

Report to Members, Funders and Donors

2024/25

There was magic in the air, as PCM's 24-25 year of school workshops came to an end with two events on 4th and 6th June. Three schools, three players and one much-loved children's story.

With a backdrop of shots from the Walt Disney classic, The Sorcerer's Apprentice proved the ideal tale for Thistle Trio's new workshop. The Glasgow-based wind ensemble brought three versions to reach the wide age range of younger and older pupils at Muthill and Kinross Primary Schools and the music students at Crieff High School. The reception was such that all the sessions overran!

The two days were run as PCM partnerships with Music in Crieff and Kinross Primary Parent Council.



Background

Perth Chamber Music's Workshop Programme takes groups of professional musicians into schools to play to, and inspire, the pupils there. Now in its 13th Year, it has reached approximately two-thirds of all schools in Perth and Kinross region. It has done this thanks to ongoing grants from local Trusts and businesses and donations from PCM's members.



2024/25

In the year April 2024 to March 2025, workshops have been organised in 11 schools, providing 23 sessions by 5 ensembles for children and young people from Primary 1 right through to exam-level senior pupils and children with special educational needs.

The Workshops

The workshops comprised:- story-telling (The Billy Goats Gruff); demonstrations of instruments, dynamics and rhythms; coaching for groups of pupils; play-and-discuss interactions; exam-focussed sessions; small group work with children with special needs; "green" themed events and full- school mini-concerts.



All the workshops this year have been highly participative and lively. One workshop coincided with the school's transition day and parents were able to sit in. Another was attended by residents of a nearby Care Home.

The photos are from workshops at Breadalbane, Scone Special Needs Class, Kirkmichael, St Dominic's and Pitlochry.

The Schools

The primary schools visited were: Kinross, Kinloch Rannoch, Blair Atholl, Kirkmichael, Pitlochry, Crieff, St. Dominic's (Crieff); Robert Douglas Memorial (Scone), Breadalbane (Aberfeldy)

The secondary schools were: Crieff and Pitlochry

The musicians were:

- Scottish Opera Winds (McOpera);
- Sequoia Violin and Cello Duo
- Armand Djikoloum (oboe) and Iyad Sughayer (piano)
- Resol String Quartet
- Ensemble Renard (wind quintet).



Feedback

The level of excitement, interaction, concentration and creativity is conveyed in the following extracts provided by the schools and the pupils:

- Our pupils really enjoyed having “real-life” instruments right in front of them. All our staff enjoyed having music floating through the building all afternoon (Head Teacher)
- They improvised all the songs we had made and they did spectacular non-verbal contact and were one sight to see (P7 pupil)
- All the pupils were bombarding us with questions. One teacher at the end said it was his first chamber concert and he had found it very moving (Musician)
- I'm sure this experience will help spark their interest in more music opportunities (PTA representative)
- You inspired my friends and me to play the Can-Can on our cellos in front of the class. We did really well. (P6 pupil's thank you letter)
- Concentration was notable for some of our pupils who find concentration difficult. We would absolutely love to have this opportunity again. (SEN Class Teacher)

REMOTE

For 7 of the schools visited this year, it was PCM's first visit. This was in large part the result of our REMOTE project (Really Exciting Music On The Edge), an appeal for funding to enable us to go to the furthest-flung schools, particularly in Highland Perthshire, which had been out of reach because of distance, time and cost. The response to the appeal has been greatly appreciated. We are now drawing up plans to consolidate and develop this initiative.



Partnerships

PCM has again worked with Music In Crieff to organise 3 of the workshops in the west of the region, splitting the costs and the workload. We were also able for the first time to support the initiative of a School's Parent Association. We hope this will continue in 2025-26. We are also networking with other music societies across Scotland to increase recognition of the value of these outreach events.

Special Needs

PCM is committed to organising at least one workshop each year for children with special needs. This year's event, in Scone, was again supported by a local Perth Firm.

Funding

The continued support from our members, Trust funds and local businesses has been crucial in broadening the workshop programme. It has more than made up for the loss of 2 sources of funding for the programme this year (because of local authority cut-backs and the closure of a national learning fund).

The demand and appreciation in schools for the workshops is universally high. We are actively looking to extend both the funding base and the volunteer resources required to organise it.

A big thank you to all our sponsors and donors.

