PM World Journal   *Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields*
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015   by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
www.pmworldjournal.net   Featured Paper

Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields

Raji Sivaraman and Chris Wilson

ASBA LLC, Singapore / USA
University of Derby, UK

Abstract

Project Management (PM) is a well-established field of research with the scope of inquiry now ranging far beyond the industrial and corporate sectors from which it first emerged. Starting from the premise that PM expertise is a valuable professional attribute and life skill of relevance to many if not all educational disciplines, questions emerge both as to how relevant techniques can be most effectively applied in educational contexts, and how insights might potentially be drawn from the study of different disciplines to enrich the PM profession.

This paper focuses initially on higher education (specifically university level study) within the United Kingdom (UK) and other countries, and provides a contextual analysis of the discourse and practice of PM in undergraduate degree subjects. Discussion then narrows in on the discipline of music, as a specific context for consideration of PM through the educational and professional continuum. Identifying a relative absence of explicit PM theory or terminology in the vast majority of degree subjects at least in the UK, there is, nevertheless, an underlying presence of project-based activity at least implicit in all university education and music, in particular, presents a distinctive example of a creative, cultural, educational, where PM is an integral component and experience of subject and discipline. This paper concludes by identifying significant value in the development of a more explicit approach to PM in educational contexts and considerable scope for the development of professional relationships between PM organizations and the higher education sector in particular.

Keywords: Project management; Education; Music.

1. Introduction

Higher education has arguably never been subject to higher levels of scrutiny and accountability. As universities grapple with fundamental changes in funding structures and an increasingly market-driven and internationalised recruitment environment, there is an increasing focus on performance indicators, ratings, rankings, and attempts to determine quality of impact both socially and economically. Consequently, as highlighted by Page (2014) in discussion with a series of graduate recruiters, there is an active discourse surrounding the knowledge, skills and professional attributes required by graduates to develop successful professional careers, and an increasing focus in universities for how best to sponsor and promote the development of these attributes both through core disciplines and through wider extra-curricular activity. Given that a premium is attached to the employment success of graduates in the age of metrics and data analysis, all higher education institutions now have a vested interest in the careers of graduates as never before and are judged according to standardised measures of work-readiness and employment success in many higher education environments and most notably in the UK.

PM World Journal
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015
www.pmworldjournal.net

Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields
by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
Featured Paper

Whilst there is opposition in education to the notion that education is primarily about developing economic productivity at the expense of wider social good, universities nevertheless want graduates to achieve positively in the professional environment, and the professional environment wants graduates capable of doing so.

At least superficially, higher education provides the perfect research-led environment for the development of work-readiness and the knowledge and skills necessary for delivering an immediate and positive impact in relevant professional environments. University study invariably involves developmental focus on self-management skills, higher level thinking, research and practical knowledge, and, perhaps most significantly, an underpinning if only implicit focus on PM through curriculum, timetable, study and assessment regimes. Simply speaking, all students in university study working towards defined qualifications, invariably engage in a series of clearly defined, time- constrained projects leading to the award of credit and consequently experience considerable opportunity to develop PM expertise alongside subject expertise. Nevertheless, as highlighted by numerous surveys of employers including research by YouGov for the Times and Times on Sunday Good University Guide (Paton, 2013), graduate recruiters can often be critical of the level to which university graduates are prepared for the demands of the professional environment with less than one in five of 635 employers describing graduate recruits as 'work ready'.

Exploring the attributes most commonly associated with graduate employability (Knight and Yorke, 2004), there are clear synergies with PM knowledge, skills and expertise. Higher education is fundamentally structured according to a PM framework, yet graduates seemingly emerge unable in most cases to apply their capabilities in the professional environment without at least some adjustment or adaptation. Consequently, there is scope for further analysis of PM in a higher education context from both a pedagogic and a professional perspective. It is in the interests of universities to develop graduates capable of immediate adaptation to professional contexts and very much in the interests of employers that graduates are capable of 'fitting in' and 'standing out'. A better understanding of how PM might inform qualitative improvements to the closing of an apparent deficit in work-readiness of graduates of higher education is reason alone for focused study in this area.

Music represents a distinctive field of human endeavour through which to consider PM through the continuum of personal practice, educational discipline, and cultural and professional environment. Firstly, the creative arts sector operates according to complex, asymmetric, and constantly reforming structures and focuses of supply and demand. Secondly, PM activity in the arts ranges from the highly personalised to fully international scale activity and across a considerable range of different contexts and environments. From the discipline and routine of individual instrumental practice in the early stages of musical study, through to semi-professional and professional environments through which highly complex performance events and creative activities are coordinated, the realisation of culturally significant musical activity represents a complete PM spectrum connecting raw human creativity to the highest levels of collective human experience. The largest scale of PM in the music sector incorporate a number of profoundly significant examples including the logistical and technical scale of major festival events and venues, and the maintenance of complex and sophisticated musical disciplines, organisations and products. For example, the figures and complexity associated with the Glastonbury festival alone are profound. In 2014, the festival housed over 100 separate venues, 2200 individual performances, 120,000 festival goers, and supported an enormously complex technical, artistic and broadcast event within a temporary working environment.

PM World Journal
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015
www.pmworldjournal.net

Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields
by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
Featured Paper

From an organisational behaviour perspective, musical cultures represent fascinating contexts for the study of PM. Given the increasing significance more widely of PM experience as a graduate attribute and a growing number of defined roles in PM in the music industry, this paper explores PM from an educational perspective with a particular focus on the discipline of music, and then focuses on a case study analysis of professional experience as it relates to music education. Albeit at an early stage of development, this research is primarily designed as a scoping exercise to explore two key questions:

1. How can the application of PM enrich the study of music, and;
2. What can the field of PM learn from the discipline of music?

1.1. Project management in higher education

For higher education qualifications in the UK, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) maintains a series of fifty eight 'subject benchmark' statements as part of the UK Quality Code Part A - Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards. These documents generally define the principles of the subject, provide a framework for the subject knowledge, understanding and skills, and define attributes of learning, teaching and assessment strategies. Whilst by no means representing a prescriptive blueprint for disciplinary practice, these documents nevertheless inform the development of curriculum and practice in most university disciplines and are mapped to in course design explicitly in most cases. Consequently, these documents present an opportunity to compare different subjects in UK universities and to contrast the emphasis attached to PM as both an implicit and explicit component of higher education study.
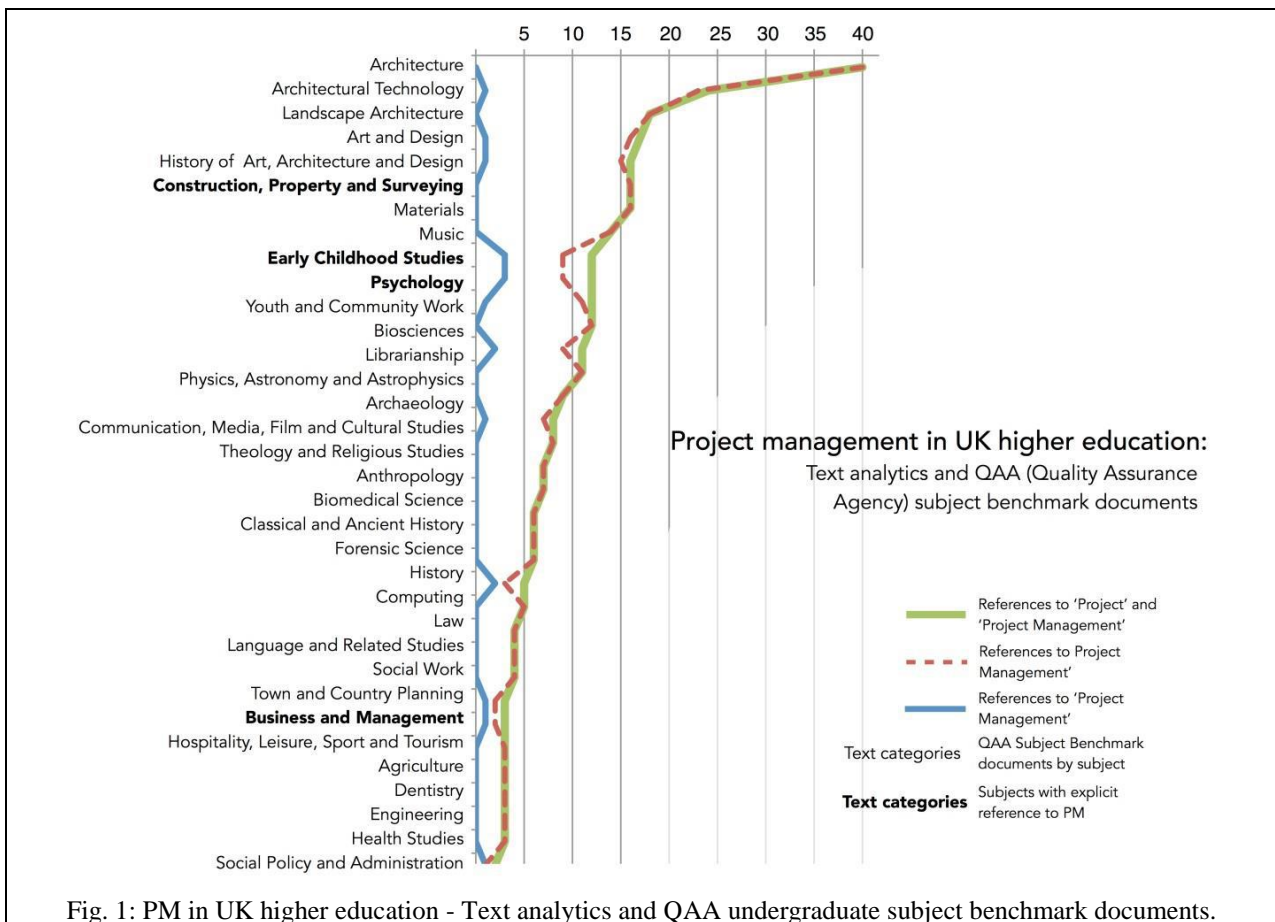

Fig. 1: PM in UK higher education - Text analytics and QAA undergraduate subject benchmark documents.

PM World *Journal*   *Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields*
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015   by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
www.pmworldjournal.net   Featured Paper

Using text analytics, QAA subject benchmark documents were first searched for references to three key words and phrases: i) 'PM; ii) 'Project', and iii) 'Projects'. Explicit reference to PM as a defined area of knowledge and skills development occurs in a relatively small number of occasions. Subjects such as Business and Management highlighted above in Figure 1 represent a tiny minority of subject disciplines incorporating clear recognition of the PM field. Most subjects refer to the study of the projects of others (professional exemplars), many make reference to 'projects' often in the context of assignments and specific research activities, whilst Accounting, Education Studies, Finance, Medicine and Philosophy as a subjects stand alone in making no reference whatsoever to any of the defined search fields. The trend analysis is quite clear, of the fifty-eight subject areas, 8% involve no reference to PM on any level, and there are only 18 references to PM explicitly concentrated in only 12 subjects representing just over 20% of the total subject documents. In over 200,000 words of text, PM is mentioned only 18 times.

On one level, PM underpins every aspect of modern higher education. Structured as most systems are on regimes of formal assessment and prescribed deadlines and units of assessment, higher education is arguably the most codified with respect to the determination of project outcomes of all organisational structures in the modern world. Delivery, on time, of products that meet prescribed requirements within established parameters is fundamental to modern university systems. In some higher education contexts such as Montclair State University, New Jersey, United States, where the co-author is a visiting specialist, or Singapore Polytechnic, which uses PM in many of their core courses including Games Design and Development, PM is a more explicit feature of the curriculum. Indeed, The Diploma in Integrated Events & PM (DEPM) that is delivered by Singapore Polytechnic (SP) which also is in collaboration with Vietnam, Nigeria, and Brunei, demonstrates visibility and growing international reach. Nevertheless, PM appears to be a central feature of higher education systems, but a residual feature of related discourse and explicit description and an apparently underdeveloped graduate capacity in many contexts. PM is a problematic concern in higher education (Morris, 2014) with clear questions over pedagogic practice in the development of PM ability in different disciplines.

2. Project Management in Music

Whilst music features in the top ten of QAA subject benchmark statements in terms of overall references to 'projects' and incorporates explicit reference to project-based activities, the subject is amongst the majority in not making direct reference to PM as a defined field of activity. Nevertheless, given suitable opportunity and understanding of the PM discipline, any professional musician of almost any field or context of endeavour would describe immediate recognition and understanding of core competences. All musicians recognise and exercise patterns of routine, technical development, collaborative working, and realisation of high-stakes outcomes and consequent evaluation. An active combination of parallel projects of varying scales is what music as a discipline is, but as with most higher education subjects, this is seemingly not expressed explicitly.

The professional role of project manager is emerging in the commercial music and entertainments sector. Notable in large venues including the holiday cruise industry, there are an increasing number of contexts in which specialist expertise in the management of music-related activities and coordination of exclusively musical activities require full-time attention. More widely in the music industry, numerous other professional titles and roles synonymous with PM remain in more regular use. From a commercial music perspective, there are numerous levels of

PM World Journal
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015
www.pmworldjournal.net

Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields
by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
Featured Paper

PM related both to the identification and development of talent and repertoire (A&R), the production of recorded media (Song-Writer, Producer, Mastering Engineer), the development of live events (Musical Director, Tour Manager, Live Event Manager, Venue Designer, Performance Director), and the development of musical ability (Music Teachers). Most occupying senior positions in related professional contexts have a track record aligned to their discipline and often limited connection with PM as a defined discipline.

2.1 Project management in music education

There are a growing number of university courses emerging focused explicitly on PM in the music sector including body-of-knowledge related publications (Feist, 2013). With most focus on PM as a defined professional role mapping to specific goal or objective delivery, there are also moves within the context of practice-based study to refine approaches to PM activity. Recognizing that specific delineations of expertise and professional role become apparent according to different scales of musical activity--there being a tendency to experience or occupy multiple roles early in a career and experience increasing specialisation and differentiation later in careers for musicians in particular--PM at any given point frequently involves portfolio and program management of multiple projects ranging from the practical and administrative to the creative and expressive.

For example, as is common with arts-based undergraduate programmes, final year study in particular is often structured around the development of a large-scale projects typically involving focus on primary creative disciplines such as music composition, performance, or fine-arts practice. In the context of project-based activity at the co-author's own institution (University of Derby), PM is addressed for example through the project planning and proposal stages of final-year music projects incorporating a number of 'guided' PM methodologies and tools. Requiring a number of traditional project management elements including the five processes and the knowledge areas from the Project Management Book of Knowledge from the Project Management Institute (PMI), charting and initial conceptions of project orientation, context, and outcomes, proposal activity also requires students to focus on project risk from a positive and negative perspective and to scope particularly for where new creative experiences will be sought (Wilson and Brown, 2014). Using a positive and negative risk matrix, students distinguish clearly between their 'home territory' and the areas where creative uncertainty, tension, novelty and discovery are most likely to emerge.

Consideration of the PM literature and practice in the corporate and industrial sectors reveal clear areas where enrichment of music education and education more widely is possible. For example, given that the success of a project is determined and influenced by diverse quality management factors, Equipoise models present a useful framework for practice, coordination, teamwork, testing, retesting equipment, and staging, while the related Supply Chain Roadmap example in Agile projects can actively mitigate the risk of the practical compromising the creative in the context of arts-based activities. By improving the efficiency of the practical, capacity is developed to support creativity and space for exploration and discovery.

Distinguishing three basic levels of PM activity relevant to educational instruction from individual practice, collective practice, and large-scale projects, PM methods and skills such as the time/cost/quality customer satisfaction triangle, RAG (red, amber, green) analysis, change management techniques, business intelligence approaches, gap analysis, RACI charting (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed), RDBM (Risk Based Decision Making), all

PM World *Journal*   *Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields*
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015   by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
www.pmworldjournal.net   Featured Paper

provide useful frameworks through which to introduce PM methodologies in almost any educational discipline. Whilst experience at the University of Derby is only in the early stages of implementation and evaluation, application in a musical context has so far demonstrated clear potential for enrichment in educational attainment and personal development, with transferable skills and self-awareness of PM abilities the most evident benefits in student attainment.

Whilst the most effective student PM correlates loosely with the most creative projects, there is certainly no indication of the introduction of more focused PM techniques compromising practice or providing for anything other than a positive impact on creative practice. Furthermore, specific features of PM methodology are often cited by students as significant in the realisation of valuable aspects of successful project work. Beyond mechanistic introduction of Gantt charts and simplistic tools for time and resource management, themselves attributes that should be well developed capacities by the later stages of undergraduate studies, there is clearly value in the enrichment of musical study by introducing more sophisticated PM methodologies. Equally, experience also demonstrates that the haphazard, the spontaneous and the accidental remain significant features of a significant proportion of the most successful musical projects. Jimi Hendrix was never aware of PM methodology, he just lived what he did musically and things were made to just 'come together'.

3. Summary and conclusions

Based on our observations within the UK and in other countries, there appears to be a disconnection between the prominence given to PM in relevant course literature and the significance attached to PM expertise in the graduate recruitment market. Whilst this is in part due to different approaches to course description and the discourse of different disciplines, data from the graduate recruitment sector nevertheless indicate a deficit capable of being addressed. In part, this may simply be a matter making PM knowledge a more explicit or visible feature of already established practice but there are also opportunities for establishing stronger connections between higher education disciplines and the PM know how more generally. Music provides an interesting case in point with PM, given that PM is often an implicit rather than explicit aspect of musical study in many cases. There is first an opportunity to focus on the value and transferability of established PM skills associated with individual and collective musical practice but also to draw more fully from PM practices so as to connect this understanding theoretically and industrially.

There is an opportunity for professional bodies in the PM sphere to connect more fully with higher education and education more generally. Recognising the diverse and well-established educational programmes of PM organisations, there are a number of structures through which PM could be more fully connected to the student learning experience across the full spectrum of subjects. With increasing focus on personal development planning (PDP) and development of supplementary records of extracurricular and professional development activity, most UK universities in particular have established recruitment market requires graduates with more developed PM abilities, then it may be that this needs to be developed proactively.

With reference to the questions outlined in the introduction of this paper and the intention of establishing a foundation for more focused research and analysis, the subject of music represents a significant example of an area of activity in which projects emerge through complex human interactions, social and commercial dynamics. There are definable elements of PM methodology that can clearly play a valuable role in enriching educational practice in music but also ways that

PM World *Journal*   *Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields*
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015   by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
www.pmworldjournal.net   Featured Paper

PM might be reconsidered from a musician's' perspective. The realization of new musical ideas is not always efficient, enjoyable, or on time, and PM techniques can be valuable in developing more effective approaches. Nevertheless, some extraordinary musical ideas emerge as a consequence of disorganization and suffering, challenge rather than opportunity, and, correspondingly, deep joy can be present in many acts of musical creation. Whilst enigmatic and poetic in conception in general, music nevertheless provides a way of thinking about PM in different ways. The intention is to further the analysis of project management in music through a series of interviews and focus group activities with music professionals. Considering both the commercial sphere and more community-based activity, the development of musical project management skills remains a subject open to further research and enquiry.

Furthermore, there are opportunities for receptive frameworks through which professional organisations can connect and engage, enriching the quality of project management study in university courses through professional accreditation. A further consequence of commercially driven nature of higher education being the rise of professional bodies validating and informing courses at individual institutions, there is an opportunity to inform course development through adaptation of existing PM understanding for wider, general pedagogic application. An outline of professional accreditation through relevant bodies could develop positive synergies between PM awareness, course design and graduate attributes.

PM World Journal
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015
www.pmworldjournal.net

Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields
by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
Featured Paper

References

Brown, M., & Wilson, C., (2014) *Creative dynamics: artistic production as a model of creative interaction*, in Reisman, F, K., Ed., Creativity in Business, KIE Conference book series, Cummins, P., 2014. *Blood swept lands and seas of red.* Art installation at the Tower of London, 2014: http://www.derby.ac.uk/alumni/graduates/collegeofarts/paulcummins/

Feist, J., (2013) *Project management for musicians,* Berklee Press.

Fletcher, T (2005) *Dear boy: the life of Keith Moon,* Omnibus Press; 3rd Revised edition edition. Knight, P., & Yorke, M., 2004. *Learning, curriculum and employability in higher education.* London: Routledge.

Lorenzen, M., and Frederiksen, L., (2010). *The management of projects and product experimentation: examples from the music industry.* European Management Review, Vol. 2, Issue 3, pp.198-211. Morris, P. W. G., (2014). *Project management: a profession with a hole in its head or, why a change in the culture of academic support is needed for the profession.* Engineering Project Organization Journal, Vol. 4, Issue 2-3, pp.147-151.

Page, L., (2014). *How to get a job when you graduate: recruiters share the ten key skills students really need when they graduate.* The Guardian, Saturday 31 May 14.

Patton, G., 2013. *University leavers lack the essential skills for work, employers warn.* The Telegraph, 12 Sept 13.

QAA (2015) Subject benchmark documents for higher education qualifications in the UK.

Thomsett, R., 2002. *Radical project management.* Prentice Hall. US.

Wilson, C., and Brown, M., 2014. *The business of invention: Considering project management in the arts and industry*. In Reisman, F., Ed., *Creativity in business*. KIE Conference book series.

Wilson, C., and Brown, M., 2013. *Extending Realities: Creativity, Artistry and Technology*. In Reisman, F., Ed., *Creativity: Process, Product, Personality, Environment & Technology*. KIE Conference book series.

Yoeman, I., Robertson, M., Ali-Knight, J., Drummond, S., and McMahon-Beattie, U., eds., 2004. *Festivals and events management: an international arts and culture perspective.* Elsevier.

PM World *Journal*
Vol. IV, Issue IX – September 2015
www.pmworldjournal.net

Project Management and Music in Education and Related Fields
by Raji Sivaraman & Chris Wilson
Featured Paper

About the Authors

Raji Sivaraman

Singapore / USA

Raji Sivaraman, M.S. PMP is a certified Project Management Professional with 20 years of project management experience. She is a citizen of Singapore and is the Principal of ASBA LLC helping companies in the USA and Singapore in their strategic planning and overseas startups and setups. She speaks several languages and has worked in many countries including Singapore, Thailand, India, and USA. She helps fortune 500 companies in their Corporate and Social Responsibility projects. She has taken several advisory assignments for nonprofit organizations. She is a frequent facilitator, speaker and panelist at global conferences. She is an active member of the Project Management Institute from year 2000. Currently, she is a member of the Chapter Member Advisory Group of PMI Global. As a Consultant, she has worked in many industries such as IT, publishing, billing solutions, financial services, education, and logistics. She is also a visiting specialist and an Adjunct Professor at the Montclair State University, NJ, USA teaching Project Management to MBA and PhD students. She has exhaustive knowledge of music and is a trained Indian classical musician. Ms. Sivaraman can be contacted at raji.sivaraman@asba-llc.com

Chris Wilson

United Kingdom

Chris Wilson is a musician and academic with 20 years' experience in higher education working with eight universities in the UK during his career as a Lecturer in Music, Senior Lecturer in Music, Programme Leader, Teaching Fellow, Senior Teaching Fellow, Curriculum Development Manager, External Examiner and Consultant. Currently holding the position of Senior Lead in Learning Enhancement at the University of Derby in the UK, he is also a Senior Lecturer in Performance in the College of Arts and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. A classically trained musician and practitioner in the technological arts, Chris is an active member of the American Creativity Association, and formerly Principal Researcher for the Creative Technologies Research Group (CTRG) and Associate of the Digital and Material Arts Research Centre (DMARC) in the UK. Chris teaches and researches across a number of subjects and has delivered workshops and presentations to teachers, academics, career development professionals, engineers, architects, film-makers, musicians, and conference delegates in the UK and Europe, Asia, and North America, on creativity, artistry, technology, project management and education. Chris has experience managing complex institution-wide educational projects and initiatives and the organisation and delivery of staff development activities for large organisations. He brings a musical and creative perspective to every aspect of his work.