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*“Free Range, Home Grown” – Music for the Dales*

*External Evaluation Phase Two:  
‘All Together Now’*



**Trish Winter**



**University of  
Sunderland**

Dr Trish Winter

Professor of Cultural Studies

Associate Director of the Centre for  
Research in Media and Cultural Studies.

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University of Sunderland

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## Summary

An external evaluation of the programme “*Free Range, Home Grown*” – *Music for the Dales*, funded by Youth Music, was commissioned from Professor Trish Winter, University of Sunderland, by Jack Drum Arts. The evaluation took place in two phases. This document reports on Phase Two, which has focused on the project *All Together Now*. The research has taken a detailed look at this project, with a particular focus on eliciting participants’ perspectives on their musical development and its broader social and emotional dimensions. It has taken an ethnographic approach including arts-based evaluation workshops, participant observation and interviews with project participants.

As with the Phase 1 evaluation, the project participants have ardently reported a range of positive outcomes in terms of the development of both creative/technical music skills and well-being, confidence and self-esteem. With a wide range of ages and musical experience in the project, these have taken many different forms at many different levels. It can be concluded once more that this project has been highly successful in meeting the objectives addressed by this evaluation research. Of particular note is Jack Drum’s support for the long term musical development of young people and the provision of clear progression routes, including into musical employment. The evaluation asked participants to identify why they thought this project had been successful in meeting its objectives, and key characteristics are outlined in the conclusion to the report.



# Introduction

## Introduction to the research

An external evaluation of the programme “*Free Range, Home Grown*” – *Music for the Dales*, funded by Youth Music, was commissioned from Professor Trish Winter, University of Sunderland, by Jack Drum Arts. The evaluation took place in two phases. This document reports on Phase Two, which took place between October 2016 and April 2017.

The research has looked at the project *All Together Now* with a particular focus on participants’ perspectives on their musical, social and emotional development. It has taken an ethnographic approach with methods including arts-based evaluation workshops, participant observation and interviews with project participants. This research runs alongside the internal evaluation activities also being undertaken by Jack Drum Arts. It is intended to complement them with depth and rich description, as well as to provide an external perspective. *All Together Now* has focused on the samba band *Runaway Samba*.

## Introduction to the Project

The band, with a wide age range from aged 6 to adults meets weekly at Jack Drum Arts’ base in Crook, County Durham. It incorporates a wide range of experience from beginners to more advanced musicians, with regular performance opportunities at a range of venues from fetes to Festivals. It has a particularly international outlook, and has taken its members to perform nationally and internationally including, during the final stages of this evaluation, a three week visit to Brazil to work with musicians from a Maracatu band, a specific form of percussion unique to North East Brazil.



# About the Research

## Research Aims and Questions

The study aims to find out how far *All Together Now* has met two of the key objectives of the wider project “*Free Range, Home Grown*” – *Music for the Dales*. It has a particular emphasis on eliciting the perspectives of the project’s participants. The research questions are as follows:

- To what extent did the *All Together Now* project meet its objective to develop young people’s creativity, listening skills and technical music skills?
- To what extent did the project meet its objective to improve young people’s social and emotional wellbeing, confidence and self esteem through engagement in music-making activities?

## Research Approach

The research approach was devised by the researcher in collaboration with Jack Drum Arts workers and managers. It takes account of the literature on research with children and young people (Tidsall et al, 2009; Shaw et al, 2011) and on the ethical dilemmas raised by the evaluation of applied theatre work (Arendsen, 2014).

The approach uses creative research methods (Leavy, 2008) leading into short interviews. The use of creative methods for evaluation is advocated by, for example, Arts Council England because these methods are seen as inclusive and as a way of enabling a wide range of participants to have their voices heard in the evaluation process. These methods are combined with Participant-observation, taking a cultural studies approach (see Gray, 2003).



## Methods

The research involved: consultation with the group; two group evaluation workshops; individual and small group interviews with six participants and two tutors; and four Participant-observations. The research schedule was as follows:

### 1. Information Session

The researcher visited the group in October 2016 to meet the participants and give them information about the evaluation research as well as an opportunity to ask questions. The Participant Information sheet was handed out, read out, and issues such as confidentiality were discussed. Following this, the participants were invited to give their informed consent or assent (for under 16s) to participate in the research. Parental consent for those aged under 16, and whose parents were not also members of the group, had previously been obtained with support from Jack Drum Arts.

### 2. Start-of-Project Evaluation Workshop

This 90 minute group workshop took place in November 2016. It was facilitated by the researcher with support from Jack Drum Arts workers. This workshop focused on discussing the participants' views on their musical and creative skill development. Creative and discussion based methods were used. After a warmup led by the group's facilitators, participants were invited to use post it notes to write down the various technical musical and creative skills that they had developed as part of the project. These were displayed, and this led into a lively group discussion of their musical skills, and the methods through which they had been developed. Participants were then invited to complete a 'skills card' where they outlined a specific musical skill that they would like to develop over the next few months.





### 3. Participant-observation

This took place on four occasions. Firstly, short Participant-observations were done alongside the information and evaluation visits and workshops. The researcher took part in warm up activities and was present for the informal opening and closing parts of sessions during the arrivals and departures of participants. Secondly, a Participant-observation of a performance by the group took place at a community event, the Crook Community Christmas, where the researcher joined the group for their on-the-day preparations, and then joined the audience for the performance.

One purpose of the Participant-observation was to enable participants to become familiar with the researcher so as to help create an open and non-pressured atmosphere for the evaluation workshops and interviews. In addition, it was used to gather contextual information about the project, its content and delivery model.

### 4. End-of-Project Evaluation Workshop

A 90 minute group workshop in February 2017 was dedicated to evaluation of the project. The workshop was facilitated by the researcher with support from Jack Drum Arts workers, and consisted of a warmup followed by: revisiting of skills cards and reflection on musical skills developed since the initial evaluation workshop; small group focused discussions of the influence of the project on their emotional and social wellbeing; and whole group feedback.

### 5. Interviews

Individual and small group interviews were conducted with participants who were interested in talking further to the researcher about their views and experiences. This enabled a more in-depth consideration of some of the issues flagged



up in the group evaluation sessions. It included re-interviews of three participants who had been interviewed in Phase 1 of the research about their participation in the *Musical Affinity and Beyond* project. Individual interviews were also held with the two project leaders, one of whom had previously been interviewed as a participant/volunteer in Phase 1. In this way, a focus on the musical development of some individual participants across the two years of the project was achieved. The [lead tutor] was interviewed to elicit information about the background and history of *Runaway Samba* which has hitherto been unpublished.

### Research ethics

The project received ethics approval from the University of Sunderland Research Ethics Committee, and was conducted in line with the university's Research Ethics Principles.<sup>1</sup> Ethical issues were discussed with the participants as part of the informed consent process. These included issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, the right to withdraw, and the potential use of research materials such as drawings, comments, and interviews in this report and further academic publications. The participants chose their own pseudonyms for use in this report. None of the participants declined to take part in the research, although some were not present at all stages of the research.

The process and practicalities of gaining informed consent from young people and, where appropriate, parents and carers can often be extended and difficult; forms and other paperwork can be frequently lost or forgotten, and it can be challenging, in practice, to ensure that all the procedures are followed. The importance of proactive support from

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<sup>1</sup> These can be consulted at: <https://goo.gl/X1B7DD>



the partner organization cannot be emphasized too highly. Jack Drum Arts' involvement and support was, as in the case of the Phase 1 research, exemplary. It demonstrated a highly professional approach and level of care for the participants as well as an understanding of the importance of research ethics and the procedures required by University-based research.



# Findings

## Description of the project

This project focuses around *Runaway Samba*, a samba band that grew out of a previous Jack Drum Arts project *Sounds Around the World*, also funded by Youth Music. Although samba activities and short courses had always been part of Jack Drum Arts, it was in 2013 that *Runaway Samba* was named and took form as a band. The first *Runaway Samba* performance took place at Brass Samba Blow Out, an event as part of Durham International Brass Festival.

Compared with the project (*Musical Affinity and Beyond*) evaluated in 2015-16, *Runaway Samba* has a more centrally musical focus. Whereas *Musical Affinity and Beyond* employed music as an integral part of multi-arts theatre-based work, *Runaway Samba* is unequivocally a musical group and is explicitly focused on musical skills, including performance.

The group has a wide age range from six years to adult. As well as being intergenerational it has a strong family dimension; some members of the group attend together with other members of their families.

*Runaway Samba* is led by two Jack Drum Arts facilitators who combine skill in the facilitation of group work with musical expertise. Both facilitators have come up through the Jack Drum Arts ranks, having started as project participants and, following training, returned as tutors.

The group meets weekly. The format of the regular meetings is as follows:

5.30-6.15: Absolute Beginners. This includes a warm up and introduces basic techniques such as rhythms and marching. Often this is done without touching the drums, through



clapping, breaking down rhythms, and marching clapping. Sometimes older members of the group join in to help the youngest ones learn.

6.20-7.15: Community Band. This is the full band, including younger and older members. After this the youngest members go home, unless they are ready to keep up with the next session.

7.15-8pm: Advanced Band. The content of this session is similar to that of the Community Band, but it also allows for some older young people 'who need to be slightly more challenged' (Tutor), and one or two additional rhythms are introduced here. This is also a forum for learning leading and facilitation skills. For a period of time leading up to the 2017 Brazil trip (outlined below), the Advanced Band session was replaced with Brazilian Portuguese language lessons.

During the *All Together Now* project, *Runaway Samba* have done a number of performance-focused projects. These have included the following:

- in July 2013, *Runaway Samba* travelled to Brussels to work with the musician Moises Lama. This involved working with Lama for two days, culminating in a performance at the European Parliament. It is reported [here](#).
- In October 2015 Jack Drum Arts hosted a return visit by Moises Lama for re-rehearsals culminating in a performance as the opening act for Musicport Festival, Whitby.
- In 2016 the band did master classes with samba master Sam Alexander, leading up to another opening performance at Musicport.
- In 2017, during the timespan of the evaluation, *Runaway Samba* travelled to Brazil. Their three week



schedule included working with Nacau Porto Rico, an established and respected maracatu band in Recife, and participation in events leading up to the Carnival. They were accompanied by mentors Sam Alexander, Jack Burton (Jack Drum Arts), and Nik Alevroyiannis (Youth Music mentor).

It is worth noting that these activities have drawn on additional funding streams outside of the Youth Music programme, bringing additional value to the programme. It is notable that the young people themselves have been actively involved in raising funding for their musical activities from sources such as: Key Fund; 3 Towns Area Action Partnership; the prize money from the High Sheriff's Award; philanthropic funding and *Runaway Samba* performance fees. For example, a total of £25,000 was raised for a group of 16 people to travel to Brazil.

This programme illustrates the outward-looking, international focus of *Runaway Samba*, both in taking the young people out of their home area and in bringing in tutors and mentors from outside. The fundraising activities and success of the young people are an indication of a strong sense of ownership of the project and of the development of skills in fundraising, a useful employability skill.



To what extent did the project meet its objective to develop young people's creativity, listening skills, and technical music skills?

### **Musical skills**

In the first research workshop, the participants were invited to identify the creative, musical, and listening skills that they had developed through their participation in the project. A wide range of skills were identified, across a spectrum from the foundational to the complex, as follows:

*Drumming and other musical skills:* Playing a variety of different kinds of drums; beat; timing; keeping the speed; counting 123; off beats; learning patterns; learning rhythms and breaking them down; different time signatures including 6/8; complex poly-rhythms; 'pretty funky' rhythms; more rhythms from Latin America including Bossa Nova and Cascara/timabales patterns; syncopation; how to keep a pulse under complicated melodies; ghost notes; accented notes; rolls; developing tone; listening skills; versatility on different instruments.

*Performance skills;* communication; marching in time; how to play in a group; watching the leader; teamwork; improvisation. They appreciated being able to develop improvisation skills 'in a controlled and structured manner'.

*Skills of learning:* self assessing your skills; 'the ability to learn from international musicians'.

*Knowledge and understanding of specific musical forms:* Samba, Samba Swing, Jazz, and Reggae, were all mentioned, as well as learning and singing Brazilian and Portuguese chants.



Another research activity examined the participants' views on how their skills were developing during the lifespan of the evaluation. In the first workshop they were invited to complete 'skills cards', where they identified a musical skill that they would like to develop. In the final workshop, three months later, they were asked to reflect on the extent to which they had achieved this.

All of the twelve participants who were present in both workshops indicated that they had achieved, or made progress towards achieving, their identified musical skills. For example, one participant, who had identified 'play more time signatures' as their aspiration, noted that 'I learned 5/4 and 7/8 time signatures and some more 6/8 and 12/8. and [can] count out 27/16'. Some reported more modest progress, such as 'I am definitely working towards this', or 'I'm a bit better but it's still super hard'. Several also identified additional skills learned that had not been mentioned on their original skills card.

The outcomes of this exercise suggest that there is a certain velocity to the development of musical skills within this project. Perhaps more importantly, however, they also indicate that the participants tend to have a well developed awareness of their own skill levels, an ability to reflect, and a keen sense of how they would like to progress. This goes together with a can-do attitude to the development of musical skill, being willing and able to set targets for themselves, and to recognize small and larger improvements, even over a relatively small time period of three months. Even one of the very youngest and newest participants described their skill development in quite specific and 'evidenced' ways: 'I can bass drum. I can now rhythm'.





Although the first objective of the project and the corresponding evaluation question were framed in terms of ‘technical musical skills’, the workshop discussions demonstrated that the participants’ learning went far beyond skill acquisition. They were developing musical skills not in isolation but in combination with an understanding of the multiple social, cultural and artistic dimensions of musical experience. For example, they mentioned having developed: cultural awareness; learning of new languages (Brazilian/Portuguese); understanding of Candomble; appreciation of the art of music and music culture; knowledge of the background behind rhythms; and the cultural background of Samba music.

### **Musical Leadership**

A number of participants identified that they were developing skills not just in playing but also in musical leadership and workshop facilitation. They were keen to point out the way that the workshop leaders share the facilitation of workshops with the participants, with young people taking on leadership of sections and sometimes the whole band. The development of musical leadership is, therefore integral to the structure of the workshops. This sharing of leadership could also be seen at the Crook Community Christmas performance where, at various times, different young people came forward to lead the band.

Three young people who had been interviewed in Phase 1 of the evaluation and were re-interviewed in this Phase speak of their development as musical leaders over the last twelve months. They reported having increasingly taken on leadership of the band:



*“I’ve started leading in some things in some of the gigs. I did one in Newcastle and I did some at Whitby and at Bishop.”*

Structured support has been provided for the development of their leadership skills and they pointed out that they were receiving mentoring in leadership skills from Nik Alevroyiannis (Youth Music Mentor).

These young musicians pointed out how leading had helped them to develop their musicianship:

*“you learn more when you’re teaching somebody a rhythm... I’ve learned so much more just by leading.”*

They also see leading as a way of developing and demonstrating their own creativity and personal style:

*“We all have a different aspect to how we lead, so it’s weird seeing how the pieces come out, because obviously we’ll put different breaks in at different times, or we’ll make this bit sound a bit different by adding things or taking things out... It’ll sound completely different each time we do it.”*

These leadership skills have spilled out into other areas of their musical lives, outside of the immediate supervision and support of Jack Drum Arts, indicating their readiness for taking ownership of their own projects, and evidencing the depth and extent of their learning. For example, two of them talked about how they were setting up a samba band in their school. This would involve them in sharing skills and mentoring each other:

*“Julie Pelican probably will get the chance to lead, and that will be really nice because I have done more leading and it’d be a good chance to mentor him in a way, to help him lead.”*



As noted in the Phase I Evaluation Report, Jack Drum Arts' integrated approach to the nurturing of musical leadership skills finds an embodiment in the figures of the two facilitators who lead the *Runaway Samba* workshops. The Jack Drum Arts Lead Arts and Music Worker is herself a previous participant. The other facilitator, Edwin, also previously a participant in Jackass Youth Theatre for 15 years, has in the last twelve months (since being interviewed for the Phase 1 evaluation) moved from a volunteer position to part time employment as Youth Music Assistant. As well as *Runaway Samba* he is also assisting with two other projects as part of the Youth Music programme; Jackass Youth Theatre and the Rock Band (Cuttlefish Orchestra). He speaks of his progression as a facilitator over the last 12 months, moving from 'taking a backseat' to facilitating *Runaway Samba* and running his own projects:

*"I was originally taking a backseat, seeing how things were done. I was very much following [the Lead Worker]'s lead but as the months have progressed I've steadily taken on more responsibility. I've happily gone into primary schools and run Djembe workshops. It gave me a chance to really hone those specific instrumental skills and also stand on my own two feet: go in, run a session, come back – it's solidly my project. And having spent so much time with the Samba band, playing with them over and over again I can remember most of the rhythms just straight off the top of my head and play them back, and that's a key fundamental role of a leader in the Samba Band, which I've taken on quite recently."*

The integrated development of leadership skills is one of the stand-out aspects of this project, which is developing the musical and creative skills of its young participants in a way that gives them ownership of their own creativity and



the resources and ambition to pursue it, both within and beyond the Jack Drum Arts framework.

### **Musical Careers**

The three young people who were re-interviewed for Phase 2 of the evaluation were explicitly focused on building future careers in music or related arts. In interview, they were brimming with enthusiasm, plans and ideas.

When asked what they saw themselves doing in twelve months' time, they talked about

*“being, hopefully, in many bands.”*

*“Leading with more and more Samba bands.”*

*“doing other stuff with different Samba bands, learning new things, being a more musical person, learning more instruments, doing more things, being part of more opportunities, going to different places, travelling.”*

*“I want to be getting work, paid gigs.”*

In speaking to these young musicians it becomes very clear that their aspirations to work professionally in music or the wider arts are realistic future plans that they are actively working towards. For example, one is planning to apply for a Winston Churchill Fellowship to go to Cuba and study music for six weeks. All have plans to apply to university to study music or theatre and have already identified particular courses at institutions such as the British and Irish Modern Music Institute (BIMM) and Manchester Metropolitan University. This is based not just on having chosen a course from a brochure but on links forged through, for example, their participation in the Future Leaders apprenticeship scheme (described in the previous evaluation report: Winter, 2016).



*“Me and MC Malcolm here have also branched off and joined some things down in Manchester; we’ve got networks down in Manchester with a group where we did a Future Leaders course. So if we’re in Manchester we can go and elaborate on our skills with them as well. We can learn their ways of doing things in music and get work.*

The facilitator Edwin points out how these young musicians have developed musical skills and knowledge related to employability and professional standards:

*“It’s getting to the point now where – I mean, they’re only 16 year olds – I’d happily take them into the studio for a session... Their etiquette is so on point... their professional awareness, composure, the actual skill...”*

The young people were often quick to point to the employability value of the musical skills they were developing. For example, when talking about the development of the ability to improvise in a structured way, one participant pointed out the importance of this skill ‘for employment in music’.

#### **Key features of the Runaway Samba approach to musical skills development**

When asked what it was about the Runaway Samba approach that helped them to develop their musical skills, the participants identified the following key features:

- It is a comfortable environment where they are made to feel comfortable with learning and with making mistakes;
- They learn from each other, often through pairings of more and less experienced musicians;
- There is a level of challenge and an awareness that there is always something further you can learn;



- There are a variety of opportunities to perform at everything from fetes to the Musicport Festival to the EU Parliament in Brussels. Performance is important, they assert, because it solidifies what you know and gives you the motivation to make it better.
- There are a variety of opportunities to work with skilled professional musicians and mentors, giving an international and national outlook;
- there is access to different modes of learning; for example, some learn through writing things down, and others learn kinaesthetically through having the rhythms tapped out on their back.
- There are informal and formal processes for helping them to develop leadership skills which feed back into their musical development.



To what extent did the project meet its objective to improve young people's social and emotional wellbeing, confidence and self esteem through engagement in music-making activities?

*"We decorate the world with our music"*

When asked directly, as a group, about the social and emotional benefits of taking part in *Runaway Samba*, the participants enthusiastically flagged up wide range of elements:

#### **Social dimensions**

They mentioned: having opportunities to meet people and socialise; making friends; feeling a sense of belonging and community; working hard and having a sense of accomplishment together; developing social skills; respect for others; and teamwork.

*"It's about courage and your heart":*

#### **Emotional dimensions**

On an individual level, they talked about experiencing: self-respect, happiness; tolerance; feelings of pride; having fun; improved confidence, enjoying buzz and friendliness; having opportunities to stand out, feelings of energy, enjoyment and relaxation, freedom, exhilaration and emotional wellbeing; gaining a sense of self worth, developing a skill to be proud of; gaining respect for being good and trying hard, building self confidence and 'reputation'. One of the youngest members said: *"you kind of get a reputation from the band... people know what you do and you're appreciated for what you do."*

The social and the emotional were not separate, but tied up together, as captured in the following statement from a young member:



*“Everybody appreciates everyone in the band and everyone encourages everybody. So everybody’s happy, everybody’s got smiling faces on them and everybody is just really, really enjoying themselves.”*

The social and emotional dimensions of *Runaway Samba* participation were exclusively expressed by participants in positive terms. When asked directly whether there were any less positive dimensions to participation, the participants talked about how these positive feelings sometimes coexisted with others, such as feeling tired or needing a break, and about ambivalent feelings related to performance, like feeling both nervous and happy at the same time. They did also point out, however, that if they didn’t enjoy and feel benefit from it they wouldn’t be there!

In interview Edwin spoke in more detail of the way that his continued journey with Jack Drum Arts over the last twelve months had a whole range of benefits for his emotional well-being:

*“... especially in terms of putting me in new scenarios just time and time again. At the time of the previous interview I was a pretty serious agoraphobic; I could only get 20 minutes from my house. But now I’ve travelled to Whitby and back, I’ve driven there and back, which is outstanding for me – I was so proud of myself. And that’s probably purely because of having advanced to the point where I can be a leader for the young people. If it was a performance, I probably wouldn’t have gone, but as a leader it’s something that was a responsibility for me. I’ve put myself in so many scenarios that I’ve frankly made outstanding recovery according to the therapist (chuckles) which is very much a personal wellbeing benefit. Also, just being around so many inspirational young people –*





*outstanding and exceptional in every way – just getting to do that daily, it just brings untold benefits.”*

This project has provided a forum – and employment – for a young person whose long-term journey with Jack Drum Arts has both helped him to develop high level musical and leadership skills and also brought reported benefits for his emotional wellbeing.

Whilst the evaluation methodology used here is not one that attempts objectively to measure wellbeing, it is nevertheless possible to point to some spin-offs from this project that might be seen as evidencing the project’s success in generating positive social and emotional benefits for its participants in addition to those self-reported benefits already discussed. For example, some participants talked about the enjoyable penetration of their musical skills, interests and identities into their everyday lives, as reported in statements such as: *‘I never stop drumming’/‘I walk to the 4/4 beat’ ‘I’m always tapping on tables’*. One participant talked about how his increased confidence led to him feeling more able to “try stuff outside”, and he was in the process of setting up a samba band at his school. The taking on of this and other musical leadership roles evidences a well developed level of self-confidence and self-esteem, as does the making of achievable plans for the development of a musical career.

What is it about the Jack Drum Arts approach that leads to these positive evaluations by participants, when it comes to their social and emotional wellbeing? A key theme that surfaced was how attractive the participants found the atmosphere of the group to be; this was often expressed using metaphors of home and family:

*‘it feels like home’;*



***“It’s like a family thing to do”***

Of course, families and home are not always perfect or ideal. It seems that the *Runaway Samba* space is being characterized by the participants as a kind of idealised version of home, family or community. They talk about it as a ‘safe place’ where there are rules; a space that is accommodating, accepting and welcoming to all people, and where “everyone accepts everybody”.

The emotional dimensions of this are captured in this final statement by one interviewee:

***“This year, more than ever, I’ve done so much with this company. I’ve been abroad with them, I’ve been all over the country with them. It’s definitely a family. It doesn’t so much feel like a company any more. it just feels like the place I go to be around the people I love and the people I care about.”***



## Conclusion

As with the Phase 1 evaluation, the project participants have ardently reported a range of positive outcomes in terms of the development of both creative/technical music skills and well-being, confidence and self-esteem. These have taken a wide range of different forms at many different levels and it can be concluded once more that this project has been highly successful in meeting the objectives addressed by this evaluation research.

Again, the built-in models for musical and creative progression that were noted in the Phase 1 evaluation have proved to be a stand-out feature of the project. In re-interviews with four participants (including Edwin the facilitator), they report significant development and achievement in terms of both their technical musical skills and, primarily through taking leadership roles, their confidence and self-esteem, over the last 12 months of the project. The development of autonomous creative projects and the well developed career plans of these young people attest to this.

It is worth saying a few words about the way that the participants in this project, even the very youngest, were able to engage with the evaluation process. Evaluation and self-reflection within a supportive group process is clearly a part of their regular musical practice, and they readily and impressively applied these reflective skills to the research workshops and interviews. Even the very youngest participants were able to reflect on their skills and well-being, in words or pictures. Given the ubiquity of evaluation within participatory arts practice, a familiarity with such processes can potentially lead to a kind of “game playing”. Participants are aware of the importance of



evaluation for monitoring and, potentially, the success of future funding bids for the activities that they value. This means that they can become very good at what the tutor described as “talking the talk”; even one of the very youngest participants, for example, used the term ‘resilience’ when asked about what skills he’d learned. The skill of the professional evaluator lies, in part, in how such views are elicited and interpreted.

The participants’ familiarity with the language and awareness of the politics of evaluation can in many ways be seen as a strength of the project. In a context where young people are not only developing musical skills, knowledge and interests, but also learning how to lead and share skills, to take ownership of their own creativity, and sometimes to develop musical careers, a reflective familiarity with processes of evaluation is itself an important area of skill and knowledge. The full and open involvement of participants in a reflective evaluation process that treats them as partners can indeed be another tool for their development and another way of bringing their views into the development of programmes.

It is a tribute to this project and the young people involved that, although they are well versed in the language of appraisal – something that is probably also part of their experience of school – their discussions of the value of their musical activities does not start and finish with this. Their responses speak of a rich, multi dimensional, contextualised knowledge and understanding of music and the social and emotional dimensions of its practice.

In asking how it is that Jack Drum Arts have achieved such positive evaluations from the perspective of the *Runaway Samba* participants, key factors can be summarised as follows:



### Key factors in the success of this project

- Integration of different ages and abilities in a mutually supportive 'learning family';
- Multiple approaches to modes of musical learning from the cerebral to the kinaesthetic, producing an inclusive and fertile learning environment;
- Clear models and routes for progression in musicianship and leadership;
- Tangible routes to musical careers, including professional mentoring and the building of a professional network to support future musical careers;
- Contextualised musical knowledge and understanding that goes beyond 'skills';
- Integration of evaluation skills into musical learning, and an awareness of the power and politics of evaluation.



# Appendix

## List of Research Participants

Jack Drum Arts Lead Arts and Music Worker

Jack Drum Arts Youth Music Assistant (Edwin, in Phase 1)

Felix

Cool Rock

Peter

Tilly Wroth

Anaperna

Zidavjn

Dotty

Julie Watson Margret Edith Pelican

M.C. Malcolm

Man

JC

Doctor Beatrice

Samba Bud

Rosie Smith

Ze General

Red Rock



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