watch.

It was a really fantastic opportunity, well run and supported, can't speak highly enough of the music service and what my children gain from music tuition and additional events like these.

I think they are a great opportunity to get children who may otherwise not be in a position to learn an instrument to play. Furthermore, because there are a few children in each year group taking part it makes it more appealing for youngsters.

Developments

As a direct result of our consultation process, we plan to expand cover across Aberdeenshire and offer a larger range of groupings or ensembles for the next academic year.

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Proposals and plans for 2023/24 include a theatre band project with Aberdeen Expressive Arts which will target senior and more advanced pupils. Establishing the Aberdeen Schools Pipe Band as an AYMS project and the development of a World Percussion project in North Aberdeenshire. Development of ensembles and roles for older and more advanced pupils will continue.

In the North will be a project for senior/advanced Brass, Woodwind and Percussion players planned for Term 3/4 in partnership with the Royal Army Corps of Music which will include a programme for primary school aged pupils that are currently not necessarily learning an instrument.

We are using Engage HQ to respond to music community with newsletters and updates to advise of any update to our provision.

Justin Brook

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Aberdeenshire Council

Instrumental Music Service

