

# **The Music Network Audience Development Programme**

**An evaluation of the pilot phase**

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# **A. Background**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Context**

Music Network is the national agency for music development in Ireland, which aims to make live classical, jazz and traditional Irish music available to all, regardless of location and circumstance, while supporting career development for highly skilled artists. It works in partnership with local promoters including those working at voluntary and professional level.

In consultation with its partners, Music Network has long acknowledged the need to develop a strategy for engaging audiences, increasing awareness and access to high quality live music events, and providing opportunities to interact with the artists and the music. The Music Network Audience Development Strategy and Programme 2007-2009 was jointly developed in response to this need.

### **1.2. Aims of the Audience Development Pilot Programme**

The Audience Development Pilot Programme was developed as a key mechanism for the delivery of the Music Network Audience Development Strategy. It aimed to:

- attract new audiences to live music performances
- enhance the live music experience for current audiences
- support the live performance of high-quality music in Ireland
- support and develop the role of the promoter
- advocate with the appropriate bodies and authorities for the promotion of the importance of live music performance to the development of culture and society in Ireland

### **1.3. What is meant by ‘Audience Development’?**

In its strategy document, Music Network defines its view of audience development as: *‘...a cohesive concept to generate sustained and progressive audience awareness, attendance and appreciation of high quality live music performances.’*

Its audience development programme is made up of three components: marketing, outreach and programming.

#### **1.4. Methodology**

*Preparatory meetings/ background research:* A series of initial meetings and discussions took place with the Music Network Development Programmes Manager. Background material included: The Music Network Audience Development Strategy and Programme 2007 – 2009; update reports; and copies of correspondence to promoters and musicians.

*Observation visits/ on-site interviews:* Observation visits were arranged in each of the participating venues<sup>1</sup>. On-site interviews were conducted with promoters and musicians, and informal feedback was gathered from the workshop participants.

*Focus groups:* Two focus groups were organised after the conclusion of the pilot programme; the first involved promoters while the second involved musicians.

*Ongoing contact with Music Network:* There was ongoing contact with the Development Programmes Manager, including two formal interviews, one of which took place during the pilot programme and the other after it had concluded.

*Review of participant feedback:* Copies of the comment books, feedback sheets and evaluation forms completed by participants were made available for evaluation purposes.

#### **1.5. Navigating this report**

This report is divided into four parts. Section A outlines the background and context to the programme including the methods, roles and responsibilities involved for all stakeholders and details of the planning and marketing processes. Section B describes the workshops and concerts that took place and includes the numbers and profile of those who participated. Section C describes the impact of the programme on different stakeholders; it analyses the key factors that underpinned the successful outcomes and identifies areas where change or further development could be usefully considered. Section D concludes with an endorsement of the achievements of the programme and looks forward to the ongoing application of learning outcomes as it develops.

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<sup>1</sup> I attended both a workshop and a concert in Tuar Ard and St. John's. In the Mermaid, I attended just a workshop.

## 2. Implementation of the Audience Development Pilot Programme

### 2.1. Participating promoters

Initially, Music Network planned to work with five different promoters in the pilot scheme but this target was reduced due to financial and operational considerations. The three promoters selected, provided opportunities for comparison across organisational size, geographic spread, population profile, audience development priorities and promotional experience. They included:

*a. The Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray, Co. Wicklow:*

The Mermaid Arts Centre opened in 2002 in Bray town. It serves a mainly urban population of 115,000 people and aims to present the best of national and international artistic activity (across a broad range of art forms) and a forum for local artistic events. The venue employs seven full-time staff and four who work part-time. It provides a 242 seat auditorium, large gallery, multi-purpose room and café. The music programme includes classical, jazz and traditional music performance. Lia Bresnihan was the key person involved in the ADP<sup>2</sup>. She identified classical music as the genre/ audience to be developed in the context of the pilot programme.

*b. St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre, Listowel, Co. Kerry:*

St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre opened in a renovated Church of Ireland building in the centre of Listowel in 1990. The centre serves a town population of approximately 4,000 but its reach extends further. It employs one full-time staff member and two more on a part-time basis. The venue hosts a multi-disciplinary programme with approximately 160 arts events per year and a music programme that includes classical, jazz and traditional performances. The key person involved in the ADP was Joe Murphy, who identified classical music as the genre/ audience to be developed in the context of the pilot programme.

*c. Tuar Ard Arts Centre, Moate, Co. Westmeath:*

Tuar Ard Arts Centre opened on the main street in Moate in 2000. It is a multi-disciplinary venue that provides a theatre, gallery space, meeting rooms and coffee shop.

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout the document, the key link people are referred to consistently as 'the promoter', despite the fact that they had different job titles/ roles within their respective venues.

The centre serves the town population of approximately 2,000 but extends through the surrounding rural areas as far as neighbouring population centres such as Athlone. It employs two full time staff members and four who work part time. While the music programme at Tuar Ard covers a range of genres including classical, jazz and traditional, the promoter aims to provide access to arts events that would not otherwise be available to the local population. Jazz was identified as a relatively inaccessible musical genre in the region and selected in the context of the Audience Development Programme. Maura Farrell was the key person involved with the ADP along with significant assistance from Tommy Mollan, a board member.

## **2.2. Participating artists**

### *a. The Prey Trio*

The Prey Trio is made up of Deirdre O'Leary (clarinet, bass clarinet, e-flat clarinet), Susan Doyle (flute, piccolo, alto flute) and Sile Daly (oboe, cor anglais, oboe d'amore). Established in 2000, the trio play a variety of music including medieval, baroque, classical, romantic, folk, contemporary and improvisation; their performances are interactive and can include audience participation. The Prey Trio have extensive individual and collective experience of working in diverse outreach contexts. A guest performer, Aingeala De Burca (violin) stood in for Susan Doyle in St. John's, Listowel.

### *b. Organics*

Organics is made up of Justin Carroll (Hammond organ), John Moriarty (guitar) and Kevin Brady (drums). Established in 1997, Organics have been composing and performing an original mix of improvised music throughout the country ever since. In 2004, they were recipients of the Music Network Young Music Wide award for emerging jazz ensembles. Members of Organics have particular experience in working with young people in educational contexts.

## **2.3. The structure of the pilot programme**

Music Network devised a pilot programme with four constituent elements:

### *a. Access to training for participating artists and the experience of being involved in an audience development programme*

Members of the Prey Trio and Organics were invited to take part in the Music Network Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme along with two traditional

musicians who were also selected to work on the ADP<sup>3</sup>. The CPD programme is an eight-month training course that caters for professional musicians working (or wishing to work) in outreach contexts such as education, healthcare and audience development. It aims to equip musicians with the necessary ideas and skills to facilitate collaborative music making and composition with a diversity of groups. It focuses on the use of tuned/un-tuned percussion and voice augmented by the musicians' own instruments. Over the course of the ADP, the training consisted of three weekend courses delivered by Elaine Agnew and a team of guest specialists<sup>4</sup> between September '06 and April '07. Course content included:

- planning and structuring participative music projects
- facilitation skills: engaging with a group
- working effectively with teaching staff/ care staff/ key workers
- improvisation and compositional skills
- repertoire development
- working in a cross art-form approach
- context-specific training (e.g. age awareness; child protection etc.)

As well as offering opportunities to participate in the formal training programme (and the informal mentoring element that ran in parallel), the ADP encouraged musicians to reflect on their experience of audience development and identify any learning outcomes; this was facilitated mainly through their participation in the evaluation process.

***b. Access to advice and support for participating promoters in the planning, implementation and evaluation of a venue-specific programme***

The Music Network Development Programmes Manager provided participating promoters with advice and support on an ongoing basis throughout the pilot programme. This advice and support covered all three facets of the programme i.e. marketing, outreach and programming. It took the form of:

- An initial planning meeting and a follow-up meeting after the pilot was completed
- Attendance at all workshops
- Attendance at each performance
- Ongoing telephone support
- Liaison/ communications with the relevant artists

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<sup>3</sup> While the promoters involved in the pilot phase chose to develop the classical and jazz genres/ audiences in their venues, Music Network intends to prioritise the inclusion of traditional music in a future phase of the programme.

<sup>4</sup> Guest facilitators included Tim Steiner (UK-based composer and education/ outreach specialist); Jenny Elliot (Northern Ireland-based dancer specialised in working in healthcare contexts); Naheed Cruickshank (UK-based early-years music specialist) and Paul Roe (lecturer in Community Music in Dundalk Institute of Technology)

- Provision of publicity materials (posters, fliers and a national press release)

*c. Access and an enhanced experience of high quality live music (classical/ jazz/ traditional) for audiences supplemented by opportunities to engage more directly with artists*

In each of the three pilot programmes, a series of participative workshops were organised prior to the scheduled concert, enabling participants to interact directly with the musicians and engage with elements of the music to be performed on the night. The artists were selected on the basis of their professional music skills, their ability to work effectively in outreach contexts and in accordance with the Audience Development priorities established by participating promoters.

*d. Access and opportunities to build on learning outcomes for a broader pool of promoters and artists around the country*

The Music Network Promoter's Forum 2007 will include a seminar on Audience Development. This will provide a means of sharing the learning outcomes from the pilot and identifying strategies for moving the programme forward into its next phase.

### **3. Planning and marketing the Audience Development Pilot Programme**

#### **3.1. Different contexts**

Participating promoters came from very different contexts in terms of venue size and location, and the level of staffing and resources available to them. These factors impacted on the promoter's individual needs and priorities and influenced their decisions with regard to the planning and marketing of the programme.

#### **3.2. Planning**

Due to the experimental nature of the programme, Music Network took responsibility for the development of the initial template, and invited promoters to express their interest in participating. The template was flexible; it involved a series of participative workshops linked to a concert but the specifics were decided by the participating promoters.

The timeframe for each promoter was slightly different. In the Mermaid, the initial planning meeting took place in February and the programme was delivered in July, giving a five month timeframe. In St. John's, the same work took place between February and June, giving a four month timeframe while in Tuar Ard, everything was planned and delivered between February and May, a timeframe of only three months.

The initial meetings focused on the promoters' specific aims in relation to audience development including the identification of the genre/ participant group to be targeted, the selection of appropriately skilled musicians and the development of a draft plan within a set timeframe.

The promoter was responsible for recruiting the target group while the responsibility for planning workshop content fell to a lead musician within the selected ensemble (with greater or lesser levels of input from the other musicians) and in consultation with the Music Network Development Programmes Manager who played a pivotal role. The promoters and musicians did not meet each other or discuss the project with each other in advance of the workshops, but instead negotiated through Music Network. Workshop participants were not involved in the planning process in any of the three pilots due to difficulties in securing their participation in advance.

### **3.3. Marketing**

There were two distinct features of the marketing process: the recruitment of workshop participants and the selling of the concert to potential audiences. Music Network provided support and advice across both areas. Responsibility for local marketing rested with the promoters who were encouraged to experiment with new and innovative marketing strategies suited to their local circumstances. Their regular marketing strategies<sup>5</sup> were also bolstered by promotional posters, fliers and photographs provided by Music Network, whose personnel also took charge of national media listings. Promoters also availed of ongoing advice and support with regard to workshop recruitment.

### **3.4. Programming**

Through the Audience Development Pilot (ADP), Music Network aimed to encourage promoters to examine their programming strategies and ensure best practice. In this

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<sup>5</sup> In the context of this report, the recruitment process is described separate from that of marketing; however, it should be noted that there was significant crossover in the promotion of both events

context, best practice was understood to involve cohesive programming underpinned by a clear rationale e.g. programming based around a particular theme and/ or a regular time (weekly/ monthly etc.) By way of support, Music Network explored the prospect of developing a music policy<sup>6</sup> with each of the promoters and encouraged them to make linkages with other music resource organisations in order to expand their sources for programming.

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<sup>6</sup> The idea of developing a music policy was raised by Tony Sheehan at an Arts Council meeting of Multi-Disciplinary Venues on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

## **B. An Overview of the Programme in Each Centre**

### **1. The programme in Tuar Ard Arts Centre, Moate**

*Aims:* The promoter's aims were to expand the audience for jazz; find effective ways of promoting it (and other music events); become more familiar with audience development research/ case studies; and become more effective in devising audience development programmes

*Initial target group and musicians:* The promoter originally planned to target young people aged 18 – 35. It was agreed that Organics would bring the requisite combination of jazz expertise and experience in working with young people in educational contexts.

*Programme:* The programme combined three workshops (later reduced to two) and a concert. All events were programmed to take place between May 11<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup>.

*Participants:* The recruitment process proved difficult within the timeframe of the pilot and ultimately, the promoter moved away from the original target group and initiated an open recruitment process. Two very different groups of people became involved. The first workshop was attended by eight adults, about half of whom were non-musicians while the second was attended by seventeen participants, mainly in their teens or early twenties, the majority of whom were instrumentalists and/ or music students. Only three people crossed over from the first to the second workshop.

*Duration and content of workshops:* The first workshop was two hours long and focused on building an appreciation of the rudiments of jazz. The second workshop was three hours long and focused on participative music making. The musicians spent some time discussing improvisation and composition and demonstrating different jazz techniques but for the most part, they focused on enabling participants to perform together. They worked on two pieces of music by Duke Ellington - Mood Indigo and C-Jam Blues.

*The concert:* The Organics concert took place on the evening of the second workshop. It was attended by sixty-one people, eight of whom had attended at least one workshop. The musicians acknowledged the presence of workshop participants in the audience; they made reference to the repertoire, styles, formats and new compositions that had been covered in the workshops and then went on to perform them. Of particular relevance to

the workshop attendees was the performance of Mood Indigo, on which they had worked collectively.

## **2. The programme in St. John's Theatre & Arts Centre, Listowel**

*Aims:* The promoter's aims were to enhance the musical experience for the existing classical music audience; encourage greater loyalty with regard to attending classical music concerts at the venue; expand the classical music audience; and become more familiar with audience development strategies and their effectiveness.

*Initial target group and musicians:* The promoter aimed to target the existing classical music audience, which is generally made up of older, retired people in the community. He also hoped to recruit some new audience members with an open recruitment strategy. It was agreed that The Prey Trio would bring the requisite combination of musical expertise and outreach experience.

*Programme:* The programme combined three workshops and a concert. All events were scheduled to take place between June 25<sup>th</sup> and June 27<sup>th</sup>.

*Participants:* The first workshop was attended by a group of fifteen participants, mainly middle aged to older adults but including two teenagers<sup>7</sup>. Seventeen participants attended the second workshop and eighteen attended the third. Attendance was relatively consistent from one workshop to the next.

*The duration and content of the workshops:* Each of the three workshops was two hours long and the musicians built on the learning from one workshop to the next. The musicians mixed a small amount of theory with a large amount of direct interaction and participation, discussing different musical forms and demonstrating how their instruments worked. They also distributed tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments among participants and facilitated them to create a wash of sound, over which they improvised. The group was invited to participate in a performance of this work as part of the concert.

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<sup>7</sup> These participants also attended an ancillary workshop for young instrumentalists that was organised by the promoter

*The concert:* The Prey Trio concert took place on the evening of the third workshop. It was attended by fifty-one people, eighteen of whom had attended at least one workshop. The musicians performed among the audience as well as from the balcony and the stage. Their programme included Klezmer music, English and Irish folk music, improvisation and audience participation. They led the workshop participants in a prepared piece of music in the second half of the concert and distributed percussion instruments to the rest of the audience inviting them to join in.

### **3. The programme in Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray**

*Aims:* The promoter's aims were to generate new audiences for classical music; enhance the musical experience for the existing audience of that genre; and conduct effective market research by meeting the audience and finding out more about them and their interests.

*Initial target group and musicians:* The promoter identified three potential target groups including adults from the local business community, school children and early school-leavers. It was agreed that The Prey Trio would bring the requisite combination of musical expertise and outreach experience to work effectively with any of those groups.

*The programme:* The programme combined three workshops and a concert. All events were scheduled to take place between July 16<sup>th</sup> and July 21<sup>st</sup>.

*Participants:* The group was particularly diverse in terms of both age and ability; it included adults (young, middle-aged and older), children (from five years old to teenagers) and people with learning disabilities. Attendance was relatively consistent across the three workshops. Eleven participants attended the first workshop, fifteen the second, and ten the third.

*The duration and content of the workshops:* Each workshop was two hours long. In the first workshop, the musicians gauged the groups' level of rhythm and control then worked progressively from there. They focused on direct interaction and participation, introducing rhythm and voice exercises that were inclusive and suitable for all ages and abilities. They distributed tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments and facilitated the group to provide a musical backdrop to their performance of a piece taken from Vivaldi's

Four Seasons. Gradually they added in pre-tuned guitars and other instruments. The group was invited to prepare the piece for the concert and the final workshop was structured like a rehearsal.

*The concert:* The Prey Trio concert took place on the evening of the third workshop. It was attended by one hundred and forty-seven people, ten of whom had attended at least one workshop. Again the musicians were very mobile and performed a varied programme, which included audience participation in the second half when they led the workshop participants in the prepared piece of music.

## **C. The Impact on Stakeholders**

A number of positive short term outcomes were identified in relation to the ADP pilot. Those pertaining to the three participating promoters were often specific to local circumstances however points of convergence and divergence provided valuable insights and opportunities for shared learning. In keeping with the programme structure, the positive outcomes and the challenges experienced by the different stakeholders have been divided up under the three component parts: marketing, outreach and programming. Although they are presented separately, there was significant cross-over between them.

### **1. The impact of the marketing strand**

#### **1.1. Positive outcomes in the area of marketing**

*An affirmation of the promoters' existing marketing strategies:*

All participating promoters used relevant marketing techniques that were effective in their locality including:

- *Local radio:* the promoter from Tuar Ard made two radio appearances in the weeks before the concert while one of the musicians from the Prey Trio went on the local station in Bray to promote the concert and workshops in the Mermaid.
- *Local newspapers:* the promoter from Tuar Ard secured two feature articles in two different local papers while The Mermaid ran an ad in the local press for both the concert and the workshops.
- *Other information outlets:* the promoters used a variety of relevant information systems in their localities, using door-to-door leafleting, e-mails, distribution points and conventional mailing lists to issue press releases and fliers and make direct contact with local organisations, individual attendees and advocates. Personal contact was particularly important in St. John's, Listowel.

*An opportunity to demonstrate local marketing conditions to Music Network:*

Promoters felt it was beneficial to have exposed Music Network personnel to the specific realities of marketing in their local area. They felt it would lead to an enhanced understanding of the localised context and equip Music Network personnel to continue to provide relevant services and supports at national level.

*A vehicle for feedback on Music Network marketing materials and services:*

The planning and evaluation process presented promoters with a structured opportunity to feed back on Music Network marketing supports. In relation to the delivery of materials and services by Music Network, all three promoters praised the reliability and prompt delivery of promotional posters, fliers, photographs<sup>8</sup>.

*An opportunity for the promoters to test new approaches to marketing:*

All three promoters responded to Music Network's invitation to experiment with new marketing approaches:

- The promoter in *Tuar Ard* developed a *Welcome book* at the venue reception area to collect audience e-mail addresses, gather information about their music/ arts-related interests as a means of target marketing for the future. In addition, Music Network advice led to the establishment of *valuable new linkages* with the local authority arts office, music schools, private music teachers and most significantly, local post-primary students and teachers
- *The Mermaid* established a *subscription scheme* through which regular concert attendees could buy tickets for the Prey Trio at a reduced price of €5
- The promoter in *St. John's* developed a *strong link between workshop recruitment and concert promotion*, with workshop participants expected to make up a large proportion of the audience. After eighteen years experience in Listowel, the promoter felt he already knew his classical audience and that regular marketing techniques would not be effective. His strategy was to cultivate cohesion and loyalty among the workshop group and follow up with a questionnaire regarding their musical/ other arts interests. This information will inform his programming of a discounted subscription series between October 2007 and January 2008 (including at least one classical concert).

*Sustained/ increased audience size:*

All of the venues attracted 'new faces' to the concerts i.e. either those who had never attended the venue before or those who never attended an event in the specific art form/ genre

- *Tuar Ard* attracted an audience of 61, which was in line with their target of 60 - 80. When they first started promoting jazz, they had an audience of 18 people. The

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<sup>8</sup> Some concerns were raised regarding the positioning of local information on fliers and some suggestions were made in relation to the expansion of the menu of marketing supports available under the ADP; these are outlined in the next sub-section: *1.2. Challenges relating to the marketing strand*

concert attracted a number of younger musicians<sup>9</sup> who had played teenage gigs in the venue previously but never attended a jazz performance there.

- *St. John's* attracted an audience of 51 to the Prey Trio concert. In the past, their classical music concerts have attracted between 10 - 40 people (leaving aside audiences for celebrity performers) and 30 is considered a 'good' audience. The programme reached a small number of young people who attended both the workshops and the concert. This was particularly significant for the promoter who identified a need to address the ageing profile of the classical audience and to reach students of classical music who do not attend the venue for classical concerts.
- *The Mermaid* attracted an audience of 147 to the Prey Trio concert, a significant increase on the average classical music audience in the past, which ranged from 80 – 100 (leaving aside audiences for celebrity performers). Front of house personnel commented on the number of new faces among the crowd. Workshop participants also played their part in this regard as they brought a number of supporters with them on the night of the concert.

*Association with high quality live music:*

While the Mermaid and St. John's have well established classical music programmes, Tuar Ard is still working to establish itself as a centre for high quality live jazz in the Midlands. Consequently, an enhanced perception of the centre in this regard was particularly significant for the promoter there. Effective marketing succeeded in attracting audience members (and workshop participants) from as far away as Lough Rea and Ferbane. The promoter felt it may have helped '*...to chip away at the elitist view held by some people locally, who'd be more likely to travel to Dublin for arts events than across the road.*' The musicians also commented on the importance of establishing venues for jazz in rural Ireland and praised the work of Music Network in this regard.

*Opportunities for ongoing development:*

A follow-up meeting between Music Network and the promoters was incorporated into the programme to facilitate further reflection and forward planning. This enabled Music Network to respond to individualised needs. For example, in response to an expressed need for further professional development in marketing, the promoter in Tuar Ard was put in touch with Business2Arts and funding was committed by Music Network to support their participation in an arts marketing training module.

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<sup>9</sup> An example of the crossover from the workshops to the concert

## **1.2. Challenges experienced in the area of marketing**

### *Timing:*

The time of the year in which the pilot took place was not ideal for any promoter and posed a particular marketing challenge for those working in Tuar Ard. A spring/ summer programme did not fit well with the annual schedule, which normally finishes around the middle of May and starts again in September; the May programme of events was already gone to print when the ADP details were finalised and the Organics workshops and concert could not be included. As a result, the promoter incurred unforeseen advertising costs.

### *Shared understandings of the parameters of the marketing strand among promoters:*

Although Music Network produced a comprehensive document outlining the different strands of their Audience Development Strategy, there were different understandings of the meaning of ‘marketing’ among promoters and a lack of clarity regarding the parameters of the ADP programme. In addition to these challenges, the level and nature of marketing support required by each promoter varied significantly. Consequently, the level of satisfaction with the marketing strand varied from one to the next. While the promoter in St. John’s was happy with both the content and the degree of support available from Music Network, the promoter in Tuar Ard would have liked the programme to include a more formal marketing module to boost their confidence in developing innovative marketing strategies and techniques for monitoring their effectiveness. Although the promoter in question appeared to employ a range of marketing strategies effectively, she felt her knowledge of the area was insufficient and wanted to learn something new and different. On the other hand, the promoter in the Mermaid had access to professional marketing personnel and was happy with the level of marketing support. She did however feel the programme lacked sufficient emphasis on market research.

### *Optimised use of Music Network marketing resources:*

Some of the Music Network marketing supports were not used to optimum effect. Due to the difficulties experienced by all promoters in securing a commitment from their target groups to participate in the workshops, a large degree of time and energy had to go into the recruitment process, lessening the focus on the promoter’s marketing strategies and their use of resources such as the press release in local publicity/marketing. This impacted more on venues without marketing personnel.

*Design of the fliers:*

From one promoter's perspective, the fliers would have been more effective if local details (venue/ date/ time etc.) had been placed on the front and made to stand out more clearly<sup>10</sup>.

*A national pr strategy:*

The Music Network Development Programmes Manager decided that a national pr strategy would be inappropriate for the pilot phase of the ADP, as it would place excessive pressure on promoters and potentially inhibit innovation and experimentation. While the promoters agreed with this, those from Tuar Ard and St. John's felt a national media strategy would be beneficial in the future and could ultimately impact favourably on audience numbers<sup>11</sup> in their venues.

*Tracking and monitoring the effects of marketing strategies in each venue:*

While the cross-over between attendance at workshops and concerts was monitored in each venue, no integrated system of tracking and monitoring the impact of the ADP has been developed as yet. This will be a vital element in the long term development of the programme, enabling promoters to collaborate strategically with Music Network in the ongoing collection, collation and dissemination of coherent information on the effectiveness or otherwise of different audience development approaches. The Music Network Development Programmes Manager is already in contact with Theatre Forum, another arts resource organisation engaged in complementary audience development initiatives. Both organisations face the challenge of optimising the information and resources pooled and making them available to partner promoters in useful and accessible ways.

*Identification of long term marketing priorities:*

In addition to the short-term outreach plans that evolved from the ADP,<sup>12</sup> each promoter identified associated long term marketing challenges they would like to address:

- *The promoter in Tuar Ard* is keen to make contact with a burgeoning new population in Moate but would like to do this through the identification of strategic advocates in order to ensure the optimised use of the venue's limited resources

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<sup>10</sup> Other comments were made in relation to the promotional materials provided by Music Network in the context of national tours; these are outside the brief of this report but they have been passed on to Music Network personnel

<sup>11</sup> The promoter from Mermaid Arts Centre did not feel that national media coverage of the ADP would impact so significantly on audience numbers in Bray

<sup>12</sup> As outlined in 2.1. *Positive outcomes in the outreach strand* under the sub-heading: *Altered attitudes/ expanded plans for further outreach*

- *The promoter in St. John's* would also like to make contact with the new population in Listowel but needs to obtain more information about their interests before investing in new programmes to target them
- *The promoter in the Mermaid* would like to discuss market research further with Music Network and to see if there is some collaborative approach they could take to the compilation and distribution of market research at a national level. This could include data regarding the make up of music audiences/ case studies outlining effective marketing strategies/ details of ticket prices etc.

*Marketing participative performances:*

A passing comment from an audience member in the Mermaid highlighted a challenge in relation to the marketing of participative performances. Unaware of the preceding workshops, the audience member was surprised to find participative elements included in the second half of the concert; he pointed out that he'd seen no indication of this type of activity in the advertising of the concert.

*Developing opportunities for self-promotion among artists:*

While the marketing of the workshops and the concerts succeeded in raising the profile of the artists in the local media, there was no real focus on self-promotion in the short term.

- The key ADP strategy was to facilitate musicians to engage directly with promoters however in the context of a pilot programme, the number of new connections was inevitably limited<sup>13</sup>. If the programme is rolled out on a larger scale over time, the potential for enhanced connections will improve considerably.
- One ensemble raised the issue of poster design and the need for a fresh template to convey more about the participative element of their work. Others felt a Music Network DVD would be helpful, featuring performances by everybody involved (or available to become involved) in the Audience Development Programme and including information on their instruments/ set up/ workshop approaches etc<sup>14</sup>. An initial showcase event was also suggested as a means of exposing promoters more directly to the artists work<sup>15</sup>. Musicians also requested more support in building their media profile particularly on key arts and entertainment programmes.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> If ADP artists are encouraged to attend the Music Network Promoter's Forum in October, it would offer them further opportunities to connect with promoters from around the country

<sup>14</sup> A similar suggestion that went beyond the brief this report was also passed on to Music Network

<sup>15</sup> Promoters also suggested something along these lines; it would be helpful to have more detailed information about each musician's particular experience and expertise in the area of outreach

<sup>16</sup> *The Late Late Show* and *The View* were mentioned in particular

- While these requests do not fit easily within the parameters the ADP strategy or even within the parameters of 'self-promotion', and while it would be unrealistic to imagine such cost-intensive materials could be delivered within the small ADP marketing budget, it is important that the needs identified are considered in the light of Music Network's ongoing programme of artist support, particularly the *Making Overtures* course. The first *Making Overtures* course was took place in Dublin Castle in June '07 and catered for twenty-two Irish and Ireland-based musicians. The five day course covered the non-musical facets of a professional musician's career including aspects of self-promotion and self-management. None of the ADP musicians participated in the course, which was a missed opportunity; Music Network is faced with a challenge in forging a clearer connection between the two and creating an inducement for musicians to participate as an integral part of the ADP programme.

## **2. The impact of the outreach strand**

It will take time to evaluate the long term impact of the workshops and to analyse whether they will impact on audience numbers in participating venues in the future. In the short term, a series of positive outcomes were experienced by participants, promoters and musicians alike.

### **2.1. Positive outcomes in the outreach strand**

#### *Participant's enjoyment:*

One important aim shared by all promoters was to provide an enjoyable musical experience for workshop participants, and this was achieved in all cases. There was much smiling and laughing and 100% of respondents<sup>17</sup> from the three venues reported that they enjoyed the workshops when they filled out the feedback forms at the end. This was particularly significant as each of the groups faced particular challenges:

- In St. John's, the group arrived expecting a talk-style workshop and were surprised and anxious to find it was participative; this was particularly the case for those who came as a result of their strong positive relationship with the promoter as opposed to their strong interest in music. Despite the group's apprehension and initial reticence,

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<sup>17</sup> Not all participants completed feedback forms. Thirteen were completed by participants in Tuar Ard, nine in St. John's, and ten in the Mermaid.

- most joined in. Their feedback demonstrated their enjoyment: *'It was different from what I was expecting and it took time to adjust ... I enjoyed it!'*; *'Great, great, great!'*
- In Tuar Ard, the individuals who attended the workshops brought different interests and levels of musical ability but the level of enjoyment was high: *'Very enjoyable... very informative and all in a casual and easy style'*
  - In the Mermaid, the group was particularly diverse in terms of age and ability and both the promoter and the musicians had fleeting concerns as to whether they would enjoy working together. These soon vanished as the group took to the workshop with enthusiasm. One woman commented that it was the best fun she'd had in a long time, a sentiment repeated in feedback from the rest of the group: *'We really had a great time'* and *'The only thing wrong was that it was too short... fantastic fun'*

*A sense of ownership among workshop participants:*

Participants became more familiar with the venues and felt more comfortable in the space as the workshops went on. The programme 'normalised' the environment, reducing feelings of fear and making people feel they were *'...part of the place'*. This was highlighted by one participant in the Mermaid at the beginning of the first workshop when he told the musicians that he found the theatre space intimidating; he said he hoped he'd *'get through'* the workshop but wasn't confident that he could. The same participant went on to attend all three workshops and the concert.

*Inclusion of all workshop participants:*

Workshop participants were facilitated to participate fully and to the best of their ability.

- In one of the *Tuar Ard* workshops, the musicians worked with instrumentalists and second level music students who had different degrees of knowledge and proficiency among them. The musicians encouraged full participation by moving people around and dividing them into small groups, thereby facilitating a high degree of individual attention. They worked mainly by ear so that everybody in the group could follow the music and when one particular group of girls appeared too shy to come forward to play the keyboard, one of the musicians picked it up and brought it to them. The musicians worked well as a team with one of them moving about the space, engaging with anybody who appeared to be struggling or excluded. Individual participants supported each other, sharing instruments and helping each other out. Two artists who were non-musicians participated by making drawing and taking photographs.
- In St. John's, the musicians faced an initial reluctance to participate among the group and a number of individuals would have opted out if it hadn't been for the communication and facilitation skills of the artists. The musicians moved around a

lot between the group, optimising personal contact and joking to ease the tension. They explained each stage of the workshop very clearly and took questions relating to people's concerns. They distributed a wide range of instruments, much to the delight of most participants who were keen to touch, pluck and strike as many as possible. The musicians also included a small amount of information on scales, musical forms and composers to cater for those who were more interested in appreciation. Participants were surprised at the extent to which they became involved, and some took on a degree of ownership, eventually handing out instruments on the night of the concert and encouraging other audience members to become involved.

- *In the Mermaid*, where small children sat alongside adults of diverse ability, the participants were encouraged to clap, play and sing in a series of rhythm and vocal exercises, but there was plenty of space for 'happy accidents' to contribute to the sound produced. For example, one participant started singing out of time but it worked well as he continued on a regular beat that happened to come after everybody else. He did the same during a clapping exercise. One of the musicians commented: 'That's the lovely thing about improvising...there is no particular right or wrong.'

*Enhanced perception of the centres as inclusive venues:*

Although the three venues all had a history of running workshops before the ADP, the promoters felt the programme enhanced their reputation for inclusiveness. The promoter in the Mermaid felt that the diversity of the workshop group represented a particular achievement in terms of access and participation while the promoter in St. John's felt the combination of the ADP workshops with the young musicians' workshop and the concert in an older people's residential care centre 'created a buzz' in the locality.

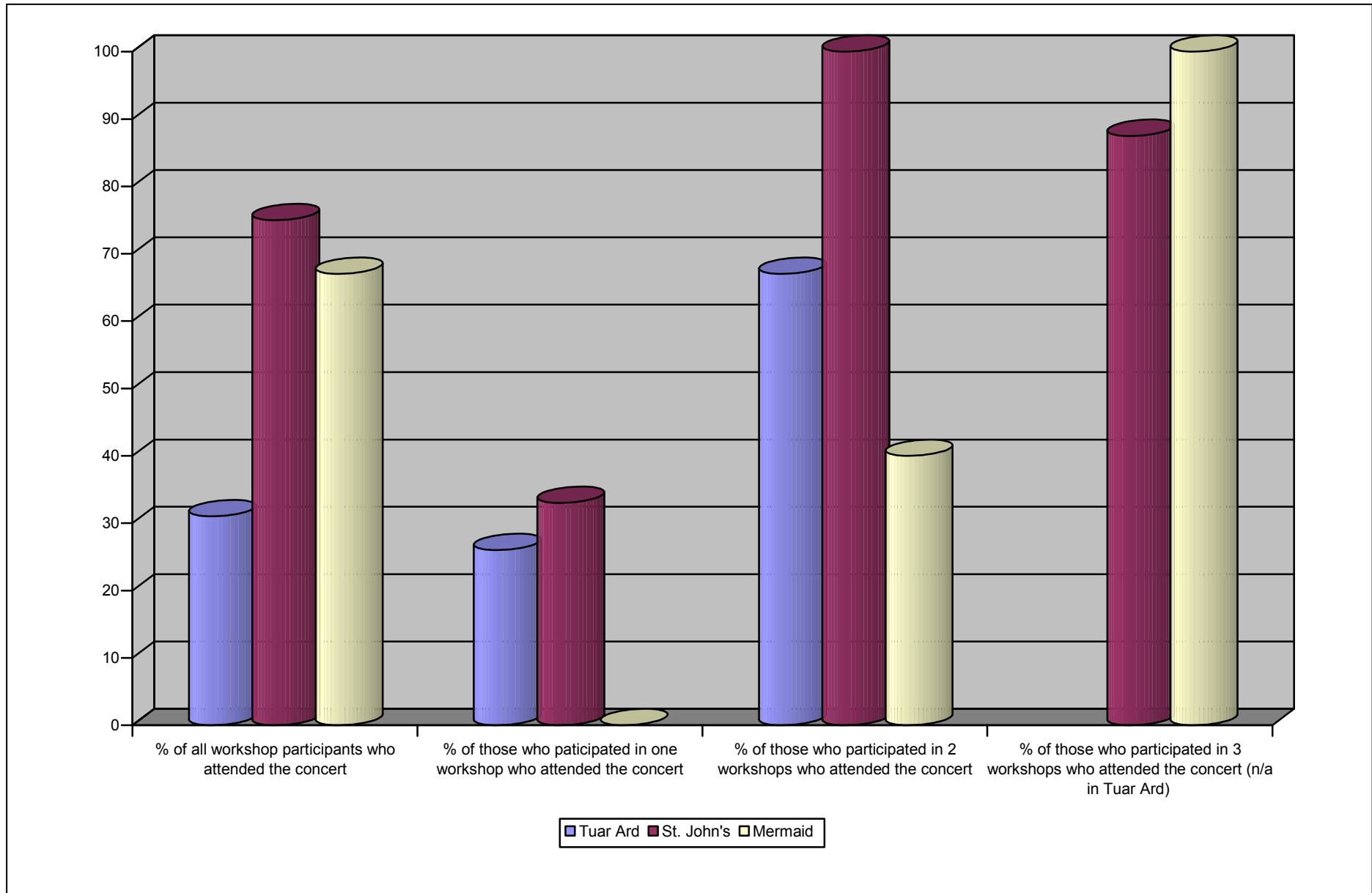
*Cross-over from workshops to concert:*

There was a high level of cross-over from consistent workshop attendees to concert-goers. Of the eight people who attended all three workshops in the Mermaid, 100% attended the concert. Of the eight who attended all three workshops at St. John's, 87.5% attended the concert. The workshops in Tuar Ard attracted very different groups of people on both days but despite the fact that the cross-over figures are too small to analyse in any meaningful way, it is interesting to note that two of the three people who participated in both workshops also attended the concert. This equates with 67%, as compared with 26% of those who attended just one workshop<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> See figure 1. for a diagrammatic analysis of the relationship between workshop attendance and concert attendance

Percentage of workshop participants who attended the concert



*An enhanced musical experience for new and existing audiences:*

The workshops offered participants an opportunity to bridge the gap that usually exists between audience and artist; in all cases, promoters observed that this experience enhanced the individual's understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the concert performance. Written feedback confirmed this. When asked *whether the workshops impacted on their enjoyment of the concert* 100% of participants from Tuar Ard who responded to the question<sup>19</sup> answered in the affirmative, along with 89% in St. John's and 100% from the Mermaid.

*Demystifying the music:*

Preconceptions regarding classical music concerts were challenged in St. John's and the Mermaid when workshop participants experienced the Prey Trio's eclectic programme performed from different corners of the venue, and more particularly when the audience was invited to become musically involved. As one promoter commented: *'It is a very different approach...where you are asked to be a participant rather than a recipient.'* In a similar vein, members of Organics felt the ADP workshops challenged the limited, stereotypical view of jazz that often scares people away from concerts, demonstrating instead the varied styles available.

*Potential for increased audience loyalty to venues:*

Whether increased loyalty to the venue is achieved will only become evident in the long term however feedback from participants suggests it is likely. When asked whether they would participate in similar workshops again 92% of respondents from Tuar Ard replied in the affirmative, along with 67% from St. John's<sup>20</sup> and 100% from the Mermaid. When asked if they would attend further jazz/ classical concerts in the appropriate venues, 100% of those who responded from all three venues<sup>21</sup> said they would.

*Potential for increased audience loyalty to participating artists:*

Both ensembles felt their direct connection with workshop participants could potentially impact on future audiences through positive word of mouth however they acknowledged that such an impact will only become significant (and visible) if the ADP expands into a regular scheme around the country.

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<sup>19</sup> This question was left blank by seven of the thirteen respondents in Tuar Ard; it was completed by all respondents from the other two venues.

<sup>20</sup> One respondent qualified their 'yes' with the comment that it would depend on the content

<sup>21</sup> Again, seven of the thirteen respondents from Tuar Ard left this question blank

*Improved communications between the promoters and the artists:*

In two of the pilots, musicians and promoters got to know each other quite well in the days and/ or weeks before the concert, which made informal communication easier and more effective. They developed 'a bit of a bond' and everybody was more relaxed as a result. In the third pilot, this was not really the case. The fact that Music Network played a pivotal communication role meant that the promoter and the musicians had less contact than they would for a regular concert but this was not identified as a disadvantage; in fact, the promoter felt it worked very well.

*Improved communications between promoters and Music Network:*

The pilot programme involved a high level of contact between promoters and the Development Programmes Manager in Music Network. This increased levels of familiarity and improved communications. It also promoted better mutual understanding, giving personnel from Music Network first hand experience of the particularities of local contexts and expanding the promoters' awareness of the breadth of Music Network's role in music development beyond the promotion of national tours.

*Altered attitudes/ expanded plans for further outreach:*

*In Tuar Ard*, the promoter found her perception of outreach altered significantly due to the ADP. Previously, she had only seen the potential for outreach in relation to limited types of solo performance, when she would ask the musician in question to add value to the performance by visiting a local school in advance. Following the pilot however, she began to see the potential for varied outreach interventions targeting all age groups and delivered by ensembles as well as solo artists. As a consequence of the ADP, Tuar Ard made an important new contact in the local Community School and there are plans to involve teachers and students in an upcoming visit by the Vanburgh Quartet. The promoter also wants to build their relationship with Organics and further develop the local jazz audience. They would like to follow up on the workshop participants from the pilot and possibly extend the programme to include a schools workshop and a masterclass as well as a more general audience development workshop and concert. In St. John's and the Mermaid, the programme didn't impact so dramatically on attitudes towards outreach but it did galvanise the promoters into planning follow up programmes.

- *In St. John's*, the promoter plans to continue working with the classical music audience, particularly targeting workshops attendees with a subscription series, which will start in the Autumn. In this context, the promoter would like to offer the group something different and is considering an appreciation programme along the lines of the one he initially promised.

- *In the Mermaid*, the promoter would like to build the relationship with the same audience/ workshop group but offer them something different musically<sup>22</sup>.

*Learning outcomes for musicians:*

Although both ensembles had extensive experience in planning and delivering music workshops, individual musicians identified a number of learning outcomes from the programme. These included an enhanced awareness of:

- *The musical potential that exists in all groups*: Musical potential was best realised when musicians treated each participant as an individual and challenged them to participate to the best of their abilities, ensuring they weren't patronised or excluded. This applied in all three venues but was particularly notable in the Mermaid where the group was particularly diverse and in Tuar Ard, where the musicians noted a positive shift among participating instrumentalists once they were challenged individually and at an appropriate level.
- *The potential for groups of mixed ability to work well together given the required resources*: In the Mermaid, the musicians' were initially surprised at their success in working with a particularly diverse group. To some degree, individual personalities created the positive group dynamic however logistics were also essential. The group was small in numbers<sup>23</sup> and included a parent who attended to the needs of her two children (particularly the younger child who was only six years old) and a key worker who accompanied and supported three participants with special needs. The musicians' ability to draw on a wide repertoire of music and exercises was also important, enabling them to offer participants opportunities to make music with varying degrees of simplicity and complexity as required.
- *The need to respond imaginatively to inconsistent group attendance*: The ADP threw up particular challenges in relation to working with inconsistent groups over a series of workshops. While it is up to the organisers to cut down on inconsistency as far as possible, it is also important that musicians develop skills and approaches that will enable them to deal with such eventualities. One musician found herself recapping at the beginning of each workshop to deal with newcomers, and considering small groups options to build their capacity to participate alongside more consistent attendees.

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<sup>22</sup> Due to a change in personnel, it was not possible for the follow up meeting to take place between Music Network and the key worker at the Mermaid in advance of this report; therefore there are no concrete details of the proposed outreach strand planned at this stage.

<sup>23</sup> Eleven participants attended on the first day, fifteen on the second and ten on the third.

- *The value of including artists in the planning and evaluation processes:* While these processes will not interest all musicians, some of the participating artists found they reflected more on the aims, nature and effectiveness of their work as a result of being involved. One musician commented that despite being involved in outreach for nearly ten years, she had never before been included in the 'big picture'.

## **2.2. Challenges experienced in the outreach strand**

### *Timing:*

Timing presented a number of challenges in the area of outreach, particularly in the areas of planning and recruitment, and access to space:

- *The impact on planning and recruitment in Tuar Ard:* The pilot needed to be planned, implemented, completed and evaluated by the end of the summer '07 in order to facilitate the rolling out of an improved, mainstream programme in the autumn. This created a significant challenge for all stakeholders but most particularly for the promoter in Tuar Ard, whose programme was planned and delivered between February and May. It was difficult and ultimately impossible to find a day and time when the venue, the musicians and the target group were all available. Eventually the promoter and the musicians agreed to schedule the workshops for Friday afternoons in mid/ late May. Unfortunately, the time of year excluded the participation of the initial target group of young instrumentalists, many of whom were engaged in college exams, and the time of day excluded the participation of a second target group of adults from the new estates in the town, as they were generally at work.
- *The impact on planning and recruitment in St. John's and the Mermaid:* Recruitment proved a difficult process for all of the promoters. Despite the use of a range of marketing tools (local press, radio and other information outlets), all of the promoters experienced significant difficulties in securing a commitment to attend. The promoter in the Mermaid had three target groups in mind but the timing did not suit any of them; teachers and students were on holiday and there was not sufficient time to build the necessary relationships with either the business community or early school leavers. All promoters had to engage in a high degree of personal contact, which was very time-consuming. This was particularly the case for the promoter in *St. John's* although this had less to do with the timeframe and more to do with the particularities of communicating with the older classical audience in Listowel. Although the group was quite flexible with regard to the time of year, the promoter felt they would be more attracted to the programme in the winter months when fewer options were available.

- *The impact on space in the Mermaid and Tuar Ard:* The shortage of lead-in time also impacted on the availability of spaces. In the Mermaid, the final workshop had to be held in the local town hall board room because the auditorium had already been booked in advance. Similarly, the Tuar Ard café, which usually opens on concert nights, remained closed on the night of the Organics performance; staff members were unavailable as they had made alternative arrangements before the ADP was booked in.

*Duration:*

In two of the three pilots, the timeframe was short and focused: it stretched over three consecutive days in St. John's and six days in the Mermaid. However, the timeframe was longer in Tuar Ard, with workshops scheduled to take place over ten days. The promoter found it difficult to secure a commitment from participants to attend over such an extended time period and ultimately reduced the number of workshops from three to two (but extended the second workshop from two to three hours).

*Clarity of communications between stakeholders:*

In one instance, there was a breakdown in communications between Music Network personnel and the promoter in St. John's. Both used the familiar term *Audience Development workshop* often and easily in their discussions but unbeknownst to each other they had very different understandings of the term. As a result, the promoter recruited participants for a 'talk-style' workshop focusing on appreciation, while Music Network engaged the artists to deliver a participative music-making workshop.

*Optimising connections between promoters and workshop participants/ audience:*

While the workshops led to a strong connection between the musicians and the participants and made the latter feel more familiar with the venues, the connection between the promoter and the participants could have been stronger in some cases. In *Tuar Ard*, the lack of an organised tea-break during the workshops was a missed opportunity for the promoter to establish a more personal connection with the participants and find out more about their musical interests/ attendance at concerts and other arts events. In *the Mermaid*, the unavailability of the key worker on the night of the concert also represented a missed opportunity. While the musicians and Music Network personnel provided the participants with a link between workshops and concert, the potential connection with personnel from the centre was not optimised.

*Lack of advance information about participants:*

Due to recruitment difficulties in all venues, there was very little prior information available to artists about workshop participants. This meant they could only engage in the most basic planning as they weren't sure whether they would be working with instrumentalists or non-musicians more interested in appreciation. While all of the musicians agreed that it would be ideal to have more advance information, there was some debate and disagreement about the degree to which it impacted on the quality of workshop delivery in the context of Audience Development work.

- Some musicians felt that advance information would not only improve the effectiveness of the planning process, it would allow the musicians to develop a set of broad templates for different groups that could be refined or expanded in line with the particular interests and abilities of the individuals involved.
- Others questioned the value of such information, highlighting the fact that categories such as *children*, *older people*, or *people with learning disabilities* do not convey much information about any individual's musical interests or abilities. Nor do they tell you anything about the group dynamic, which will only emerge on the day.

*Lack of a shared understanding of Audience Development outreach among artists:*

In general, participating artists were unfamiliar with the contents of the Music Network Audience Development Strategy document and lacked clarity regarding the parameters involved. Understandings of the term *Audience Development* varied from musician to musician and there was uncertainty as to how it could be interpreted in the context of the outreach programme. When members of the participating ensembles came together and found they had adopted two very different approaches, a valuable debate ensued and a number of pertinent questions were raised:

- Members of Organics found it difficult to work with a diverse group with mixed interests and abilities. They would prefer to work in a more structured way and felt the programme would benefit from being more focused. While they understood that the aim of the programme was to develop an audience for and with the promoter, they felt it could be expanded to include a wider range of outreach programmes. For example, they proposed a varied programme with a school-based workshop early in the day followed by an instrumental workshop/ master class or appreciation workshop (pre-determined and pre-planned) in the venue before the concert.
- While there were some points of agreement between individual musicians across the two ensembles, members of the Prey Trio generally saw greater potential for the involvement of a diversity of people in collective music-making, regardless of musical experience or ability, for the purposes of fun and inclusiveness. There was

some uncertainty as to whether more structured workshops for particular groups would come under the heading of Audience Development and some questioning of the elements that differentiate ADP work from other outreach work in schools etc.

- There was some agreement in relation to the importance of establishing clear aims for each ADP outreach programme and allowing these dictate the appropriate approach. However, confusion remained as to the flexibility of the ADP in this regard.

*Continuing Professional Development for artists:*

Although participation in the CPD programme was considered part of the ADP contract, feedback shows there was a failure to make a meaningful connection between the two. There were different levels of participation. Out of the six days of training that took place during the ADP:

- Members of the Prey Trio attended two days, one and a half day and no days respectively, while their guest performer attended three days
- Members of Organics attended a half day each.

While members of both Trios enjoyed the elements of training they attended, they questioned its effectiveness in equipping musicians to work in Audience Development contexts. Their perception was that the programme failed to differentiate sufficiently between:

- different contexts in which people work
- different levels of ability and experience
- different learning styles and interests
- different levels of challenge afforded by improvisation (and possibly other rhythm exercises) for classically trained musicians as opposed to jazz musicians

As a result of their limited attendance at the training and their reservations about its specificity to their work, the musicians felt that their own prior outreach experience was more effective in equipping them to manage the challenging situations thrown up by the different pilot programmes.<sup>24</sup>

It is interesting to note the discrepancies between the musicians' perceptions of what the CPD course had to offer and the content of the training as outlined by Music Network<sup>25</sup>. It suggests that there may be a breakdown in communication whereby some of the musicians remain unaware of the breadth and scope of the training available and its

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<sup>24</sup> Two of the musicians gained some of their outreach experience through previous Music Network programmes, which also incorporated elements of training and support.

<sup>25</sup> The content of the CPD training course is briefly outlined in *Section A.2.3. The structure of the project*

potential relevance to Audience Development work. It also highlights the potential for the CPD programme to be informed by the experiences of musicians involved in the ADP and further developed to address their specific training needs.

### **3. The impact of the programming strand**

#### **3.1. Positive outcomes in the area of programming**

Again, it is important to emphasise the different levels of resources and needs among participating promoters and the different local circumstances that impacted on their programming decisions. The programming aspect of the ADP is experimental and the impact will only be seen in the long term. However, a number of short term outcomes were identified, particularly in relation to Tuar Ard, where the promoter had very specific aims with regard to programme development.

##### *An additional concert in the music season:*

Each centre promoted an additional concert as a result of the ADP; both St. John's and the Mermaid promoted a classical concert by The Prey Trio, while Tuar Ard promoted a jazz concert by Organics.

##### *Expanded scope and level of activity in Tuar Ard:*

The ADP had a significant positive impact on the quantity and scope of music programming in Tuar Ard. The promoter has *raised the number of quality music concerts* for upcoming seasons, having booked the Vanburgh Quartet and requested two concerts from Music Network instead of the usual one. More significantly for a venue that wishes to establish itself as a centre of excellence for jazz in the Midlands, the promoter has been encouraged to *add Irish jazz to the programme*, rather than continuing to limit the choice to Music Network's international jazz tours. While the promoter intends to continue to benefit from the quality and professionalism associated with Music Network concerts, participation in the ADP has caused her to expand her range of musical contacts. As a result, she has made contact with other professional jazz resource organisations such as the Improvised Music Company and The Living Room Project.

*The development of a music policy:*

Two of the three promoters see potential in developing a music policy as a means of enhancing the coherence of their music programming; they plan to work with Music Network in exploring the idea further.

### **3.2. Challenges experienced in the programming strand**

One promoter is not currently interested in developing a music policy as part of the ADP. The promoter feels such a policy could restrict his ability to select and deliver a varied programme of music in consultation with his audience.

## **4. Key factors underpinning the successes of the ADP**

A small number of key factors underpinned the successful outcomes from the ADP. These include:

*Access to Music Network supports and resources:*

The thinking behind the Music Network Audience Development Strategy was based on extensive research, consultation and consideration and this helped shape a programme that was largely effective, informative and enjoyable for promoters, participants and musicians alike. As well as providing the promoter with access to promotional materials, Music Network provided valuable contact and support on an ongoing basis; in some cases, this opened up new and thought-provoking possibilities, which were central to the successes achieved. Music Network support provided a solid foundation for the programme enabling promoters to engage in more lateral thinking, experiment with new ideas and establish new contacts. Access to the Music Network instrument bank was another important asset, immediately engaging the curiosity of workshop participants in St. John's and the Mermaid and contributing significantly to their pleasure and enthusiasm.

*Informed/ effective promoters:*

Participating promoters had access to good contacts within their communities and demonstrated commitment and ingenuity in using the marketing tools available. When they encountered difficulties in recruiting workshop groups, they took the time to ring

around and ‘...literally chase’ potential participants; they were always keen to develop new contacts. The promoters were open and willing to review their strategies critically and imaginatively; they demonstrated a willingness to ‘...think outside the box.’ They were supportive of the visiting musicians and provided them with suitable, uninterrupted spaces in which to work.

*Skilled musicians:*

The knowledge and professionalism of the musicians combined with their specific skills in communication, facilitation and participative music-making were essential to the success of the programme. Both trios demonstrated an important degree of openness, flexibility and confidence. They demonstrated an ability to improvise and devise programmes catering for a diversity of needs and optimised the range of abilities among participants. One of the promoters commented: ‘*A lot of musicians would have baulked at the group... [but they] were really good at dealing with the diversity; they treated everybody equally.*’ The promoters found the musicians pleasant and easy to work with and valued their combination of professional skills and natural abilities. As one promoter pointed out, this mix can never be taken for granted as many talented musicians are unable to communicate effectively in this way.

*Participant focused workshops:*

In all cases, the workshops revolved around the needs, interests and abilities of the participants. This is partly why each set of workshops were so different and why they achieved such high satisfaction ratings from the individuals involved. Even in the case of St. John’s where the group arrived with the expectation of a talk on music appreciation, the musicians worked with their varied interests and tastes, enabling them to participate in a way that was comfortable, fun and individually relevant.

*A clear link between the workshops and the concert performance:*

The musicians succeeded in creating strong linkages between workshop activities and concert performances. They engaged participants at a personal, intellectual and musical level in a way that enhanced both enjoyment and understanding. Where workshops participants were facilitated to get to know each other better, the impact was further heightened. For example, two workshop participants who sat together at the concert in Tuar Ard were overheard commenting on familiar material and techniques between numbers. Another pair who travelled separately from Athlone but sat together, showed an interest in attending future jazz concerts together and gave some consideration to the suggestion that they might even establish a local jazz society.

*Appropriate numbers for the workshops:*

With one exception, the musicians were happy with the numbers attending the workshops<sup>26</sup>. The optimum number differed from pilot to pilot depending on the aims of the workshop, the diversity of age, ability, and musical interests among the participants, and the approach adopted by the musicians. All stakeholders felt it was important that these factors would continue to dictate numbers in the future.

*Focus:*

While audience development is always on the agenda in a general way for promoters, participating in a structured Audience Development Programme helped them to focus on the task in hand. It created space to reflect on marketing and outreach needs and led them to formulate a more long term approach to development. Similarly, having an outside partner agency such as Music Network following up on progress at all stages, created some positive pressure, particularly in relation to workshop recruitment.

## **5. Looking to the future**

### **5.1. ADP aims revisited**

The aims of the Audience Development Programme were largely met, despite the challenges that arose in the context of the pilot. *New audiences* were attracted to live performance at all three venues, albeit to differing degrees according to the promoter's target groups. The programme reached a broad demographic including people of all ages and diverse abilities.

As demonstrated clearly by audience feedback, the *live music experience was considerably enhanced* for those individuals who attended ADP workshops; they found the performances more enjoyable, more interesting and more attractive in terms of future attendance as a result of their direct engagement with the musicians.

Evaluating the degree to which the programme *supported live performance of high quality music* will be complex in the long term however the report has shown that it was very successful in the short term. It led to the promotion of three well attended concerts

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<sup>26</sup> Fewer than expected turned up for the first workshop in Tuar Ard.

by a number of highly skilled musicians following a series of innovative marketing strategies and participative music workshops. It also contributed to the development of an engaged and enthusiastic audience, many of whom say they will return to their respective venues for future concerts.

*The role of the promoter* was supported and developed through the marketing, outreach and programming strands of the programme. All promoters identified significantly positive outcomes in one or more of these areas and in some cases attitudes and approaches towards music promotion were radically altered.

Only one aim did not demonstrate an immediate, short term success. The ADP proposed to support *advocacy* ‘...with the appropriate authorities for the promotion and importance of live music performance in the development of culture and society in Ireland’. The lack of any apparent short term success in this regard may be partly due to the long term nature of aspirations regarding high level advocacy. It may also be partly due to the lack of short term goals and performance indicators identified, which would help to progress advocacy by means of small, measurable steps. While valuable information emerged from the pilot, a long term plan is required to ensure its collation, presentation and effective dissemination. The aim remains valid and important and requires consideration in partnership with other stakeholders, all of whom could play an important role.

## **5.2. Changes and developments to be considered**

As well as building on the successful elements of the pilot programme outlined in this report, it will be important to consider potential changes and developments in accordance with the learning outcomes.

### **a. Changes and developments in the planning process:**

#### *Timing:*

While the timeframe for the pilots varied from three to five months, the promoters’ experiences clearly demonstrated the need for longer lead-in times. The establishment of a preliminary period would allow promoters to build up their relationship with the target group and identify a key contact person who could represent the group in the planning process. Additional time would also facilitate promoters and artists to come together to clarify their understandings of Audience Development and discuss individual and

collective aims. Once all stakeholders have agreed the specific aims of the project they will be better equipped to discuss practical issues such as timeframe, availability, costs, group size, workshop content, duration, equipment, space, participant fees etc.

*Duration:*

While the duration of each programme will be decided in consultation with promoters, participants and musicians, the experience at Tuar Ard was instructive. The advantages of working within a short, intensive period should be considered by those coming new to the programme alongside other relevant factors and circumstances at local level.

*Clarification of aims, approaches and terminology:*

While a comprehensive document exists outlining the aims of the Audience Development Programme, which was disseminated to all participating Promoters and Artists in advance of the pilot's commencement, it presents a relatively inaccessible format for some stakeholders. In the short term, a strategy is needed to engage all stakeholders with the aims, approaches and terminology in a more active and meaningful way. Terms such as *Audience Development* are fluid and stakeholders may find their understanding altered as the programme develops; consequently, the use of such terms should be interrogated on a regular basis. Similarly, aims are unlikely to remain static in the long term and should be clarified at regular intervals. Events such as Music Network Promoter's Forum 2007 will be important in this regard as it will focus on audience development.

*Greater clarity with regard to roles and responsibilities:*

Using the experience of the pilot, Music Network could usefully translate a number of the learning outcomes relating to the roles and responsibilities of promoters into guidelines.

Particular areas for consideration could include:

- attendance at all relevant workshops and concerts
- responsibility for sign-in books
- responsibility for workshop/ concert introductions
- provision of tea and coffee for musicians and participants alike
- utilisation of the tea-break as a networking and information gathering opportunity
- administration of feedback/ evaluation forms

## **b. Changes and developments in the marketing strand**

### *The ability to meet a variety of marketing needs among promoters:*

Music Network works with a broad range of professional and voluntary promoters who have access to varying levels of information, personnel, training opportunities and resources. In order to meet the diversity of needs that exists among promoters, it would be useful to draw up a menu of marketing support options, which could be disseminated to potential participants in advance. There is potential to add to the menu as the programme expands and develops.

### *Tracking and monitoring the effectiveness of marketing strategies:*

The issue of tracking and monitoring needs to be included from the very initial planning stages. If promoters will agree to establish ADP tracking systems that are tailored to their individual booking systems, Music Network could take responsibility for compiling and disseminating the learning as a means of informing Audience Development at a national level.

### *Advertising the participative element in future concerts:*

The ways in which the participative elements of concerts are advertised requires further consideration. A suitable form of wording should be agreed by the different stakeholders and included in publicity materials in order to preclude any situation where an audience member may feel disappointed or misled, and possibly decide not to return.

### *Enhanced support for artists in the area of self-promotion:*

A stronger linkage is needed between the ADP and the Music Network programme for artist support, most particularly *Making Overtures*. Participation on such a course would offer ADP musicians an opportunity to reflect further on their self-promotion needs and explore ways in which they could develop the necessary resources, materials and/ or skills to meet those needs.

## **c. Changes and developments in the outreach strand**

### *Recruitment:*

Taking account of the recruitment difficulties experienced in all three pilot programmes, it may be useful to develop a set of flexible guidelines to support promoters to create new linkages and build on local strengths and circumstances. In situations where the promoter

has no particular target group in mind the introduction of advance taster workshops<sup>27</sup> was proposed, as a means of generating interest and making contacts. If a set of guidelines are produced, particular attention should be paid to the terminology used with no assumption of shared understandings.

*Supporting the professional development of suitably skilled musicians:*

More opportunities for dialogue with participating artists should be incorporated in the ADP, particularly in relation to learning outcomes and training needs. At the same time, greater emphasis should be placed on encouraging the ADP musicians to attend the CPD training programme as they have had limited exposure to the methods and approaches on offer. As well as finding ways to heighten awareness of what is on offer, Music Network could consider the introduction of inducements, including careful consideration of proposals regarding specificity and opportunities for peer learning. Strategies could include the introduction of opportunities to visit and observe other ADP workshops and share information with others involved the programme. Music Network could also consider the introduction of a small payment to cover musicians' expenses when attending ADP related events.

**d. Changes and developments in the programming strand**

*Additional and alternative strategies to support coherent programming:*

At present, the ADP encourages promoters to develop a music policy for their venue as a means of ensuring coherent music programming. More consideration of alternative and additional strategies will be needed as the programme develops and a wider range of promoters become involved.

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<sup>27</sup> Other suggestions included the organisation of a talk/ music event in a public place as a means of reaching people who never usually attend arts venues; it was suggested that the idea of the taster workshop could be expanded to include talks and the use of recorded music as well as participative music making workshops.

## D. Conclusion

The Music Network Audience Development pilot was an innovative and ambitious programme that emerged from a period of research and consultation. It offered promoters and musicians a range of direct and indirect supports in the areas of marketing, outreach and programming, and created opportunities for audiences to interact directly with artists prior to their concert performances. The foundations of the Music Network Audience Development pilot were tested through this evaluation and were found to be strong; it achieved all of its short term aims, and programme organisers have already put some structures in place to tackle the more long term aspirations. The programme also addressed four of Music Network's overall objectives: to build audiences for music across a range of genres; to foster and develop high quality concert promotion in Ireland; to provide enhanced performance and professional development opportunities for highly skilled musicians within Ireland; and to encourage wider participation in and accessibility to music.

The Music Network Audience Development pilot encouraged critical enquiry at every stage of its planning and implementation and incorporated learning outcomes into the programme on an ongoing basis. This is a demanding way to work but it is at the heart of the ADP's capacity for flexibility and relevance. While some fresh strategies will be required to address the challenges identified in each strand, the stakeholders themselves represent a valuable resource in this regard. Already their energy and commitment has contributed enormously to the success of the programme, moving it forward from being a strategy on paper, through the challenging pilot phase and now into a period of consolidation and further development; it will be important to continue to harness their ideas and learning in each phase as it progresses.

A high level of enthusiasm remains among all those involved in the pilot programme and both promoters and musicians have expressed a wish to continue into the next phase. Workshop participants too were keen to have more opportunities to take part in similar programmes. The promoter from the Mermaid summed it up neatly. She pointed out that the ADP had enabled the venue: *'...to get people in, facilitate them to have contact with the artist, get them more familiar with classical music and the theatre space, and give them a great experience.'* With the roll out of the next phase, the ADP can build on its achievements to date and continue to expand opportunities for fun, familiarity and confidence among music audiences around the country.