

Classical EDI Development Fund Project Report



Contents

Glossary	3
Summary Report	4
Full Report	
Introduction	6
EDI in Classical Music: UK Sector Reports	7
Projects	8
Sharing Forum	17
Recommendations	18

Glossary

Here we offer definitions of some key terms used within this report.

Our definitions are based on current EDI frameworks and are offered with respect, kindness and in good faith. We are committed to reviewing and updating our use of language in line with changes to contemporary thinking around EDI.

Accessibility – the practice of using inclusive design principles to remove barriers that would prevent any person from having equal access to any opportunity.

Anti-racism – the work of actively opposing racism by supporting changes that promote equity of all ethnic groups within society.

Classism – the discrimination or prejudice against people who are perceived to belong to or who identify as belonging to a particular social class.

d/Deaf – a collective term used to refer to both the physical condition of having hearing loss (lower-case 'deaf') and Deaf cultural identity (uppercase 'Deaf').

Diversity – refers to the different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences of all members of a society, which need to be recognised, valued and taken into account.

EDI – is a collective acronym that stands for 'Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion'. Separate definitions for each word used within the acronym are given in this glossary.

Equalities – refers to the act of treating different members of society fairly and ensuring that they are given equitable access to opportunities. It is distinct from the notion of 'Equality', which is treating everyone as if they were the same.

Equity – is the fair treatment of people according to their circumstances in order to reach an equal outcome.

Inclusion – is the work of actively recognising and meeting the differing needs of all members of a society.

Lived experience – is the first-hand knowledge or direct experience acquired by individuals through their daily lives.

Racism – is the discrimination or prejudice against people who are perceived to belong to or who identify as belonging to a particular cultural or ethnic group.

Summary Report

The Classical EDI Development Fund

The Classical EDI Development Fund (CEDIDF) is an annual research fund and forum launched in 2023 to explore and develop different approaches to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the classical music sector. It is developed and delivered by Chamber Music Scotland in partnership with Creative Scotland.

The aim of the fund is to support individuals and organisations within Scotland's classical music sector to build knowledge and skills in EDI by exploring the work of others. The fund also aims to strengthen links between people and organisations with an interest in EDI and to create a constructive, open space for discussion and development within the sector.

Seven projects were funded by the CEDIDF in 2023-24. The projects included research and some with a focus on applied learning. They were delivered by a cohort of Scotland-based individuals and organisations:

- Ailie Robertson
- Katrina Lee
- Live Music Now Scotland, led by Carol Main
- National Youth Orchestras of Scotland, led by Neil Fox
- Paul Chamberlain
- Scottish Freelance Classical Ensembles Network, led by Catherine Ferrell
- Simone Seales

Outcomes

The fund made a positive impact on individuals and organisations within the Scottish classical music sector.

The CEDIDF provided a paid pathway to EDI-focussed professional development for the 2023 cohort. The cohort were supported to develop new approaches to EDI work and to conduct research that would further advocacy within the industry.

For participating organisations, positive outcomes included an increase in levels of proactivity and confidence in supporting good EDI practice; a better understanding of workforce needs and how to implement employment and recruitment changes to meet them; an increase in the knowledge, skills and confidence of participating staff; and the creation of sector networks to identify and drive collective change.

For participating individuals, positive outcomes included an increase in their knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting good EDI practice; a growth in their artistic and professional development which fostered new work and opportunities; and the creation of peer networks to foster and share work to identify and drive collective change. Some members of the cohort followed participation in the project by obtaining advisory roles for organisations within the classical music sector.

Learnings & Recommendations

The outcomes of the project were presented at the end-of-project Sharing Forum in March 2024. The event was open to the public and in attendance were industry executives, union leaders, curators, educators, musicians and arts managers.

This report provides a written summary of the outcomes and learning of the CEDIDF. The learnings were collected through in-house evaluation, which included participant reports and an audience survey.



Introduction

The Classical EDI Development Fund (CEDIDF) is an annual research fund and forum launched in 2023 to explore and develop different approaches to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the classical music sector. It is administered by Chamber Music Scotland on behalf of Creative Scotland from an initial tender to support a Classical EDI Go See Share Fund and Forum.

The aim of the fund is to support individuals and organisations within Scotland's classical music sector to build knowledge and skills in EDI by exploring the work of others. The fund also aims to strengthen links between people and organisations with an interest in EDI and to create a constructive, open space for discussion and development within the sector.

In 2023 individuals and organisations were invited to apply for funding to help progress EDI in Scotland's classical music sector by addressing some structural inequalities in the sector which contribute to a lack of diversity and inclusion. Seven projects were funded by the CEDIDF in 2023-24. The projects included research and some with a focus on applied learning. They were delivered by a cohort of Scotland-based individuals and organisations:

- Ailie Robertson
- Katrina Lee
- Live Music Now Scotland, led by Carol Main
- National Youth Orchestras of Scotland, led by Neil Fox
- Paul Chamberlain
- Scottish Freelance Classical Ensembles Network, led by Catherine Ferrell
- Simone Seales

Open dialogue and mutual learning were established as priority aims of the CEDIDF. The 2023/24 CEDIDF was designed to meaningfully deliver against these aims with the following practical activities:

A group of EDI mentors were recruited to provide the cohort with support during the CEDIDF. Berginald Rash, Francine Gorman, Matthew Swann and Roz De Vile were selected to provide pastoral and specialist advice to the cohort on project planning, delivery and dissemination.

An initial cohort gathering in July 2023 was held at the outset of the project to strengthen links between funded individuals and organisations. This created an open space for mutual support and discussion which encouraged collaboration, knowledge sharing and offered the cohort the opportunity to undertake relevant professional development with the support of the project's EDI mentors.

A second cohort gathering was held at the midpoint of the project in October 2023 to address issues that had arisen for the cohort, to offer mutual feedback and to share initial findings and learnings in a safe space.

The project culminated in a Sharing Forum, in March 2024, with 6 of the cohort members in attendance to present the findings and learnings from their individual projects. The event, which was open to the public, was attended by industry executives, union leaders, curators, educators, musicians and arts managers from across the classical music sector. This activity was preceded by a delegation of 3 cohort members at the 2024 Association of British Orchestras (ABO) Conference in January, who shared initial learnings with over 300 delegates from across the classical music sector. The aim of the CEDIDF's in-person sharing activities was to offer the broader sector an opportunity to learn from the research and experiences of the cohort with a view to affecting wider and longer-term impact and change.

EDI in Classical Music: UK Sector Reports

The classical music sector experiences significant and persistent issues around equalities, diversity and inclusion. These widespread inequalities have been the focus of previous studies and testimonies within the UK classical music sector.

In 2015, an **ESRC-funded research report** noted a significant lack of diversity in the classical music workforce. This finding has been echoed more recently by **research from Arts Council England (2021)** which looked at the demographics of ethnicity, gender diversity, disability and long-term health condition and socio-economic background, and found a similar and persistent lack of diversity, particularly in senior roles.

Subsequent studies have examined the barriers to access faced by marginalised groups. A landmark **report by Black Lives in Music (2021)**, highlighted concerning testimonies of barriers to career progression and discrimination experienced by black musicians training and working in the UK classical music sector. This was followed by a **2023 report** focussed on intersectional prejudice and discrimination faced by black disabled musicians. **A 2022 report by Parents and Carers in Performing Arts** examined factors that excluded classical musicians with caring responsibilities from the sector.

This evidence base is particularly well-studied from a UK-wide perspective, but does not focus on the Scottish context. However, these reports introduce points of commonality in unequal access to opportunities in the classical music sector which operate across the life and career span of musicians. These points of commonality include conditions across the industry that entrench existing inequality: such as prevailing employment practices (freelance working, project-based employment and high levels of job precarity), a lack of diverse representation in senior roles and recruitment through peer networks (which can entrench existing inequality), which are repeatedly referenced as key barriers to a more diverse and representative workforce within the UK classical music sector.

The Classical EDI Development Fund: A Project Report

“It's been a privilege to engage with artists in Scotland who are seeking to deepen their own knowledge and practice in and around EDI in order to help shape and inform the classical music sector and the lives of all those it reaches.” – Berginald Rash, EDI Mentor

The aim of this project report is to share the activities and outcomes of the 7 projects supported by the CEDIDF in 2023/24. We identify the impact of the CEDIDF and share our learnings with the aim of benefitting discussions around EDI within the classical music sector.

The 2023/24 cohort projects focussed on a multiplicity of EDI topics, experiences and perspectives. Amongst individuals, the projects focused on improving knowledge and advocacy, with some focus on d/Deaf musicians, gender diverse musicians, musicians with chronic and major health conditions and musicians with experiences of racism and classism. Amongst organisations, the project focused on improving the diversity of recruitment, with some focus on disability and socio-economic background.

Monitoring and evaluation was performed by CMS throughout the CEDIDF. In addition to the informal feedback collected at gatherings, cohort members completed a post-participation report to share the impact and satisfaction of their time on the project. At the Sharing Forum, an audience survey was collected to measure impact and collect insight into attitudes towards EDI within classical music. The evaluation helped CMS to identify points of commonality within the cohort learnings and recommendations to guide the future ambitions of the CEDIDF.

Projects



Ailie Robertson

“ As a musician and the mother of a profoundly Deaf baby, I have really valued this opportunity to spend time researching music and deafness..It has greatly increased my own understanding of accessibility issues for d/Deaf audiences and musicians, and in turn, I hope it has started to impact how other organisations approach accessibility.”

Background

Ailie is a multi-award-winning harpist and composer based on the west coast of Scotland. She works across the classical, folk and electronic genres and has been commissioned by a number of leading cultural institutions, including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Proms and Scottish Chamber Choir. As both a musician and educator, Ailie advocates d/Deaf accessibility for children and adults across Scotland.

Ailie’s Project

Ailie’s project aimed to explore d/Deaf access to music making and experiences, with a view to empowering organisations to reduce barriers and increase provision for d/Deaf service users. Her project had two main strands: research visits and interviews and professional development training which included mentorship from Francine Gorman and instruction in BSL. Ailie conducted research visits and interviews with 15 music organisations (including Yorkshire-based d/Deaf music charities I can Play! and Music and the Deaf), 2 Scottish societies for d/Deaf children and adults and 6 d/Deaf musicians. Her research included a range of Scottish music organisations – including orchestras, trusts and charities – and d/Deaf musicians of all ages and backgrounds, including leading Scottish percussionist Evelyn Glennie.

In the interviews, Ailie collected qualitative information about d/Deaf music activity in Scotland. She found that both organisations and communities felt that accessible opportunities for d/Deaf musicians and audiences were rare, and that a lack of understanding, ableism and elitism were some of the key barriers to access within the sector. 100% of the d/Deaf musicians Ailie interviewed felt that they had experienced discrimination in the music industry from a young age. Ailie’s research showed that organisations regularly cited a lack of time and resources, as well as insufficient knowledge and training, as the primary reasons for current levels of access.

“ In the arts we often operate with a scarcity mentality. We can feel that there is not enough time or resources, that precarity and a lack of training are explanations for a lack of provision.”

Outcomes

Ailie’s research identified a gap amongst sector organisations in their knowledge, provision and understanding of and for d/Deaf service users. To address this gap, Ailie created a free briefing guide for organisations in working with d/Deaf audiences and participants that gives practical advice and suggestions in understanding the barriers that d/Deaf people can encounter. Ailie’s guide provides organisations with ideas for enhancing equity through simple, easy steps that can improve communication and event delivery, widening access to music for d/Deaf people.

In July 2024, Ailie was elected to the Scottish Music Industry Association (SMIA) Equalities, Diversity, Inclusion and Access (EDIA) Advisory Group, supported by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland. Allie will draw on her research and professional development to continue her EDI work as part of this newly-formed group, ensuring that more voices from across a diverse range of backgrounds have a say in future development priorities for Scotland’s music industry.

Katrina Lee

/// *As a violinist with roots in a working-class, first-generation British-Chinese background, I found myself at times feeling like an outsider in an industry that didn't always reflect or understand my experiences. But working with CMS has changed that perspective.*

Background

Katrina Lee is a multi-award-winning violinist from Yorkshire, based in Scotland. She is a distinguished alumna of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and has held the position of Principal Second Violin with the Scottish Ballet Orchestra since 2017. Katrina champions diversity and inclusion within classical music. Her commitment to amplifying the voices of marginalised composers is reflected in her involvement with the Escocia Duo, Lee-Horvath Duo and Isola String Quartet.

Katrina's Project

Katrina's project looked to address systemic issues of under-representation of women composers within classical music performance, by recovering and recording forgotten works by historic British composers Elizabeth Maconchy, Dorothy Gow and Imogen Holst. Her project had two main strands: archival research and an album recording.

For her project, Katrina took archival research visits to England. In archives held at the British Library and the University of Oxford, Katrina had access to mostly unpublished manuscripts by Elizabeth Maconchy and Dorothy Gow. With support from EDI mentor Francine Gorman, as well as composer Dr Lucy Hollingworth and Dr Leah Broad, Katrina was able to research several original works which would be used in the production of an album of works by female composers.

Katrina presented her initial research findings to delegates from across the classical music sector at the 2024 ABO Conference, as part of a panel on collaborative approaches to EDI in the Scottish classical sector.

During her project Katrina also used her archival research to support applications to Creative Scotland, CMS and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland to record her debut solo album. Featuring some of the original works by Maconchy that Katrina discovered in the archives, the album of works by female composers will be released by Grammy award-winning label Delphian Records.

/// *The current classical canon is incredibly narrow and it is largely dominated by Western white male ideals. When female composers are seen in programmes, it can seem like a tokenistic gesture... My own frustrations with the rate of change and the unfairness of unequal representation across the sector is part of the reason why I have dedicated time to researching and learning the works of lesser-represented composers who have been written out of history due to societal factors such as gender and race."*

Outcomes

As well as supporting Katrina to pursue her professional artistic development as a violinist, the research and recording will allow Katrina to share this previously lesser-heard or unheard music with wider audiences. It will allow these lesser-known and unknown works by women composers to be recorded and performed, and to help raise awareness with new audiences. Following the CEDIDF, Katrina was elected to The Musicians' Union Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee in April 2024. With the MU, Katrina will continue her work to enhance equity in Scotland's music sector.



Live Music Now Scotland

“ It is an important part of our learning to develop our network and strengthen our relationship with diverse communities.”

Background

Live Music Now Scotland (LMNS) is a leading voluntary sector organisation which funds outstanding young talent to undertake live musical performance. As well as offering vital early career support to young musicians in developing their performance skills, repertoire and industry recognition, LMNS also plays a key role in supporting the provision of access to high-quality live music for rural, remote and economically deprived communities.

Live Music Now Scotland's Project

Live Music Now Scotland's project aimed to remove access barriers to recruitment for disabled and neurodivergent artists by hosting an Open Day as part of its EDI initiative Pathways Programme. This programme was created to support musicians with disabilities and additional support needs in accessing paid performance opportunities. The project was led by Carol Main, Director of Live Music Now Scotland and LMN International.

LMNS inaugurated its Pathways Programme as a means of widening inclusion for disabled and neurodivergent artists. The funding received from CMS enabled LMNS to also hold an Open Day as part of their application process.

The project provided prospective disabled and neurodivergent candidates with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the audition setting, to perform together and to ask questions and access advice and support. LMNS violinist Penny James and accordionist Neil Sutcliffe facilitated the Open Day, which was attended by 20 emerging artists from underrepresented groups.

“ In extending our roster of artists to include early career autistic musicians on our Pathways programme, we are discovering different ways of communicating with our audiences through music [...]. We are grateful to Chamber Music Scotland for an EDI development grant which has enabled LMNS to significantly grow its work in this area over the past year.”

Outcomes

LMNS identified the Open Day as a significant factor in encouraging more artists from marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds to apply to their audition process. After the Open Day, demand for auditions was twice as high as anticipated from previous years. This encouraged LMNS to host an additional two days of auditions to accommodate the increased demand. LMNS are committed to continuing this programme for 2024/25 and have successfully applied to Creative Scotland's Open Fund for over £11,000 in additional funding for personal support access costs to further the recruitment of disabled and neurodivergent musicians.

LMNS acknowledges that the Open Day played an important role in the recruitment of several diverse new musicians, including autistic violinist David Nicholson. After joining LMNS in October 2023, David became a representative for LMNS's Pathways Programme. Alongside Carol Main, David spoke about equity in music and the positive impact of LMNS's Pathways Programme at the European Music Council's Forum on Music, held in June 2024.

National Youth Orchestras of Scotland

“ The connections we have made with peers in industry as part of the fund's cohort has been incredibly useful. It is great to hear others within the Scottish classical music industry are facing similar challenges but also passionate about tackling them.”

Background

The National Youth Orchestras of Scotland (NYOS) offers residential training programmes for Scotland's most talented young musicians. Their programmes provide foundational group music-making opportunities, inspirational orchestral experiences and advanced artistic and career skills development for players aged 8-25. NYOS is committed to widening access to their world-class musical training for emerging musicians from a wider range of lived experience.

NYOS's Project

NYOS's project was to research EDI strategies across leading peer third-sector organisations with a view to increasing the inclusivity of NYOS's own programme of youth recruitment. A particular point of emphasis for NYOS was how best to attract those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and from rural and remote areas. The project was led by Neil Fox, NYOS' Director of Engagement.

Neil visited three other organisations that are successful in engaging and working with young people from underrepresented groups: Orchestra for All, Scottish Ballet and Scottish Cycling. His visits focused on exploring how these other sector organisations had devised and implemented their successful engagement strategies.

NYOS aimed to use this learning to better inform their own engagement projects and diversify their recruitment. They were especially interested in how best to support young musicians from remote and socially-disadvantaged backgrounds to gain the skills and experience needed to apply to NYOS. NYOS also worked with Dr Diljeet Bhachu (Equality, Diversity, & Inclusion Officer, Musicians' Union) in evaluating this learning.

As part of a panel supported by Creative Scotland and CMS, Neil shared this learning with over 300 delegates from the UK's classical music industry at the 2024 ABO Conference. This provided NYOS with an opportunity to network with organisations in the classical music sector from across the UK, sharing insights and forging valuable connections.

“ It was fantastic to showcase our work on such a large platform and we are very grateful for the opportunity.”

Outcomes

The principal outcome of NYOS's consultation process was an understanding that EDI approaches need to be tailored to the specific requirements of service users. NYOS found that each organisation that they spoke to had used a process of trial and error to test their own ideas and processes, developing bespoke methods of reducing barriers through a devised learning process.

To learn from the success of this approach, NYOS is setting up a Youth Forum to listen to the specific needs of their service users with lived experience of marginalisation, whose views will then be taken into account when planning NYOS's programme of activities.

Paul Chamberlain

“ This project has been immensely beneficial in giving me insight into the current research around musician’s health and also in connecting with other musicians dealing with ongoing health challenges. It has been inspiring and motivating and definitely made a very positive impact on my personal recovery journey and artistic development.”

Background

Paul is a classical accordionist, based in Scotland. He has performed with leading cultural institutions, including the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Paragon Ensemble, Scottish Opera Connect Orchestra and London Concertante. He has released two solo albums: Classical Accordion and Accordion Sensations. Following a successful heart transplant in 2022, Paul has enjoyed a return to the concert stage.

Paul’s Project

Paul’s project researched the challenges faced by musicians who experience chronic and major ill-health in their return to performance. He aimed to offer an overview of the existing support available, and to gather insights, advice and best practices in returning to a performing career while prioritising physical and mental well-being and recovery. Paul’s research comprised two main strands: attendance at a leading 4-day conference on performance science and care; and a series of 1-1 interviews with musicians with lived experience of ill-health. At the 2023 International Symposium on Performance Science in Warsaw, Paul attended panels that saw musicians, scientists and health practitioners come together and share insights into the latest developments in performance care. This gave Paul access to cutting-edge work and advice from leading, international experts from across the sector.

Paul supplemented this learning with a series of 1-1 interviews with musicians from a range of backgrounds, who are all affected by serious and long-term ill-health. This gave a safe space in which to share experiences and thoughts about their journey, and to discuss ideas for changes and adaptations required to support musicians with injury and illness. A common theme across the interviews that Paul conducted was a fear of losing work. This resulted in many interviewees feeling that ill-health had to remain a hidden experience. They noted the difficulties they faced in accessing accommodations such as rest days and an access rider when touring. Paul also noted how this culture of not talking about it led to a lack of awareness of existing resources such as those offered by the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine and Help Musicians’s Emerging Musicians Health Scheme.

“ These discussions gave us a safe space to share experiences and thoughts about the journey through illness and to discuss ideas about what could be improved or what might be beneficial to others faced with similar situations.”

Outcomes

Paul devised three principal research outputs to raise awareness and connect musicians experiencing ill-health with vital advice and support. He has created a lecture on performance art and well-being to be given to the student population at RCS and other Music Departments across the Scottish Higher Education sector. This raises awareness for the next generation entering the industry of the importance of prioritising health and well-being across their entire career journey. Paul has also summarised the learning he undertook at the conference, along with the insights gained through his 1-1 interviews, in a final Project Report that provides a valuable resource for musicians experiencing ill-health and recovery. A summary article of this report will also be submitted for publication in the ISM members Journal, to ensure as wide a reach as possible.

Scottish Freelance Classical Ensembles Network

“ We have seen an immediate change to how we discuss and interrogate our own current recruitment practices in a collaborative way; articulating challenges, problems and opportunities and strategising how we might approach those to improve and inform best practice.”

Background

The Scottish Freelance Classical Ensembles Network (SFCEN) is a collaboration of four classical music organisations operating across Scotland, namely: Dunedin Consort, Hebrides Ensemble, Red Note Ensemble and Scottish Ensemble. The consortium shares an ambition to ensure exceptional musical opportunities for freelance individuals across the length and breadth of Scotland.

Scottish Freelance Classical Ensembles Network’s Project

The Scottish Freelance Classical Ensembles Network (SFCEN) project was to engage in constructive dialogue between their four member organisations with a view to making their freelance recruitment processes more inclusive. Dunedin Consort, Hebrides Ensemble, Red Note Ensemble and Scottish Ensemble regularly engage freelance musicians, with 397 such instances of recruitment in 2022/23. Any improvement in the inclusivity of their recruiting processes therefore has the potential to significantly impact the diversity of freelance classical work across Scotland. The project was led by Catherine Ferrell, General Manager and Executive Lead on EDI for Scottish Ensemble.

By engaging in collaborative dialogue between several of Scotland’s key freelance ensembles, SFCEN’s project sought to better understand the barriers that diverse candidates face in freelance recruitment practices across the Scottish classical music sector. Collaborative discussion sessions between the four organisations created a valuable space for knowledge-sharing, reflection and mutual support. This enabled SFCEN members to share the insights, challenges and opportunities that they had discovered in their own attempts to make their recruitment processes more inclusive, whilst also learning from each other.

As part of a panel supported by Creative Scotland and CMS, Catherine Ferrell was able to share this learning with delegates from the UK’s classical music industry at the 2024 ABO Conference.

“ Organisational culture is the place to embed good practice. We need diversity on boards, in our staff and the artists we work with. Without this pipeline we cannot create change.”

Outcomes

SFCEN chose to postpone the delivery of the second stage of their project to 2024/25. During 2023 SFCEN became aware of a landmark 10-Point Orchestral Plan to diversify UK orchestras, led by Black Lives in Music (BLiM), the Association of British Orchestras (ABO) and the Musicians’ Union (MU).

The decision was made to redirect SFCEN’s project, which had originally sought to create a best-practice guide for inclusive recruitment, to avoid duplication of efforts across the sector. The new focus of the project would be on the successful implementation of an inclusive recruitment drive for the following year, using both the 10-Point Orchestral Plan, and insights shared between Scottish Ensemble, Dunedin, Red Note Ensemble and Hebrides Ensemble.

Simone Seales

“ If we’re going to move the conversation forward, we have to be willing to get it wrong and make mistakes and there needs to be spaces where that vulnerability between people can be fostered and nurtured.”

Background

Simone Seales is a Glasgow-based cellist and performance artist. They focus on improvisation, interdisciplinary collaboration, poetry and devising music for theatre. They are a recipient of the Sphinx MPower Artist Grant and recently released their debut album *I believe in living* – a responsive improvisation to the poem ‘Affirmation’ by Assata Shakur. They are passionate about creating spaces of radical joy and rest within classical music.

Simone’s Project

Simone’s project explored racism and anti-racism in the classical music sector. Their project had two main strands: a programme of mentorship and professional development, and the creation of a video essay featuring recorded interviews with sector leaders in EDI. To support Simone in undertaking research on the challenging and affecting topics of racism and antiracism in the classical music sector, they spoke with EDI mentor Berginald Rash and received additional mentorship and professional development from musician and activist Loki Karuna (Director of Artist Equity, American Composers Orchestra).

This programme of mentorship and professional development supported the second stage of Simone’s project where they conducted research interviews with Aaron Akugbo (Freelance Musician), Chris Jenkins (Associate Dean at Oberlin Conservatory of Music) and Sam McShane (Artistic Director of Kings Place). The recorded conversations present a wide-ranging discussion of diversity and equity, addressing intersecting experiences of racism and classicism at different career stages and roles within the classical music industry, within both a Scottish and global context.

“ I want to make the classical music sector a safe place for myself and others – and that starts by honestly saying how harmful this institution can be to people who don’t fit the mould and have to make themselves fit by shedding parts or denying parts of their identities...”

Outcomes

Reflecting the twin strands of their research, Simone’s project had two principal outcomes: an increased confidence in advocating for antiracism in the classical music sector, and the creation of a freely-available video essay to disseminate their research learnings. As a result of the programme of mentorship and professional development that they undertook, Simone reported an increased confidence in their ability to speak about the challenging topics of racism and antiracism in the classical music sector. They noted feeling an increased fluency and confidence in holding space for these challenging conversations.

This increased confidence is reflected in their video essay, published in April 2024, shortly after the Sharing Event. Simone weaves personal stories, sections of research interviews with Aaron, Chris and Sam, as well as EDI definitions, concepts and demographic data, to explore how musical institutions, practices and aesthetics play a critical role in the experiences of Black and working-class musicians. Freely available to the public, the video aims to get others to engage with discrimination in classical music in an accessible way, providing the viewer with the tools to have honest and constructive conversations about racism and anti-racism.

Sharing Forum

In March 2024 we held a Sharing Forum to conclude the CEDIDF. The aim of the Forum was to allow the cohort to share their project insights and learning, and to inspire open, public discussion of the challenges and possibilities of good EDI practice. It was the final dissemination activity of the project, which had shared early learnings at the 2024 ABO Conference to a further 300 delegates from across the classical music sector. The cohort decided the best medium to disseminate their own project findings during their panel session, with methods including presentation, live music performance and semi-structured panel discussions. Learnings were shared by 6 of the 7 cohort participants at the event. Many of the learnings were specific and contextual, reflecting the range and breadth of the research topics whilst raising awareness of many continuing inequalities within the sector. The panel and Q&A sessions were chaired by EDI mentors Roz De Vile, Berginald Rash and Francine Gorman.

The event, which was open to the public, was attended by industry executives, union leaders, curators, educators, musicians and arts managers. With the aim of the learning reaching key voices within the sector, invitations were extended by CMS and Creative Scotland to leading classical music organisations and representatives. The audience included members of The Musicians’ Union, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Cumnock Tryst, Paragon Ensemble, Tinderbox Collective, Making Music, the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra, the National Youth Choir of Scotland and the Scottish Music Industry Association, as well as representatives from participating organisations.

To monitor and evaluate the impact and success of the Sharing Forum, we distributed a questionnaire to the 39 people present, with a completion rate of 41%. We found that the majority of audience members surveyed felt negativity about the state of EDI in the sector at large. 88% agreed that there was currently a lack of understanding about good EDI practice within the sector. 94% felt that for further progress surrounding issues of EDI, there would need to be more investment and funding. The survey results were in broad agreement with existing research into feelings about EDI within the sector and were not expected to diverge from previous findings. While audience perspectives on EDI in the sector as a whole were notably bleak, views of the success and importance of the Sharing Forum itself were significantly more positive. Audience members were asked the question, “Did the event change your views about EDI in classical music?” Open form responses included:

“ The event made me feel more positive about how a sector with embedded barriers could shift”

“ It made me hopeful that more people and organisations are putting their funding and efforts into it”

“ It was invigorating to hear about some of the practical ways forward that the researchers had found or were advocating for”

As well as inspiring our audience about the possibility of making meaningful change, attendees also felt that the event had improved their own understanding and feeling about EDI. Open form responses included:

“ The event definitely improved my understanding of EDI in classical music”

“ I found it very informative”

“ It increased my knowledge of the range of issues facing the sector”

These responses were very encouraging, and supported our conviction that events such as this, and the activities of the Classical EDI Development Fund more broadly, have the potential to influence change across the sector.

Learnings & Recommendations

The learnings of the CEDIDF cohort represent findings by both individuals and organisations working within the classical music sector. The projects focused on improving knowledge and understanding of specific barriers to access and in offering potential models of good practice. Based on the project findings and evaluation of the CEDIDF the following recommendations for CMS are:

1. CMS needs to continue support for work in and around EDI to help shape and progress the classical music sector and the lives of those it reaches. The initial tender from Creative Scotland to support a Classical EDI Go See Share Fund and Forum identified a need in the sector. The CEDIDF findings indicate that issues of inequality and inclusion remain a significant and persistent challenge with the current resources and levels of support within the Scottish sector. Sustained funding and investment to support individuals and organisations within Scotland's classical music sector to explore and share EDI work in supportive and constructive dialogue is vital to collective development and sector-wide transformation.

2. CMS needs to continue building networks of stakeholders committed to mutual support and learning. Strengthening links between the classical music workforce, organisations and audiences is vital to sustaining momentum with progressing EDI in the sector. Qualitative feedback from our cohort participants and audiences at the sharing event demonstrate the positive impact and the increase to confidence that collective action can create. To sustain an impetus for progressing EDI in the Scottish sector CMS should continue to develop networks of mutual support that bring key stakeholders together to share resources and learning.

3. CMS needs to tailor support and opportunities to meet the diverse needs of Scotland's sector. Increased spending does not necessarily equal increased engagement. CMS needs to continue investing capacity and resources into developing knowledge and skills of EDI in consultation with stakeholders with lived experience of inequalities. The findings of some of the CEDIDF cohort highlighted discrimination and feelings of marginalisation and erasure which disproportionately burdened musicians and communities. The CEDIDF needs to model an approach in which consultants are compensated for their lived experience and labour and the burden of advocacy is shared between musicians, audiences and organisations.

4. CMS needs to model good practice in EDI. There is a need to prioritise accessible events, inclusive recruitment and diverse representation in developing and implementing EDI strategy. The aims and outcomes of the cohort project provided a practical demonstration of active steps that could be taken to progress EDI for several groups within the classical music sector. The CEDIDF needs to embed the learning and recommendations from the cohort and continue to grow opportunities for musicians and audiences from a range of identities and backgrounds to feel supported and represented in the classical music sector.

5. CMS needs to be open and honest in sharing levels of knowledge and learning. To effect meaningful and impactful change CMS should embed the learning of the CEDIDF and commit to an ongoing practice of organisational EDI education. The findings of the CEDIDF highlight the contribution of insufficient knowledge and training, as well as insufficient capacity and resources, to sector-wide failures to address barriers to inclusion. Investing more time and spending on employee and workforce development is needed to ensure effective EDI training and an effective voice for freelancers and staff within the classical music sector.

For more information about this project and Chamber Music Scotland, please contact:

info@chambermusicscotland.com

www.chambermusicscotland.com

Chamber Music Scotland
8/2, 51 Cadogan Street
Glasgow
G2 7HF

Scottish Charity Number SC20803.

Copyright © Chamber Music Scotland.

