

A Message from the CEO: our journey and vision for The Music Works

Dear prospective Artistic Director,

Thank you for considering joining us at The Music Works at this pivotal moment in our journey. I thought it might help and inspire you if I shared our story - where we've come from, where we are now, and the exciting future we're building together. I really hope that this inspires you and makes you want to come and join us.

Our Origins: A Grassroots vision

Nearly two decades ago, in 2004, a small group of passionate music leaders in Gloucestershire came together with a shared belief: music has the power to transform young lives, especially those facing challenging circumstances. They saw pressing needs in our community - stark social and health gaps, shrinking support for youth activities, and a disconnect between young people's musical interests and traditional music education.

From these humble beginnings, we've grown into a vibrant national charity that regularly engages with over 8,000 young people annually, with 80% coming from challenging circumstances or under-represented communities. Our approach has always been youth-led, focusing on contemporary music that resonates with young people's lives and aspirations.

Where we are now: local Impact, national recognition

Today, The Music Works stands as a beacon of innovative, inclusive music making and career development across the UK. While our roots are in Gloucestershire, where we've established two thriving Music Hubs and launched a mobile Music Bus, our impact extends far beyond. We've cultivated strong partnerships with schools, community organisations, and the music industry nationwide.

Our Upsurge programme, nurturing the next generation of diverse talent, is gaining national recognition for its approach to addressing inequalities in the music sector. We're proud of our alumni successes, such as Leah (Elje) signing with Sony, and groups like GCoda using music to transform their lives and communities. Our commercial arm, Onatura, includes a record label and a partnership with Warner Chappell, the established international music publisher, for global administration of our talent's songs.

Our work has earned us national accolades, including awards from the Association of Youth Offending and the Queen's Award for social enterprise. In March 2024, we launched Music Leaders UK, our awarding organisation aimed at revitalising music education in schools across the UK. Our pioneering programmes using music to address youth violence and mental health issues are gaining recognition and interest for broader implementation. And, we've taken on a leadership role in inclusion and youth voice for the new Music Education Hub covering Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Swindon, cementing our position as innovators in the field.

Our vision: transforming lives and the industry

As we look to the future, we're embarking on an ambitious journey to amplify our impact across the UK. We're not just about music making - we're about using music as a catalyst for personal growth, community transformation and systemic change.

We are looking for an experienced and visionary Artistic Director dedicated to supporting young people from challenging backgrounds and empowering the next generation of music industry leaders. We want you to lead our artistic and programmatic strategy, shape our creative vision and build pathways for young people into the industry.

You'll work closely with me and our team to:

1. Reach over 100,000 young people annually through direct engagement, performances, digital content, and school programmes across the UK
2. Empower young leaders through our enhanced youth participation framework, exploring co-leadership models at the highest levels of our organisation
3. Drive innovation in music education across the UK to make it more relevant, industry-connected, and accessible to all young people, regardless of background
4. Spearhead our artist development and creative careers programme, addressing sector under-representation through diverse local and national opportunities
5. Cultivate a range of performance platforms, partnering to create unique showcasing opportunities for young artists
6. Establish The Music Works as a national centre of excellence, sharing our models of change and advocating for the transformative power of music in young people's lives.

This role is about more than artistic direction - it's about shaping the future of music for young people across the UK. You'll be instrumental in creating pathways for diverse young talent, influencing national policy, and demonstrating how music can address broader social challenges like mental health and youth violence.

We're looking for someone who can bring fresh perspectives while honouring our grassroots origins. Someone who can work collaboratively with our team, our young people, and our partners to take our artistic vision to new heights.

If you're excited by the prospect of leading this transformation, of using your artistic vision to change young lives and reshape the music industry, then we want to hear from you. Join us in writing the next chapter of The Music Works' story.

I look forward to meeting you,

Deborah Potts

CEO, The Music Works