

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020



THE ABSOLUTE MUSIC TRUST

YEAR TO 31 AUGUST 2020

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THE ABSOLUTE MUSIC TRUST

1. Background, reference and administrative details

- 1.1. Name: The Absolute Music Trust ('AMT').
- 1.2. Charity Number (Charity Commission): 1174528.
- 1.3. Principal Office: 855 Ringwood Road Knighton Heath Industrial Estate, Bournemouth BH11 8NE.
- 1.1. Trustees: (As at the date of this Annual Report) Lisa Coley, John Denton, Richard Gosler and Joe Musker. The following were Trustees during the period but resigned after the end of the period – Mark Furber. There are no circumstances arising from, or in connection with, these resignations.
- 1.2. Other key personnel:
 - Chief Executive (Alan Barclay)
 - Chief Facilitator/Music Session Organiser (Jamie King)
 - Director of Peripatetic Teaching (Deena Jackman)
 - Publicity Director (Suzy Wheeler)
- 1.3. The Charity banks with HSBC.
- 1.4. The Charity does not currently have Solicitors. Legal advice, where necessary, has been provided by Mark Furber (Trustee) who is a retired Solicitor.
- 1.5. Independent Examiner – Michelle Love (a director of) PKF Francis Clark, Towngate House 2-8 Parkstone Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2PW.
- 1.6. A Brief History:

The Charity was set up in September 2017 as a result of a chance conversation between the owner of Absolute Music (one of the largest independent music retailers in the South of England) and Mark Furber (Trustee). What started as a discussion about creating opportunities in music for students from poorer backgrounds evolved into a more general objective of broadening participation in music for people from all sorts of backgrounds. The principal facilitator, Mr Jamie King, was recruited to provide expertise in designing and delivering sessions to mixed ability groups including profoundly disabled children and 'hard to reach' young people.

1.7. Main objects:

The Charity's objects (as recorded at the Charity Commission) are:

'The advancement of music education for the benefit of the public in the Dorset/Hampshire area, in particular but not exclusively for the benefit of disadvantaged persons and in particular but not exclusively by the provision of:

- (i) *Musical instruments;*
- (ii) *Tuition or instruction.*

For this purpose 'Disadvantaged Persons' shall include any individual or group of individuals who (i) suffer from a physical, mental or other impairment; or (ii) who, for whatever reason whether financial or otherwise, have restricted access to music and musical instruments; or (iii) whom the charity trustees believe would benefit from greater access to music'.

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1.11 The Charity's Vision:

The Charity's vision is that music should be something that is available to everyone regardless of ability, health or background. More specifically, even though the aims in paragraph 1.10 above refer to 'Tuition or instruction', the aim is to widen participation in music-making.

In short, the Charity exists to improve the lives and wellbeing of people through making music and who, for whatever reason, have limited access to music. To date, because of limited funds, this has mostly been through group sessions in which participants contribute to a recording which is then presented back to them. As the Charity develops and raises more funds it hopes to be able to assist in other ways e.g. sponsoring individual musicians with talent, but limited means, lending or donating instruments etc....

2. **Structure, governance and management**

2.1 How the Charity is constituted: Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

2.2 Organisational structure: The Charity was established on 24 August 2017 by adopting the Model Constitution for a CIO (as amended) ('the Constitution') and registered with the Charity Commission on 6 September 2017.

2.3 During the relevant period there were four Trustees (see paragraph 1.4 above). The Charity has no subsidiaries. It has no co-operation agreements or formal understandings with any other charities or other bodies. However, the Charity does have a number of informal relationships with other organisations including local schools and educational establishments which help the Charity to identify groups and individuals who might benefit from the Charity's activities.

2.4 How Trustees are appointed and trained: The Charity has no formal policy on the induction of Trustees. It does have an ongoing policy to identify and encourage people with useful skills and from different backgrounds and walks of life to join either as Trustees or volunteers. In the event that new Trustees are appointed it will have regard to both its Recruitment Policy and Section 10(2) of the Constitution which states:

'In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO'.

Because the Charity is small it has no formal policy on the training of Trustees except that all Trustees and other personnel providing services to it (e.g. freelance teachers) are DBS checked. Training opportunities are identified and Trustees are encouraged to attend if they wish.

2.5 Decision – making/delegation: Trustee meetings are usually held bi-monthly to discuss both strategic and operational matters. Decisions are taken on the basis of one person, one vote. Decisions concerning the day to day implementation of the Charity's activities (i.e. the music-making sessions) are taken by Jamie King, the Chief Facilitator, in consultation with the other Trustees. Ad-hoc meetings take place between Mr King and the other Trustees between formal bi-monthly Trustee meetings in order to keep funding and operational matters under review.

The Trustees are well aware of Section 9 of the Constitution which states:

'It is the duty of each charity trustee: (a) to exercise his or her powers and to perform his or her functions in his or her capacity as a trustee of the CIO in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the CIO.....'

2.6 Other staff: The Charity only has two direct employees. The Chief Facilitator (Mr King) and Director of Peripatetic Teaching (Deena Jackman) are paid by the Charity out of charitable

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income. The former is paid from general charitable income and the latter is paid from the income derived from teaching in local schools (see paragraph 3.5 below). Other teachers are freelance and not employed by the Charity but are paid out of the teaching income.

2.7 Other than the staff referred to in paragraph 2.6 above, all other people giving time and services to the Charity do so on a voluntary basis, including the Trustees.

2.8 Factors within and outside the Charity's control which are relevant to achievement of its objectives:

2.8.1 on the positive side, the Charity benefits from the following:

- having a low cost base. The Charity benefits from being able to use the premises and facilities at Absolute Music in Bournemouth, from which it rents studio space at a competitive rate;
- the Charity also has the use of musical instruments and other equipment largely for free. This includes electric guitars, keyboards, full drum kits etc..... together with state of the art recording equipment which allows the Charity to provide participants with a quality musical experience;
- there are on hand experienced musicians into whose knowledge and expertise the Charity can tap;
- the time and services given to it by its Trustees and other volunteers.

2.8.2 at the same time, the Trustees have identified three main operational risks which it is seeking to address:

- The Charity is currently looking to recruit volunteers, both at Trustee and staffing level, with a passion for music and who will widen the Charity's base of expertise. In particular, the Charity is looking to recruit Trustees from different backgrounds, ethnicities etc.....;
- at present the Charity is being run on a limited budget. Various fundraising initiatives were undertaken during the period in question, but these only provided limited funds and the Charity does not yet have the profile to attract major private donations. The Trustees are working hard to secure long-term funding through (for example) available grants.
- The COVID19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the charity's ability to secure funding and deliver workshops. By keeping overheads to a minimum the charity has been able to survive periods of lockdown. As restrictions ease, it is essential that we build up funding from donations and income from workshops and lessons.

3. Financial Review

3.1 The Charity's accounting reference date is 31 August. The third annual accounts ('the Accounts') are for the period 1 September 2019 to 31 August 2020.

3.2 Reserves Policy:

The Board of Trustees has examined the Charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the Charity should be no less than the provisional cost of staff redundancies currently assessed to be £6,500. Unrestricted reserves are held for the following purposes:

- To maintain services through periods of reduced funding and cash flow;
- To develop new projects;

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- To pay redundancy and recruitment costs; and
- To respond to adverse incidents.

At the year end the charity held total unrestricted reserves (excluding designated funds) of £7,167 (2019: £16,030) and restricted reserves of £4,205 (2019: £1,057) which is deemed sufficient.

3.3 A financial summary is provided on page 12 of the Accounts.

3.4 The Charity has no investments.

3.5 Source of funds: The Charity is funded by a combination of the following:

- private donations;
- surplus income from private lessons in local schools;
- grants; and
- small fundraising activities.

3.6 Statement of principal financial management policies: The Charity has a formal Financial Management Policy. It states that the Charity will follow 'best practice' including, in particular:

3.6.1 financial records will be kept so that the Charity can:

- meet its legal and other obligations e.g. HMRC and charity reporting;
- enable the Trustees to have control over the organisation's finances; and
- demonstrate appropriate use of funds to funders and others;

3.6.2 any payment of £500 or more must only be made on the joint instruction of the Chief Executive and at least two Trustees one of whom is not employed by, or connected with, Absolute Music Limited;

3.6.3 a financial summary of income and expenditure is presented to the Trustees at each bi-monthly Trustee meeting; and

3.6.4 all expenditure can be made only in the direct or indirect furtherance of the charitable objectives and in line with (if applicable) funders' requirements.

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4. Objectives and activities

4.1 The Charity's objects are set out in paragraph 1.10 above.

4.2 The aims and differences the Charity seeks to make: The Charity aims to broaden participation in music, principally amongst the 'disadvantaged'. By doing so the Charity provides the numerous benefits which music-making can bring including:

- physical dexterity/manipulation;
- improvements in mental health;
- confidence building;
- teamwork;
- pride in achievement.

4.3 Strategies adopted to achieve this end: As mentioned in paragraph 1.11 above, during the period this has translated mainly to holding group sessions for 'disadvantaged persons' in which participants contribute to a recording which is then presented back to them. Examples of the kind of sessions held are set out in paragraph 4.7 below. The Charity takes a three-stage approach to group sessions. First, it identifies a need. Secondly, it designs a programme suitable to address that need. Thirdly, it evaluates outcomes.

Identifying a need

Access to music-making facilities is becoming more and more restricted even amongst those suffering no disability or restriction. Playing music is still, to some extent, regarded as the preserve of the wealthy or middle-classes and, amongst certain groups, the attitude seems to be that it is 'not for me'. Access to music-making is even more restricted amongst the following groups:

- young people with physical disabilities who are less often able to engage in creating music due to their physical limitations;
- young people with special educational needs are often not included socially, can be prone to bullying in mainstream settings and their families can become isolated;
- young people at risk of causing anti-social behaviour often come from areas of deprivation and chaotic homes;
- adults with mental health and addiction issues can suffer from similar hardships which can often be accentuated by a feeling that they have been 'forgotten' by the system.

The Charity identifies these – and other groups – which it thinks may benefit from its activities – through the usual combination of contacts (e.g. Mr King has worked in local education for around 25 years) and 'word of mouth'. The Charity also works closely with other local organisations who have been instrumental in referring groups that meet the Charity's criteria. The Charity also undertakes a limited amount of teaching in mainstream schools which provides a small income to the Charity (see paragraph 4.4 below) but which also has the spin-off of giving access to local music teachers in a wide-range of schools whom, in time, it is hoped will be instrumental in introducing groups and talented individuals that might benefit from the Charity's activities.

The Charity is also actively building up its website (www.absolutemusictrust.org) and creating a social media presence which it is believed will reach the sort of people the Charity is aiming to attract.

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Designing a session

A workshop (or series of workshops as appropriate) is then designed which is centred around the make-up of the group. For example, sessions for the profoundly disabled tend to involve creating soundscapes and accessing a variety of instruments, both acoustic and electronic, which appeal to the senses – hearing, touch etc.....At the other extreme, a group of disengaged teenagers may want to write, perform and record rap music.

The sessions are structured and we encourage everyone to contribute something to a recording, which they invariably do. However, as mentioned above, each session is slanted towards the particular client group. This is achieved through a combination of prior discussions with client groups, through evaluation (see below) and also the experience of our Chief Facilitator.

Evaluating outcomes

The multiple benefits of music-making are well-documented.

The sessions often go beyond the immediate objective of making music and having fun. Many of the children and young people have difficulties in their private lives and limited positive relationships. Not only do they get access to musical instruments (which is probably limited for them) but they are encouraged to ‘perform’ in front of others in a safe and nurturing environment. Freedom of expression is right at the heart of what the Charity does. The environment and ethos described above is the foundation for building self-belief/worth and creating pride and a sense of achievement, all of which is aided by the creation of original recorded materials.

The following are amongst the outcomes the Charity has achieved and hopes to achieve in varying degrees depending upon the client group concerned:

- physical/emotional stimulation
- being part of a group/ensemble
- making new friends
- developing emotional articulacy
- building self-esteem
- building a sense of pride in achievement
- enhancing performance skills.

For children with profound learning difficulties, music provides stimulation and enables expressive communication. For those with behavioural issues and from areas of deprivation our sessions develop emotional articulacy and promote personal growth. Making music together is a brilliant way of fostering team work and helps promote an appreciation and understanding of challenges faced by others.

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Empirical measurement of achievement is, of course, difficult as a result of the nature of what the Charity does and the positive results outlined above. During the period in question the Charity has largely relied on the positive (mainly verbal) feedback received from participants, parents and carers (as appropriate). We have also had groups who – having had ‘taster’ sessions – have gone on to arrange further sessions. Whilst the Charity has plenty of photographic evidence to support the above it is moving towards adopting more formal methods of evaluation including:

- feedback questionnaires; and
- recognised ‘well-being’ evaluation tools (e.g. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale).

4.4 In addition to the sessions referred to above, the Charity goes into the local community to provide group and individual music lessons at local schools. Whilst many of the children who benefit from this activity might not be described as ‘disadvantaged’ the schools with which the Charity has a connection are amongst the less well-resourced locally where the musical curriculum is limited, if it exists at all. The Trustees feel that this provision is still part of achieving its wider remit of making music available to all. However, the Trustees recognise both the importance of staying within the Charity’s remit and also that the teaching in schools must not become a drain on the Charity’s resources (in the period in question the teaching in schools returned a small surplus). For these reasons, the teaching in schools is kept under close review by the Trustees at its bi-monthly meetings.

4.5 The Charity also hires out musical equipment (e.g. PAs) to local groups, usually in one or more of the following three situations: where the group itself is a worthy cause, where it furthers the Charity’s own main objects (e.g. where it is a local event at which music is a central feature) and where the Charity can itself benefit by having a stall or other presence at the event.

4.6 How expenditure has supported key objectives: Expenditure has broadly fallen into four main areas:

- the salary of Mr King, the Chief Facilitator;
- studio hire to support Mr King’s activities;
- the salary of Ms Jackman, chiefly responsible for the delivery in local schools;
- payments to freelance musicians delivering music sessions in local schools.

Other expenditure has been incidental to the achievement of the Charity’s objectives (e.g. promotional material, printing costs etc.....).

4.7 Details of significant activities during the period: During the period in question, the Charity delivered a variety of successful workshops and music-making opportunities for some very deserving participants.

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The following is just a selection of some of the activities the Charity undertook in the period in question:

- the Charity provided regular workshops for a local school with a significant special needs requirement;
- the Charity continued to provide holiday club sessions making music for the Dorset Childrens' Foundation whose members have a range of mild to severe physical and mental health issues;
- the Charity continued to work with a local centre for recovering addicts providing weekly song-writing sessions.
- During lockdown, the charity worked with the local Music Education Hub to pilot video streaming performances to inspire the students of local schools.
- Peripatetic music lessons were moved online.

5. Public Benefit statement

The Trustees are satisfied that the Charity has, during the period in question, carried out its charitable purposes for the public benefit.

In particular:

- (1) the Charity has pursued its charitable purpose of encouraging participation in music of all kinds particularly amongst groups of disadvantaged persons who, for whatever reason, have limited access to music-making facilities. A list of some of the key activities undertaken is set out at paragraph 4.7 above.
- (2) the Trustees are satisfied that the charitable activities have been carried out for the public benefit in that:
 - the charitable purpose is beneficial and no harm results from the pursuance of the charitable purpose;
 - the charitable purpose benefits a sufficient section of the public (particularly anyone who is 'disadvantaged' and who - for whatever reason, whether health or finance-related or otherwise
 - does not have easy access to music-making facilities); and
- (3) the Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance ('the Guidance') and have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the Guidance is relevant.

6. Significant post-period developments

The following are important matters which have arisen after the period covered by this Annual Report:

6.1 The Coronavirus has impacted significantly upon the Charity's abilities to raise funds and deliver workshops. Where possible, lessons have been delivered online. However, because of its low cost base, the impact of the virus should not prove to be too adverse for the Charity;

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7. Plans for the future

At such time as it is able to re-commence its activities, the Charity proposes to:

- offer more of the kind of sessions already run to more and different groups;
- improve the design and delivery of sessions;
- build sustainability by pursuing available grant funding and considering other fund-raising opportunities with a view to becoming self-funding e.g. corporate event days;
- build sustainability by taking on more facilitators;
- increase the Charity's reach within the local community;
- widen its skills base by recruiting more Trustees and volunteers from different backgrounds;
- upgrade its website and increase its social media presence;
- formalise the methods and procedures by which it evaluates session outcomes.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees who held office during the relevant period:

Jonathan Denton

Date: 17 June 2021

THE ABSOLUTE MUSIC TRUST
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020

	Unrestricted £	2020 Restricted £	Total £	2019 £
RECEIPTS				
Peripatetic Teaching Income	17,650	-	17,650	35,893
Donations	7,385	-	7,385	16,339
Grant Income (Lottery)	-	7,505	7,505	-
TOTAL RECEIPTS	25,035	7,505	32,540	52,232
PAYMENTS				
Teaching Salaries	(19,804)	-	(19,804)	(37,305)
Overheads	(2,650)	(4,357)	(7,007)	(8,824)
Workshops	(11,444)	-	(11,444)	(16,077)
TOTAL PAYMENTS	(33,898)	(4,357)	(38,255)	(62,206)
NET RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS) BEFORE TRANSFERS	(8,863)	3,148	(5,715)	(9,974)
TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS	-	-	-	-
NET RECEIPTS/(PAYMENTS) FOR THE YEAR	(8,863)	3,148	(5,715)	(9,974)
CASH FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD AT 1 SEPTEMBER	16,030	1,057	17,087	17,087
CASH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD 31 AUGUST	7,167	4,205	11,372	17,087
	=====	=====	=====	=====

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STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2020

	Unrestricted £	2020 Restricted £	Total £	2019 £
MONETARY ASSETS				
Bank and Cash Balances				
HSBC AMT old current account	-	-	-	244
HSBC AMT current account	7,167	353	7,520	16,843
HSBC AMT youth account	-	3,852	3,852	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	7,167	4,205	11,372	17,087
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
NET ASSETS	7,167	4,205	11,372	17,087
	=====	=====	=====	=====

The accounts on pages 12 to 13 were approved by the Trustees on and signed on their behalf by:

Jonathan Denton

Date: 17 June 2021

THE ABSOLUTE MUSIC TRUST
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2020

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Absolute Music Trust

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Absolute Music Trust (the CIO) for the year ended 31 August 2020.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the CIO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act;
or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Michelle Love FCCA
A Director of PKF Francis Clark
Chartered Accountants
Poole

Date: 17 June 2021

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