

Culture, Welsh Language, and Communications Committee, National Assembly for Wales

Consultation: Music Industry in Wales, Live Music (June 2019)

1. The Musicians' Union (MU) is the trade union for musicians in the UK, and represents over 31,000 employed and self-employed musicians working in every area of the UK music industry, and in music education.
2. Live performance is a crucial part of our members' work and income across all genres of music, through functions, gigs, festivals, theatre productions, concerts, busking, session work, broadcasts, and the royalties that songwriters and composers receive from live performances of their music. We are committed to supporting live music in our work, through the UK-wide Live Performance, Theatre, and Orchestra sections, the MU's six Regional offices, and our campaigns such as Keep Music Live and Work Not Play.
3. The MU supports fair pay and conditions for live work through collective bargaining as well as promulgated rates, template contracts, and legal advice for our members. We also support venues and musicians through our Fair Play Venue scheme, which invites venues to declare their support for the fair treatment of musicians and opposition to unfair deals such as pay-to-play by endorsing the principles of our Fair Play Guide.
4. We have supported recent campaigns to protect live music venues in Wales, such as the Save Womanby Street campaign in 2017 and the Save Gwdihw and Guildford Crescent campaign in 2018/19. On a UK-wide level the MU has recently worked in partnership with organisations like UK Music and the Music Venue Trust to advocate for grassroots music venues and for venues to be protected by the Agent of Change principle.
5. Live music is a vital part of cultural life and the economy in Wales and across the UK, and therefore needs to be properly valued, supported, and protected. According to UK Music's Measuring Music 2018 report, live music contributed around £991m in Gross Value Added (GVA) to the UK economy in 2017.
6. The MU is a member of UK Music, among other industry bodies, and we support UK Music's response to this consultation, while also making the following additional points.

## Support for live music

7. All forms of live music should be supported in Wales, including Welsh language and traditional music, at all levels, from grassroots venues to shows at the Principality Stadium, while Welsh Government, Arts Council of Wales (ACW), and local authority activity and policies can have a significant effect on the health and availability of live music in Wales.
8. Some areas of live music, such as classical music and opera, are generally more reliant on public funding and therefore more likely to be seriously and directly affected by changes in ACW policies. On the other hand, grassroots music venues, and therefore emerging artists, are typically more dependent on government and local authority activity and policies on issues like planning, licensing, and business rates. Wider policies, such as parking and transport, can also have a significant impact on music and the broader night-time economy.
9. We welcome the Welsh Government's ongoing work on researching and mapping grassroots music venues in Wales, as well as establishing Creative Wales, and call on Welsh Government to create a coordinated, wide-reaching music industry strategy for Wales encompassing the work of Creative Wales and ACW.
10. We have welcomed the recent announcement that Arts Council England have created Supporting Grassroots Live Music, a new strand within their National Lottery Project Grants programme with a ring-fenced budget. We call on Welsh Government to explore how best to provide support and funding for existing and new venues, particularly in relation to grassroots music venues and options for taking live music venues into community ownership, without stretching the ACW budget further.
11. We note Cardiff Council's work on a music strategy for Cardiff following the recent report by Sound Diplomacy *Cardiff: Music Ecosystem Study and Strategic Recommendations* and would urge other local authorities in Wales to carry out similar work and draw up strategies in relation to music, particularly live music and venues, that account for the economic and cultural value of music, as well as the need for a good talent development pipeline in Wales serviced by the necessary venues.

## Musicians' pay and conditions; talent development

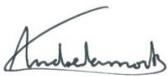
12. We are concerned about low pay and bad practices that are still common when musicians are engaged for live work across Wales. We therefore call on Welsh Government, ACW, Creative Wales, and other industry bodies to support and encourage best practice and good rates of pay in the music industry at every opportunity, particularly when providing support and funding.
13. The MU is extremely concerned about the impact of Brexit on musicians' work and the state of the UK music industry, particularly in relation to live music. The ability to travel and work freely and easily in the EU is of paramount importance to our members, so we support the continuation of freedom of movement or, at the very

least, a simple, cheap, and admin-light EU touring visa for musicians and performers. The end of freedom of movement and the introduction of customs checks and carnets would make touring more difficult and expensive for all musicians, but particularly new and emerging artists, and would also have an impact on the ability of musicians from the EU to come to Wales. That would, in turn, have an impact on live music in Wales, including venues and work opportunities for Welsh musicians. While we recognise that Brexit is not a devolved issue, we welcome the Welsh Government's recent decision to support a referendum with remain on the ballot paper and to campaign to remain in the EU.

14. We remain concerned about music education provision in Wales, which is essential for the long-term health of live music. We welcome the Culture, Welsh Language, and Communications Committee's recent work in this area, as well as Welsh Government's work on commissioning a feasibility study into the options for delivery of music services and the creation of a national plan for music education.
15. We welcome Welsh Government's initial £1m investment in *Anthem* and ACW's work on developing it since then, and hope that it can develop into a valuable resource for music in Wales, but are concerned about the extent to which it will be possible to develop an endowment from private funding and the potential impact funding from *Anthem* will have compared to ongoing, direct funding from Welsh Government.

#### Other issues

16. We note that some local authorities in Wales haven't been fully supportive of busking, which is a missed opportunity given that live music can enhance the atmosphere of an area, especially when supported with the right guidance. We have helped several local authorities across the UK to develop busking guides that include best practice for buskers, council officers, residents, and businesses and would be happy to work with all local authorities in Wales on similar guidance.



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