

EDITORIAL

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Let's take stock

Our own priorities remain the same

I am writing this month's editorial during Mental Health Awareness Week – a difficult week for those who are already painfully aware of their impoverished mental health, but also an opportunity to reflect, share, collaborate and learn. On p.36 of this issue, David Kettle speaks to music teachers about how the last 15 months have impacted both their and their students' mental health and offers some sound advice on how you can come back stronger in your practice.

Of course, it's hugely important to talk about mental health, but nothing can change on the ground if funding services isn't prioritised. This brings us back to a word that's been flying around a lot this month, appearing throughout this issue in various different ways: 'priorities'. The arts education world was recently handed the government's quiet admission that arts courses – including music – at higher education are not among its 'strategic priorities'. It's difficult to ignore the kind of signal that this sends out to younger students, parents, and music teachers. It certainly makes it harder to believe in the wish for a 'rigorous' curriculum in schools when, in later years, music is being robbed to feed STEM, as though we must have either/or. You'll find an opinion piece by Hugh Morris on p.15, and Thomas Lydon's in-depth commentary on the MMC is on p.26.

In spite of all this, our own priorities remain the same, and the debate and discussion must not detract from the incredible and continuing work of music educators and students day in, day out. This month's vocal issue reminds us how important it is that young people of all abilities can benefit from singing again as we return to normality, while on p.30 we find out what the National Children's Orchestra has been up to. We also gain insight from three fantastic organisations with inclusivity and accessibility at their core: Bollo Brook youth centre (p.22), Soundabout (p.32), and Just Like Us (p.35).

In other news, I'm delighted to let you know that we've launched the jam-packed programme for Expo (24–25 September), so do have an explore and register for free at www.musicanddramaeducationexpo.co.uk/london. Finally, the writer of a 'Star Letter' each month will receive a £25 voucher from Dawsons, so please get in touch with your responses (positive or otherwise) to what you find within these pages. Hopefully I will see some of you at the Music Teacher Summit from 15–17 June.

Harriet Clifford, editor



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Music Teacher is the UK's only magazine aimed at music educators from across the sector. It is a place where music is valued in and of itself, embracing all genres. We offer up new approaches to pedagogy through in-depth features, engaging opinions, lesson plans and schemes of work. We cast a critical eye over the latest research and products to help inform the conversations that shape musical teaching. This is a platform for raising awareness of the key issues affecting music teachers, and for championing existing efforts to ensure music education is accessible to all.