



ORCHESTRAS *Live*

 Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

Early Years Live Stream with NYMAZ Connect: Resound



© Becky West

The Apple Tree Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 30 January 2020

Evaluation report by Orchestras Live



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PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND AIMS

As part of the Connect: Resound programme, Orchestras Live (OL), NYMAZ and Durham Music Service (DMS) – lead partner of Durham & Darlington Music Hub – co-produced a performance of *The Apple Tree* by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE) as part of OAE's residency in County Durham in January 2020. The performance aimed to engage and inspire young children, introducing them to the sound world of the orchestra and taking them on a journey through the seasons.

A friendly old apple tree, and the source of a tasty, juicy snack! But a month later, the tree is bare. Icicles suddenly appear, followed by leaves, then blossom, and then birds and bees. But will there ever be any more juicy apples to eat?

This was the first time that an Early Years concert has been streamed through Connect: Resound. Through using a live stream partners wanted to enable settings across the country, but particularly those in rural areas and places less well served culturally, to access a high quality live orchestral event designed specifically for early years children. The project aimed to connect and enhance our early years programmes, broaden audience reach and increase the national profile for our work.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The OAE performance of *The Apple Tree* was live streamed to early years settings across the country at 11am on 30 January 2020 from Ushaw College, Co. Durham. It was then available to watch online through the Connect: Resound website for a further week. The broadcast was a similar length to previous live streams, however it was available to watch online for a shorter period. A resource pack to support further learning was provided by OAE and available to download both before and after the broadcast.

The Apple Tree was a pre-existing OAE TOTS show with a clear theme about the seasons which partners felt would interest early years settings and enable cross-curricula work. OAE consulted with Makaton specialists to ensure Makaton signs were accurately used during the action songs. NYMAZ led on the marketing campaign ensuring details of the event were circulated to Music Education Hubs nationally alongside wider marketing. They used their existing partner U Can Play to deliver the technical side of the live stream and hosted everything through their website. DMS worked with their early years partner settings to bring them to the live performance or watch the live stream and supported the marketing campaign through the Durham Vocal Festival.

To understand the impact and reach of the broadcast the partners agreed a series of evaluation tools:

- Audience survey undertaken by NYMAZ with all those who had signed up to the mailing list.
- Qualitative survey completed by partner Music Hubs undertaken by Orchestras Live. Their staff viewed the live stream with a setting in their local area.
- Web analytics provided by NYMAZ and U Can Play

The aim was to ensure we received a rounded picture of how the live stream worked in practice for this age group that would inform how this strand of work could be developed.

AUDIENCES

These web statistics come from NYMAZ’s web analytics and cover the live stream performance and the following week when it was available online. There are some differences between the website statistics and YouTube data, but for consistency with other Connect: Resound broadcasts we have used the website statistics.

- 591 unique users
- 1.44 unique sessions per user
- 325 downloads of the resource pack
- 467 unique users on the day of the broadcast
- The average view duration was just over 19 minutes

Given that a large proportion of the unique users were settings tuning in with a group of children watching, the audience for the broadcast is estimated to be 4,400.

In addition, 30 children attended the live performance. This was due to be more, but one setting was unable to secure transport to the venue at the last minute and watched online instead.

Location data was not available for 64% of users from the UK. The remaining 36% can be broken down as follows:

UK location	%
London	13.27
Norwich	5.5
Coventry	3.56
Irvine	2.59
Durham	2.43
Harrogate	2.27
York	2.27
Bristol	2.1
Darlington	2.1

Referrals	Overall (1 Jan – 5 Feb)	Week of broadcast (20 Jan – 5 Feb)
Direct to Site	63.2%	57.8% straight to <i>/watch</i>
Social	22.2%	24.4% the vast majority of which were from Facebook.
Organic search	6%	10.9%
Other referral	5.6% Of which 2.87% was from Early Arts e-news	5.9% (principally durhammusic.org.uk)
Email	3%	1%

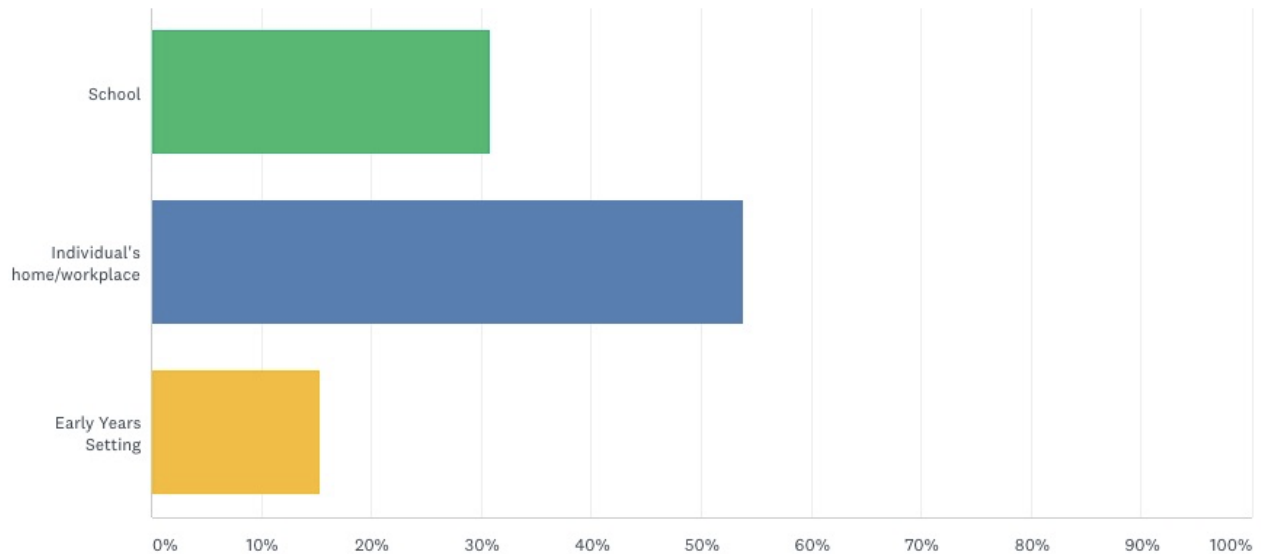
The high level of ‘direct to site’ to the */watch* page referrals in the week of the broadcast indicates that the marketing approach was successful in generating the audience. Facebook is clearly the most valuable social media site for this type of event as it achieved the majority of social media referrals. NYMAZ’s posts about the broadcast had a total of 7,100 impressions and 70 engagements; their Twitter activity around the broadcast received 15,380 impressions and 211 engagements but did not refer as high a proportion of traffic as Facebook. Promotion by DMS and the Early Arts e-news was also successful in directing audiences to the broadcast.

Audience Survey

NYMAZ sent the audience survey link through social media with a reach of 3,527 and to their mailing list of 386. They received a total of 13 responses, which is more than NYMAZ have received for other streamed content surveys. With such a small sample number, the following data is to be viewed as a snapshot of opinion rather than reflective of the full audience view. Of the schools/early years settings who responded a total of 114 children viewed the broadcast with the responder.

Are you viewing from a school or other setting?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



It was fantastic. Our nursery sent us information about the programme and although my child was not going to nursery today, we watched online. Pure joy.



Online audience member



We loved all of it and many thanks. We will be singing the songs for the rest of the day.



Online audience member



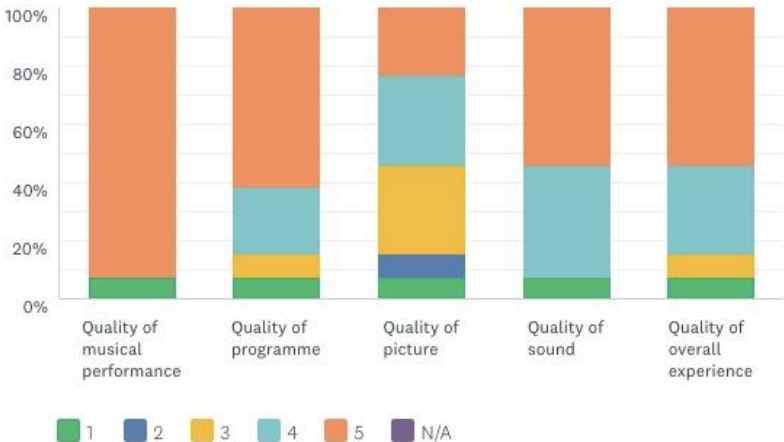
The children experienced something they wouldn't normally experience, particularly the instruments, in the comfort of their familiar class.



Early Years setting viewing online

Please rate the quality of the given areas on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 is very poor, 5 is very good)

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



“ The music was excellent and it was good for the children to experience ‘live’ music. We felt that it was quite a dark background – with all the dark wood, when watching on a screen often it was difficult to make out what was happening. The orchestra was also very dark – light clothes would have been better and it would have been good for the children to be introduced to at least some of the instruments individually. Also, the style of music wasn’t really that ‘child friendly’ and they found the purely instrumental sections too long.

”

Online audience member

“ Many of our children will not have opportunity to see or hear live music and it was a great opportunity to introduce the instruments of the orchestra.

”

Early Years setting viewing online

When asked how much the children enjoyed the performance, on a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘very much’), the average score was 8.5.

The quality of the overall experience was rated as good or above by the majority of respondents and the quality of the musical performance was particularly highly scored. However, it’s clear that the quality of the picture was more mixed, indicating that this could be improved in future. All respondents indicated they were likely to engage with a live performance in future and over 90% would engage with a live stream.

Costs and living in a rural county were challenges highlighted that would prevent a setting from accessing live performances. The majority of respondents had not used the resource pack but some indicated they would.

The live stream also received a positive review from a family blogger. They observed that it enabled the young children to engage with the music on their terms in their own home. They commented that the children focused initially, then played whilst listening to the music and periodically coming back to the screen. A live stream was something they would try again.

Read *The Greatest Showmum* blog here:

<https://thegreatestshowmum.home.blog/2020/02/08/the-one-with-live-music-in-our-front-room/>

Words the children used to describe the live stream:

- Really good
- They are very clever
- I liked that
- Exciting
- Loud
- Fun
- Funny
- Wow
- The violins made me happy
- Interesting
- Long

Qualitative Feedback

Members of staff from Music Hubs were asked to attend a live stream with a setting in their area and return a survey including feedback from themselves and the staff at the setting. The following summarises their responses:

- Surveys were received from 5 Music Hub staff and directly from 1 school.
- 145 children watched the broadcast at 5 settings.
- The vast majority of the children were in Reception and Year 1, ages 4 - 6.

How easy was the broadcast to access?

Most settings reported few technical problems. There was a request for more guidance around needing to subscribe to the *U Can Play* channel. One setting was unable to access the live stream at all and did call the NYMAZ office for support but it appeared it was a wider school network setting that prevented it from accessing the stream.



How engaged did you think the children were?

The initial section led by the OAE double bass player engaged the children well with learning the songs. However, the orchestral introduction was found to be too long and children lost interest. The story did re-engage most children, although attention wandered at times and some had a lie down, not uncommon at that age. Not all children understood the link between the orchestra and the story, they needed to get more connection.

One setting had clearly prepared in advance and had set up an ‘apple tree’ in the room for children who were less engaged to play with. This setting reported the most engagement from the children and it was clear they had planned carefully how to scaffold the live stream in the classroom and maintain engagement.

The overall feedback was that the whole experience was too long for this age group to remain engaged in the streamed format.

Were the children able to effectively join in when they had the opportunity?

Most reported that children were able to join in and this was more effective where staff supported them to do so. One setting reported the children were keen to try but a bit baffled as to what they were supposed to do. One setting felt that without staff input, the children would have just sat and listened rather than participate.

Was it helpful to have a live audience at the performance and did it add to the live stream experience?

Feedback indicated that this didn’t add much for the children at most of the settings, although some liked the feeling of being part of something bigger. This could have been because the live audience was not seen much on camera. However, some reported feeling this was important to support the orchestra’s delivery.



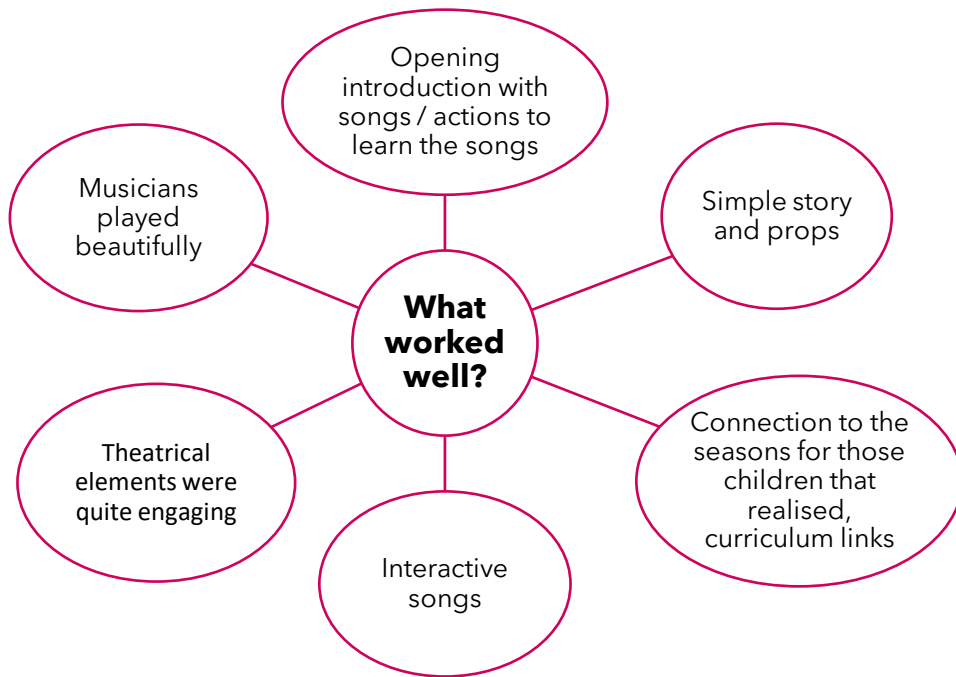
It was a good way to experience an orchestra without having to travel.



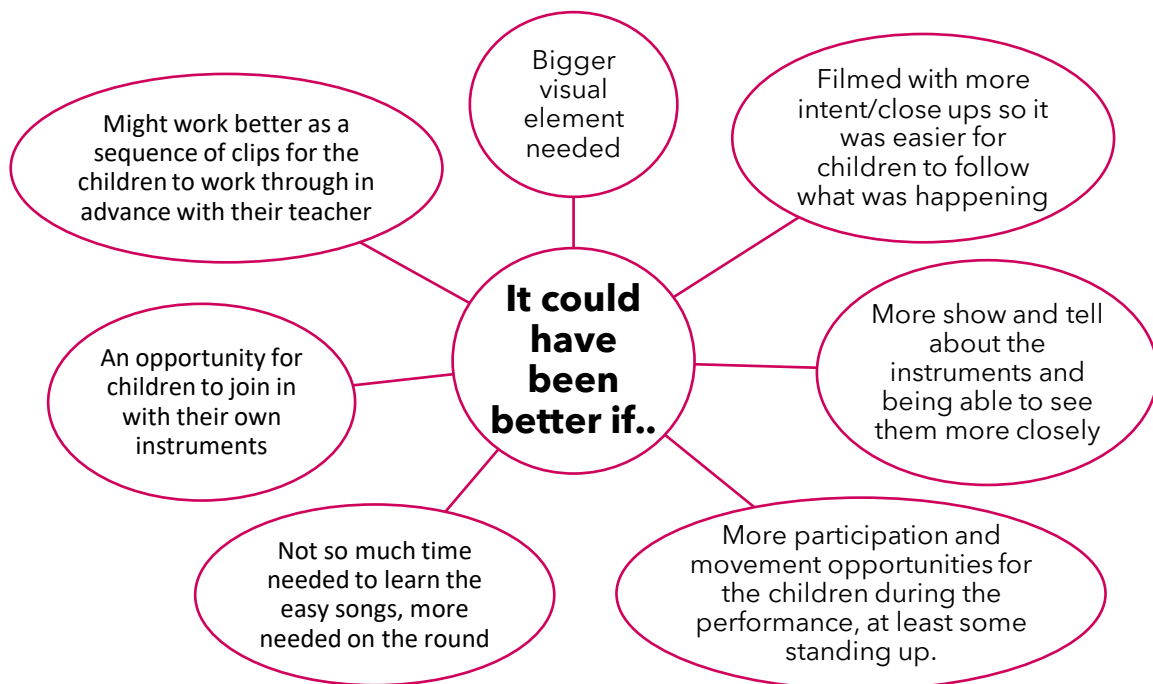
Online audience member



© Becky West



We also received anecdotal reporting through DMS that the free live stream made it accessible if settings couldn't afford to attend a live performance.



One suggestion was to use a series of clips, challenging the children to use them as a jigsaw to see if they can put them together in the right order and then watching the live stream of the performance to find out if they are right.

Setting Engagement

- Only 1 setting had used the resources in advance, and this was the one that reported the most positive engagement from the children.
- 1 setting would use the resources afterwards, 1 didn't know, 3 would not use them.
- 1 setting would watch a live stream again, 2 didn't know, 2 would not.
- 3 settings would consider attending a live performance, 1 didn't know, 1 would not.

What could be the most effective way Hub staff could support and build on live stream performances to develop early years music making locally?

- Being able to plan to deliver school workshops in the run up to the live stream
- Staff present during the stream to support singing/participation, connection with the orchestra/identifying instruments, how to listen.
- Know which instruments would be featured to be able to do a 'live' presentation.
- Access to songs/material to plan ways to build on the live stream in advance of the performance date.

◆ Penryn Reception @penryn_YR · Feb 2

Last week EYFS, along with other schools and preschools across the country, joined in a live streamed performance of The Apple Tree by The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. We met the instruments of the the orchestra including the double base, violin and flute.
@NYMAZmusic



🌐 Our Foundation Stage @Foundation_MWP · Jan 30

Replying to @thatnurserylife @NYMAZmusic and 4 others

Thank you so much for sharing this. Our children were captivated by the wonderful performance!



EVALUATION

This first broadcast through Connect: Resound of a performance targeted at early years audiences has clearly demonstrated that there is an audience across the UK for a live streamed music offer tailored for this age group. This has been one of the most successful Connect: Resound broadcasts and the marketing campaign was clearly effective in driving audiences to the */watch* page. NYMAZ are clear that this has demonstrated a greater demand than they anticipated for this Early Years content. The broadcast achieved press coverage including this item from Tyne & Wear TV <https://www.twlocal.tv/videos/orchestras-live-x7rbwi9/>

The musical quality of the performance that OAE bring and the engagement of all the musicians in the performance, as well as those that contributed to the theatrical narrative, was clearly appreciated by the majority of the audience. The introduction and learning of the songs was well led and received positive feedback. The clear theme and curriculum connections were also noted positively by the settings. The resources provided have been downloaded a large number of times, although from the evidence we have gathered it's not possible to conclude whether these have been well received and effectively used.



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The technical side of the broadcast worked for the majority of the audience, however some did experience technical issues and this is something to ensure pre-broadcast communications are very clear about in future.

The most positive feedback came from a setting who had clearly engaged with the resources beforehand and planned how to structure the live stream within their classroom to enable the children to enjoy and get the most out of the performance in their own way.

IMPROVEMENTS

Partners undertook this live stream to establish whether there was demand for this type of content and whether it can work effectively online for this age group. Collecting qualitative feedback was a key part of the process to enable partners to assess the most effective way to develop live streamed work for young children and continue to increase access to orchestral opportunities. The performance itself clearly engaged the live audience well and

there was positive feedback on key elements of the broadcast. The feedback we have received indicates a number of areas that partners can develop to improve the format in future.

Structure

Online audiences all reported the broadcast was too long for this age group although for the live audience this was not an issue, demonstrating a clear difference between live and streamed experiences. Suggestions have included separating out the 'learning the songs' section from the actual performance so that the learning becomes a prior resource and teachers can use this creatively in the best way for their setting in the lead up to the live broadcast. Ensuring the orchestral introduction isn't too long is also key to getting audiences hooked into the narrative.

Participation

There needed to be more clearly signposted opportunities for the online audience to actively participate all the way through to help support and maintain children's engagement. Future broadcasts could maintain the role of the orchestral presenter to focus on leading the online audience to join in, signposting opportunities for standing up and moving around as well as listening.

Partners could also explore ways to develop calls to action from online settings that can be featured as part of the live performance.

Visuals

The quality of the visual definition could be improved as well as siting cameras closer to the action to enable better close up images. More integration between the camera work and story/music is needed so that online audiences can clearly see both instruments / props at the right moment in the narrative. This will enable young children to effectively follow the story without needing too much guidance from staff.

Considering how a set works visually on a screen, ensuring props stand out against the background effectively along with brighter clothing and more movement on stage would all help to make what can be a static picture more interesting.



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Resources

Produce online content that supports settings to pro-actively prepare for the live stream through planning and staff support on the day rather than just 'sitting down' to watch it. A 'How to prepare your early years setting for a live broadcast' online library with a range of content including:

- Resources on songs / instruments that are featured
- Information on expectations for children
- How to encourage children to join in through singing / movement / instruments
- Suggestions for related activities for those children who find it harder to engage
- Calls to action that encourage settings to use the resources, record a performance of a song or material they created to share that can be featured during the performance

Music Hubs

Music Hubs clearly have a key role to play in supporting planning and delivery with their local settings to ensure they can maximise the impact of the live stream for audiences. It would be beneficial to involve the staff who provided the qualitative feedback in the future development of live streamed content for early years audiences to ensure this can be effectively embedded and used within Music Hub programmes.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

More information about **Orchestras Live** and our projects can be found on our website: www.orchestraslive.org.uk

NYMAZ website:

<https://www.nymaz.org.uk/>

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment website:

<https://www.oae.co.uk/>

Durham Music Service website:

<https://www.durhammusic.org.uk/>

For more information about this project, please contact:

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