

Welcome to The Music Man Project

The Music Man Project is an international music education service for children and adults with learning disabilities, providing accessible music tuition leading to inspirational performances. Run by volunteers, the charity gives grants for accessible arts education, promotes equal access to performance, carries out research and raises awareness of the achievements of disadvantaged people in the arts. The music sessions focus on education, enjoyment and performance through the singing, signing and playing of accessible musical instruments, using original repertoire written especially for the project.

The Music Man Project/Salvation Army Partnership

The Music Man Project was founded in 1999 by charity CEO and Churchill Fellow, David Stanley BEM. He taught the song 'I am the Music Man' to a friend with Down's Syndrome and established a weekly Music School with local charity, Southend Mencap. He promised his students that one day they would play the Royal Albert Hall. 20 years later, 200 Music Man Project students from across the UK performed Music is Magic at the Royal Albert Hall to an audience of 3000 people, supported by massed choirs, orchestra and celebrity guests. The concert began with a trumpet and drum fanfare performed by the Salvation Army.



Music is Magic at the Royal Albert Hall, 2019

The Music Man Project/Salvation Army partnership is an outstanding example of two like-minded organisations joining together to make the world a better place. An adherent of Leigh-on-Sea Corps in Essex, David originally invited members of the Salvation Army to meet his students in Southend, strongly believing that they could work together to further their mutual goals of community service and music. The friendship has led to two performances at Regent Hall, performances at the Enabled (formerly SAFE) Summer School and dozens of workshops up and down the country to establish Salvation Army-run Music Man Projects across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The partnership even led David to seek out the Salvation Army in New York and start a Music Man Project in America in 2019. One of the first Salvation Army projects to deliver weekly sessions was The Music Man Hampshire, based at Hedge End Corps in Southampton. Wearing their distinctive purple shirts, these wonderful musicians joined their fellow Music Man performers in a special version of Kumbaya at the Royal Albert Hall. It was a moving tribute to the ground-breaking partnership and a moment to thank Chris Stringer in particular for his vision and support.



The Music Man Project Student Ambassadors at Strawberry Field, Liverpool



The Music Man Project workshop at Kilmarnock, Scotland

Regional projects are officially licenced for free, enabling them to use The Music Man Project brand and to access exclusive music, teaching resources and performance opportunities. Each Salvation Army Music Man group joins a unique family of musicians that stretches around the world. The service has reached vulnerable communities thousands of miles away in South Africa, India, Nepal, USA and the Philippines. The Music Man Project explores how far the universal language of music can be used to free the constraints placed on people with a learning disability across the world, joining them together through song, country by country.

Notable Recent Achievements by The Music Man Project

A World Record at the London Palladium

The Music Man Project has performed two Sunday Night at the London Palladium variety concerts. The first featured an original musical called From the Asylum to the Palladium in which the students told their journey from isolated patients in mental hospitals to stars of the West End. In the second, they broke the World Record for the largest ever triangle ensemble, reaching 1521 triangles with the help of a capacity audience and a member of the Royal Family.



3 is the Magic Number TV Advert

Three Music Man Project students opened the National Lottery's 25th birthday TV advert. They were an instant hit with everyone involved in the production, from the casting agents to the acclaimed director, Michael Gracey (The Greatest Showman). Their performance brought the Music Man Project to millions of people.

Musical Role Models for 10,000 School Children

The Music Man Project delivers inspirational performance workshops to mainstream Primary School pupils, taught by leading musicians with a learning disability. Over 10,000 children have learned diversity awareness and acceptance by singing, signing, playing and dancing with the famous Music Man Project Student Ambassadors.

Academic Research at the Finest Music Conservatoire in the World

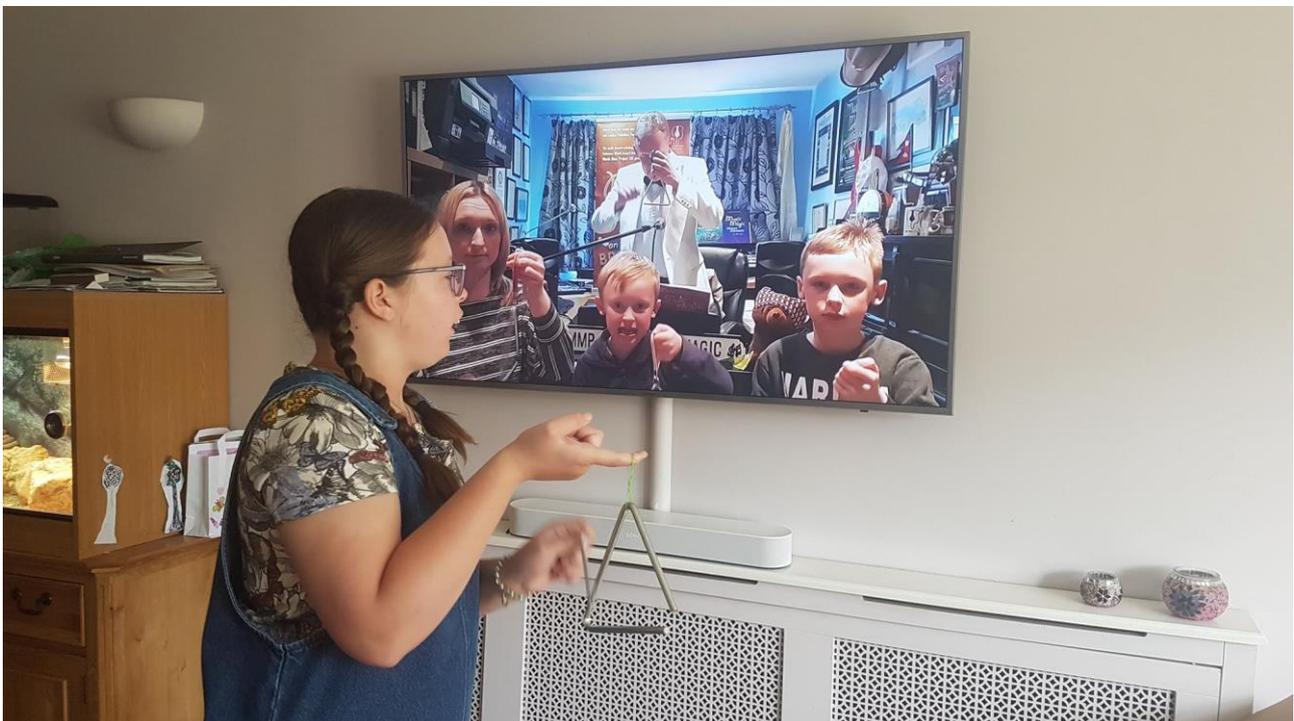
The Music Man Project is at the centre of ground-breaking PhD research by Music Man Project Director, Natalie Bradford at the Royal College of Music. Natalie's study into the effect of active music participation on the well-being of adults with Down's Syndrome provides empirical evidence of the potential benefits that music education and performance can offer, whatever the level of musical appreciation or ability.

Churchill Fellowship in New York

David Stanley was awarded a prestigious Churchill Fellowship from the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust in 2019, enabling him to research music education and performance for people with learning-disabilities in New York. His report made 11 recommendations to raise awareness, enhance provision and increase impact across the UK, and provides the foundation for a UK/US transatlantic partnership for Special Needs Music Education. He started 'The Music Man Project New York' and established links with Special Needs music providers in America, such as the inspirational Daniel's Music Foundation in East Harlem.

Surviving Lockdown

In normal times, Salvation Army churches and facilities host regional Music Man Projects up and down the country. When the coronavirus put an end to all in-person teaching, The Music Man Project stepped in to support its students and the wider disabled community through a wide range of online services. '#MMPWired', with its live Facebook shows, Zoom music sessions, video calls and nearly one hundred new YouTube videos has brought the joy of music to the homes of an isolated community. Thanks to emergency COVID-19 relief funding, the charity delivered new musical instruments to families across the UK so they could join in with the music at home.



The online platform has brought the Music Man Community together in new ways. Thousands have tuned in, including many people who didn't have a local Music Man Project to attend before the lockdown. They are now able to join the music-making with students who normally attend regional centres. The charity has pledged to continue these services after the pandemic, such has been the success and impact for everyone involved.