

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales
Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / The Culture, Welsh Language
and Communications Committee
Ariannu addysg gerddoriaeth a mynediad ati / Funding for and access to
music education
CWLC(5) FAME01
Ymateb gan Mat Davies / Evidence from Mat Davies

Firstly I am very pleased that there is an inquiry into this very important matter.

Just to give you a little of my background. I am 44 years old and started playing Trumpet at the age of 8 in Porthcawl. I was fortunate to have private lessons during primary school, when I went to Porthcawl Comp I had free peripatetic lessons from David Hughes and was a member of the school wind band, orchestra and choir. I attended Mid Glamorgan orchestra, and brass band on a Friday night. I was also fortunate enough to go on various Junior and Transport Orchestra courses at Ogmere Residential Camp, I also was on quite a few Wind Band Courses. With all these FREE opportunities this led me to audition to HM Royal Marines Band Service whilst I was studying for my GCSE'S at the age of 15/16. I had just short of 6 years in the Royal Marines Band Service and then left to complete a BA (Hons) in Jazz Music at Middlesex University. I left music for a while and have taken it up semi professional in the last 3 years and am now applying to work on the cruise ships and become a full time professional musician again.

All of my career opportunities would definitely not have happened if it wasn't from the fact that I had access to free music education in the form of peripatetic lessons etc. I was also quite a shy child, and music education brought me out of my shell and developed me as a person.

I am extremely concerned that we are going to potentially future generations of children will lose out to the opportunities and benefits that music gives them as a developing child, purely by the fact that slowly bit by bit parents will have to pay more and more for music education and not have the access to instrument banks to allow their children to have the opportunities that we were fortunate to have.

There are many studies and the evidence is compelling on the benefits that playing a musical instrument has on the brain and also the many benefits it has for a child as they are developing. Even if they do not go into music in further education and a full time career, it has far reaching benefits. One I

would like to point that a person that plays a musical instrument tends to have a mathematical brain and the two are linked.

Playing a musical instrument should never become an opportunity where only people who can afford to pay for it have the opportunity. Not only could we lose generations of talented musicians, but we will be denying children the additional benefits that playing an instrument has for their development and future progress in life.

I cannot emphasise enough the danger of putting music out of reach to certain parts of our communities by slowly eradicating the funding in this education to the point that it will never be able to recover.

We are living in difficult economic times, and the arts has always been the easy option when looking at cuts and saving money. I believe that in the USA they have recently made Music a core subject, this is in an indication on how important they see music.

I was fortunate enough to have a semester at Central Michigan University whilst studying for my degree, and went to a high school to see how important and dedicated they were with regards to music education. I urge you to have the same attitude in Wales. Please be bold and keep the opportunities and funding in place for generations to come.

I am happy to discuss any of the above in more detail if required.

Yours Sincerely,

Mat Davies BA (Hons) Music (Jazz)