

Southampton Centre for Music Education and Social Justice

Launched on 16 October 2023, the Centre for Music Education and Social Justice (CMESJ) has experienced a dynamic and productive inaugural year. Our activities have adhered closely to our core aims and objectives, which include advancing research, public engagement, and training in music education and social justice. In our first year, we have successfully initiated an annual music education policy conference, conducted a 'virtual knowledge exchange' symposium with international partners, expanded our community outreach, and developed a range of ambitious research funding proposals.

Report prepared by Erin Johnson-Williams, Chiying Lam, Helen Dromey.

Key Achievements



1. Major Research Grant Award

As a highly positive way to cap off our first year as a research Centre, we have recently met with substantial funding success for our first major research grant:

For a start date of 1 August 2024, we have been awarded

£620,931

for CMESJ to be home to the AHRC Hub for Public Engagement with Music Research.

Led by Erin Johnson-Williams and Benjamin Oliver, and involving Department of Music members Chiying Lam, Liz Gre, Hettie Malcolmson and David Bretherton as spoke project mentors, this prestigious grant will facilitate four spoke projects over two years that will develop projects around music and social justice based on collaborations between academics and creative practitioners.



2. Integration on curriculum

Working very closely with the Department of Music's Programme Team and EDI lead, we have integrated CMESJ's research and teaching objectives within the undergraduate curriculum of the Department of Music by:

- Proposing a new second-year undergraduate module, '**Music Education and Social Justice**', which will run annually from 2024–25, and which will be a 'core' module for all second-year undergraduate students in the Department of Music from 2025–26,
- Reviewing the **programme and module learning outcomes** according to '**social justice-informed principles**' as part of our Periodic Academic Review for both Taught Postgraduate and Taught Undergraduate content,
- **Recruiting and mentoring** an incoming cohort of **PhD students** who are working on various topics in music education and social justice.



3. Support the University Sanctuary Working Group and Sanctuary Mission

- CMESJ collaborated with the **University Sanctuary Team, CLEAR**, and the **Welsh National Opera** on a project that involved student volunteers.
- This partnership culminated in an informal sharing event in the **Turner Sims** foyer, sponsored by Turner Sims, on 9 July 2024,
- The project is planned to continue into the 2024–2025 academic year.



Moments at the Informal Sharing in Turner Sims Foyer, 9 July 2024.

Knowledge Exchange and Community Engagement

We have developed significant collaborations with local music education organisations and venues, including Turner Sims, John Hansard Gallery, South Coast Music Partnership, Hampshire Music Education Hub, and SoCo Music Project. Key areas of focus include:

- **Workforce Development:**
Initiatives aimed at enhancing the skills and competencies of music educators.
- **Early Years Provision:**
Improving music education for young children through targeted programs and resources.

These initiatives are scheduled for implementation in the upcoming year.

Widening Participation Events

Our knowledge exchange efforts have also involved showcasing diverse music education initiatives and working closely with organisations like Turner Sims.

These efforts aim to build strong local networks and widen participation in music education.



Research presentations at CMESJ visit to the Royal Northern College of Music, 18 October 2023.

Funding and PhD Student Recruitment

We have accepted and offered places to 6 PhD students for the 2024–25 intake, all of which are working on some aspect of music education and social justice. Applicant Sophie Iddles has received the competitive SWWDTP funding, Julia Barela has received the Innovation and Social Impact Scholarship, and Yifan Liu has received the Presidential Bursary.

Looking ahead, CMESJ will continue to prioritize building Knowledge Exchange capacities and networks, developing interdisciplinary collaborations, and work on targeted strategies to increase our web presence.

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PhD students
2024–25



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