

STREET STEEL PROJECT 2016

ACTIVITY REPORT



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1. Setting the Context

Northburn Steelbands is an established voluntary music organisation based in South East Northumberland.

We were approached by Northumberland Live (<https://www.facebook.com/NorthumberlandLiveFestival/>) to prepare and provide a Steelpan musical performance for the 2016 festival.

Northumberland Live is a recognised performance event delivered free to the community. With an estimated audience of 11 000 people, the proposal represented a considerable challenge and therefore we felt it appropriate to approach this opportunity as a stand alone project.

Our main aims when planning the project were, to elevate the profile of Steelpan music in our community, to generate interest among local young people and ready them for public performance and to provide routes of progression and challenge for established Steelpan players.

To meet these aims the project required a suitable ensemble of instruments to meet the expectations of the players and partners.



2. Description of the Project

The Street Steel Project was aimed at young people aged 11 to 18 years of age.

Research planning and development started in Autumn 2015 and publicity generated via a number of avenues.

Outreach sessions and workshops provided first hand opportunities to experience Steelpan as an instrument.

Public performances by existing players promoted the project in the community.

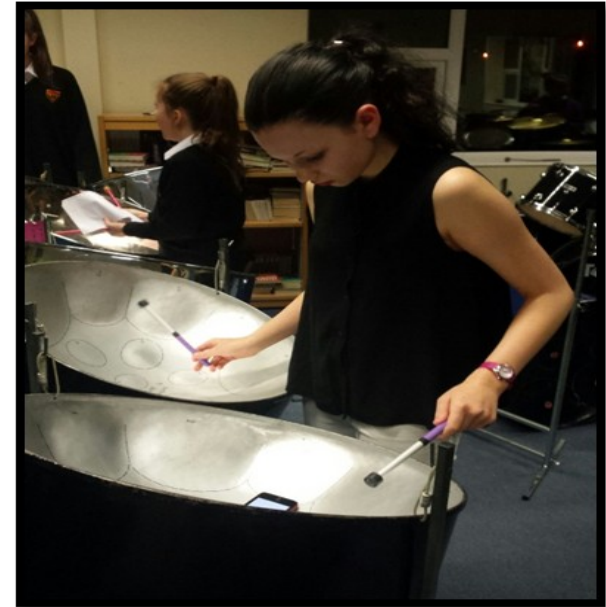
The development of links with the local high school and other community organisations and schools enabled us to reach our wider target population.

Social media links facilitated extensive communication in our search for potential players.

Street Steel was aimed at beginner pannists, no musical or pan experience was necessary just enthusiasm and motivation. Becoming involved in a steelband has a number of positive consequences.

The artistic and musical component is accessible, inclusive and allows for personal and creative development.

There also opportunities for young people to take leadership roles in both creative and management spheres. Performance is known to open a portal for young people to gain confidence develop positive self esteem and experience success.



During this early phase participants were encouraged to take ownership of the project by developing branding, logos and performance attire.



By Christmas 2015 we had a viable number of participants committed to the project. Support in kind for tuition, mentorship, supervision and administration had been secured and was in place.

Northumberland Live was confirmed as the performance event with a preparation deadline of 25th June 2016.

Tuition and rehearsals commenced in January 2016 and early sessions focussed on developing basic pan related music skills and assessing the individual ability of the participants.

There is no requirement to read musical notation in Steelpan music. The visual, kinaesthetic and aural traditions of pan tuition around the world lend themselves to accessibility and inclusivity.

However a basic understanding of musical terminology is helpful.



Musical choice was also very much in the hands of the participants. Our experience has highlighted that young people invest more in music they have helped to compose, arrange and ultimately perform.

Their choice of music was arranged and adapted by Musical Director Claire Falcus. Differentiation in this area was key. As with any mixed ability group the aim was to maintain engagement by providing sufficient extension and challenge. To ensure all participants were accessing an appropriate level of teaching regular verbal progress reviews were undertaken. Participants provided verbal feedback during every session and teaching was differentiated accordingly.



It was possible for the group to move ahead together by careful planning and the introduction of mentors to support the group as a whole. These mentors, all experienced young pan players and members of Northburn Steelbands, volunteered to provide encouragement to the participants of the project and their help was invaluable.

To augment the weekly sessions, a series of planned workshops allowed participants to develop mutually beneficial partnerships, provided opportunities for peer support, teaching and review.

Overall musical mentorship and development of the project has been undertaken by Claire Falcus with additional artistic guidance and support provided by Toussaint Clarke. This collaboration has added authenticity and real creativity to the project and its music. Working with an artist of international repute, like Toussaint provided the participants with genuine insight into Steelpan music composition, arrangement and technique. His attitude towards young people playing pan is hugely positive and he is keen for them to access a quality musical experience through Steelpan and the history and culture that surrounds it. We thank him for his expertise, commitment and enthusiasm.



As the project progressed our thoughts turned towards the performance itself. We had already established that this would be the first time some of our participants had ever performed in public. It was decided to arrange an opportunity for the project to go live!

The North Tyneside Festival of Steelbands was identified as a suitable event for Street Steel to debut their music and performance skills. The Steelband festival is an annual gathering of regional school based steelbands. Northburn Steelbands has been a participant in this event for a number of years and Northburn players were available to provide support and mentorship on this very successful occasion.



The Northumberland Live event on 25th June was a total success from a Street Steel perspective. All participants attended and performed to a standard that exceeded ours and their expectations. The music was received with positivity and enthusiasm by the event organisers and those attending the Festival.



3. Aims and objectives

AIMS	OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	EVALUATION
<p>To raise the profile of steelpan music in our community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop links with schools and community organisations. • To perform in the local and wider community. • Generate interest through workshops and taster sessions. • Promote social networking to target potential participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established effective link with local high school. • Have performed at community based events as a direct result of the project; • Workshops have become an ongoing strategy for recruitment. • Social networking established via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram 	<p>Despite generating sufficient interest to initially make the project sustainable a programme of local promotion will have to be devised to ensure ongoing progress and continued recruitment of participants.</p> <p>However, taking full advantage of current social media trends and allowing young leaders ownership in this area will help us reach our target and wider demographic.</p>
<p>Provide accessible steelpan beginner opportunities in our community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage new pan players in the 11– 18 age range. • To provide regular sustainable teaching sessions. • To provide routes for progression and development. • To ensure differentiation and challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong cohort of participants from the target demographic. • Teaching sessions are established and will continue as part of our succession planning. • Participants have progressed to our community band. • Regular reviews of progress and feedback allows monitoring and movement between bands. 	<p>The accessibility of steelpan music conceals the complexities of its tuition. An expert tutor/mentor is vital to success in this area. We must work to ensure strong succession in this area by identifying potential young leaders and providing for their musical development. Our current programme is small and needs to be placed high on our strategic development agenda to ensure potential steelpan tutors are allowed to flourish as part of Northburn Steelbands</p>

<p>To develop and prepare steelband musical performance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a sustainable, engaging programme of music tuition. • To monitor progress and ensure adequate differentiation. • To adhere to planning regarding time table • To be flexible and accommodate unexpected changes. • To provide mentorship and support for participants. • To produce and perform at a large scale public performance event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of the original cohort of participants took part in the event. • Remaining participants were well prepared and confident in performance. • We were able to take advantage of several unexpected performance opportunities. • Our existing Young Leaders were able to benefit from mentorship opportunities. • Performance at Northumberland Live was deemed a success by the event organisers , the participants and 	<p>The Northumberland Live performance was well received by the organisers and the audience.</p> <p>With hindsight we would have spent more time on performance skills such as choreography to add visual impact.</p> <p>We also would have negotiated a different performance time and location at the event.</p> <p>This would have given Street Steel increased exposure however, could have proven intimidating for a cohort of novice players.</p>
<p>To provide progression and music development opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve links with other similar organisations and artists at a regional and national level. • To develop sustainable engaging programme of music tuition that ensures participants readily progress and enjoy success. • To ensure progression opportunities for existing players that allow personal and musical development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established link with Northern Steel Network and Northern Steel Orchestra. • 80% of participants continued with the project through to performance and have progressed to community band level. • Several established players have taken up regional and national level competition and performance opportunities 	<p>New instruments have allowed existing players to flourish under expert musical direction and guidance.</p> <p>We need to develop our young leader programme to ensure a strong foundation of musicians that will sustain our community band. With out this it will be difficult to maintain the current standard of tuition and quality of music output.</p>

4. Unexpected outcomes.

As a result of the project the profile of Steelpan has been significantly raised in our community. This has prompted several unexpected outcomes. The number of enquiries received by Northburn Steelbands by email and via social media has increased significantly. As a direct result of this increase in activity we have several new projects and ventures already in progress and in development.

- An adult beginner band with 10 participants aged 18 to 70 receiving weekly tuition . They have already performed in public and have further performances arranged.
- Workshops and taster sessions devised to promote the project have proven successful and prompted enquiries and bookings from local schools and community groups.
- An outreach project has been developed with a local primary school to commence weekly in September 2016.
- A very successful residential weekend with Scouting Northumberland providing workshop activities and culminating in a performance by participants to 2500 (www.marracamp.org.uk).



At this point it would be appropriate to thank our partners and volunteers for their enthusiasm, support and patience.

These individuals have given their support in kind , expertise and time to ensure the Street Steel projects success.

Musical Director Claire Falcus

Music Tutor Jenny Chan

The Cramlington Caribbean Crew Young Leaders, Sophie Purvis and Caitlin Lockey

Cramlington Learning Village and Ms Jo Watson, Head of Music

Northburn Primary School and Head Teacher, Mrs Clare Scott

Mr Toussaint Clarke and Rainbow Steel Orchestra

Mel Jackson and Northumberland Live

Mrs J Davison and Mrs S Burt, administrators

Mrs G Purvis , Dinnington First School

5. The future

As an organisation Northburn Steelbands has gained a great deal by planning and undertaking the Street Steel Project. We have developed musically, creatively and as a team. We have established valuable steelpan links locally, regionally and nationally. We have been able to provide opportunities for new and existing participants as a direct result of the Project. These include increased performance opportunities and chance to adopt and develop leadership roles. We have also nurtured significant creative links that will allow participants to access 'next level' steelpan experiences and opportunities. We intend to build on our existing creative links by planning and developing regional visits and exchanges.

We will continue to invest in our young people and support them musically, socially and emotionally as they will be the foundation and future of Northburn Steelbands.



6. Links to further information

- [https://m.facebook.com Cramlington Caribbean Crew Steelband](https://m.facebook.com/CramlingtonCaribbeanCrewSteelband)
- <https://cramlingtoncaribbeancrew.wordpress.com>
- Twitter @cramcaribbean and @streetsteel1
- Email cramlingtoncaribbeancrew@outlook.com
- [http://chroniclelive.co.uk /whats on/music-nightlife-news/ Northumberland-live](http://chroniclelive.co.uk/whats-on/music-nightlife-news/northumberland-live)
- Facebook @ Northumberland Live Festival 2016

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