

KERRY RUBIE

Previously Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Academy of Dance. Current Chairman of Friends of the Elderly. He was Vice Chair of Leo Burnett Worldwide Inc (LBWW) from 1997- 2004.

KERRY RUBIE FROM LONG JOHN SILVER TO THE VOICES FOUNDATION

Some time in the mid-1990's I was approached by 'Business in the Community' to volunteer to help primary school children with their reading. The school chosen for me was St Mary's Primary School on East Row in London.

Never having had any experience of teaching children, I was somewhat apprehensive about what lay ahead but was subsequently delighted to be greeted by a very enthusiastic staff and a group of equally enthusiastic children. For the most part, English was their second language but I suspected that whatever difficulties they might have with reading in English, the one thing that all children loved was a story. So I decided that what we would do to help them with their reading was read one of the great stories of the English language written by one of our great story-tellers. The story was *Treasure Island* and the author and master story teller, Robert Louis Stephenson.

The strategy seemed to work quite well and I was never short of kids who wanted to join the class. I was relating my experiences at St Mary's with a family friend from my time living in Hong Kong. Her name was Suzi Digby who became quite interested in hearing about my encounters because, as I was to find out, St Mary's was a school on her list to bring into the emerging Voices 'family' in London.

Suzi told me that she had recently interviewed an Australian teacher at St Mary's by the name of Anna McManus who, although presently teaching general primary subjects, had a musical background which made her the ideal candidate to bring St Mary's and Voices together. The only obstacle that needed

to be overcome was funding. Not an unfamiliar problem with extra curricular primary school activities and which I thought we could find a way to overcome.

Suzi invited me to observe a Voices class and it took me about three minutes to recognize the amazing impact the Voices methodology had on children who were perhaps struggling with English, let alone singing in it. As I watched the children form a circle, begin to sing as a group with the lead coming from Anna and then individual children taking over the lead from her and handing it on from one to the other I could almost feel the confidence and joy in the room escalate.

Voices was clearly so right for St Mary's so we set about sorting out the funding problem and the school was on its way to developing a music culture that was previously absent.

Over the subsequent months, I enquired about progress of the programme and was delighted to learn that the children had asked if it was possible to take singing beyond the classroom and perhaps form a school choir. The students' enthusiasm was matched by their teachers' and a choir was formed who did the previously unthinkable and practiced during their lunch break and even after school!

So competent and talented did the St Mary's choir become that they earned the right to performance at The Royal Opera House, The Royal Albert Hall and special functions of one of Voices' great benefactors, Bain and Company.

The above notwithstanding, perhaps one of the most rewarding early experiences for me was to be invited to attend a recital for parents and hear the extraordinary advances that these young singers had made. Not only with singing but also with musical instruments of varying kinds.

A musical culture was undeniably taking root at St Mary's. When I was then asked to attend the year-end performance of the East Row version of the West End musical 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' I was not really surprised.

The concert also included a performance by St Mary's newly formed Guitar Orchestra which had over twenty members playing guitars donated to the school by the kids' parents who had reluctantly agreed that they were not going to be the next Paul Simon or Neil Diamond.

This was indeed further evidence of St Mary's emerging musical culture and in subsequent year-end concerts I have heard talented performance from a small but very committed orchestra playing more traditional instruments.

Arguably this broadening musical competence would not have emerged had it not been for the introduction of the Voices curriculum into St Mary's. From my observation, not only has it brought singing to the lives of youngsters but it has also helped shape their attitudes and, through that, how they behaved in an increasingly complex world.

INSIDE VOICES

IN THIS ISSUE...

- ✓ Founder Suzi Digby talks about the importance of music in children's development and the principles that have guided her and which remain at the heart of the Voices Foundation.
- ✓ A fascinating insight into our partnership work with a multi academy trust (Creative Education Trust) by Charles MacDougall, one of our Choral Specialists.
- ✓ The Voices Foundation journey: Kerry Rubie, one of our key supporters, talks about what inspired him to get involved and the impact that our work is having.
- ✓ Rebecca Le Brocq, our CEO, talks about the importance in investing in the right team and the vital role that they play.

TheVoicesFoundation @Voices_Found



WHAT'S COMING UP IN 2017

1. WEBSITE LAUNCH

The team has been busy designing a new website which will be launched in March and will offer a fresh and contemporary look for the charity.

2. DIGITAL LEARNING PLATFORM

We are planning to create a digital learning platform for schools and teachers to access, to support their individual or school's musical learning throughout the year. It is apparent that schools frequently require accessible, online tools to support their learning and we see this as an opportunity to extend our offer to schools and engage new schools.

3. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

We will be holding our annual residential conference (Voices Nucleo) for our workforce in April at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester. We will welcome our workforce who are located across the country for a weekend of training, support and talks from music and education experts.

4. PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

This year we are focusing on developing our school programmes. In order to explore how our programmes can be improved we will hold a seminar with a number of champion Headteachers, practitioners and music education consultants. We will look to discuss our current school programmes and how we can develop these in order to increase children's engagement and musical progression.

NEWS



1. SHORTLISTED FOR AN EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY/EARLY YEARS AWARD

The Voices Foundation are delighted to announce that we were shortlisted for the Excellence in Primary/Early Years Awards for Excellence. Although we did not win the award this year, it was a great opportunity to be celebrated in the presence of over 280 industry guests, including teachers, hub leaders and musicians celebrating some of the strongest examples of music education practice.

2. CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL INVITED TO PRESENT UK AT INTERNATIONAL MUSIC CONFERENCE IN SWEDEN

In December one of the Voices Foundation's schools Central Primary, Watford was invited to present at Forum21 in Stockholm sharing their musical journey and successes to date. We have been working in partnership with Central Primary School since 2013. Over this time all staff have taken part in a tailored CPD programme

in and out of the classroom, developing their skills and musical ear. As a result, all teachers deliver regular music and singing in the classroom and the school has developed a strong choir which performs regularly in the local area. The school delivered a strong case study for *Music-making in every classroom - what could happen?* and presented a video of some of the great singing and music taking place in their school, which they stated is largely down to their Voices Foundation programme.

3. KINGS HEATH PRIMARY ACADEMY BECOMES A SINGING SCHOOL

Kings Heath Primary Academy in Northampton became a Voices Foundation Singing School earlier this year, working with 388 children from Nursery to Year 6 and over 30 teachers. The programme involves an extensive teacher development strand for Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2 staff and weekly inspirational choral activities for all pupils across the school, reaching all pupils aged 4-11. This involves specialist input from leading music educators and choral directors and will see singing embedded within the daily curriculum as well as establish extra-curricular singing enrichment for pupils in Key Stage 2 (pupils aged 8-11).

THE VOICES FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE TO THANK:

- Armourers & Brasiers' Gauntlet Trust
- The Clemore Trust
- The Christopher Laing Foundation
- The Cutler Trust
- The David Ross Foundation
- Drapers Charitable Fund
- The Ernest Cook Trust
- The Florence Turner Trust
- Friday Afternoons Fund
- Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation
- The Headley Trust
- The Holbeck Charitable Trust
- The John Lewis Partnership
- The John Lyon's Charity
- Kerry Rubie
- The Lucille Graham Trust
- The Purcell Club
- The Segelman Foundation
- Tedworth Charitable Trust
- The Worshipful Company of Barbers



THE VOICES FOUNDATION: MUSICAL BEGINNINGS



SUZI DIGBY OBE

Suzi is the Founder of the Voices Foundation. She is an internationally renowned Choral Conductor and Music Educator, and has founded a number of other ventures including ORA, Voce Chamber Choir, Vocal Futures, Singing4Success and The London Youth Choir. She has been a judge on the BBC show 'Last Choir Standing'.

www.suzidigby.com

It happened in a classroom in Kecskemet, Hungary one day. A thunderbolt of enlightenment; one of those light-bulb moments after which everything changes. I witnessed a class of Primary children functioning as musicians at the most impressive and wholistic level. These were not 'selected' children, this was a whole class with not one child left behind. From this moment, I understood that high-level musicianship skills were not just in the domain of the 'talented' few. I also understood how vital it was that every child should have this aspect of their intelligence developed as a fundamental right. The Voices Foundation was born.

Once you observe children learning in this way, it seems so *obvious*.

And what were the key ingredients? There were no instruments, no expensive resources, just a well-trained teacher, a tuning fork and a blackboard for notation - this was an advanced class. The principle is 'sound to symbol'. Just as we learn language, not from the alphabet, (the equivalent in music education being theory) but from song culture (the equivalent in language being words).

You cannot transplant a methodology from one culture to another without constantly adapting it to the new culture. In Hungary, the 'Kodaly' methodology has indigenously developed from Hungarian song culture to suit their own education systems. So we can import the principles, but must adapt them to suit our children's culture and education structures.

So, the principles we have been inspired by are:

1. Music is one of our multiple intelligences - we must develop this alongside other intelligences
2. Musical learning must begin at the earliest age possible (the ears are the first organs to be fully developed in utero)
3. The singing voice is vital in musical development. It can form the foundation of the development of musicianship skills long before the child can coordinate on an instrument. Train the ear and develop aesthetic awareness and instrumental learning can follow with great acceleration. It is vital that children learn instruments, but they are likely to lose interest before viable skills develop unless they have been 'trained' through the singing voice. Would you expect a child to learn a Shakespeare play before it could speak fluently? Literacy and numeracy are similar in this respect, but are understood better pedagogically.
4. Structure of methodology and *progression of learning* are of utmost importance (as with literacy and numeracy). The windows of opportunity presented in the pre-pubescent child need to be met with the right materials, methodology and teaching. Experiential learning is the key.
5. The younger the child, the more aware of / well-trained in pedagogy the teacher must be. The division of specialist and non-specialist music teaching is spurious at pre-school and Primary level. All teachers should be skilled and confident in teaching music, just as they are at teaching literacy/numeracy
6. The methodology must ensure that *every child* succeeds.

My own belief as a teacher and pedagogue is that the development of the weakest link i.e. the most insecure child or, if you are working with the whole school, the most reticent teacher, should be the marker of your success. This has become my abiding principle both as a teacher and as a member of society.

Good teachers 'maggie' from other great teachers and borrow others' ideas. Movement and dance is vital in music learning - Dalcroze teachers have taught us a great deal. My own belief is that we should not stick too rigidly to application of one methodology, but constantly adapt and learn. As long as the six basic principles, as outlined above, form the foundations.

Kodaly himself would have approved of this approach and he would have been wary of any application of his own ideas that fossilised in a way that was intolerant of new and creative developments - this is our challenge. Take the best of the great teachers and keep refreshing your teaching art.

By far the best way to do this is to 'shadow' others whom you respect. If you have been teaching for more than a year without observing better teachers than yourself, you may get stale and, God forbid, bored! It is great individual teachers, working within a supported environment that have most inspired me over the last thirty years.

Titian's last painting, when he was well into his 80s and could hardly see, was accompanied by the words, 'I've only just started to learn how to paint'.

WELCOME TO THE THIRD EDITION OF THE VOICES FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER. WE HOPE THAT IT PROVIDES AN INSPIRING UPDATE ON THE CHARITY, AND KEEPS YOU, OUR DONORS, INFORMED. IN THIS ISSUE WE FOCUS ON THE MUSIC EDUCATORS WHO INSPIRE THE CHILDREN AND TEACHERS WITH WHOM WE WORK IN SCHOOLS. THEY ARE VITAL

TO OUR SUCCESS, AND WE ARE DELIGHTED TO GIVE THEM THIS CHANCE TO REVEAL HOW THEY APPROACH THEIR ROLES WITH VOICES FOUNDATION.

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO SUPPORT THE VOICES FOUNDATION.

CHARLES MACDOUGALL WHY THIS JOB MATTERS



As a professional classical singer, vocal coach and choral director I owe my own early successes in music to the choral training I received as a chorister. I learned with exceptional choral directors who inspired me with their infectious enthusiasm, technical skill and knowledge of the voice and repertoire. As a result, I and many other choristers were able to become disciplined and creative musicians ourselves. As well as enjoying our own development, we quickly saw that effective and inclusive choral singing was one way of offering all children the chance to become confident and refined musicians.

Therefore, back in 2015, when Becky invited me to join the Voices Foundation team to help forge ahead with a new choral strand, I was thrilled. As an organisation that leads the charge in training teachers and children in musicianship through singing, it seemed natural that it should now use its powers for establishing effective practice in vocal and choral training too. This would allow the Voices Foundation to develop not just great musicians, but great singers and choirs too. It has been a pleasure to come on board with the Voices Foundation as a choral specialist to help develop the choral delivery strand. The basic aims are to initiate, develop and refine choral work within our partner schools and provide support and training for those teachers who are responsible for choirs and singers within their schools.

In autumn 2016, I made introductory visits to seven secondary academies which form the Creative Education Trust (CET) where we are delivering a pioneering teacher and pupil development initiative. The project will improve classroom music and choral/solo singing across all secondary schools in this Multi-Academy Trust. I am directing the choral/vocal strand encompassing two elements, the first of which is entitled 'Chorus', and the second, 'Singing Ambassadors'.

For the 'Chorus' strand, in response to the individual needs of each school, I hope to establish, enliven and refine the school's choral work through delivering a combination of choir visits and training for the school music teachers. In each school, there are wonderful staff grappling with the science and art of vocal training and choral direction, each with a different set of needs: they might need a basic introduction to vocal physiology, or perhaps a better understanding of the art of choral conducting, repertoire ideas (in terms of suitability and standard), or increased understanding of young voices and especially the

The Creative Education Trust (CET) is a registered charity and social enterprise set up in 2010 with support from leaders in the creative industries, innovation-based businesses and education. Their mission is to improve standards of education and skills for children and young people across the UK, equipping them to be successful adults in the competitive, globalised world of the future. The Multi-Academy Trust currently consists of seven secondary academies and six primary academies. However, it is looking to expand the number of academies in its network to around 20 over the next two years.

CET has identified singing as the most exciting, practical and inclusive way to broaden secondary pupils' musical horizons and enlarge their experience of music-making. They invited Voices Foundation to put forward a proposal



maturing teenage male voice. Many secondary school music teachers are first study instrumentalists who don't feel they have the experience or confidence to stretch their choirs or take risks. Every participating teacher has been extremely receptive to the collaboration with the Voices Foundation, and they have all particularly expressed a need for help with singing in parts and establishing a broad repertoire; not solely relying on Pop music as a crowd-pleaser, but working with material that develops skills and broadens horizons.

ALTHOUGH YOUNG PEOPLE ARE IMMERSSED IN LIGHTER STYLES OF MUSIC, THEY CAN STILL DISCERN QUALITY AND THEY DESERVE TO HAVE A BROAD REPERTOIRE INTRODUCED TO THEM'

'Singing Ambassadors' is a solo singing strand through which we aim to help young people to explore new repertoire and become confident singers who can encourage and involve other pupils in choirs or other musical activity. During the introductory visits I 'auditioned' at least two pupils from each school singing a song of their choice. Almost without exception, they sang a Pop song or a piece of Musical Theatre repertoire. Having heard them sing, and having done a quick voice test, I selected a Classical song for them to work on over the next year with my help. With this element in particular, I've really felt

to strengthen music and singing in their schools through an extensive cross-trust teacher development programme. The project involves teachers and pupils in seven secondary academies across the Midlands and East Coast to develop their musicianship and choral singing.

The seven participating academies' catchment areas face complex challenges, where young people and their families do not have access to many cultural opportunities. Two of seven academies suffer from coastal isolation and four others have above-average levels of pupils with Special Education Needs, English as an Additional Language and on Pupil Premium. The Voices Foundation prioritises schools which face these kinds of educational, cultural and social disadvantages.

the burden of my high office: having to win over these students to classical music with one solo song. However, I needn't have worried! One young baritone stands out in particular. In his audition he crooned high tenor vocals in falsetto and although it was a lovely sound, it wasn't his natural voice. After some brief exploration, a rich baritone voice emerged. After a week or so of musing, I assigned him 'Deh, vieni alla Finestra' from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and, on my next visit, I played the aria to him: he could barely contain his excitement. Although young people are immersed in – what might be regarded as – lighter styles of music, they can discern quality and they deserve to have a broad repertoire introduced to them which goes beyond what they already know.

All this should, I believe, encourage students to be more engaged with Classical repertoire and challenging choral works, so that they can embrace a broader diet of music. The success of the project depends significantly upon their teachers becoming more at ease with the demands of training a choir, technical vocal knowledge, the art of conducting and choosing repertoire.

Looking beyond the initial project this year, I hope that, having engaged the students and empowered the teachers, these schools and their choirs will become beacons of musical excellence – examples for other schools of what brilliant singing looks and sounds like – and just exactly what standard we might expect from school choirs and young soloists across the UK.

KATIE NEILSON HOW TO TEACH A TEACHER



KATIE NEILSON
Katie is a Senior Practitioner and Course Leader at the Voices Foundation. She has trained and mentored numerous teachers and produced a fully revised edition of The Voices Foundation's Early Years resource, *Inside Music*.

Additionally, Katie conducts children's choirs and runs her own business delivering preschool music classes in the Hertford area. She firmly believes in the value and power of music education in children's lives and always endeavours to reach as many children as possible and give them the opportunity to understand and enjoy music.

Lisa: "When you come to visit, it's like having an angel who catches me as I fall and teaches me to fly..."

Anna: "No offence, but I'd rather have an OFSTED inspector in my classroom than another one of your visits!"

How can these two teachers both be talking to me about my regular mentoring visits into their classrooms? And would you believe me if I told you that I eventually formed a great relationship with both of them, and that both of them made good progress in teaching music?

You see, the role of a Voices Foundation practitioner is extremely complex and goes way beyond that of a good music teacher. Yes, we train and mentor classroom teachers so that wherever their musical journey begins, they improve their practice. But of course, classroom teachers come in all sorts of different shapes and sizes and many have issues about teaching music. Voices Foundation practitioners have to adapt constantly to build good working relationships with all teachers whatever their musical background and whatever their attitude.

It is always a pleasure when we meet teachers like Lisa. She had very little musical understanding but was keen and very open to learning. Lisa's enthusiasm sometimes got the better of her and I had to tactfully remind her not to sing along with the children all the time! She often mis-learned songs and I had to find ways of correcting her that did not undermine her confidence. Through her Voices Foundation journey, she increased her musical skills and understanding at the same time as demonstrating

to her class that mistakes are just part of the journey towards success. From the very start of the programme, Lisa valued the transformative power of music for her and for her class – it was my job to help her hone her practice whilst preserving her enthusiasm.

Anna and I got along quite well and her honesty when comparing my visit to that of an OFSTED inspector was refreshing and made us both laugh! She was nothing short of terrified about singing in front of anyone and everyone. Her confidence had been destroyed as a child when she had been told that she couldn't sing and this experience had switched her off music making ever since. She grew up thinking music was a "gift" and something reserved for specialists. She made her feelings very clear to me when she explained that she would prefer to parade naked than sing in front of other people and she had been horrified when her head teacher told her that her school was going to be working with The Voices Foundation. I helped her by carefully selecting achievable activities that initially allowed her to sing as little as possible, which took a while, but eventually she did sing in front of me. As the year unfolded she became more willing to take risks and ask for help. Anna's class responded really well and the children respected her all the more because she was facing her fears. By the end of the year I was greeted more enthusiastically – she admitted that she was even looking forward to my visit because she and the class had so many things they wanted to show me.

As Voices Foundation practitioners we frequently encounter classroom teachers who are terrified of teaching music through song though not all of them are as honest and open about their fears as Anna.

Some appear lazy, others come across as rude, many do their best to avoid us, others are quite emotional and some bravely battle on doing their best to overcome their fears. It is our job to build a relationship with every single teachers no matter what their attitude. We build up trust by letting them know that they are not alone, that their experiences are not uncommon and that, over the years, we have seen many teachers overcome their fears and difficulties. We find playful activities that help our teachers to develop confidence and build up their skills steadily. Through a complex and bespoke balance of empathy, patience, kindness and firmness we help terrified teachers to believe that they can teach music.

I believe that all children are entitled to a good music education and I don't think that children's musical progress should be limited by the confidence or ability of the teacher. Lisa and Anna took very different paths but in the end, with my help and their own determination to do the best for the children they teach, both learned to teach music to their classes. Our Musical Foundations programme provides teachers with a balance of training, demonstrations and mentoring from practitioners who are not only excellent music practitioners but also have great interpersonal skills that enable them to connect with a wide range of teachers including the terrified, the experienced and the novice. All good classroom teachers are capable of teaching music and, when they do, they demonstrate that music is a gift which we can all enjoy!

A WORD FROM THE CEO, REBECCA LE BROCC

Music education practitioners are at the heart of Voices Foundation's success; the charity was founded by a music educator and choral director, Suzi Digby who was our first practitioner (see Suzi's article on the front page of this issue). Led by Suzi, the organisation initially grew and evolved through its practitioner workforce, which was instrumental in driving the first decade of the charity's development. 23 years on, our practitioners remain engaged and involved in Voices Foundation's progress, but are also supported by an office team which now leads the charity's strategy under the direction of the Board of Trustees. This frees up the practitioners to focus their energy and efforts on the complex task of training teachers and inspiring children with music.

The process of training adults and children who are lacking in confidence in their own musical ability can be both challenging and spine-tingling (as Katie

In 2016 we commissioned an independent evaluation and consultation drawing in the views of all 70 partner schools and received unanimously positive responses from head teachers and classroom teachers about the work led by the Voices Foundation practitioners:

"This programme is a subversive way of training staff in music. It gets rid of the myth that you need a music specialist." Head teacher

"At the start, I hated singing in class and in front of other adults. Over the year I've overcome this. I'm more inclined now to use music across the curriculum. I will continue next year. The more you do it, the better it becomes. It [VF's Musical Foundations] has been really positive. It's equipped me better to do music and I'm more inclined to do it on the spur of the moment now." Year 2 teacher

"I am actively taking this journey alongside others and it's now becoming a belief that we can use our singing voices to communicate with the children. My confidence has grown in my own capabilities of using my voice to sing for communication, to aid performance and to give us all a feeling of self-worth to share with the whole school. I feel amazing!" Year 4 teacher

Neilson outlines in her article above). In order to help our practitioners to overcome any obstacles they meet, we bring them together several times a year with leading educators and vocal specialists to examine the specific ingredients needed to deliver effective music education programmes. We devote time to listening to, and discussing our challenges with researchers, academics and teacher trainers so that we can ensure that our approach and practice can truly transform lives.

The sheer depth of trust and rapport that most schools expressed about their relationship with their dedicated trainer was overwhelming. Nonetheless, every member of the team at the Voices Foundation has to be committed to continuously refining their practice so that we can retain our reputation as a high-performing workforce, and, crucially, continue to help children to develop musically, personally and academically. Every year we invest in our practitioners so that they are effective in delivering the outcomes that children, teachers and schools need.

THE VOICES FOUNDATION TEAM



REBECCA LE BROCC
Chief Executive

Having grown up in a large musical family, I completed a music degree at Edinburgh University. Before joining VF as CEO I was Director of Education at Opera North and Education Officer at the City of London Sinfonia.



VICTORIA HUNT
Learning Manager

After gaining a degree in Vocal and Operatic Studies, I decided to focus my career on music education. A particular highlight was working within Opera North's Education team where I curated a variety of cross-arts programmes across Yorkshire. I am now thoroughly enjoying my role with the Voices Foundation as Learning Manager.



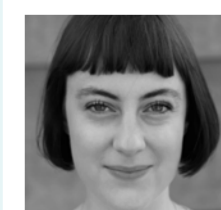
JAMIE MATTHEW
Learning Officer

After a music degree in Leeds and piano studies in Strasbourg & London, my early career was as a freelance musician, including a spell on the full-time music staff at Opera Holland Park. Before joining the Voices Foundation I was also a part-time primary music teacher, and worked in Learning & Participation at the London Jazz Festival.



OLIVIA COLLINS
Development Manager

After studying a BMus as a singer at Cardiff University I moved to London to begin working in the arts, firstly in the corporate world interning for a record label. Realising that I didn't find this fulfilling I began working in the third sector across an arts organisation and a music education hub. I joined the Voices Foundation in January this year and I am excited to be part of the organisation in this pivotal and exciting point of development.



RUTH TEBBY
Administrator

Ruth is a Theatre and Performance graduate from Goldsmiths, University of London. Ruth grew up in a musical family and is passionate about working for a charity that advocates for music being available to all children.

WE'VE MOVED
August 2016 saw us move from our offices in Grosvenor Gardens to the prestigious arts venue, Kings Place where we are pleased to be tenants of Kings Place Music Base.