



## Evaluative Case Study of The Ark's outreach workshop programme with musician Robbie Perry

14 May – 18 June 2009

Prepared for the National Centre for  
Technology in Education (NCTE)



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## 1. Summary

The six week workshop programme with artist Robbie Perry was conceived as part of Earth Explorers, The Ark's multidisciplinary art project running from May to August 2009. Earth Explorers aimed to encourage children and families to engage creatively with the environment and explore the impact we have on our surroundings through a range of fun, inspirational and imaginative arts activities.

This specific element of the programme was devised to address the needs of children with learning and autistic difficulties and in doing so enabled The Ark to continue to prioritise this key aim within The Ark's four year strategy. The programme proposal offered a second opportunity to work with students taught within the special teaching unit and mainstream classes of St Peter's National School, Greenhills, Dublin 12, whose first encounter with The Ark had been during The Artist In Residence workshops in the 2007 programme. The Ark was eager to work with and build on relationships with St Peter's N.S. Involvement in this subsidised project enabled thirty-two students from the school to experience an enjoyable and meaningful workshop programme for free.

The workshops were designed to engage students in the exploration of sounds, vibrations and self-expression using melodic, percussive and electronic instruments made from existing and recycled materials. Through the processes of free improvisation, creation of instruments, composition and performance the children developed new skills and grew in confidence and creative expression.

The workshops received great praise from students, teachers and the artist, demonstrating that they had been engaging, beneficial and enjoyable for those involved. The workshop programme in turn proved the potential for ongoing development of the artist's specific work with new technology to support the curricular learning and musical appreciation of children with individual needs.

The workshop programme demonstrated a creative application of new technology through a relatively cost effective media that the artist had constructed himself. The benefit of the instruments which utilised new technology was that all students regardless of their age or ability could produce a range of unique sounds, strengthening their capacity to express ideas, feelings and experiences through music and composition.

This project would not have been possible without the support of The National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) and The Community Foundation for Ireland.

The Ark gratefully acknowledges the support of the Arts Council in making Earth Explorers possible. Earth Explorers is part funded by The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism / An Roinn Ealaíon, Spóirt agus Turasóireachta.

The Ark is also grateful to our other annual supporters: Department of Education and Science; National Development Plan; PPDS; Temple Bar Cultural Trust and Dublin City Council.

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## 2. Context

The Ark is committed to commissioning and producing cutting edge creative programmes for children and young people through a dedication to artistic excellence, innovation and social inclusion. The Ark is founded on the principle that all children, as citizens, have the same cultural entitlements as adults.

Within the company strategy for 2006 – 2010, The Ark outlined an aim to prioritise the cultural entitlements of children with special needs (physical, emotional and intellectual). This aim was specifically addressed within The Artist in Residence programme of 2007, where a third of the autumn programme of work was dedicated to the facilitation of workshops for children with individual requirements.

By engaging artist Robbie Perry for this series of workshops exploring music and new technology, The Ark wished to once again directly address this aim and in turn build on the relationship that had been forged with the participating Dublin primary school.

The Ark was eager to explore the potential benefits of fusing creativity, music and technology in the delivery of a meaningful workshop programme. The Ark was able to involve St Peter's N.S. in this pilot project at no cost to the school due to the grants received from the NCTE and Community Foundation.

## 3. Programme Content and Structure

Robbie Perry is a musician, artist and inventor with an active interest in the provision of creative work through artistic technology for children and young people, particularly those with exceptional needs. His primary focus, and source of his current PhD studies, is in creating new music and inventing musical instruments using technology and recycled materials such as abandoned or discarded objects. Most recently, he has worked with the groundbreaking light-based Mytobii Eyegaze technology to show the possibilities for movement vocabularies controlled by eyes. This system enables musical and movement-based interaction for people with severe physical disabilities.

For this project the artist conceived a workshop programme of facilitative musical practice. This was designed to stimulate the mind into a process of engagement with its environment through the introduction of musical instruments of varying technology. His process involved using existing musical instruments and capacitive sensing electronics such as the Theremin<sup>1</sup> as well as instruments constructed from recycled materials such as modified garden implements.

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<sup>1</sup> The Theremin is an early electronic musical instrument controlled without contact from the player. It consists of two metal antennas which sense the position of the player's hands and control oscillators for frequency with one hand, and amplitude (volume) with the other. The electric signals from the Theremin are amplified and sent to a loudspeaker.

His process involved active participation throughout and developed organically in reaction to the skills and interests of each group he was working with. The artist emphasised the importance of each child discovering how sound can be created from an object, how sound varies from one object to another and how combinations of these objects or instruments can be used to create original and unique compositions.

*"All the children were encouraged to explore the sounds unique to each instrument and to experiment with the technique in any way they may have found productive and conducive to their creativity, i.e. let them at it."*

**Robbie Perry - Artist**

This pilot workshop programme ran weekly over a six week period from Thursday 14 May to Friday 12 June in St Peter's N.S. It culminated in a presentation of work and improvised performance using some of the instruments the children had made earlier in the process on Thursday 18 June in The Ark workshop space.

St. Peter's N.S., caters for boys aged four to twelve years of age, with classes ranging from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. The school operates a special teaching unit for children in the autism spectrum and in particular for those with Asperger's Syndrome. St Peter's N.S. makes every effort to include and integrate these children into mainstream class activities.

The artist worked with small groups of between eight and twelve students aged four to ten years old. Each session lasted between 30 and 60 minutes depending on the age group and assistance was provided in the preparation of materials and demonstration of elements of the workshops by an Ark member of staff.

Group A comprised of ten children aged 4 – 8 years, including the youngest children from the Asperger's Syndrome special teaching unit alongside students from mainstream Junior Infant, Senior Infant and First Classes. This group was supported by one teacher from the special teaching unit and between one and two special needs assistants.

Group B was made up of twelve children from Fourth Class including one student with Asperger's Syndrome from the special teaching unit alongside a core group of seven other children with individual needs including dyspraxia, as well as emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. The four remaining places were offered to other students from the remainder of this mainstream class on a rotation basis so that all were given the opportunity to be involved in the workshops at some point over the six week process. This group attended each workshop with the class teacher and one special needs assistant.

The main aims and objectives of this project were:

- To engage children creatively with their environment through the introduction of musical instruments of varying technology and to encourage them to explore concepts relating to environmental awareness, sustainability and reusing and recycling materials.
- To encourage children's participation in, engagement with, and enjoyment of the workshops.

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- To identify elements of both the music and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) curriculum, seek benefits in the alternative curriculum and further options for cross-curricular engagement.
- To increase the opportunity for children with individual needs to participate in The Ark's visual arts summer programme 'Earth Explorers'.

## 4. Process

Within the first three weeks of the project the artist initiated the workshops by demonstrating the sounds that could be created from his unusual and interesting musical instruments. These were gradually handed out to children within the groups for them to experience playing them individually through free improvisation. They included melodic, percussive and electronic instruments, as well as some that the children created themselves.

*"Spade Cello, Theremin, Hand Chimes, Spade Bass, Auduino (HandHeldSynth), Surdo Drums, Windbows, Balloon Didgeridoos, Straws, Iron Rods, Shakers, Rain Sticks, Thunder Tubes, Bells, The Stick, Piano Frame, Paper, Water Filled Bottles, Cabassa, Cajón, Giant Water Dispenser Bottles and a few more things that escape my mind!"*

**Robbie Perry – Artist**

The workshop space was arranged to encourage inclusion and active participation by creating a musical circle with participants, instruments and the artist on the same level. This enabled each student to approach and experience the instruments on their own terms in a safe and comfortable environment, to explore the instruments individually, listen to one another and perform together. The small group size allowed for a quality engagement with each participant, as well as maintaining a minimum number of participants suitable for the possibility of group composition and performance.

By mixing more basic and familiar percussive instruments with those which used electronics to form sounds, alter pitch, rhythm and amplification the children were less inhibited to try the more complex instruments out and were often surprised and amazed at the creative possibilities of these unusual objects.

The techniques that the children used to create sounds from the instruments developed within the time they were allowed to freely explore them.

*"Techniques that we used for all these objects were developed naturally with the time that each child had to spend with the instruments. These included Picking, Scratching, Scraping, Bowing, Slapping, MashBashSmash (my favourite), Strumming and of course Gentle Encouragement."*

**Robbie Perry – Artist**

It emphasised to the children and also the teachers that musical expression is individual and does not have a right or wrong method.

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The artist built on this exploratory work within the first couple of workshops enabling the children to listen and respond to sounds, create simple group compositions and perform for one another with instruments and body percussion. They were also able to experience creating sounds from found materials and build simple instruments of their own construction to perform with.

The groups participated in rhythm circles using body percussion, hand chimes and voices where they were given control of changing the direction or nature of the sound and therefore controlling the rhythm or melody of their group composition. Breaking off into smaller groups, they were able to work like sections of an orchestra where their individual compositions worked together to form a whole. The workshops also incorporated call and response exercises where one child led a rhythm from the Cajón<sup>2</sup> and the rest of the group repeated it back. This exercise encouraged performance and listening skills, as well as enhancing confidence and leadership skills.

#### **a. Classroom Management**

The majority of the workshops took place in St Peter's N.S., in a medium sized, open plan room away from the main teaching areas of the school. The students and artist worked together in a musical circle of cushions with the rest of the space in the room filled with musical instruments of varying technology on hand to play during the workshop. Ready access to power points was essential for the set up of the electronic instruments within the space.

The openness of the space was important for each child to have the freedom to explore the ways in which they could play and manipulate each of the instruments and to do so safely. Many of the children became very animated and energetic in the periods of free improvisation and the space within the room allowed them to release this energy, move around to the music and travel to different parts of the room to see or hear another instrument or show off their skills to a classmate.

One child commented that he wished the room had no doors, so that they wouldn't be able to leave the workshop, they could play the instruments endlessly. Other students struggled with the noise levels of certain sessions, a problem that could be linked to the sensitivity of hearing in children suffering from Asperger's syndrome. Headphones were available to these children to muffle the sound and they were then happier to either observe or return and engage in the process after a period of rest.

It was beneficial to hold the final session in The Ark workshop space where the children from Group B were able to use their homemade wind bow instruments. These large musical instruments made from a bamboo cane, ribbon and balloon, required a large space to be swung through the air to create a humming sound. It wouldn't have been possible to safely use these in the space allocated in the school.

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<sup>2</sup> A box drum played by slapping the front face (generally thin plywood) with the hands.

## 5. Impact

### a. Assessment

The artist was accompanied in all sessions by the author of this case study to act as an evaluator of the process. Weekly assessment was made of the sessions to record observations of the student's engagement, enjoyment and behaviour during the workshops, alongside regular discussions with the artist and teachers from the school. Each session was also documented through still photography and with audio recordings.

The teachers involved in the project were invited to undertake an evaluative questionnaire individually and to attempt to address certain questions with their respective groups.

The teacher within the special unit found it difficult to discuss the specific questions suggested with her group and instead simply asked them whether they enjoyed taking part in the workshops, to which they all enthusiastically answered yes. She was also able to provide very useful feedback as to the eagerness of the group towards the weekly sessions and any specific changes or developments that she was witnessing in the group.

The teacher of the Group B also took his own very creative approach to the review of the workshops with his class. He asked them to use words to describe the artist Robbie Perry and their experience of the workshops to someone with a visual impairment, alongside a creative writing session where they wrote about their favourite experiences within the project:

*Enthusiastic*  
*Makes things from scratch*  
*Musical*  
*Fun*  
*Hairy head*  
*Weird*  
*Music*  
*Funny*  
*Got to do all the music*  
*Anything we wanted*  
*Looked deadly*  
*Big long beard*  
*Real cool*  
*Hippy look*  
*Bright, intelligent*  
*Can make stuff out of nothing*  
*Robbery Perry*  
*Awesome*  
*A whole collage of musical instruments made from scratch*  
*BMTE (best music teacher ever)*  
*Weird beard*  
*Amazing*  
*Guitar that made the sound on its own*  
*Inspiration to us*

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*Made music easy!*

A round table evaluative discussion of the workshop programme was scheduled following the final week between the artist, The Ark and teachers from St Peter's N.S.

## **b. Benefits**

Observation of the workshop process and feedback from the children, teachers and artist, revealed a high satisfaction and enjoyment in the methods and technology explored over the six week process.

### **Children**

*"Dear Robbie, thank you for coming to our school many times and for letting us play with your instruments and showing us how to make music out of well nothing really. You have made me to really like music and instruments. I think you are very talented and you would make a great music teacher. Thank you very much for everything you have done."*

**Fourth Class Student**

### **Teachers**

Described the workshops as *"brilliant!"*

*"The magic that Robbie brings to materials that might be otherwise obsolete is absolutely inspirational for all the children involved, and they brought this message to our whole school community."*

**John O'Carroll – Fourth Class Teacher**

*"Excellent – gave the children a chance to freely explore the instruments."*

**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

### **Artist**

*"The workshops were an enormous success for the children. They showed incredible ability at exploring their sonic environment each week without any inhibition whatsoever. Since the workshops I have learned that they have felt a greater sense of inclusiveness and respect from each other because of their shared experiences as a group and the musical games they have played together. Both groups are incredibly special and rich with abilities that are truly inspiring and remind me of why I love making music so much!"*

**Robbie Perry - Artist**

The enjoyment of the process was observed in the reactions of the children involved. They were participatory, energised and excited by the workshops, responding vocally, laughing, standing, clapping and dancing along to sounds and rhythms. Their teachers commented that the afternoon is often a tough time to do productive work with the children, especially the younger group from the special teaching unit, as they are often quite lethargic. However the teachers recognised changes in the energy levels of the groups in the afternoon workshops.

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*"Palpable excitement was harnessed for music making."*  
**John O'Carroll – Fourth Class Teacher**

*"Something in the music wakes him up."*  
**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

The teachers really enjoyed seeing the children so energetic and enjoying themselves at the end of the day.

The workshops were eagerly anticipated by the students, who were always keen to start the session each week.

*"They were so enthusiastic about coming down every week. Chance to use the instruments in a different way and make as much noise as they wanted!!"*  
**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

The artist employed a very open approach to music, expression and the instruments themselves. There was no preciousness about how music should be made or how an instrument should be used. This allowed the students to freely enjoy the possibilities in sound and rhythm presented to them.

*"Great stimulation – openness to possibilities. One child said you can do anything you want! Great freedom of expression."*  
**John O'Carroll – Fourth Class Teacher**

Furthermore, anything that was demonstrated to the children, they had the opportunity to explore themselves.

In periods of free improvisation the students grew in confidence as they discovered individual talents for musical performance and demonstrated this to their classmates.

*"Key achievements for the children were - gaining a sense of how making music together is an inclusive process creating a sense of belonging to something very special, belonging to a group. Learning how to listen and speak to each other through the medium of music. Gaining an understanding of how easy it can be to compose or arrange a piece of music through pure experimentation. And of course the main thing.....there doesn't need to be any rules if you don't need them!"*  
**Robbie Perry - Artist**

There was always a great excitement at the introduction of a new instrument and whether the technique to play it was straightforward or complex, every student was keen to have a go.

*"Yes we can! I can do it, make music, make instruments, sounds are fun!"*  
**John O'Carroll – Fourth Class Teacher**

By involving instruments which used new technology such as the Theremin, Auduino (a hand-held synthesiser), cello spade and spade bass the children experienced new sounds and explored new ways of creating music outside of their normal classroom experience.

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The ease with which these instruments could be manipulated to produce a sound, enabled each child to perform with them regardless of their age or ability.

*"It is very beneficial both as a learning tool and a way of bringing certain children out of themselves. Can give 'non-academic' children a chance to show off a skill/talent others may not have."*

**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

These instruments demonstrated the diversity of sound and its ability to influence atmosphere and mood. On hearing the sounds from the Theremin and Auduino the students recalled soundscapes from films and video games which might have a science fiction theme or eerie atmosphere. As these particular instruments were homemade, the artist was able to describe the way in which they were made and the way in which they worked to the children simply and effectively.

These unusual instruments presented new challenges to the children and a chance to explore something new, outside of their usual experience of the music curriculum.

*"They were seeing instruments that they had never seen before. The instruments in school are just the same ones they meet every year. When they're doing it in a classroom environment, it's so structured. To get the chance to see instruments like that and figure it out themselves "how do I play this", they loved that."*

**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

No matter what the instrument, the students relished the opportunity to try and create a sound from it.

The teachers and special needs assistants played an invaluable role in the delivery of the workshops. They brought the groups to and from the workshop space and managed the control and discipline of the students within the workshop. They also consistently engaged with positive encouragement for the students, congratulating them on achievements and for good behaviour.

*"The teachers were very engaged with our activity but were also very careful to step in only when needed. I believe the enthusiasm of the children is the only encouragement a teacher needs in order to join in!"*

**Robbie Perry – Artist**

Key elements of the music curriculum including musical concepts, listening and responding, performing and composing were accessed through the student's active participation in the workshops each week. Many of the aims and broader objectives of the music curriculum were explored through access to a variety of instruments and music making technology, and the freedom of space and time for the children to explore their own creativity whilst also benefiting from the collective experience of playing and listening to the music as a group.

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*"One and all benefited. Two boys blossomed hugely. One emotionally scarred through separation found a voice. Another suffering from dyslexia; his creativity and ability came through."*

**John O'Carroll – Fourth Class Teacher**

Another demonstration of the beneficial effects of the workshop process occurred in week five when the student diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome in Group B experienced the excitement and satisfaction of being actively engaged in musical creativity.

As he led the group during a call and response activity, he displayed a very natural rhythm on the percussive instrument he was playing. As he continued to perform, he received positive feedback from his classmates, the teacher and artist, describing him as *"the best"*, *"deadly"* and as having *"fast hands"*. This musical performance nurtured his self-esteem and self-confidence. He became physically animated bouncing up and down and clapping, and also became far more expressive in his face, smiling and laughing. For a student who was prone to distraction during earlier workshops, this was the most engaged he had been and his teacher even described the event as a *"miracle"* in his achievement as it really brought him out of his own world and he *"held the room"*. The experience wasn't only a personal achievement; it evoked emotion and enjoyment from everyone in the group.

This is also an example of where elements of the alternative curriculum were being addressed during the six week process through perceptual and cognitive development as well as encouraging practice in communication and language skills, personal and social development. At times of discussion, demonstration and performance, the students had to demonstrate control, maintain concentration, develop awareness of themselves and others in the space, share items and the space with their classmates and keep eye contact with the facilitator. In particular, the call and response exercise encourages all students be aware and supportive of their classmates to maintain the rhythm and continuity of the exercise.

For Group A, alternative curricular skills were identified as particularly important to ease the integration of these younger students into mainstream classes within the school in the next couple of years.

*"It was great for them to come down with the other boys [from mainstream classes]. For them to come in and it didn't matter whether they could read the word, whether they could say the number."*

**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

The workshop process was beneficial to this group in allowing them the opportunity to work creatively with children of differing abilities, placing them in a situation where they have to share and be considerate of others, and develop confidence in their own achievements.

*"[The workshop process] Has made some of them more explorative, [they] have a keener interest in music and sounds around them."*

**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

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The students were also inspired by the creative elements of the workshops where they have been shown how to make their own musical instrument from materials that they might easily find or recycle. In turn this series of workshops had the additional benefit to the school of supporting their efforts as a Green School, as fourth class teacher John O'Carroll was keen to inform us.

*"This project has been very much in keeping with our Green Schools Policy of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. The magical use of our recycled instruments will help to bring us one step closer to gaining our first Green Flag."*

**John O'Carroll – Fourth Class Teacher**

### **c. Challenges**

In reviewing the process both the artist and teachers from St Peter's N.S. discussed how they would have appreciated having more time in advance of the workshop programme to meet and discuss the structure of the workshops and the particular needs of each group and perhaps individual children. Though all the students enjoyed and benefited from the creative experience, it was clear to identify how certain students would benefit far more from an individual approach to the process, whether working one on one with the artist or in a small group. This was a particular recommendation of the teacher from the special teaching unit.

*"Maybe starting off with a smaller amount of time in smaller groups and then joining them together would work well. They're so mad for exploring the stuff and it can be difficult to crowd control as well as let them all have the opportunity to do it."*

**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

It would also have been beneficial to establish roles within the workshops with regard to control and discipline. Each teacher had mechanisms and instructions to control the children and encourage them to regain focus. Early collaboration with the artist would have established these roles and benefited to the control of the workshops ahead of the first session.

The Ark was fortunate to engage a school where there is a great enthusiasm for creative work. This also meant that the teachers were keen to involve as many students in the project as possible. We were able to maintain the manageable group size of between 8 and 12 students for each workshop, but discovered that rather than working with the same students throughout as planned, we were facilitating a core group of students with special needs and then the additional places were taken by students from the mainstream class on a rotating basis. This restricted the developmental approach planned for this series of workshops and limited the artist's ability to build towards a composition in the final week. However it did allow for children with individual needs and those from mainstream classes to integrate and experience and enjoy the workshops collaboratively.

The teachers themselves commented on how they would personally have enjoyed an opportunity to experiment creatively with music.

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*"I'm not musical at all and I don't like chaos so I just think it was great because me as a teacher, I'm very structured."*

**Maggie McGuirk – Junior & Senior Infant Class Teacher in the Special Teaching Unit**

This would enhance their own knowledge and confidence in musical technology and performance.

The time of day at which the workshop was held at made it difficult to measure what would have been an interesting piece of data. We were keen to identify whether the workshop process could have an effect on regulating mood in the students, either to stimulate or calm. However when the workshop session ended the students had finished school and went home, and it was impossible to identify the potential effects it might have had on other elements of their school day. We did ask the teachers to seek any feedback from the parents as to the mood and behaviour of the students at home following the workshops, but nothing specific was noted.

The relative location of The Ark and the school was also a challenge as the cost of transport to the city centre for the full six week process was not feasible, and therefore all but one of the workshops were facilitated in the school. It is unfortunate that the students in Group A did not get the opportunity to travel and experience a new performance environment at The Ark due to the level of supervision required for such a young group, as it certainly added another dimension to the enjoyment of the process for the older children in Group B.

## **6. Evaluative Overview**

This musical project facilitated the creative engagement and freedom of self expression that is identified within the music curriculum,

*"It is a profoundly satisfying area of individual and shared experience, fostering a deep sense of well-being. Music offers lifelong opportunities for the development of imagination, sensitivity, inventiveness, risk-taking and enjoyment."*

**NCCA, Arts Education Curriculum Guidelines – Music**

It also demonstrated how the use of new technology can broaden the child's understanding and experience of music, encouraging active listening, musical playing and meaningful composition. The creative and collaborative opportunities presented in the workshops for musical appreciation and performance, aided the development of personal and social skills within the participating children. These skills are immensely important in the development of any child but offer additional benefits to the development of a child with autism where social interaction and communication is more challenging. The added benefit to the children within the special teaching unit of St Peter's N.S. was in the promotion of turn taking, sharing and group work to aid their integration into the mainstream school system over the coming years.

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The workshop programme demonstrated a creative application of new technology through a relatively cost effective media that the artist had constructed himself. The benefit of the instruments which utilised new technology was that all students regardless of their age or ability could produce a range of unique sounds, strengthening their capacity to express ideas, feelings and experiences through music and composition. Robbie Perry's work with electronic instruments has huge potential for work with students with more profound individual needs as very little movement is required to explore the exciting and unusual sounds and music they produce.

The current usage of Information Communication Technology (ICT) within the classroom can allow children to access instruments which would not otherwise be readily available to them in their own environment. This workshop programme presented a range of unique and unusual instruments to the students which they could not only see and hear but also explore playing themselves.

Within this pilot project the artist was able to introduce children to the fundamentals of musical expression which was enjoyed by all who participated. By building their confidence in their abilities to create basic sounds and compositions, it opened up possibilities for an extension of the work to make greater use of technology in music. The children could explore recording and building on their compositions, take pleasure in listening to themselves performing and extend their musical creativity into new realms through ICT software applications alongside this programme.

Further recommendations for this project would be to explore the potential for small group or one to one facilitation specifically designed to the learning difficulties of the selected groups or individuals. It would also be interesting to explore timetabling the events earlier in the day to observe any emotional effects on the students and their attitude or mood for the remainder of the school day.

The benefits to the curricular learning and personal development of the children involved in this project was strongly demonstrated in the feedback from all those involved. The engagement of a skilled artist, access to range of new technologies, instruments and creative processes, coupled with the support and enthusiasm of the participating school were all key aspects in the successful delivery of this project, not to mention the enthusiasm and talent of the participating students.

Special thanks to: the staff and students of St Peter's National School; Mr Matt Hurley, School Principal; Mr John O'Carroll, Fourth Class Teacher; Miss Maggie McGuirk, Junior and Senior Class Teacher in Special Unit.

Written by Jeanine MacQuarrie  
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## Appendix: Session Plan and Assessment

<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 1, Group A – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b>
	Session 1 of 5

<b>Date</b>	Thursday 14 May 2009
<b>Time</b>	1:15pm – 2pm
<b>Subject</b>	Exploratory and introductory session, allowing children to meet with artist and experiment with the sights and sounds of various instruments.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ environmental</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rattle made from Llama toenails</li> <li>2. Hollow box with flattened nails of different lengths fixed to produce muted piano like sound</li> <li>3. Shaker with beads</li> <li>4. Gong</li> <li>5. Cymbal</li> <li>6. Rain stick</li> <li>7. Trumpet, made from tube and funnel</li> <li>8. Didgeridoo, made from a drain pipe, balloon and mouthpiece</li> <li>9. Bells, made from flower pots suspended on string from a tripod</li> <li>10. Electric Cello and Double Bass, made from spades and plugged in to an amplifier</li> <li>11. Trumpet, made from a straw in front of the children</li> <li>12. Xylophone, made from glass bottles filled with different amounts of water</li> </ol>

### Procedure

The room was arranged with musical instruments on display and cushions set in a semi circle for the children to sit on facing the display. The instruments, facilitator and children were on the same level.

The artist led by introducing each instrument, demonstrating its sound/rhythm and then passing it out to the group. Each child was handed an instrument throughout the demonstration and were given the opportunity to play it themselves.

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A number of the instruments that Robbie introduced had been made from found materials and a couple were instruments that he was able to make in front of the children, such as the bendy straw that when holes were cut into it formed a trumpet, and the didgeridoo which was made from a balloon being stretched over the end of a wide plastic tube.

Once Robbie had introduced all the instruments he allowed the children to individually explore all of them in a free improvisation session. The children enjoyed being able to choose the instrument that they were most interested in trying to play.

In the final 10-15 minutes Robbie ensured that the children had all had an opportunity to play all the instruments that they wished to.

Focus shifted slightly to the balloons that were used to make the didgeridoo but Robbie maintained focus on the musical element of the workshop by showing how a blown up balloon can produce a sound by rubbing it with wet fingers or how a trumpet sound comes out when the air is let out through a small aperture.

The children left the workshop very energised and appearing to be excited about the next workshop.

### **Assessment**

The children were engaged, enthusiastic and participatory throughout the workshop. They didn't demonstrate any apprehension when meeting the artist or seeing the instruments for the first time and were quick to learn the particular technique for each one following a demonstration.

They held focus and eye contact when encouraged to do so. They were observant and vocal in identifying instruments and the sounds they might make.

Gradually as more and more instruments were handed out to the group, the noise level increased and the children began to become more engrossed in the instrument that they had in their hands, rather than the next one being introduced by Robbie.

This resulted in Robbie having to work hard to draw the children's attention back to him and at times it was necessary for the teacher to step in to help regain the focus of the group. The teacher and SNAs were very supportive during the workshop and also regularly acknowledged the achievements of the students when they learnt how to produce sounds from different instruments.

The group were excited and energised by the workshop, standing, clapping and dancing along to sounds and rhythms. Their teacher commented that the afternoon is often a tough time to do productive work with the children as they are often quite lethargic, concentrating on completing academic work in the morning and lagging in the afternoon. She really enjoyed seeing the children so energetic and enjoying themselves at the end of the day.

The children grew in confidence throughout the workshop so that in the free improvisation period they were choosing their own instrument to play and even finding new ways to make sounds from them, such as running a beater along the side of the corrugated tube used for the trumpet as a percussive sound.

The children were interacting with one another, sharing the instruments and the space.

Curricular Links	<p><b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Myself</b>  <i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Developing self-confidence</li> </ul> <p><b>Strand: Myself and others</b>  <i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i></p> <p><b>SCIENCE</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Energy and Forces</b>  <i>Strand unit: Sound</i>  <i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i></p> <p><b>Strand: Materials</b>  <i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i></p> <p><b>Strand: Environmental awareness and care (cross curricular link with Geography)</b>  <i>Strand unit: Caring for my locality</i></p> <p><b>GEOGRAPHY</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Human environments</b>  <i>Strand unit: People and places in other areas (instruments from different parts of the world)</i></p>
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<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 2, Group A – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b>  Session 2 of 5
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<b>Date</b>	Thursday 21 May 2009
<b>Time</b>	1:15pm – 2pm
<b>Subject</b>	Development session, looking at making instruments, exploring sounds and compositions.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> <li>○ emotional</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Straw trumpets, hand chimes. Session recorded with photographs and audio.

### Procedure

The children arrived and sat on the cushions.

The artist produced a bunch of straws and they discussed what straws can be used for. Robbie suggested that it could also be used as a trumpet. One child remembered this idea from the previous week.

With one straw instrument made, they discussed the kind of sound it made; like a trumpet, or an elephant. Robbie compared it to a flute or tin whistle as holes could be added to change the pitch, melodic options.

During the discussion, Robbie was able to make a straw trumpet for each child to form the straw orchestra where all the children played together.

Robbie then introduced a new instrument, hand chimes. These are metal bars tuned to different notes that chime when struck by the hammer attached to them. They are easy to handle and to produce a sound from.

Each child handled a chime, each of which played a different note. They explored what they all sounded like played together and when played on their own. They responded to the different pitches of the chimes, “I love it”, “I don’t like the sound”.

Robbie concluded the session with a new way to play the instruments, like a game of tennis with an imaginary ball.

## Assessment

The children entered the workshop confidently and were friendly and responsive to Robbie.

The technique for playing the straws was not straight-forward but all children followed instructions well and persevered until they managed to master it, displaying a sense of achievement in doing so.

The children were vocal and laughed at the strange sounds coming from their straw orchestra.

The adults in the workshop were involved throughout, giving positive feedback to the students and playing musical instruments themselves.

The children were enthusiastic whenever a new instrument or concept was introduced to the workshop, and were eager to try the technique out themselves. They all left the workshop playing their straw trumpets.

## Curricular Links

### SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)

#### Strand: Myself

*Strand unit: Self-identity*

- Self-awareness
- Developing self-confidence

#### Strand: Myself and others

*Strand unit: Relating to others*

### SCIENCE

#### Strand: Energy and Forces

*Strand unit: Sound*

#### Strand: Materials

*Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials*

#### Strand: Environmental awareness and care (cross curricular link with Geography)

*Strand unit: Caring for my locality*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 3, Group A – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b>  Session 3 of 5
<b>Date</b>	Thursday 28 May 2009
<b>Time</b>	1:15pm – 2pm
<b>Subject</b>	Development of work with hand chimes and introduction of larger percussive instruments.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> <li>○ emotional</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Hand chimes, samba drums, large bass drums, Theremin.

### Procedure

This week the classroom management of the workshop was changed. The cushions for the children to sit on were placed in a circle that included the artist. Then all of the percussive instruments were placed outside of this space behind the artist so that they were not so tempting to reach for when the children entered the space. The hand chimes however were placed in the centre of the circle, and on the arrival of the children, these were handed out.

Reviewing the work from the previous week, Robbie began the session by hearing the chimes played one by one around the circle and then back again. The children then created a more free and improvised composition by playing an imaginary game of tennis, developing on the work of the previous week. The children were then given the opportunity to play with the sounds of a number of different drums. These were quite large and were played with softened beaters.

Robbie used arm signals to ‘conduct’ the group, to start and stop playing at his command. He also used arm movements to control the volume of the playing. He then used his home made trumpet to control the sounds which was more successful at gaining the attention of all the children in the room as some of them had their backs to him whilst playing.

The group began to form a composition by each being assigned a number and playing when this number was called out.

Finally the group were introduced to Robbie's home made Theremin which creates sounds by passing your hands through the sound waves it electronically emits.

### Assessment

The change in the classroom management worked very well, creating a far more inclusive environment and one more conducive to composition and group performance. The children really enjoyed trying out the hand chimes again.

In reviewing the tennis game, the children were given the opportunity to create music in a playful way, and gave each of them the chance to choose how to develop and change the sound of the composition.

They relished the opportunity to freely explore the sounds that they could create on the drums. Quiet sounds were created from tapping them with their fingers, and these developed into louder sounds if they used more fingers, their palm or a beater. The drums allowed for a large release of energy and the noise levels did make it difficult to communicate with the children whilst they were playing. This is where Robbie's skills as a musician proved very helpful to control their playing with another instrument, the home made trumpet. The children followed instructions well and they were engaged throughout the workshop.

The Theremin was introduced at the end of the workshop and was set up at the side of the room. This resulted in it being a bit lost and not all of the children were introduced to it at the same time. It is unfortunate that it didn't have the impact that it could have considering how straight forward a technique it requires to create music with it.

<b>Curricular Links</b>	<p><b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Myself</b>  <i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Developing self-confidence</li> </ul> <p><b>Strand: Myself and others</b>  <i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i></p> <p><b>SCIENCE</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Energy and Forces</b>  <i>Strand unit: Sound</i></p> <p><b>Strand: Materials</b>  <i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i></p> <p><b>Strand: Environmental awareness and care (cross curricular link with Geography)</b>  <i>Strand unit: Caring for my locality</i></p>
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<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 4, Group A – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b> Session 4 of 5
<b>Date</b>	Thursday 4 June 2009
<b>Time</b>	1:15pm – 2pm
<b>Subject</b>	Development of listening and performance skills, using percussion and voice.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ environmental</li> <li>○ vocal</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Hand chimes, percussion instruments including rattles, tambourines, cymbals, voice and some home made instruments. Session recorded with photographs and audio.

### Procedure

This week's session continued to develop the work with hand chimes, and using arm signals to control the group like an orchestra. Alongside the chimes the children also worked with their voices repeating back a note in response to the artist.

The children were eager to explore all the instruments on offer once again, so a range of percussion instruments were used, as well as some instruments created from a range of items including foil and plastic tubes to make a kind of kazoo.

As the noise levels grew focus was brought back to the workshop and the instruments were put down. The artist concluded the session by asking the children to imagine and make sounds of quiet animals like a mouse or an ant.

### Assessment

The children clearly enjoy working with the hand chime instruments, but when offered an alternative they are easily distracted by it.

The freedom of expression that the children are allowed can result in the noise level getting out of hand, and puts a large pressure on the facilitator and in this case the teacher to implement methods to bring focus back to the workshop.

But Ms McGuirk commented at the end of the workshop how much the children enjoy attending them, and anticipate the session, knowing that 'Thursday is music day'.

<b>Curricular Links</b>	<p><b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Myself</b> <i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-awareness</li><li>• Developing self-confidence</li></ul> <p><b>Strand: Myself and others</b> <i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i></p> <p><b>SCIENCE</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Energy and Forces</b> <i>Strand unit: Sound</i></p> <p><b>Strand: Materials</b> <i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i></p>
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<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 5, Group A – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b> Session 5 of 5
<b>Date</b>	Friday 12 June 2009
<b>Time</b>	1:15pm – 2pm
<b>Subject</b>	Conclusion of the project involving experimenting with the textures and sounds of simple, found materials like paper.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ environmental</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> <li>○ emotional</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Hand chimes, Cajon, Home-made synthesiser. Session recorded with audio and photographs.

### Procedure

This was the final session with Group A, where Robbie returned to the concept of anything found, recycled and moulded can be used to make music.

With different thicknesses and textures of paper and card he guided the children through an experimentation of sounds; ripping, scratching, drumming, and using it like an amplifier.

A long roll of cellophane like coloured plastic was stretched along the line of children and they collectively experimented with the noises that they could create.

Robbie concluded the session by bringing out the now very familiar percussive instruments which all the children enjoyed playing again. He also invited each child to come up to the front and lead the group in a rhythm from the Cajon.

### Assessment

This final session reviewed a number of the elements of the past 4 weeks and provided a playful and enjoyable conclusion to the project.

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The children demonstrated their knowledge of many of the musical techniques they had learnt by finding different ways to create sounds with the found materials.

The call and response session with the Cajon was a great opportunity for each child to perform as an individual and for all of their classmates. They all enjoyed the freedom of expression and the chance to be the leader of the group.

<b>Curricular Links</b>	<b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b>  <b>Strand: Myself</b> <i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-awareness</li><li>• Developing self-confidence</li></ul> <b>Strand: Myself and others</b> <i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i>  <b>SCIENCE</b>  <b>Strand: Energy and Forces</b> <i>Strand unit: Sound</i>  <b>Strand: Materials</b> <i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i>  <b>Strand: Environmental awareness and care (cross curricular link with Geography)</b> <i>Strand unit: Caring for my locality</i>
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<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 1, Group B – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b>  Session 1 of 6
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<b>Date</b>	Thursday 14 May 2009
<b>Time</b>	2pm – 3pm
<b>Subject</b>	Exploratory and introductory session, allowing children to meet with artist and experiment with the sights and sounds of various instruments.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ body percussion</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peruvian rattle made from Llama toenails</li> <li>2. Hollow box with flattened nails of different lengths fixed to produce muted piano like sound</li> <li>3. Shaker with beads</li> <li>4. Gong</li> <li>5. Cymbal</li> <li>6. Rain stick</li> <li>7. Trumpet, made from tube and funnel</li> <li>8. Didgeridoo, made from a drain pipe, balloon and mouthpiece</li> <li>9. Bells, made from flower pots suspended on string from a tripod</li> <li>10. Electric Cello and Double Bass, made from spades and plugged in to an amplifier</li> <li>11. Trumpet, made from a straw in front of the children</li> <li>12. Xylophone, made from glass bottles filled with different amounts of water</li> </ol>

### Procedure

The room was re-set with the display of musical instruments and cushions set in a semi circle for the children to sit on facing the display.

While the group waited to come in to the workshop room, I observed them doing some improvised body percussion as a class group. I informed Robbie of this should it be a means of encouraging the students in performance and composition.

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As the students entered Robbie was playing a range of rhythms on the melodic and percussive instruments on display. Once all the students were seated he came to a stop and introduced himself.

As with the younger group Robbie led the workshop by introducing each instrument, demonstrating its sound/rhythm and then passing it out to the group.

With this older group, Robbie was able to explore in more detail and more technically the way the sounds were made by different instruments.

He demonstrated an instrument that he hadn't shown the younger group. This was like chimes or a glockenspiel and consisted of different lengths of thick metal suspended across two inflated modelling balloons. The students were quick to identify that the air in the balloons allowed the bars to vibrate and resonate, whereas laying them on a flat surface would prevent this. He built on the demonstration of amplification by using the technical amplifiers used for the spade cello, and bass.

The instruments made from found materials captured the imaginations of the children and they started to discuss instruments that they had created themselves, and at this stage also demonstrated the body percussion that they all play at.

The session developed into a free improvisation session and with more students and more confidence the noise level was considerably higher than in the earlier session. However the age of the group meant that Robbie was better able to regain their focus when needed.

The students were asked if they had a good time when leaving the workshop to which they all answered yes, and Robbie pre-empted the content of the next workshop by suggesting that next time they might put the sounds they had explored in to a piece of music.

## Assessment

The students were engaged and responsive throughout the workshop.

Robbie was particularly impressed at how intelligently they approached the workshops and any discussions.

They were confident in making suggestions, sharing ideas and creating sounds.

<b>Curricular Links</b>	<b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b>  <b>Strand: Myself</b> <i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-awareness</li><li>• Developing self-confidence</li></ul> <i>Strand unit: Making decisions</i>  <b>Strand: Myself and others</b> <i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicating</li></ul>
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## **SCIENCE**

**Strand: Energy and Forces**

*Strand unit: Sound*

**Strand: Materials**

*Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials*

**Strand: Environmental awareness and care**

*Strand unit: Environmental awareness*

## **GEOGRAPHY**

**Strand: Human environments**

*Strand unit: People and other lands (introduction to instruments from other countries)*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 2, Group B – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b>  Session 2 of 6
<b>Date</b>	Thursday 21 May 2009
<b>Time</b>	2pm – 3pm
<b>Subject</b>	Making simple instruments from found materials, working on building soundscapes through group performance.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ environmental</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Straw trumpets, hand chimes and home made versions of the instrument using metal bars and thin drainpipe. A number of the musical instruments that had been introduced in the first session, melodic and percussive. Session recorded with photographs and audio.

### Procedure

As with the younger group, Robbie started the session with the construction of a straw trumpet orchestra. As this group were older, they were more able to construct the instruments themselves.

The group were introduced to pitch and how this could be altered by adding more holes to the trumpet and either covering or uncovering them with their fingers to change the sound.

The second half of the workshop was devoted to introducing the hand chime instruments as well as some home made versions. These were made from a small piece of drainpipe split long ways in half to make half a cylinder; two rubber bands stretched over at each end; and then a metal bar was suspended over these so it could resonate in the cradle of the cut drainpipe.

The students played one by one around the group to hear the different notes/range of pitch. They were asked to concentrate on the rhythm that they were playing to keep it steady and consider the makings of a composition by choosing the order that they were played in.

For the conclusion of the workshops, all of the instruments that they were introduced to the past week were brought out to combine those sounds into an improvised playing session.

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## Assessment

In spite of the fact that this group were more able to construct the straw instruments themselves, they found it far more difficult to master the technique to play them. However they all persevered and were very pleased when they did produce a sound.

A number of musical terms were introduced and discussed practically in this workshop such as pitch, volume, amplification, rhythm and composition. There was a great benefit in using these terms in an environment where they could be demonstrated and explored on instruments of the children's own making as well as on existing instruments.

Robbie commented again on how enthusiastically the group are responding to the workshops, describing the students as "brilliant" and "exceptional" in their attitude and creativity.

Curricular Links	<b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b>
	<b>Strand: Myself</b>
	<i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-awareness</li><li>• Developing self-confidence</li></ul>
	<i>Strand unit: Making decisions</i>
	<b>Strand: Myself and others</b>
	<i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicating</li></ul>
	<b>SCIENCE</b>
	<b>Strand: Energy and Forces</b>
	<i>Strand unit: Sound</i>
	<b>Strand: Materials</b>
	<i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i>
	<b>Strand: Environmental awareness and care</b>
	<i>Strand unit: Environmental awareness</i>

<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 3, Group B – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b> Session 3 of 6
<b>Date</b>	Thursday 28 May 2009
<b>Time</b>	2pm – 3pm
<b>Subject</b>	Focused group work looking at dynamics, rhythms and composition.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ body percussion</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Hand chimes and clapping; number of the musical instruments that had been introduced in the first session, melodic and percussive. Session recorded with photographs and audio.

### Procedure

The group sat in a circle and were each given a hand chime or a home made version. They reviewed the exercise of the previous week by playing each of the instruments one by one, all together and then changing the direction of the sound.

Robbie introduced a method of controlling the direction of the sound by hitting a double note on the hand chime.

Then all the instruments were put down and they swapped to exploring this method but with claps. It was easier to control via this method and a definite rhythm began to develop in the sound.

Robbie followed this with a simple call and response exercise where the leader claps out a rhythm and the rest of the group respond.

Finally the students were able to enjoy some free improvisation on the range of instruments Robbie had with him, including some large samba drums.



## Assessment

When the hand chimes were being given out a number of children had picked a favourite note from the previous week and were keen to play the same one.

They all enjoyed the power of being able to control the direction of the sound around the circle whether through clapping or playing the hand chimes and collaborated in groups to maintain a particular tune or rhythm together or to send it in another direction. Within this exercise they also had to be very aware and considerate of one another so that everyone had the opportunity to be involved.

There was a great deal of concentration and focus required for this session, and all of the students responded well to it. However there was definitely a lift in the atmosphere of the session when at the end the range of instruments were brought in and a freer reign was allowed for them to explore and play the instruments once again.

By this stage all of the students are free of any trepidation to either try out an instrument or perform for others, and particular musical talents are beginning to shine through in certain students.

Curricular Links	<b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b>
	<b>Strand: Myself</b> <i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-awareness</li><li>• Developing self-confidence</li></ul> <i>Strand unit: Making decisions</i>
	<b>Strand: Myself and others</b> <i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicating</li></ul>
	<b>SCIENCE</b>
	<b>Strand: Energy and Forces</b> <i>Strand unit: Sound</i>
	<b>Strand: Materials</b> <i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i>
	<b>Strand: Environmental awareness and care</b> <i>Strand unit: Environmental awareness</i>

<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 4, Group B – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b> Session 4 of 6
<b>Date</b>	Thursday 4 June 2009
<b>Time</b>	2pm – 3pm
<b>Subject</b>	Building on rhythmic work with clapping from previous week; introducing the wind bow and the option to make them individually for a performance demonstration in The Ark in the final week.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ body percussion</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Clapping, hand chimes and wind bows made from bamboo, ribbon and a balloon. Session recorded with photographs and audio.

### Procedure

The session picked up from the work they had been doing in maintaining steady rhythm and changing the dynamic of a piece through a clapping circle.

The group were then split up into smaller groups to try and maintain different rhythms and tempos in their separate groups but all at the same time.

Instead of using claps, each student was then given a hand chime to use their groups and different sounds to form a composition.

Robbie used the second half of the workshop to introduce an instrument made from found materials called a wind bow. It was made from a long piece of bamboo which had a length of synthetic ribbon tied between both ends. An inflated balloon was then inserted between the ribbon and bamboo to make the ribbon taut. When this instrument is swung through the air at a certain angle, it catches the wind and creates a humming note. The pitch of this note will change depending on the tightness of the ribbon and where the balloon is positioned along it.

Robbie demonstrated how it was made and how it created a sound and the children responded very enthusiastically, likening it to a light sabre or samurai sword.

Workstations were then set up with the artist and an assistant for the children to create their own wind bow in pairs or small groups.

### Assessment

By splitting off into separate groups, the students were able to demonstrate their confidence in maintaining the rhythm in their section. They had to assume responsibility to ensure that the rhythm remained steady and maintain a steady rhythm throughout. They demonstrated strong listening and concentration skills and were focused throughout.

The group were very inspired by the possibility of creating their own wind bow musical instrument, and also very excited at the thought of going to The Ark in the final week.

The description of how the wind bow created a sound encouraged the students to consider musical terms such as amplification and pitch.

A couple of the students who didn't have to rush out to catch a bus home stayed in the space to have a go at trying out the wind bow again.

Curricular Links	<b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b>
	<b>Strand: Myself</b> <i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-awareness</li><li>• Developing self-confidence</li></ul> <i>Strand unit: Making decisions</i>
	<b>Strand: Myself and others</b> <i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicating</li></ul>
	<b>SCIENCE</b>
	<b>Strand: Energy and Forces</b> <i>Strand unit: Sound</i>  <b>Strand: Materials</b> <i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i>  <b>Strand: Environmental awareness and care</b> <i>Strand unit: Environmental awareness</i>

<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 5, Group B – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b> Session 5 of 6
<b>Date</b>	Friday 12 June 2009
<b>Time</b>	2pm – 3pm
<b>Subject</b>	Exploring further development with group composition and performance. Exercise in call and response with instruments.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ vocal</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ singing</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> <li>○ emotional</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Hand chimes, Cajon, Home-made synthesiser. Session recorded with audio and photographs.

### Procedure

This week's session began with playing hand chimes, one after the other, as a whole group and playing at changing directions with a double beat.

The students were also split into different sized groups and conducted like an orchestra.

By splitting into groups of different numbers and playing at different rhythms, tempos and with different melodies, Robbie was able to demonstrate how their unique composition was repeating within the small groups and then in a larger loop and less regularly throughout the room.

Robbie then introduced an exercise of call and response with rhythms drummed out on the Cajon (a wooden, hollow box which the player sits on and drums out rhythms by hand).

He initiated the exercise, drumming out a rhythm, the 'call', and waiting for the 'response', the rhythm being repeated back on the hand chimes, or clapping from the students.

Each student then had the opportunity to lead the exercise, one by one around the circle.

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A range of rhythms, tempos and dynamics were explored and it allowed the students to express individual talents as well as enjoy the shared experience of the performance.

Finally Robbie introduced a small box attached to an amplifier which he had constructed himself. It had two levers on the top one which changed the pitch of the melody and one altered the quality of the sound producing a sound like a synthesiser. The instrument was passed around the circle for each student to experiment with, and the other students were invited to accompany the lead performer with the hand chimes.

### **Assessment**

This week's session witnessed a very inspiring and enjoyable event.

The students worked very hard during the hand chime group playing, concentrating on listening to the others in their group and appreciating the changes that were occurring in the sound produced by the whole group.

They were very excited by call and response exercise and relished the opportunity to perform in front of their peers.

One student in particular shone in this exercise (this is the student in this older group with aspergers syndrome). Throughout the project he has demonstrated an enthusiasm for music and a talent for rhythm when playing instruments, particularly percussive instruments. However he is prone to distraction or to retreating into himself and his SNA attended each session with him to help him maintain focus on the task in hand.

During his turn to lead the group, his musical skills were demonstrated to the fullest and to the enjoyment and encouragement of the rest of the group who described him as "the best", "deadly" and as having "fast hands".

His performance was celebrated throughout with everyone clapping along, and him becoming more excited and animated by everyone's reactions, regularly standing up, jumping, and becoming more vocal and laughing.

This was the most animated he had been throughout the whole process and his teacher even described the event as a "miracle" in his achievement as it really brought him out of his own world and he "held the room".

The hand held synthesiser was an interesting instrument for the students to work with as it was very simple for them to manipulate and form a range of sounds from. The unusual electronic sounds it emitted fascinated the boys and had them imagining sci-fi and thriller or horror movies.

It is clear to see a lot of potential in an instrument like this to use with people with more profound physical disabilities where movement and dexterity is more of a problem.

Curricular Links	<p><b>SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Myself</b>  <i>Strand unit: Self-identity</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-awareness</li> <li>• Developing self-confidence</li> </ul> <i>Strand unit: Making decisions</i></p> <p><b>Strand: Myself and others</b>  <i>Strand unit: Relating to others</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating</li> </ul></p> <p><b>SCIENCE</b></p> <p><b>Strand: Energy and Forces</b>  <i>Strand unit: Sound</i></p> <p><b>Strand: Materials</b>  <i>Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials</i></p>
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<b>Title</b>	<b>Week 6, Group B – Robbie Perry Musical Workshop at The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children</b> Session 6 of 6
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<b>Date</b>	Thursday 18 June 2009
<b>Time</b>	12:30pm – 1:15pm
<b>Subject</b>	Final workshop session held in The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children. A chance to review a number of the elements that had been enjoyed and successful throughout the six week process, including group composition and performance, call and response, and construction and performance with wind bows.
<b>Strand</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Musical concepts</li> <li>2. Listening and Responding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exploring sounds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ vocal</li> <li>○ instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• responding to music <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ talking about</li> <li>○ movement</li> <li>○ singing</li> <li>○ playing instruments</li> <li>○ emotional</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• playing instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Composing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvising and creating</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Equipment used</b>	Inside of a piano frame, beaters, hand chimes, voices, box guitar/sitar and balloon wind bows. Session recorded with audio and photographs.

### Procedure

The large, open workshop space was set up with a small seating area for teachers, Ark staff and guests to sit and observe the workshop.

The workshop/performance area was created with a circle of cushions surrounding the inside of a piano frame.

Robbie demonstrated the weird and wonderful sounds that could be created by using beaters with rubber ends to hit, or gently scrape the metal strings. The students took turns to explore these sounds, the different pitch and volume of the strings, the rhythmic possibilities of the wooden frame, and the echo effect of speaking and shouting into the frame.

Robbie then led the students in a composition using their voices. Whilst maintaining a steady count of 1, 2, 3, 4, he invited the students to choose a number, and on each of those counts to make a

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short sound. The soundscape grew into a repeating phrase of grunts, shouts, squeaks and words. The group named this composition soundscape a, and then repeated the process to create soundscape b, with a different sound on their chosen beat. Once both compositions were complete, Robbie challenged the students to remember both of them and then recall them and swap between them on his command. He withdrew his counts so that the students followed the natural rhythm that the exercise created.

A new created instrument was then introduced, a rectangular wooden box with one open side which sat propped up facing the musician, and strings attached down the outer two sides. The strings were each tuned to a different note, and the hollow centre allowed the sound to resonate out.

Each student came up individually to play the instrument, either strumming it with their fingers or hitting the strings with beaters. Hand chimes were passed out to the students surrounding the central performer. The group then embarked on a call and response exercise, with the circle of observers repeating the rhythm and style of the box guitar/sitar player.

The students then performed with the hand chimes in an improvised tennis game, an exercise they had explored at the start of the six week process.

The group then cleared the space to allow for the construction of the wind bows which had been started 2 weeks previously. Bows had been prepared for each student with the ribbon attached. The students added the balloon at a chosen point to allow for a particular sound to come through and each found space to play with the sounds they could create.

## **Assessment**

This session acted as a lovely conclusion to the six week project, encapsulating many elements of the process including; musical exploration and experimentation; composing; performing and instrument invention and creation.

By hosting the session in The Ark's workshop space, the students enjoyed the added excitement of being in a new creative space and demonstrating new skills to the guests that were present.

The students once again expressed enjoyment and interest in the new unusual instruments bring presented to them each week. This week the piano frame and box guitar/sitar fascinated them, and all were eager to explore the instruments and all demonstrated confidence in attempting to make a sound from them, develop a rhythm or create a tune. All of the students were eager to experiment with the way in which they could create a sound on the instruments. Following on from their Japanese activity day in the school the previous week, one child used chopsticks to play the box guitar/sitar.

In creating the soundscapes the students were in control of the pitch, volume and nature of the sound that they were creating. They had to be aware of rhythm and timing to ensure that their involvement was consistent and allowed the phrase to regularly repeat. It evoked skills in listening, concentration and self expression, and resulted in a recognisable sense of enjoyment as the composition grew in surprising and fun ways.

The session ended in a very playful and enjoyable way as the students constructed and performed with their wind bows. They required the space and freedom that The Ark workshop allowed and it created an amazing atmosphere of sounds and colour to watch them.



**Curricular  
Links**

**SOCIAL, PERSONAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (SPHE)**

**Strand: Myself**

*Strand unit: Self-identity*

- Self-awareness
- Developing self-confidence

*Strand unit: Making decisions*

**Strand: Myself and others**

*Strand unit: Relating to others*

- Communicating

**SCIENCE**

**Strand: Energy and Forces**

*Strand unit: Sound*

**Strand: Materials**

*Strand unit: Properties and characteristics of materials*

**Strand: Environmental awareness and care**

*Strand unit: Environmental awareness*