



Pioneering Andrew Lloyd Webber music programme rolled out to state school students in one of England's most deprived towns

- Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST) helps three more schools – two in Oldham, one of the most deprived towns in England
- The seven-year-old charity now works with 17 disadvantaged secondary schools in a bid to transform young people's lives through classical music education
- Award-winning violinist Nicola Benedetti says Andrew Lloyd Webber programme is a "robust, challenging and progressive curriculum"
- So far, more than 10,000 11 to 14-year-olds have benefited from free weekly group music tuition and over 10,000 instruments have been funded thanks to key sponsors

London: 26 November, 2020 – A music education charity has extended its ground-breaking Andrew Lloyd Webber programme to two schools in Greater Manchester's [most deprived](#) town, as part of its ultimate aim of providing free classical music tuition to all disadvantaged state secondary schools in England.

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, [Music in Secondary Schools Trust \(MiSST\)](#) has partnered with The Hathershaw College and The Radclyffe School in Oldham. Across both, all 530 Year 7 pupils have received their own instrument for free and are now learning the violin and other classical instruments in the classroom as part of the Andrew Lloyd Webber programme. It includes MiSST's unique online music curriculum developed during the UK's first lockdown. The online lessons and resources mean that any child forced to isolate at home can continue to learn as if they were in school.

A third state secondary Sydney Russell School in Dagenham, East London has also signed up to the programme in order that 370 of its youngest students can benefit from the world-class music education.

Nine out of 10 (92%) of parents from both schools in Oldham said that learning a musical instrument was "increasing their child's resilience in their learning", according to a recent survey exploring the impact of MiSST's blended learning curriculum.

The charity launched in April 2013 with the aim of transforming young people's lives through classical music. It now works with 17 schools serving disadvantaged communities – 14 of these are in the capital.

MiSST is now looking into further opportunities to work with more secondary schools in deprived areas across the UK. The charity solely relies on the generosity of philanthropists, corporate organisations and general donations.

Funded by Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, Charles Wolfson Charitable Trust, and the Dame Alice Owen Foundation, MiSST has already given free, regular classical music tuition to more than 10,000 *Key Stage 3* children (11 to 14-year-olds) and provided a similar number of instruments.

Andrew Lloyd Webber, who has lent his name to the programme, added: "I am a passionate believer in the importance of arts in schools, particularly music, which transcends all languages, shades of politics, race and creeds. Through MiSST, it is thrilling to see music



empower young people to meet the challenges of the pandemic, by teaching motivation, resilience, self-confidence and self-esteem. Music education has never been as vital as it is today and it should be free”.

Award-winning violinist Nicola Benedetti, a patron of MiSST, commented: “MiSST has continued over the last year to provide excellence throughout all the work it does. I am delighted to be Patron, and to work closely with the young musicians in the MiSST orchestra. The Andrew Lloyd Webber programme enables disadvantaged children to follow a robust, challenging and progressive curriculum so they can move from being a non-player to Grade 3 level by the end of Year 9. I believe all children should have the opportunity to access this programme regardless of background”.

Mark Giles, Principal of The Hathershaw College, said: “I am extremely proud of our association with MiSST. My vision has always been to provide children from disadvantaged backgrounds with the opportunities their peers enjoy in more affluent areas of the country. I am also passionate about the Arts leading the way in raising aspirations by providing opportunities for students to develop their cultural capital.

“Despite the current pandemic and the disruption it has caused, I watch children arrive at school carrying their violins in eager anticipation. This is more than about teaching children to play an instrument, this is also about instilling responsibility and providing them with opportunity. I am determined to ensure Hathershaw becomes an OFSTED outstanding rated school, not for the personal accolade, but for the opportunities and self-confidence that this will bring to our community. MiSST is central to this vision.”

John Cregg, Headteacher at The Radclyffe School, said: “We have been delighted with the early impact of the MiSST programme. It has been a real pleasure to visit music lessons and listen to our Year 7 students playing their violins and cornets. I have been very pleasantly surprised by the quality of their performances and the development that has already taken place in just a few short weeks. We look forward to further progress and hope to enjoy some public group performances in the near future”.

Rachel Landon, CEO of [MiSST](#), added: “Regardless of the logistical challenge during a global pandemic, we’ve managed to ensure over 500 children from one of the poorest areas in the UK received their instruments safely and started our free music tuition in the classroom and online.

“At a time of deep anxiety and stress caused by Covid-19, we know the positive cognitive and emotional benefits of music to children’s wellbeing and mental health. The Andrew Lloyd Webber programme will help young people from all backgrounds and abilities by unlocking hidden potential, building confidence, social skills and connecting them to the world of classical music in the best way possible – putting a musical instrument in their hands.

“Access to classical music should be for every child not just the few whose parents can afford it. There’s a crisis in music education and lack of diversity beyond school. We want to change that.”

Former MiSST pupil Deronne White, 22, who graduated from the Royal College of Music last year, grew up in a single parent family in Hackney.



He added: “I think music has kept me safe. I was so focused on playing the flute. It was and still is my absolute passion. My mum knows it’s been my salvation and has kept me out of any trouble.

“I was a shy 11-year-old. I never put my hand up. I didn’t believe in myself. Music has given me confidence that I can achieve. It’s helped me express myself and convinced me to push beyond the mere satisfactory. It’s taught me to never give up. I’ve learnt so much about myself, what I can achieve with effort and determination. That has had a remarkable impact on how I conduct myself in other parts of my life.”

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It costs £250 a year for a child to learn music through MiSST’s Andrew Lloyd Webber programme. Over Key Stage 3 it comes to a total of £750 (11 to 14-year-olds).

MiSST

MiSST works with 17 secondary schools in and around London, Warwickshire and Oldham. The charity helps secondary schools that have disadvantaged and challenging student in take by providing not only funding for classical instrument but also support in the form of regular tuition, opportunities to perform and a programme of excellence that is unrivalled in the UK.

MiSST also provides ‘Pathways to Excellence’ programmes for promising students, with access to ensemble and orchestral playing. This includes Saturday Music School, Leadership Programmes, and 4-day intensive Radley College Residential courses.

Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation

Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation was set up by Andrew in 1992 to promote the arts, culture and heritage for the public benefit; since inception Andrew has been the principal provider of funding for all its charitable activities.

In 2011, the Foundation embarked on an active grant giving programme and has now awarded grants of over £20 million to support high quality training and personal development as well as other projects that make a real difference to enrich the quality of life both for individuals and within local communities. Significant grants include £3.5m to Arts Educational Schools, London to create a state of the art professional theatre, £2.4m to the Music in Secondary Schools Trust, £1m to The Architectural Heritage Fund, \$1.3m to the American Theatre Wing and over £350,000 annually to fund 30 performing arts scholarships for talented students in financial need. The Foundation is also a founding supporter of the Get Into Theatre careers website www.getintothetheatre.org