



Southampton Centre for Music Education and Social Justice

Southampton Centre for Music Education and Social Justice 2025 Autumn Newsletter

Season's Greetings from CMESJ!

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Launched back in October 2023, the [Centre for Music Education and Social Justice](#) (CMESJ) continues to actively advocate for equality in music education. We bring together music practitioners and local, national, and international partners to engage in conversations about social justice, addressing inequality, powerlessness, and discrimination.

This year we continue to be home to the [AHRC Hub for Public Engagement with Music Research](#) and partner with University Sanctuary Team to support the Sanctuary Mission. Our commitment includes embedding social justice-informed principles into our curriculum, expanding widening participation initiatives, and developing a range of ambitious research funding proposals to advance our mission.

You can check our Annual Report 2024-2025 on this [link](#).

As we move into the new academic year, we are excited to continue this important work together.

Best wishes,

Chiying, Erin, Helen, Amy, Heather and Ben

Updates from AHRC Hub for Public Engagement with Music Research



The Centre is excited to host the [AHRC Hub for Public Engagement with Music Research](#) in its second year, a funding hub dedicated to connecting music research with real-world settings. Led by **Erin Johnson-Williams, Lisa Tregale, and Benjamin Oliver** the Hub is pleased to announce the launch of **four Spoke projects** across the UK.

You can read more about their projects below:

- Sophia Loizou (Young Sounds UK) and Mykaell Riley (University of Westminster): ['EQUALIZE'](#)
- Fairbeats Music and Melanie-Marie Haywood (Birmingham City University): ['In Practice and Policy: Co-creating an Ethical Framework and Organisational Decolonisation Process with Young Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants'](#)
- Karen Irwin (Live Music Now) and Beth Pickard (University of South Wales): ['Musical Connections: Nurturing Musical Cultures in Autism Resource Bases Across the UK through Participatory Action Research'](#)
- Fiona Moorcroft (SAYiT), Katie Jukes (MMU) and Surabhi Shukla and SJ Cooper-Knock (University of Sheffield): ['"What Words Do You Not Yet Have"? Musical Storytelling, Queer Life, and the Law'](#)

Project updates:

Policy Document Resources:

Explore our Policy Documents for advice on influencing UK government policy around music

These guides, compiled by the AHRC Hub's Policy Associate Rhys Lawrence in conversation with our Spoke projects and the wider Hub team, provide advice on how to influence UK government policy around music.

'Government and Music Policy Guidance' provides a general introduction to the structure of UK government, strategies for following and influencing policy developments, and an overview of key organisations and publications in music policy. It contains advice on how to interact with select committees and all-party parliamentary groups, how to produce and deliver a policy brief, and alternative methods for the communication of policy work.

The remaining three cover specific policy areas: music and social justice, musical education, and creative health. These more specific documents provide a brief introduction to their respective field, including key ideas and challenges, and lists of useful documents and organisations from which a research project can begin. Wherever a document such as a report, brief or evaluative framework is mentioned in these guides, a link is provided for ease of access. [ACCESS THE POLICY RESOURCES HERE.](#)

Discover new insights in inclusive music education - Musical Connections

The first two episodes of new **Shared Notes** [Podcast](#) are now live!

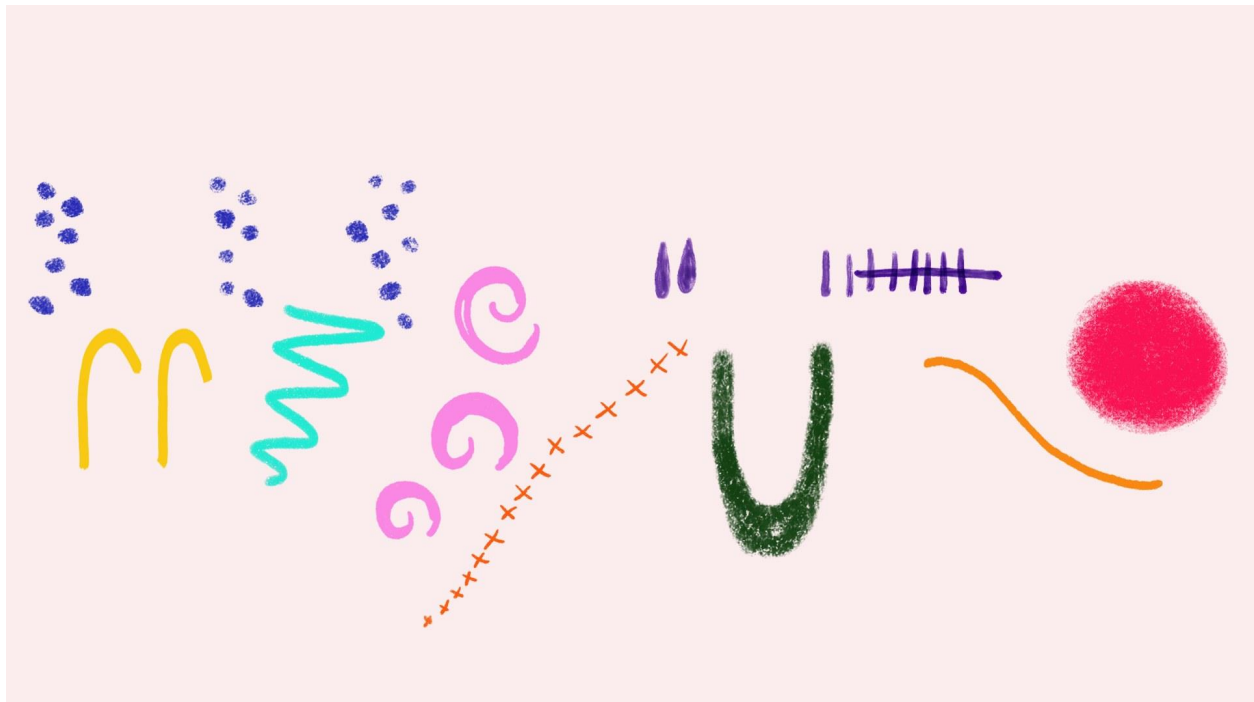
Join **Dr Beth Pickard** and **Alex Lupo** as they share behind-the-scenes reflections on the project so far - from the research process to early findings - and what this could mean for autistic young people's access to music.

Listen to Erin and Ben talking about the Hub: [AHRC Hub for Public Engagement with Music Research Policy Podcast](#)

Follow us on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/uoscmesj/>

You can also contact Hub team at: CMESJ_MusicPEHub@soton.ac.uk

Launch of Free Education Resource: **Pythagoras' Workshops Toolkit**



[Pythagoras' Toolkit](#) features a cheeky modern-day puppet Pythagoras (with her bag of tools) challenging eight virtuoso classical musicians and a conductor to help her carry out musical experiments. Created by director and theatre maker [Rachel Warr](#) (Dotted Line Theatre) in collaboration with Southampton composer and conductor [Benjamin Oliver](#), it is a playful, wordless show for family audiences which has been performed in Montreal (Canada) and Southampton.

'Pythagoras' Workshops Toolkit' has been designed for educators and practitioners. The resource offers ways to explore music, specifically graphic scores and conducting, through

music, sound-making, drawing and puppetry. It has been developed by Rachel Warr, Benjamin Oliver and Chi Ying Lam.

The toolkit draws on ideas, and includes clips, from the theatre show *Pythagoras' Toolkit*, but it is not necessary to have seen the performance to engage with the activities. It has been developed for participants aged 7-11 (Key Stage 2), although can be adapted for younger or older learners. It can be used at a range of scales, from one-off workshops to 6-week teaching blocks.

The Pythagoras' Workshops Toolkit consists of a PDF that outlines a wide range of activities, linking to related 31 project tutorial videos hosted on YouTube and sheet music resources. The toolkit is openly licensed under a Creative Commons license.

Sign up to download the Free PDF via this link to the [form](#). Please contact [Benjamin Oliver](#) with any questions.



Welcome our new student board members



1 - MUSI2151 Music Education and Social Justice: Supporting the Early Years Centre music-making session on 11 December 2025

We are very excited to welcome our wonderful 2025–2026 Student Representatives of CMESJ:

- **Ronnie Lam, AJ** – Undergraduate Representatives
- **Long Lin, Erin Townsend** – Postgraduate Taught Representatives
- **Jessica Price** – Postgraduate Research Representative
- **Megan Harrision** – Alumni Representative

We look forward to working with you all in the coming year! Our Centre's student representatives will be organising a series of student-led events. Stay tuned for more information.

Finally, we would like to extend our **heartfelt thanks to Oliver Picken, Maria Martins, Yifan Liu & Emily Macklow** for their invaluable contributions as student representatives during the 2024–2025 academic year. Your dedication and service have been greatly appreciated.



2 - Students performing Uri Agnon's participatory piece For People from Places as part of the Public Engagement Research Unit project (PI: Chiying Lam, CMESJ; Co-I: Claire Giles, University Sanctuary Team) at the James Matthew Building for Southampton Arts and Humanities Day 2025.

PhD News and Updates

We welcome **Jessica Price, Mahaliah Edwards and Callie Langley** to our PhD community at the Centre for Music Education and Social Justice. Mahaliah and Callie have been awarded the **Social Innovation Scholarship** and the **Leverhulme Doctoral Scholarships Programme for Interdisciplinary Resilience Studies** respectively.

Second-year PhD student Julia Barela's research project - *The Loudest Voices; How Social Class Shapes Our Musical Identity* aims to create a set of recommendations on making music education more equitable. She is currently looking to visit various schools throughout England to conduct interviews, focus groups and classroom observations, and finding it extremely

challenging to recruitment the number of schools needed. If you are able to help at all, please get in touch with Julia at J.E.Barela@soton.ac.uk.



3 - Some of our postgraduate research and taught students at Advisory Board member Dr Dave Camlin's talk, Music Making and Civic Imagination, including our youngest CMESJ member, son of postgraduate student Yifan Liu.

Conference and Study Day Updates



Event Recap - Beyond Borders: Knowledge Exchange Day

CMESJ has joined with colleagues across the University of Southampton to organise a one-day conference on **10 December**, marking **Human Rights Day**. The programme can be found here: [Beyond Borders Programme.pdf](#)

This **one-day conference** offered an opportunity to showcase research across the University related to migration and displacement, refugees, and asylum seekers, linked to the anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The event was designed to build on earlier mapping work that supports the University of Southampton's application for **University of Sanctuary** status.

The day included opportunities for networking and was designed to foster **interdisciplinary collaborative working**. There was also space provided for **early career researchers** to present their work. Through this event, we were able to acknowledge the dedication and commitment

of colleagues across the University and in the wider community, as well as the impact their meaningful contributions have made in this area.

Sounds of Climate Justice Study Day – Call for Provocations

- **Deadline for provocations: 31 January 2026**
- **Decisions / programme finalised: 7 February 2026**

The Southampton Centre for Music Education and Social Justice is pleased to announce a **Study Day on ‘Sounds of Climate Justice’** on Friday 24 February 2026. We invite submissions for **provocations of around 10 minutes**, relating to any intersectional reflections on, or musical responses to, the challenges of the climate crisis, and the interventions that music studies can make in the pursuit of climate justice.

This will be an in-person study day, although virtual or pre-recorded presentations can be accommodated.

The day will feature a mix of **academic presentations, musical performances, and workshops**, with time for reflection. There will also be space for participants to **co-construct and outline principles for a manifesto for music studies**, committing—musically and/or musicologically—to sustainable futures of scholarship, practice, and curricular design.

Submitting a provocation:

Please email a c.100-word abstract/outline of your provocation (spoken, musical, or performed) to **Erin Johnson-Williams** at e.johnson-williams@soton.ac.uk by **midnight on 31 January 2026**

Organising Committee

- Erin Johnson-Williams (University of Southampton)
- Chiying Lam (University of Southampton)
- Ellan A. Lincoln-Hyde (SOAS / King’s College London)
- Lawrence Davies (University of Huddersfield)
- Amy Williamson (University of Southampton)

Contact CMESJ

Southampton Centre for Music Education and Social Justice

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Deputy Director: Dr Erin Johnson-Williams

Associate Directors: Dr Helen Dromey; Dr Heather Mease; Prof Benjamin Oliver; Dr Amy Williamson

cmesj@soton.ac.uk | [website](#) | [instagram](#) | [youtube](#)