

Young Musicians

Funding advice



Introduction

Following a funding review at the Musicians Benevolent Fund, we have discontinued our awards to school aged musicians. Our remit is to help those who are in, have been in or are entering the profession and so, in times of limited funding, we have had to prioritise those who are at the later stages of development and on the cusp of entering the profession.

There are, however, several other charitable organisations which can assist musicians of school age and details of them can be found on our Funding Wizard (helpmusicians.org.uk/fundingwizard). We will be working closely with them to ensure that the most pressing cases, where there is real financial strain and musical talent, can receive help.

We are providing the information below to help young people and their parents identify potential sources of funding towards their musical education.

Musical instruments

Many young musicians begin by borrowing or hiring instruments from either their school or local music service. You can find your local music service by visiting the Federation of Music Services website (thefms.org/teachers-parents-children/parents-children/your-local-music-service). Some local authorities also offer an Assisted Purchase Scheme whereby an instrument can be purchased at a VAT-exempt price.

If you are looking to purchase an instrument, many instrument retailers offer hire-purchase schemes or payment plans, enabling you to spread the cost of purchase. Sometimes these are interest-free.

There are a few organisations who offer grant funding towards instrument purchase, including the EMI Music Sound Foundation (emimusicfoundation.com), Awards for Young Musicians (a-y-m.org.uk), Future Talent (futuretalent.org) and the Schools Music Association Founder's Fund (schoolsmusic.org.uk/grants)

For exceptionally talented young musicians, the Benslow Instrument Loan Scheme can offer high-quality instruments on long-term loan (benslow.org/instrument-loan-scheme.php). A similar service is offered by the Cherubim Trust (cherubimtrust.org).

Lessons

The availability of affordable music lessons is very much dependent upon where you live. While some local music services can offer subsidised tuition, particularly to low-income families, many no longer do. In the first instance, you should ask your school or music service whether any financial support is available.

Charitable support for regular instrumental lessons is very scarce. However, Awards for Young Musicians (a-y-m.org.uk) can provide grants for this purpose – the annual deadline for applications usually falls in March each year. Future Talent (futuretalent.org) may also be able to help.

Saturday schools, Junior Conservatoires and other ‘Centres for Advanced Training’

The Department for Education’s *Music and Dance Scheme* (MDS) (education.gov.uk/b0068711/mds) offers Government Aided places to exceptionally talented young people at eight specialist independent music and dance schools across the UK. In addition, the MDS offers financial support to a network of Centres for Advanced Training (CATs), which includes the Junior Conservatoires, to enable them to offer subsidised places to young musicians. Further information about these scholarships should be sought from the relevant CAT.

Most centres offer a range of other bursaries and assisted places where there is clear financial need. Parents are often asked to make a commitment to seek additional funding from other sources. At a national level, organisations like Awards for Young Musicians (a-y-m.org.uk) and Future Talent (futuretalent.org) may be able to help towards the cost of attending CATs. Other organisations to try include the Hattori Foundation (hattorifoundation.org.uk) and the Miss E B Wrightson Charitable Trust (email: norah@henryhickman.com for further information). There may also be support available from your local authority or local charitable trusts. Funding Central (fundingcentral.org.uk) and Turn2Us (turn2us.org.uk) are useful directories of funding bodies operating at a local, regional and national level.

The future of music education

In 2011 the Department for Education published a review of music education in England by Darren Henley. You can read the report and the Government’s response here: (<http://bit.ly/jaBjg6>). In response to the review, the Government will consult on a ‘national plan’ for music education (publication expected in late 2011). The music education landscape is changing rapidly and the Musicians Benevolent Fund will continue to work with its partners to ensure that exceptionally talented young people have the support they need to enter the music profession.

Funding tools and other useful links

Funder Finder – funding directory (access fee) funderfinder.org.uk

Turn2Us – funding directory turn2us.org.uk

Funding Central – funding directory fundingcentral.org.uk

Association of Charitable Foundations – advice on applying to a charitable trust acf.org.uk

Musicians Benevolent Fund funding wizard helpmusicians.org.uk/fundingwizard

Countess of Munster Musical Trust funding directory (out of date) munstertrust.org.uk/Funding_Guide/fgbp.htm

National Association for Gifted Children nagcbrtain.org.uk

Access to Music – popular music courses and apprenticeships acesstomusic.co.uk

Creative Choices – advice on creative careers creative-choices.co.uk

Federation of Music Services thefms.org

Music Education UK – music education magazine musiceducationuk.com

Pay the piper – information about taking up a musical instrument paythepiper.co.uk

Sound Junction – award-winning music education website soundjunction.org

SoundStation – Youth Music’s website for young people soundstation.org.uk

Youth Music – Supporting young people’s music making youthmusic.org.uk

The **British Music Education Yearbook** (published annually) is a useful source of information, including listings of funding bodies, and can be found in libraries or purchased from the Rhinegold website (rhinegold.co.uk/directories/directories_catalogue.asp?m=3&css=1)

The **Directory of Grant Making Trusts** is published annually by the Directory of Social Change (dsc.org.uk) and should be available in your local library.