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Understanding the Cultural Value of In Harmony-Sistema England

AHRC Cultural Value Project

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Understanding the Cultural Value of In Harmony-Sistema England

Executive Summary

This research project was designed to explore questions of cultural value in relation to the schools music project In Harmony-Sistema England (hereafter IHSE[1]). Our core research focus has been upon the ways in which children, their teachers and tutors, and their families understand the value of their participation in IHSE initiatives. The project engaged with three case studies of IHSE initiatives (based in Norwich, Telford and Newcastle) and qualitative data was gathered with primary school children, school staff, parents and IHSE musicians in all three cases. Overall, we found a considerable disparity between the way in which the cultural value of IHSE was articulated by adults and primary school pupils. While there was a broad tendency for children to see value in 'instrumental' terms, adult stakeholders were more willing and able to attribute 'intrinsic' benefits to children's IHSE participation. While children's responses to IHSE participation (our primary research focus) were varied in terms of the value attributed, underpinning them were a series of discernible trends which appeared to be principally informed by levels of parental support and validation for IHSE instrument learning from the home; children's broader levels of school-commitment (IHSE was seen by many as akin to a school lesson); expressed ease in musical instrument learning (leading to progression within projects) and the nature and extent of children's pre-existing investments and engagements with popular musical forms. We found limited, if any, evidence of variations in the value children attributed to IHSE – despite considerable variation in the way it was delivered, funded and staffed - with the exception of children at one school, where their participation was wholly voluntary. In significant regards, the ways which children variously understood cultural value in relation to IHSE were informed by both the degree to which its frames of cultural reference resonated with their own or else the relative presence or absence, in their lives, of significant others who perceived value in it.

[1] At the time of writing, the ACE/DfE funded 'In Harmony' programme is made up of the following six projects: In Harmony Telford & Stoke-on-Trent, In Harmony Nottingham, In Harmony NewcastleGateshead, In Harmony Leeds, In Harmony Lambeth and In Harmony Liverpool. 'Sistema England' is a national charity, which distinguished its name from 'In Harmony' early in 2014 in order to make clear the distinction between its supportive role in relation to El Sistema-inspired activity, and the work of the 'In Harmony' programme. This report nevertheless retains the term 'IHSE' as shorthand to refer to our three chosen case studies.

Researchers and Project Partners

Researchers: Mark Rimmer, John Street and Tom Phillips (all at UEA)
Project Partners: Sistema in Norwich, NORCA, Norwich Primary Academy, Catton Grove School, In Harmony NewcastleGateshead, Hawthorn Primary School, In Harmony Telford & Stoke, Old Park Primary School.

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While we have made every effort to represent the opinions and statements of our interviewees faithfully, we would note that the fault for any misinterpretation, misrepresentation or inaccurate attribution rests solely with this report's authors. Responsibility for the accuracy of any of the claims made and conclusions drawn here also rests with this report's authors.

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1. Overview and Aims

This research was designed to explore questions of cultural value in relation to the schools music project In Harmony-Sistema England (hereafter IHSE). Our core research focus has been upon the ways in which children, their teachers and tutors, and their families understand the value of their participation in IHSE initiatives.

Our concern reflects directly that of the Cultural Value Project in that we examine 'how people experience various forms of art and culture in different contexts' (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2014: 123). Rather than focus on the 'secondary impacts' - benefits on health and wellbeing , or economic and industrial performance - that are typically used to 'value' culture, the Cultural Value Project was established to move beyond the dichotomies of the 'intrinsic and instrumental'. In this same spirit, our project has sought to establish the cultural value experienced by the different stakeholders and participants in IHSE, and to ask how and when this value differs for different forms of IHSE and for different groups of people.

IHSE is a fascinating example because, where most attempts to link music to forms of social good have employed popular music forms (as part of an effort to appeal to the disadvantaged young people with whom they work), IHSE adopts an orchestral model and uses classical and folk music forms. We studied the adoption of IHSE in three locations in England and in four primary schools. We witnessed the teaching of music within school hours, the after-school clubs, and the performances that children gave, all as part of IHSE. We spoke to over 100 children in Years 2-6, their teachers, their tutors and their parents. We compared the different forms taken by IHSE. In all of this, our attention was upon how the multiple experiences of IHSE were valued.

We used two working hypotheses:

1. Understanding the value of IHSE is best achieved through an appreciation of the cultural values involved in individuals' experience of participation in the programme, rather than by reference to measurement of 'objective' social indicators;
2. The outcomes achieved by different projects are likely to vary according to a range of factors relevant to them (such as, for instance, the forms of project leadership and delivery, the schools involved, the partners – whether they are community music projects or orchestras, as well as a number of locally-inflected factors).

Emerging from these were two central research questions:

RQ1: How do participants understand the cultural value of their participation and how might this understanding contribute to a more general account of 'cultural value'?

RQ2: In what ways is that value dependent on the activities undertaken by different kinds of IHSE project lead organisation and their project participants?

2. Research Project Background

The approach and philosophy behind IHSE derives from the activities of the National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras and Choirs of Venezuela – known as *El Sistema* – that began in the 1970s with the aim of creating youth orchestras in deprived areas, in the hope that this would help to combat the social problems that blighted these areas. Its apparent success was noted by authorities in Europe (not always central government, and not always the same department of local or central government). Today music education projects modelled after the Venezuelan programme have been established in more than 25 countries. Following the National Plan for Music Education (DfE 2011a) the British Government announced that the IHSE programme would be expanded across England (from 3 to 6 projects nationally) with matched funding from the Department for Education and Arts Council England.

This initiative was a key plank of New Labour's cultural policy, which while having a focus upon promoting the economic achievements of the creative industries, also saw culture as a vehicle of social and political change, allied with the Creative Partnerships and New Deal for Musicians (see Cloonan 2007). A similar theme has continued under the Coalition, where advocates of the Big Society (Norman 2010) have also stressed the potential social value of musical activity (DfE 2011b).

Underlying these public policy initiatives is the evidence and arguments presented in work from academics and researchers (Jermyn 2004; Bunting 2007; Hallam 2010). Within psychology, these links have long been made, but it has been the more recent work in political science/sociology that appears to have caught the attention of policy makers. Robert Putnam's Bowling Alone (2000) is a key text here. Putnam suggests that the collective performance of music has positive effects upon social capital and civic engagement.

Under New Labour, there was a competitive bidding process (in England and Wales) to deliver IHSE initiatives, with a separate scheme in Scotland. While the pilot schemes have all reported on their activities, there has been very little attempt to analyse systematically whether and how IHSE projects have achieved the outcomes attributed to them and how these relate to issues of cultural value. The only scholarly work to engage with 'El Sistema'-modelled initiatives in the UK to date has focused upon relations between researchers and project partners within a 'knowledge exchange' programme (Allan et al, 2010) and the challenges projects face in producing evidence of impact (Allan 2010). Or it has focused on single case studies – for example the Institute of Cultural Capital report (2011) on Liverpool.

One reason for this apparent gap in our knowledge about IHSE derives from the very real problem of assessing the value of its cultural dimensions. The distinctions often made between the 'intrinsic' and the 'instrumental' outcomes of cultural activity have handicapped attempts to engage meaningfully with questions about the value of culture (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2014). One way out of the impasse is offered by the approach advocated by Knell & Taylor (2011) which seeks 'to make these different "logics", and their relative weight and inter-relationships,

more distinct and transparent' (2011: 14). Knell and Taylor argue that all claims about the intrinsic benefits of cultural activities necessarily 'reflect views about the good and healthy life' (ibid: 16). In terms of public policy then, the authors suggest, 'instrumental rationales drive intrinsic claims for the arts' (ibid: 17). What is therefore required to move the debate forward, is an appreciation of the distinction between, on the one hand, 'public good instrumentalism' (i.e., what has, until now, been seen as 'instrumentalism' proper) and, on the other, 'artistic instrumentalism' (2011: 18), a concept which 'would embrace excellence in terms of raising artistic standards and a better understanding of the value of the artistic experience for producer and consumer' (ibid).

But while the adoption of such an approach helps to advance the process of conceptual clarification, it still begs question of appropriate methodology. Our own suggestion was that, rather than seeking economic proxies or forms of Contingent Valuation to understand the value of culture, there may be considerable scope in exploring the perceptions of value that the participants in IHSE themselves use (and perhaps share) in understanding the nature of their activity and its outcomes. Furthermore, rather than trying to establish the general value of IHSE initiatives, we decided to consider the *variations* (if any) between its implementation and participants' perceptions of cultural value. This comparative approach would allow us to comment on how perceptions of value vary in line with divergent forms of organisation, funding levels, various aspects of project partnership and leadership as well as a range of other practical and locally-inflected factors as they impinge upon the delivery of IHSE initiatives.

In summary, our review of the background to, and literature about, IHSE suggested that our two RQs addressed directly the issue of how and when 'cultural value' is experienced.

Research methods

Our first RQ required us to see how participants in the IHSE schemes understood, talked about and valued their participation. Put simply and crudely: what value do they place on their involvement (or, in the case of teachers/tutors, parents and guardians, on the involvement of those for whom they are responsible). Such information, we suggested, was best derived from semi-structured interviews with key actors (pupils, tutors, parents and teachers), supplemented by a limited number of focus groups (with parents and tutors) and by observation of classes and performances.

We were aware that enabling respondents to articulate their experience of cultural value was never going to be an easy task, and an especially difficult one with children. We took advice from a Professor of Education at UEA with extensive experience of primary school research. As a result, we devised an interview scheme in which our respondents were asked to rank different forms of cultural and social activity in terms of the value they offered. We used photographic prompts, and asked them to comment on their choices. The interviews covered a range of general activities (such as cycling, watching TV, playing with friends, etc.), as well as specifically musical activities and associated tastes, ending with IHSE activities (practicing, performing, etc.). The interview schedule was also designed to elicit how the children distinguished between

things that they 'liked' doing, and those things that were 'good for them to do'. This was a specific attempt to probe how 'cultural value' was conceived and understood by the children.

The interviews were recorded, and the results analysed in terms of the themes that emerged. These themes were themselves identified through research group discussion. Our primary concern was less with the rankings and more with the ways in which 'cultural value' was identified and articulated in relation to IHSE, and in comparison to other valued activities. We were also sensitive to differences in these articulations as they appeared to correlate to age and gender.

The interviews and focus groups with parents, teachers and tutors took a more familiar form. These were also semi-structured, and were designed to elicit understandings of the cultural value attributed to participation in IHSE.

Our second research question, which asked whether variations in the experience cultural valuations was dependent on structural features of the programme, was addressed through the use of three locations and four schools. The three locations – Norwich (2 schools), Telford (1 school) and Newcastle (1 school) – allowed us to compare variants of the IHSE scheme. The difference included levels and sources of funding, place of IHSE within the curriculum and after-school activities, and the type and role of the partners.

Our method involved comparison between the responses given by the children and others in the different locations and formats. We were concerned to see whether discernible differences emerged between the articulation of cultural value and the particular arrangements in each of the case studies.

By the use of a case study approach and the combination of interview and focus groups, we have been able to produce a database with which it has been possible to analyse: a) the language and terms in which cultural value is expressed; and b) the possible sources of variation in this value.

3. Project Case Studies

In the following section we sketch the backgrounds to the three IHSE initiatives we studied, and the arrangements made by the schools to accommodate them. The intention behind the selection of these case studies was to enable us to address our second research question. This asked whether understandings of cultural value (in relation to IHSE) varied according to such factors as the way in which the initiative was delivered, how it was funded, and with whom the schools were partnered.

In Harmony NewcastleGateshead

The Newcastle-Gateshead project is run by The Sage Gateshead, whose mission is 'to entertain, involve and inspire' [www.sagegateshead.com] through music and creative events. Such values are achieved through initiatives such as the Royal Northern Sinfonia and a thriving Young Musicians' Programme (YMP) – each housed within the Sage itself. The orchestral contacts and prior expertise in music pedagogy provided by these initiatives made taking on a provision such as IHSE a good match for the values of the organisation. A commitment to a close, sustained relationship with the partner school meant that proximity to the Sage Gateshead was an essential criterion. Whilst a potential partnership with the Sage was a competitive process, ultimately Hawthorn Primary School in Elswick – 2 miles away – was approached.

Elswick is a deprived area of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and was part of the Newcastle New Deal for Communities in 2000, which filtered money into the area until 2010. The school itself was listed as the 22nd most deprived school in the country on the 2007 Tax Credit Deprivation Indicator. There are currently 196 pupils on the roll, with nearly two thirds eligible for free school meals. The school's readiness for a sustained commitment to the IHSE project was, as noted by Sage Gateshead staff, something of no little importance within the partnership decision-making process:

> We didn't go for the building or the awards…we went for *School Head* and her staff. Because they were literally going "Yes, yes, please can we…we need this and the reason we need it is this". You know, so we went for passionate, committed, skilled senior leadership and wider school staff and board of governors (Staff member, Sage Gateshead)

> Music's always been something that's very dear to my heart. The Deputy has always sung in choirs and so has the Business Manager you know, so it just so happens that we're people who are interested in music. So I knew about El Sistema and all that, so as soon as those words were mentioned I got extremely excited (Senior staff member, Hawthorn Primary)

Prior to the arrival of the IHSE initiative, music provision at Hawthorn took the form of teachers leading singing in classrooms, and a visiting peripatetic music specialist who visited for

approximately three hours per week. Indicative of Hawthorn's commitment to the IHSE programme, the structure of the school week was altered in order to accommodate it:

> The project works in a kind of intensive way within the school day and the actual time that children spend having music learning is dependent on which key stage they are in…Key Stage One have their half-hour small group lesson and two hours' worth of ensemble. And then each week Key Stage Two…have a half-hour lesson and three hours of ensemble a week…and Reception have…[four] half-hour musicianship lessons a week as well (Staff member, Sage Gateshead)

In an attempt to best accommodate the initiative within the school week, the school day was extended by half an hour from Monday to Thursday, and reduced by two hours on a Friday. This also ensured that what were previously voluntary after-school sessions now became mandatory for all pupils.

IHSE sessions take place in numerous parts of the school: classrooms, the main hall, library as well as a dedicated 'Music Cabin', the construction of which was funded by playwright Lee Hall and musician Sting – prominent celebrities with ties to the local area. Yet logistically, music delivery can be hard to manage; the warren-like structure of the school meaning space can be an issue with orchestral instruments being maneuvered around by pupils:

> There's just so many children and things flowing backwards and forwards through the corridors…the layout of the school…doesn't lend itself very well to children moving smoothly through school at the best of times but when they're carrying double basses and things it's [very difficult]! (Senior staff member, Hawthorn Primary)

IHSE sessions are delivered by a team of 10 tutors, each specialist players (with formal music learning backgrounds) for whom IHSE is just one facet of their day-to-day tuition responsibilities in the North East. The introduction of a large team of new faces into the school meant that a bedding-in process was necessary in order for Hawthorn and Sage Gateshead staff to cohesively work together:

> I'd like to think that we're one big team. I think one of the things that we've learnt is communication. One of the big things that we've had to learn to do is to say "Right, we are not two separate teams", that we have to be a team together. And so that's been a learning process for us all, which is still ongoing (Staff member, Hawthorn Primary)

The relationship between Hawthorn and Sage Gateshead staff was thereby reported to us as fruitful and beneficial to pupils' learning. In addition, the staff at Hawthorn School – from teachers to administrators – have been encouraged to take up and learn instruments alongside pupils. The school has also hired a tutor from the Sage Gateshead in order to establish a staff choir, reemphasising their dedication to cultivating a musical culture within Hawthorn:

> People took some cajoling…if music isn't your thing, then why would you want to learn to play a musical instrument? But we felt it was very important, as does In Harmony, because if you are in the same situation as the children…you forget as a teacher that it's really hard learning a new skill and we felt it was really important that the teachers learnt that new skill alongside the children to give the kids some sense of leadership in it I suppose. So for the children to see that actually adults can learn new skills as well and yes, if the adults are struggling well yeah, that's how it is when you're learning something new (Senior staff member, Hawthorn Primary)

In this way the IHSE initiative was adopted as something of a holistic experience for the school, and this was seen as particularly important in encouraging pupils to approach their instrument learning with enthusiasm. Given the projects partnership with the Sage Gateshead, pupils have also had the opportunity to perform there, as well as attending other music events, with the school being given free tickets to certain events in order to encourage parents attendance.

> [We] put on a range of visits, so the whole school got to visit the building here and get a tour around it and meet people (Staff member, Sage Gateshead)

In addition, IHSE performances are scheduled in order to publicise the project on a wider scale, a project partnership has been established with Newcastle United FC and children are regularly taken to perform (as part of an ensemble), at local events (such as at Newcastle Racecourse).

Image 1: Newcastle United FC player Tim Krul and manager Alan Pardew visit Hawthorn Primary [from: www.sagegateshead.com]

In Harmony Telford & Stoke

In Harmony Telford & Stoke is run by Telford & Wrekin Music, an organisation which has been providing instrumental and vocal tuition in local schools since 2007. The tender for the In Harmony bid was made alongside partners such as Manchester Camerata and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and during the bidding process the organisations together began to identify potential primary school partners according to compatibility with relevant deprivation criteria. While the project eventually settled at two schools, including Heron Cross Primary in Stoke-on-Trent, the research covered by this project looked specifically at delivery at Old Park Primary School in Malinslee, Telford.

Malinslee is among the 10% most deprived wards nationally in terms of measures including income, employment, health, and education (Telford.gov.uk, 2011). The school currently has around 600 pupils, with 37% eligible for free school meals. Although the school was not involved in the In Harmony bid process or any initial project planning, Old Park was already known to Telford & Wrekin Music:

> Some of the people on that group from Telford & Wrekin Music…knew us and had worked with us and knew we were a school that tended to do things that were a bit different [and] liked big projects that involved the whole school (Senior staff member, Old Park Primary)

The school itself is situated in a large new building (as of 2008), which integrates staff and pupils from three previously separate schools. In 2009 Old Park became a National School of Creativity, and in 2011 (before the arrival of the IHSE initiative) was awarded the Times Educational Supplement's 'Outstanding Primary School of the Year' award, with the judges noting that:

> Against a backdrop of difficult circumstances, Old Park Primary has proven the power of creative activities to engage children and parents…[The school has] created magical learning experiences that its pupils will remember for the rest of their lives (Telford & Wrekin Council website)

A clear commitment to the arts therefore signalled Old Park as an appropriate partner for the IHSE initiative. Indeed, given that the previous music provision at the school was relatively minimal, the IHSE initiative stood to make an important contribution to the school's music provision:

> [There was] almost none…and interestingly it had been something we'd identified as a school we had very little. We had a few children learning the guitar and then it was singing and class-based music, which was okay but you know, we didn't have many music-trained staff…and then obviously we went from one extreme to the other, [from] virtually nothing to In Harmony.' (Senior staff member, Old Park Primary)

In delivering the music education programme, Telford & Wrekin Music liaised with project partners (and the schools) in order to plan the best method of tuition:

> …when we got the funding from the Arts Council and the DfE…[we then needed to] get our heads together with the orchestras and with the schools to work out what would best fit both of the communities and the schools in terms of where they were musically, what they already had to offer children and young people and their families and then design and fit a programme around where they were at. (IHSE Project Manager, Telford & Stoke)

As a result, an emphasis on collaborative delivery and partnership working emerged quickly, as did a desire – given the three-year duration of the initial funding commitment – for the project to establish itself with as little delay as possible:

> We would have liked to have offered more choice to young people about which instrument they wanted to play but we simply had to get something in place for those children and young people as quickly as possible (IHSE Project Manager, Telford & Stoke)

Today, musical activity plays a large part within the average school day, across all year groups. While Nursery and Reception classes benefit from Early Years provision, Year One pupils take 'musicianship' (which comprises the teaching of reading and writing music and singing). Once pupils move to Year Two – and up until they leave Old Park – they participate in IHSE sessions. Years Two and Three learn strings, with older children learning wind and brass. Whilst all this provision takes place within school hours, as children get older they do have access to some lunchtime practice clubs:

> This year we've started offering optional activities to children and young people after-school so that they can come to a woodwind club or a brass club or an all-round practice club…we didn't have those in the first year because it took us a while to get the main programme embedded into both schools with the timetable and other curriculum pressures (IHSE Project Manager)

In addition, the IHSE initiative has developed an online learning resource [www.inharmonyonline.org] which students can use to access learning materials from home.

There is a team of 23 music tutors who serve the school, offering a variety of teaching experience and musical backgrounds. A number of these are peripatetic music teachers with links to local music services (such as Telford & Wrekin Music and Stoke City Music), while others are professional orchestral musicians with affiliations to the Manchester Camerata and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Tutors and school staff are encouraged to be as reflective on their practice and experience as possible:

> You need to be able to step back and say well actually that worked and that didn't work and be able to kind of you know, share that kind of practice and develop it as we go (Project Manager)

All members of the team are provided with a workbook on which to reflect on their experience, allowing for future planning and change in delivery methods and tactics. Allowing a large team to enter the school and change the makeup of the school week was initially a process of negotiation, but ultimately those within the school feel the working relationship with In Harmony is beneficial and contributes positively to the school environment:

> Occasionally things get in the way but on the whole In Harmony is prioritised…but also there've been times when we've said 'well can we look at how this is working' or 'can we have another look at particular groups of children?' and they've [IHSE staff] been very good at working with us on that really (Senior staff member, Old Park Primary)

Trips and excursions are organised by In Harmony, and parents are encouraged to attend with their children. Taking a trip to Birmingham, In Harmony provided a meal for parents and children before watching the CBSO play; allowing parents access to an experience they perhaps otherwise would not have had.

Sistema in Norwich

Sistema in Norwich adopts a slightly different model to the In Harmony projects in Newcastle and Telford. The project is run by Norwich and Norfolk Community Arts (hereafter simply NORCA), a charity and company limited by guarantee which has, since its inception in 2001, developed a strong track record in the delivery of community arts initiatives (with a particular emphasis on music-based projects), particularly working with and in Norwich's more deprived communities. Originally an In Harmony project, Sistema in Norwich was, at its inception in 2009, funded centrally by the Department for Education and the Arts Council:

> Well the Government wanted to fund three pilot projects…I think 80 organisations applied and they brought it down to three, which was NORCA, Lambeth Music Service and Liverpool Philharmonic…[w]e were given it and yet we were the kind of smallest; we didn't have a building…so it was a bit of a risk for them to give it to us. However, I think it paid off (Director, NORCA)

However, after an initial period, the Norwich project's funding was removed, and the project had to make some operational changes in order to remain in service:

> We're a relatively small programme, we had our funding taken away from us in 2011 when we became independent of the national In Harmony programme. Not necessarily the worst thing that could happen, although quite a difficult and stressful time but actually we're surfacing from that…what we're trying now to create is a sustainable local model, mixed income, that's viable (Director, NORCA)

As a result, Sistema in Norwich remains affiliated to Sistema England, but not under the 'In Harmony' banner.

The project operates in two separate schools in Norwich: Norwich Primary Academy (hereafter NPA), a new academy institution which has approximately 336 pupils on the roll, 58% of which were eligible for free school meals in 2012; and Catton Grove Primary, part of the traditional state sector which has 606 pupils on its roll, 41% of which are eligible for free school meals. These schools are both in areas of deprivation and figure amongst the 25 most deprived wards in Norfolk.

At NPA, tutors' provision is to cover preparation, planning, and assessment (PPA) for six hours per week. As per ATL's Workload Agreement (ATL website), teachers in maintained schools in England and Wales are guaranteed 10% of their timetabled teaching to be set aside specifically for PPA, meaning cover is needed for particular sessions during the school week. This means that for each class from Years 1 to 6, the IHSE tutors take full control of the class for an hour per week whilst their teacher is absent. For the tutors, PPA cover thus involves not only IHSE tuition, but organisation and administration tasks such as taking a register after lunch, and facilitating movement between classrooms and communal spaces.

As a result, all children at NPA get to experience the violin or cello, with some variation between recorder, flute, percussion, and brass instruments. In addition, Reception has one hour per week of general musicianship tuition, and Years 2 to 6 have the opportunity to attend optional after-school sessions of one hour per week for their respective year group and instrument, and an additional hour of ensemble for all. Ultimately, each pupil receives at least one hour of tuition per week, and has the option of up to an additional two after school (one 'sectional' and one 'ensemble' session respectively).

The IHSE musicians' role in providing PPA cover at NPA means that the school contributes £54,000 per year to the Sistema in Norwich programme, rather than it being funded by a central body. This also means that, during PPA cover, IHSE musicians take charge of each individual class whilst teachers are absent. This means that, with the exception of classroom assistants, school staff are not directly involved in day-to-day IHSE activities. As a result, NPA has:

> Some [input into the delivery], not a huge amount. It's been mainly led by Sistema as to what they teach them (Senior Staff Member, NPA)

Sistema in Norwich is similarly autonomous at Catton Grove. The main provision offered is an after school club, hosted three times per week to different age groups. As a result, Catton Grove is the only school included in this research in which it is wholly optional for children to participate. A team of musicians, distinct from that which delivers the sessions at NPA, works with varying age groups on singing and movement, and on string instruments.

Previously, the music provision at Catton Grove had been a simple system, adopted from a package designed for teachers with little or no obvious musical expertise; as a result, tuition was all internal and delivered by teachers whose specialisms lay elsewhere. Whilst Sistema in Norwich was able to integrate fully with the school during the initial period of funding, offering a more specialised expert provision, as limits on money, time, and space have grown, Catton Grove's teachers have become less involved:

> In the beginning, for the first two or three years, at least three members of staff actually went along and they learnt to play the cello. So when the children went off to play in orchestras, whether that was in London or in the city [Norwich], they played. Unfortunately, as teachers' lives get busier and busier and their demands on their time…what happens is you have to weigh up "Have I got time to play in that orchestra or do I need to do my marking?"…But there is a lot of support. When the children have a performance, staff will go along and support that (Senior Staff Member, Catton Grove)

This change in dynamic in the relationship between Catton Grove teachers and the IHSE project is seen as a result of the change from the In Harmony provision to Sistema in Norwich. Comparing their previous experiences at Catton Grove to current ones, one musician offered the following:

> When we were first started up…there was a team of about four or five of us at Catton who were there all the time…And we sat in the staff room at lunchtime with the staff, knew them really well. But as the project has changed and we've had less input in school…[and] it had sort of fallen off the edge of the radar really. And so some of the teachers didn't even know…they'd look at you as [if to say] "Who are you and what are you doing here?" (IHSE Musician)

The absence of a lasting IHSE presence in the school is indicated by the space restrictions imposed on the tutors. In contrast to the NPA tutors who have use of the school music room, at Catton Grove the tutors have no permanent storage space on site. Currently, at the end of each school day as the tutors arrive they must unload a vehicle which stores their instruments, music stands, and other equipment, before loading it back up as they leave the school site. Yet despite these constraints on the relations between tutors and school staff, both schools remain enthusiastic about the project and the music provision offered to their pupils.

With limited orchestral partnership opportunities in Norfolk, NORCA has pupils perform in public to encourage awareness of the project, fund-raising, and performance experience for the children. Pupils selected from a more advanced ability group have played diverse venues in Norwich such as a contemporary music venue, a concert hall, a scientific research centre, and a Sainsbury's supermarket, the latter of which has chosen Sistema in Norwich as their charity for the year in 2014 (SistemaEngland.org.uk, 2013). In addition, pupils and parents were taken to London Southbank to participate in the 'Nucleo Weekend 2013' along with children from other IHSE projects.

Image 2: Sistema in Norwich performing outside The Forum, Norwich, as part of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival 2014.

Yet ultimately, according to the NORCA Director, the most significant change to affect Sistema in Norwich remains the cut in funding to the programme:

> The funding was pulled so we had to go back to scratch and the school paid for two sessions, we reduced tutor input. So we were able to keep something going for the children that were engaged, by then about sort of 80-90 kids per school…so the thing is that the process of the evolution has partly been driven by the availability of money and small 'p' political changes at the school (Director)

As a result, the programme at Catton Grove can now only cater to the children who are particularly enthused about the project. The voluntary nature of the Catton Grove programme means that those only those who actively sign up will get to experience music tuition, rather than the arrangement at NPA were all children receive at least some contact with Sistema tutors.

Summary

As can be seen from this brief summary of our case studies, there are similarities in the areas they serve (in terms of deprivation measures, demographic characteristics and so on). In addition, the general principles of IHSE teaching remain consistent across all cases. However, the case studies do also differ in a number of important ways. Each of these variations, we have

hypothesised, may affect the way in which cultural value is experienced. These key variations lie in:

Funding

Both Newcastle and Telford receive central funding from In Harmony Sistema England, allowing for a greater investment in resources, such as Telford's integrated web system for tutors and pupils to share and learn IHSE material, or their ability to commission original music arrangements for children to learn. The funding at the Sage Gateshead allows them to provide free concert tickets for Hawthorn pupils and parents, and their YMP has grants available to children, supported through the DoE Music and Dance Scheme.

Image 3: A page taken from the resource section of the Telford IHSE website

Norwich, on the other hand, depends on support and sponsorship raised by NORCA. Income has been sought from diverse places: organisations such as Norfolk & Norwich Chamber of Music; trust funds such as the Geoffrey Watling Charitable Trust; individual and corporate donors such as a local branch of Sainsbury's supermarket, and various additional government-sponsored funding initiatives, the likes of which NORCA is used to bidding for as part of their regular day-to-day operations. Whilst both the Telford and Newcastle projects do supplement their income from other charitable funding (Telford also has links with a local Sainsbury's, for example), such support is not as crucial to operations in these instances.

Curriculum and Timetable

Three of our case study schools scheduled IHSE within the regular school timetable, albeit in different ways and with different emphases. For Telford and Newcastle, IHSE became a central

part of the school week, inclusive for both pupils and staff, and with a strong visual presence on notice boards and in visual displays. For Newcastle in particular, IHSE and its values were used to promote other school interests, such as introducing staff, highlighting the diverse heritage of their pupils, and monitoring attendance.

Image 4: Whole-school class attendance monitor at Hawthorn Primary School (displayed in school premises)

In Norwich, PPA cover at NPA ensured that every pupil had access to IHSE activities, however their time with tutors was more limited than in Telford and Newcastle, and school staff (in particular teachers) were less involved in the project. In an important divergence from the other three schools in our sample, Catton Grove Primary in Norwich confined IHSE to after school sessions, with very limited involvement from school staff. Yet Catton Grove was notably the only of the four schools which solely catered for children who explicitly wished to be there. In this sense, whilst the least integrated into the school's curriculum it was perhaps the most indicative of children's engagement with IHSE activities.

IHSE Musicians

Whilst music tutors for all of the projects have classically-trained backgrounds, Telford and Newcastle were able to draw on those currently involved in local orchestras for some of their teaching. Telford has some professional orchestral musicians delivering aspects of the programme, and in Newcastle many of the tutorial team are affiliated to the Northern Sinfonia. Although they are professional working musicians and educators, the tutors in Norwich are employed by NORCA directly rather than subcontracted as part of an orchestra. As a result, for Norwich pupils there is less contact with external music groups.

4. Cultural Valuing: Participating Children

In this section of the report we examine the ways in which our young research participants detailed their varied engagements with cultural objects and experiences, including those relating directly to IHSE. At each step, the focus of our analysis – as with the interviews on which this is based - has been on seeking to look beyond statements about the *objects* of children's stated cultural preference or interest. Rather, our focus throughout seeks to uncover the processes, relations and dimensions of those objects and activities from which children appeared to derive notable value. This approach therefore takes us beyond the matter of *what* might be of value within particular situations to also engage with questions about *how* objects and activities are valued and on what bases such valuing depends.

Children's cultural valuing beyond IHSE

As is mentioned above, one of the starting points of our discussions with children involved exploring the kinds of cultural activities in which they expressed an interest and from which they derived enjoyment. Looking across our sample as a whole, children's ages seemed to play a key role here. In many ways this is unsurprising. Children of different ages do, after all, tend to be exposed to different sorts of activities and granted varying degrees of autonomy in relation to some types of experiences as opposed to others (although not uniformly so). What we therefore uncovered as one of the common trends in the accounts of children at school years 2 and 3, was a tendency towards expressed preferences for cultural activities which were undertaken either within the home environment or were notably family-oriented in nature. Baking or cooking (although usually the former), with one or more family member (overwhelmingly 'Mum' but occasionally 'Nan' or 'Gran'), therefore emerged as a quite commonly stated favourite activity amongst the younger children in our cohort. While this was especially the case amongst young girls, boys were by no means immune to the pleasure on offer here. When we asked children to explain what they enjoyed about this, responses quickly referred – almost without exception – to the presence of 'my Mum' or 'my sister/brother'. Neither the finished product of the baking, nor any sense of satisfaction related to the 'making' process (or indeed any other element in it) appeared with the same degree of regularity and priority as the presence of family members.

Much the same sort of phenomenon was discernible in relation to other stated 'favourite' cultural and leisure activities of our youngest research participants, particularly in terms of swimming and, although undertaken less frequently, going to the cinema. In relation to each of these activities, our attempts to probe precisely what respondents liked/enjoyed/valued about these things garnered responses which focussed less on any specific dimensions or qualities of the activities themselves than the nature of respondents' relations with those also involved or present. Again then, in relation to both swimming and cinema, either 'my family', 'my Mum', 'my Dad', along with 'my sister(s)/brother(s)' featured prominently within the accounts offered and it was clear from the ways in which family members' involvement within such activities were described that their presence served to imbue these activities with perceived value.

Although somewhat diffuse as a finding, this nevertheless does appear to point towards a perception, amongst our youngest respondents, of value residing largely in shared and family-related, as well as familiar and regularly-undertaken cultural activities. In some respects this echoes the ways family relationship, continuity and felt-security has been noted as significant within the lives of children at this stage of life (see, e.g., Charlesworth et al. 2010; Edwards 2002). Other cultural and leisure activities valued by many of the year 2 and 3 pupils (ages 6-8) who we interviewed also alluded strongly to the role played by the domestic sphere and familial bonds within their cultural lives. 'Playing video games', for instance, was often mentioned as a favoured activity, again taking place within the home and with either siblings or – less commonly at this age – with visiting friends.

Similarly, numerous accounts of reading at home accorded with the broader valorisation of activities undertaken within the domestic sphere, although our findings here are somewhat less consistent than might allow us to extrapolate any further. Finally, while 'playing with friends' was also commonly mentioned (again pointing towards the pleasure to be found in shared activities), this appeared to relate more to its status as something taking place on an almost daily basis within the school setting, and in the context of developing social relationships, rather than suggesting any necessary desire for the youngest amongst our respondents to seek out what might be considered more distinctive, exceptional, unusual or otherwise 'special' experiences.

As we move to consider the bases of valuation informing the preferred cultural and leisure activities of children in school years 4, 5 and 6 (ages 8-11) we begin to see, in many instances – and especially at the upper end of this age range – somewhat less emphasis being placed on home-based and family-related activities and more on peer-oriented, collaborative and (in some cases) more competitive activities. Whilst 'playing video games' and 'playing with friends' were very commonly favoured by children in this age range then, the ways in which they were elaborated upon appeared to reveal a growing valuation of out-of-school socialising contexts (typically local neighbourhoods but also within virtual settings and, particularly for boys, within the digital environment of the co-operative online building game *Minecraft*). Within this older age range we also saw more emphasis and value located in the somewhat more exploratory and decidedly peer/friendship-oriented nature of selected activities (e.g., bike rides with friends, 'surfing' *YouTube* for interesting video clips to be subsequently shared/discussed with friends).

Sporting activities, and especially 'playing football' (for not only many boys but also numerous girls) undertaken either informally with peers, or else in more explicitly competitive 'team' contexts, were also detailed commonly by 8-11 year olds. When asked to explain why they favoured these, again children frequently mentioned friends early on in their accounts, although some also went on to outline how their pleasure, enjoyment and satisfaction also connected to a sense of directed engagement, achievement and competition (typically in the form of "because you get to…" responses).

At the same time, it should be noted there was also a good deal of variation in terms of the bases of the cultural valuations outlined by this older group. In other words, while many children seemed to be describing different *modes* of cultural valuing from those of their younger counterparts (as detailed above), this was far from being the case for all. Thus many older children appeared to retain a prioritisation of domestic and family-oriented activities in their cultural valuing, while showing only relatively minor indications of what might be considered a transition towards more peer and friendship-related sources of interest and value. This was slightly more common in the case of the girls with whom we spoke, a number of whom also appeared to be inclined towards activities such as reading and homework; activities which, given the other correlating features of their accounts, seemed to indicate a tendency towards seeing teacher-validated or, more broadly, school-validated activities as meaningful and valuable.

A further point to note, in terms of children's valuing of leisure and cultural activities, concerns the centrality of physicality, movement and exercise. Across all age ranges and within each of our case study settings children informed us that they enjoyed physical activities. In some cases, the bases of this enjoyment appeared to reside in the nature of the sensations on offer through these activities. So, for example, swimming was often noted as pleasurable in relation to the sensations rooted in the tactile, kinetic and buoyant experiences of being in the water. More often though, the rationales offered up to us by the children related much more directly to their belief that the activity was good for them, that exercise was important and it would prevent them from being unhealthy. Indeed, it was quite striking just how often children spoke, when asked to explain what they liked about their physical activities, about the importance of exercise and not 'getting fat' (in a way which appeared to closely echo the exhortations of the recent national *Change4Life*[2] campaign). We cannot not help but suspect, however, that the way in which this rationale was consistently offered up – in functioning very much like a pre-scripted narrative – reveals something of the complexity involved in attempts at uncovering accounts of cultural value (especially pronounced with children). That is, where an activity or experience is considered enjoyable and worthwhile, the explanation offered up in support of it may very well take the form of whichever social narrative is most conveniently to hand. In the case of many of our young respondents then, accounts based on the recognised benefits of exercise were regularly invoked (even, for example, in terms of how playing video games could be considered 'good exercise for the fingers') as a means of justifying and explaining phenomena which certainly appeared – given the other elements within children's accounts – to be functioning on a quite different plane. While we do not therefore doubt that young people did, at least in part, believe that forms of physical exercise were valuable for their health benefits, we cannot help but suspect that this explanation of their value veers so far towards the 'instrumental' and so far away from the 'intrinsic' as to merit some caution in its interpretation. Indeed, this finding

[2] *Change4Life* is a public health programme in England run by the Department of Health since 2009. It is the country's first national social marketing campaign to tackle the causes of obesity.

alerted us to the need to understand the accounts of value offered up by our research participants as just that: accounts. As such, they are necessarily at one step removed from the experiences which they attempt to describe.

Children's Musical Valuing

A second key area of our conversations with children sought to draw out the ways they approached matters musical and the dimensions of musical consumption and activity which resonated most meaningfully with them. As was the case for the broader cultural and leisure activities considered above, our aim here was not so much to understand which particular musical genres or artists (i.e., which *objects*) appealed to and engaged children but, more particularly, which dimensions of different musical encounters resonated with them and in what ways they did so. Whilst we did use musical artists and genres as a key means of opening up this area for discussion, we also sought to grasp insights into the contexts, times/occasions, relations, media practices and associated activities bound up with the music-related dimensions of our research participants' lives. This, we hoped, would furnish us with a richer picture of what were perceived as the most salient dimensions of music and music-related activity, as well helping us understand how these were incorporated into and valued within children's everyday experiences.

One thing to note at the outset was the surprising degree of consistency (we might even suggest homogeneity) evident within a significant majority of our respondent's accounts in terms of their relations to music, certainly in terms of the musical objects which held their interest. This much was perhaps most evidently the case amongst our young female respondents, very many whom expressed variously passionate degrees of interests in the music of pop groups such as *One Direction* (who were extremely popular), *Little Mix* and *JLS*, or else solo artists including (in approximate order of popularity) *Katy Perry*, *Jessie J*, *Justin Bieber*, *Olly Murs*, *Rihanna*, *Nikki Minaj*, *Taylor Swift* and *Lady Gaga*. In many cases, these same pop music acts were favoured by the boys in our study, although with slightly less enthusiasm overall and a stronger preference – for some – towards male, rather than female artists (e.g. *Gary Barlow*, *James Arthur*, *Tom Odell*). Indeed, it was only around age ten that boys began to express a comparable degree of interest in popular music as many of the girls. When they did so, their burgeoning interests were often orienting around what might be considered more explicitly male-coded/'masculine' and beat-focussed/driven musical forms such as Rap and Hip-Hop or else dance music/dubstep/DJing and associated forms (e.g., *Skrillex*, beatboxing). Rock music seemed to carry relatively limited appeal to many boys and girls, be they towards the lower or upper end of the primary school age range. While older girls (from around aged nine upwards) evidenced a broadening and greater variegated range of musical interests, these nevertheless remained, for the most part, within the ambit of what might be considered pop music (e.g., *Rizzle Kicks*, *Avicii*, *The Saturdays*). During our discussions about musical interests with the children, specific song titles were commonly offered, song lyrics were related (sometimes even sung) and notable dislikes (Justin Bieber seemed to divide many for example) or else changes in taste ("I used to like X but now…") were discussed with no little zeal. This sense of excitement may, in some ways, have related to the opportunity of discussing such matters within school contexts and with adults

keen to hear about them. That said, given the diverse ways in which popular music forms were implicated in these children's social and leisure activities, it seems to us to be more likely that the something more important was at work here.

As we explored the children's accounts of music-related activity further, it became apparent that the bases of valuation being applied here quite often resonated with those relevant to other sorts of valued activity. Very typically then, children spoke of ways in which parents and family members participated – usually within domestic contexts – in their musical lives. While siblings, where present, certainly appeared to function as key reference points in terms of expressed musical taste decisions and broader practices (e.g., singing along to music videos on television, dancing around the living room, playing music-based video games such as *Just Dance* or *Guitar Hero*), the role of parents and the influence of their musical worlds appeared no less significant, especially for some of the younger children (listening to radio with Mum in the kitchen, Dad's CD choices in the car, going to a concert with Mum and her friends). Indeed, while a number of the children carried their favourite music around with them (on mobile phones), in the main, many of the valued music activities described to us appeared to point, once again, to the centrality of home-life and the domestic sphere. Yet perhaps just as important as the way that the sonic environment of the home was one shared with loved ones, was the fact that, when activated within living rooms and bedrooms, music very often brought with it a compelling visual dimension.

Children very often told us that their preferred platform for engaging with popular music was *YouTube* (although a few other online video sites were referenced). While dedicated music TV channels were occasionally mentioned too – where children could remember their names – watching music videos via *YouTube*, in communal domestic settings (on 'my laptop', 'Mum's iPad/tablet' or a smart phone) emerged as a key means of accessing musical texts. It was also evident that a great many of our interviewees followed television programmes such as *X-Factor*, *Britain's Got Talent* and *The Voice* quite closely (and this was typically 'whole family' viewing). In many cases, children subsequently developed an interest in the ongoing careers of artists emerging successfully from these music/talent competitions. Unsurprisingly then, artist image, look, style, appearance and other visual dimensions of musical texts appeared to play a notably prominent role for many of the children in our sample. That is to say, musical performances were *watched* as much as they were *heard*, on a regular basis. Importantly, it seemed (especially given how difficult many of the children found it to talk about the sonic dimensions of music), this visuality provided valued reference points for numerous and ongoing conversations with friends, playground dance routine re-enactments and fashion-related or self-presentational inspirations (e.g., "I like her hair"/"I think he looks cool").

The fact that popular music's visual elements were very often coterminous with its sonic ones did not mean, however, that children's consumption of popular music was usually a sedentary or passive affair. As is alluded to above, dancing or else singing along were commonly reported (although more often by girls than boys as a general rule). While dancing was often valued for its physicality and framed in terms of a form of exercise which is "good for you" (we can't help but

suspect a little disingenuousness in the offering up of this narrative script however, since it was quite evidently something that was experienced as pleasurable too), it also appeared to offer scope for creative improvisation and expression as much as emulation, for accessing feelings of freedom (moments of "just going a bit crazy") as well as implicitly holding out the possibility of such pleasures being amplified by the co-participation of others (especially at parties or 'sleepovers'). In a similar vein, albeit a quite different form, singing along with popular music (we might include beatboxing here too) appeared to be valued for the way it offered another way into, or another mode of accessing some of the pleasures on offer through popular music. Whilst some children made a point of informing us that they were "good at singing", for many others, questions about vocal quality or of singing's more strictly sonic components appeared largely beside the point. In no way, then, did not being a good singer stand, in the children's eyes, as any kind of obstacle to their vocal accompaniment of favourite songs or artists. Indeed, singing along often appeared to function as another way – like dancing along – of getting closer to 'the music' or, more pertinently in this case we suspect, 'the song' (in terms of the representational or symbolic meanings offered up by it). Popular music's lyrical content, in whatever ways this was ultimately interpreted and understood, thereby provided further potential sources of both meaning and expression for many of our young interviewees. In quite a number of cases – such as when we were told that *One Direction* songs were valuable due to being "about something real", or rap artists were valued because of "what they talk about" – we could not doubt the perceived importance of this 'extra' layer of lyrical meaning for the children, especially when they set this against what were seen as less symbolically fecund musical forms, often characterised as "just music" (i.e., without lyrical content).

In numerous ways then, and however critics might question the motives or ethics at work in the pop industry, as far as our young research participants were concerned, the popular music forms for which they commonly expressed interest were incorporated into their lives in ways which spoke of a host of valued experiences. From spending time and developing bonds with family and friends, exploring self-directedness and choice within and alongside experiences of sociality, to experiencing the pleasures bound up with music's physical qualities (both moving and singing along to rhythms and melodies) or engaging with feelings, emotions and ideas, there appeared to be a great deal going on beneath the commonly stated "fun" on offer. While it was certainly not the case that all of our young research participants engaged with popular music forms in the same ways or to the same degree, there could be little doubting that many of them saw popular music and its related activities as rich with pleasures and potential.

Valuing IHSE: Children's perspectives

Something we would note at the outset, in terms of children's engagements with IHSE, was the considerable degree of similarity between children's responses to the three IHSE initiatives in our sample. This is not to say that there were no differences at all however. In a number of ways, children spoke of how they derived pleasure/enjoyment and satisfaction from the distinctive experiences afforded by the different projects (through, for example, visits made to different arts settings and performances, or else through the various 'extra' or the additional playing/learning opportunities made available within each project, especially when these were

voluntary). We also encountered more by way of positive estimations of project participation at Catton Grove School, where the activity took place only at the end of the school and where children's participation was – unlike any of our other case studies – wholly voluntary. When looking across the 111 children's accounts as whole however, factors which related to children's individual circumstances and their broader valuations of cultural activity appeared more important – in terms of how these informed the children's valuing of IHSE involvement – than project-specific variations.

In some ways, this situation may well be linked to the as-yet limited engagement of many of our young respondents' with IHSE initiatives (most had, for example, only been actively participating for approximately 16 months at the time of our data collection). In other respects however, there did emerge a sense in which a significant portion of our young respondents had already formed quite decided positions or stances vis-à-vis IHSE. In appreciable regards, these stances seemed liable to feature prominently in the ways children would continue to understand, interpret and value their IHSE participation in the future (although this is, we recognise, difficult to say this with any real certainty).

In what follows we attempt to further elaborate on some of the thinking above, by exploring not only the range of ways in which children articulated a valuing of IHSE, but also, as far as possible, providing some suggestion of the bases and grounds of such valuing. Further, in an attempt build up an understanding of the notable variations in the extent to which and the ways in which children derived value from their participation, we also structure what follows around what emerged, again across our whole child cohort, as the key correspondences between greater and lesser levels of expressed enjoyment and valuing of IHSE involvement. While the first section of the below discussion therefore takes a more synoptic view of key themes emerging across the whole of our sample, following this we attempt to demonstrate, through the presentation of several short 'portraits' of selected children, how factors related to their broader social and cultural engagements might impact upon and refract the ways they understood and incorporated (or not) IHSE into their cultural and social lives.

Prominent Themes

A first issue to note, in terms of our efforts to explore questions of cultural value in relation to children's IHSE participation, was the way in which our young respondents found it notably difficult to give expression to notions of value. Despite our numerous attempts to frame and figure 'value' or 'the valuable' (i.e., by using proxy terms, by offering examples), it was very often the case that what children deemed valuable was also what they found pleasurable and enjoyable. In one effort to probe these questions of value more deeply we asked children what they considered to be 'good for them' (using the example of the way in which eating broccoli might be said to be 'good for you', even if eating it might not be as pleasurable as eating sweets). In order to capture children's own understandings here, we asked them to distinguish, for our benefit, between what parents and teachers might tell them is 'good for them' and what they themselves felt was 'good for them'. In this, however, our efforts fell rather flat. Almost invariably children told us that what they considered to be 'good for them' was exactly the same

as what they had, immediately before, informed us that adults thought was 'good for them', or else what they had, just a few moments prior to that, described as enjoyable and pleasurable. As a result, our inquiries adopted a more circuitous, roundabout and exploratory mode, seeking to draw out some of the implicit meanings, associations and connections between things deemed 'good' and the ideas lying behind this assessment.

One theme to emerge with some consistency amongst the children who spoke positively about their experiences of musical activity in IHSE was the importance of parental validation and the ability (built into projects to varying degrees) for children to take their instruments home. Indeed, parental interest in and support for children's musical instrument learning seemed to function like something of a necessary (although not sufficient) condition for children's expressed valuing of their IHSE participation. This parental validation might take a number of forms it seemed, including: the provision of an appropriate space at home in which to practice; encouragement to undertake home practice; parents asking children about their progress; attendance at performance events; the chance to perform at home ('for the family') and even parents 'trying' or 'having a go' on their child's instruments (seen by children as indicative of parental interest and validation). Indeed, such validation was not exclusively restricted to parents it seemed; older siblings and other family members might perform similar roles (although parents were mentioned far more commonly). Below are some typical quotations:

> They [parents] find it quite fascinating…they want me to be in an orchestra in front of loads of people (Boy, Year 3)
>
> I'm looking forward to playing it at home. I just want my Mum and Dad and sister to see (Girl, Year 2)
>
> *Q: Why do you enjoy playing [music]?*[3] Because I get to take my cello home…I like when I can take it home…I just want my Mum and Dad and sister to see (Boy, Year 2)
>
> *Q: So what do you enjoy about it [playing an instrument]?* Because I get to take it home…show Mum and Dad and sister (Girl, Year 3)
>
> *Q: So why should you practice, do you think?* You can show people what you've done at home (Girl, Year 4)
>
> It's really fun playing at home because Mum and Dad and relatives get to listen to you and get to praise you and they tell you if you're doing good (Girl, Year 6)

[3] Questions asked by members of the research team are presented in italics, both here and in what follows.

As the final interview excerpt suggests, being able to play at home provided an opportunity for children to receive praise and acknowledgement for their efforts and as such, this seemed to function as an important way of establishing the sense in which the music learning being undertaken in school was, indeed, of value and worth. By way of counterexample, in many of the cases where children demonstrated a relative lack of interest in their instrument learning, when asked to describe how parents felt about their music learning they either had little to relate or else told us how their parents had, for example, said "Nothing" (Boy, Year 5). That said, there were other, somewhat more subtle ways in which some children's IHSE instrument learning could be partially undermined by parents' responses. Several children reported how, for instance, after having taken their IHSE instruments home for practice purposes, one or more parent had expressed a desire to build on this apparent musical interest by buying them a musical instrument, yet one which accorded more with the popular music forms in which parents were interested (guitar, drums and keyboards were therefore mentioned several times in this regard).

> My mum said that she might get me a guitar for my birthday present (Girl, Year 3)

Further reflective of the ways that family or parental validation fed into children's recognition of musical instrument learning as something of worth and deserving of continued effort, came in the form of family members' attendance at IHSE performance events. This was noted by many children as quite significant and appeared to function as something of both a key part and extension of support from the home. In response to our questions about children's experiences of public performance then, when parents were present in audiences this was very commonly mentioned by children, as was the way that their parents' recognition made them "feel proud". The following was typical:

> *Q: So what did you enjoy about that performance?* Because Mum, Dad and Nan came. They took a picture of me and said I'd done well (Girl, Year 4)

For many, such feelings of pride, rooted as they often were in the recognition of family members served – when the latter were present – to offset the commonly noted feelings of nervousness and embarrassment associated with public performance (e.g., "performing in front of loads of adults…it's scary", Girl, Year 2). Conversely, an absence of such family support seemed often meant that children did not – especially if they felt less confident in their musical abilities – derive a great deal of satisfaction from playing for, as one put it, "a bunch of strangers" (Girl, Year 6)

While performance attendance and expressions of encouragement from family members certainly seemed consequential in terms of children's valuation of IHSE participation then, other influences originating from the home could also produce comparable effects. Where, for instance, participants' siblings were also engaged in and responding positively to the IHSE initiative, this seemed to bolster children's sense of its value and worth (e.g., "My sister has got

the Sistema bug too", Girl, Year 9). In a similar way, the pre-existing and ongoing musicality of older siblings or family members, where these had approached music learning via 'formal' learning routes or else where the instruments they played were associated with the classical symphony orchestra, appeared to produce the effect of validating and reinforcing children's current music learning endeavours:

> My brother plays the violin too and he sometimes teaches me…he's been playing since he was 11, now he's 22. He teached me 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' (Girl, Year 4)

> I like learning new notes…[I] practice 10, 15 minutes every day…my brother plays bassoon too…Mum's favourite instrument is piano (Boy, Year 5)

This sort of musical family background was by no means a necessary condition for children's valuing of their IHSE instrument learning however. Indeed, we encountered a number of instances where children described what seemed like positive feedback mechanisms which encouraged them to strive and push ahead with their instrument learning. In such cases, children very often described how, although they had not been playing for very long, they felt that they were making good progress. Indeed, several here described learning their instruments as "easy".

> The music I prefer is things we learn at school. They tell you what to do and give clear instructions. You can just do it like that [clicks fingers] (Girl, Year 6)

> In year two we had like this folder thing…and we had it in our violin cases which we could like, if we forgot it when we were in groups, we could practice it and I practiced like all of 'em [the songs in the folder]. *Q: So why did you practice all of them?* Because I like playing instruments, I like playing instruments so I can get better and better at violins…*Q: Do you find it difficult to play violin?* No. *Q: So you find it easy?* [nods]. *Q: Are you making good progress?* Yes. (Girl, Year 3)

While this was fairly common amongst some of the children who outlined positive experiences of broader school life (enjoyed lessons, noted strong levels of academic achievement, gained academic awards) and might be considered, much like the above respondents, as relatively 'school-committed', it was also the case for some children who expressed greater ambivalence towards academic life as a whole. This was perhaps most marked for several older boys who, despite sharing many of the same sorts of cultural tastes and interests as peers who derived comparably little satisfaction from their IHSE participation (football, video games, rap/dance music forms, watching video game-related clips on YouTube), were progressing well in their instrument learning. Again then, the source of their satisfaction appeared to reside in the fact that they were tapping into previously unrecognised aptitudes. In such cases, it appeared that these boys had discovered an area of school-centred endeavour in which they were progressing well and experiencing the kind of positive feedback loops associated with this achievement. The following are good examples:

> I play the clarinet, I'm in Creative Ensemble. *Q: Creative Ensemble? What's that?* It's like when you learn the music before any other people in music lessons. *Q: And how come you are in Creative Ensemble?* Cos you have to say if you wanna [join] and then all the people that wanted to [join] went on a list, and then there were like clapping tunes and they [presumably IHSE musicians] found out who was the best and I got in, *other child*[4] got in, and *other child* got in. And there was like [respondent names seven other children] who wanted [to join] but didn't [get in]…*Q: So how have you found it, learning your instrument?* Easy…*Q: What about the sessions that you have at school, the In Harmony sessions, could you tell me about them?* They're easy (Boy, Year 5)

> I like to play my trumpet a lot…I've been playing for nearly about two years…I can play 'When the Saints go Marching In' all the way through…I practice at weekends…I like orchestra the best cos it's probably the easier, cos all you are doing is looking at a sheet and playing the piece on the sheet and then you've got the person who is telling you what to really do…*Q: So do you find it easy reading the music too?* Yeah (Boy, Year 6)

> *Q: What instrument do you play?* Trumpet. *Q: Do you like it?* Yeah…*Q: Do you practice at home?* Yeah. I take my instrument home on Fridays, then bring it back on the Monday. *Q: How often do you practice on the weekend?* Like 20 minutes every day…*Q: Will you carry on when you go to high school do you think?* Probably, yeah…*Q: And your friends, how do they get on with the trumpet?* Some of my mates go on the trumpet, and I like help people, like tell them which valves to use and everything (Boy, Year 6)

As the first of the above respondents suggests, by being advanced (selectively) into this project's 'Creative Ensemble', a degree more confidence is gained and a sense of progression and ability becomes something that is more immediately recognisable. Value might be figured here in the sense of a recognised (and externally validated) sense of one's abilities. In other cases, children reported ways in which they recognised the challenges presented by their instrument learning activity yet, unlike others (on which more below), they had persevered and by dint of this had come to reap personal rewards. Each of the below respondents thus found their IHSE participation to be broadly valuable and enjoyable, but also recognised the personal resources on which this had depended:

> *Flute Teacher* teaches me fun songs to play. It was really hard at first, now I'm finding it easy (Girl, Year 5)

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[4] Where individual's names were reported by respondents, these names have been removed and asterisks are used to indicate this. The role or status of the person to whom the speaker was referring is noted between these asterisks.

> It's hard [playing violin], I like playing it quite a bit, but it's hard…I like it cos it's a thing [that], I didn't know nothing about it, I couldn't do anything with it, [so] I like that [I can now]. *Q: Do you like that feeling in other stuff, say in science or in maths?* Yeah, I like it when it's like hard, cos it's things I haven't done…[other] people like doing things that they've already done cos it's easier. I like a challenge (Boy, Year 3)

> It's hard, but I like when something's hard. *Q: So you mean you like a challenge?* Yeah, I like challenging myself (Boy, Year 4)

For those children who appeared to be befitting from the kinds of virtuous spiral of effort and reward outlined above, we also uncovered evidence of the ways in which this flourishing had begun to percolate into other areas of their cultural lives. Several such children thus spoke of a desire to write music on their instruments, others (typically older children) described ways in which they had already made up short tunes of their own, while some detailed how they had begun to play along to popular music songs that they liked. The below respondent is quoted at some length since his account provides some valuable contextual information about how his expressed enjoyment of musical learning and associated activity, as well as that of his friends, correlates with some of the factors already discussed.

> My mum always tells me to get my violin out…if you don't practice it at home you won't get better…you should do it [practice] cos I imagine it's like exercise, that you've got to do it every day...*Q: You know you were saying that you and your friends get together to play video games, well do you ever get together to play music?* Yeah. *Q: What do you do?* We just bring all our instruments and go around to one of the houses and get our instruments and play. *Q: Do you do that a lot?* Not really cos we all have a baby sister and one has got as dog and it barks a lot. *Q: And do you all play violin?* No, I've got one friend that plays guitar, erm, two that play guitar and one that plays the flute and me that plays violin. *Q: So the ones that play guitar, do they go to a different school?* They do come to this school but that [guitar] is ones that their mums bought them and they just practice with it and I do have a friend that has a cello as well. He's very greedy cos he's got a guitar and a flute and a cello, but the flute's his mum's. Q: *And when you bring instruments around to each other's houses, what do you play then?* We sort of talk to each other on the violin, cos my name is two syllables, so I'll play two syllables on the violin so you have to guess what they're saying…*Q: Have you ever tried writing songs of you own?* Yes…I was gonna think of a syllable song that has lots of syllables in it…I do it in my head and then I write it down…but normally I go on my computer put some music on and go along [play along] in the tune it's being sung. I don't play fast songs cos if it's going too fast I do it wrong…*Q: So, last question, how does it make you feel when you are playing?* I think it makes me feel very concentrated, cos if I'm not concentrated then I'll just play wrong, so then it will sound a bit crazy (Boy, Year 3)

It is interesting to note the way in which the above respondent, and his young friends, appeared to see little disjuncture between the possibilities afforded by what we have elsewhere referred

to as popular music instruments and those usually associated with the classical symphony orchestra. In light of our other findings, which saw many other children drawing fairly sharp distinctions between the worlds of IHSE music and popular music forms, it may well be that the perceived boundaries are less marked for younger and more committed participants. It was certainly noticeable that some of the most dedicated younger participants saw their instrument playing as holding out creative potential, for instance:

> *Q: So what are you aiming for in, with playing, would you say?* I'm aiming for to like make up a tune that sounds right, so I can play for my mum and my Dad and my little brother my tune that I just made up (Girl, Year 3)

That said, it was also evident that some older participants had made efforts to connect their popular music interests to their IHSE instrument learning. Where this was the case however, there was also evidence of ways this could be inhibited by the rate of pupils' instrument learning progression and the challenges presented by their instruments:

> I tried to do it before [play a popular music song on trumpet] but I just couldn't do it…I couldn't do the A# before, so it didn't work out. I haven't tried since (Boy, Year 6)

A further interesting finding, about whose broader import we can but speculate, concerned the several cases of highly IHSE-committed participants who stated a much stronger preference and valuation of playing their instruments alone (compared to small-group sessions or full orchestra practice). This finding tended to correlate especially powerfully with strong expressions of broader school-commitment and amongst children who appeared to derive satisfaction from being seen, by teachers or IHSE musicians, to be making especially good progress in their instrument learning.

> *Q: Tell me, do you prefer playing on your own or with other people, in a big group or a small, or, well, when is it best do you think?* Err, playing on my own, cos I only like doing it on my own, but I don't like it, doing it with other people cos they might, when we do it all together they might like do the wrong note, the wrong sound and then it won't sound right (Girl, Year 3)
>
> I would prefer to play it at home *Q: Why?* Cos it's more quiet and when some of the cellos play [in groups music sessions], they play when they're not meant to (Girl, Year 4)
>
> *Q: And do you like practicing on your own, at home, or do you like other people to be there?* Practising on my own because can practice all day and you get to play your own tunes. *Q: Oh, so do you make up your own tunes?* Well, I have like these pieces of paper with different violin music on… (Girl, Year 4)

Indeed, as has already been alluded to, for a significant number of those children who expressed broadly positive attitudes towards their IHSE participation, something of an adult-oriented (i.e.,

seeing value primarily in activities validated by adults) and school-committed attitude could be discerned. In some ways, this may reflect the fact that IHSE activities took place, across most of our cases, within school time, within school buildings and in the presence of school teachers. It was therefore unsurprising to find that IHSE sessions were seen by many children as analogous to other school lessons (and when we asked about IHSE sessions, children typically drew comparisons with other timetabled lessons). In this way, many children described their relationship with IHSE initiatives in ways which echoed their broader stances in relationship to school.

Correspondingly, this often meant that students who viewed school and scholastic endeavour as rewarding and valuable tended to transfer this attitude onto their IHSE 'classes'. Thus where, as in the following extended interview excerpt, a child might be notably invested in school, oriented towards winning prizes, awards and other means of earning the validation of parents and teachers, the motivation towards IHSE music learning and, perhaps relatedly, both progress in it and the sense of worth subsequently derived from it, appeared to be heightened.

> Me and *three other children* have been chosen for Creative Ensemble…and in one of the assemblies, me and *other child*, we got an award and we'll also be getting a treat from Miss…*Q: Okay, so you've chosen your favourite activities and we have swimming at the top, then homework, then reading, then playing music…so why is swimming your favourite?* Because it's a great form of exercise…*Q: And then you've said homework, so why is that second?* Because you get to learn lots of facts about homework…*Q: And you've also mentioned reading, so what kinds of things do you like to read?* Well I was also doing this contest, whoever reads the most books, and you have to do book reviews for every book that you read…*Q: And you've got music playing at number four?* It's really good playing music at home, your Mum and Dad and all your relatives get to listen to you…and they tell you if you're doing good or bad, they don't lie to you, saying 'Oo wow, that's good' even if like you was appalling, they tell you even if you made a little mistake and they could tell you to improve on it, they wouldn't just lie to you and say 'Oh my god that's fantastic' they would tell you the truth, they wouldn't lie. *Q: Do you prefer that?* Yes, they're telling you the truth, you need to know if you're getting better or worse…*Q: And so your parents, they come to every performance that you do, do they?* Yeah, and I'm planning on doing *school talent show* on my trumpet…last year *other child* won…this year I'm hoping to win (Girl, Year 6)

While this virtuous cycle and the different elements which fed into it (home/parental validation, school-commitment, aspirational outlook), led to a positive responses to IHSE for some children, for other, less school-committed children, it could mean that IHSE participation was not seen as either intrinsically motivating or rewarding.

> I just find it's kind of boring, cos you're just blowing on it and it's a piece of brass and I just, I just think it's boring…*Q: Is it hard?* Sort of, it is yeah, it's a bit hard…*Q: Do you take your instrument home as well, like some of the others?* No. *Q: How come?* They gave

> you a choice if you want to and I don't… *Q: What about your friends, don't they like it?* No. *Q: And how many of them are you thinking about there?* Most of my friends. I think one of my friends likes it but, yeah, that's it. *Q: How about the other people in your class, say overall, do most people seem to like it or not?* Most of them not. Cos sometimes, like when we was doing something before [an IHSE session], like I was watching a film, and Miss was like, "Ok, you have to go to orchestra" and everybody went "Aww [groaning]" *Q: So is that how you know that they don't?* Yeah. *Q: Or, were they just enjoying the film?* I don't know, because some people do that [groan] when it's just normally [time for] orchestra (Boy, Year 6)
>
> *Q: So why is it that you don't like practicing at home?* I've got better things to do…if I learn it at school I don't know why I'd want to learn it at home (Boy, Year 6)

While such a lack of interest and enjoyment was often difficult to pin down ("just boring"), it was evident that broader contextual factors, such as when children encountered what they described as too great a degree of challenge in their learning activity, this could limit their overall engagement, pleasure and sense of value:

> *Q: So how are you finding it, learning and playing your instrument?* I don't like it…because I keep getting it wrong (Girl, Year 2)

Although such a sense of inadequacy or insufficiency was highlighted by some children, more told us that a key reason why they disliked their IHSE activity related to the immediately physical challenges it presented them with. The following were not untypical in this regard:

> I don't want to do violin cos it hurts my neck so much (Boy, Year 4)
>
> It's a little bit hard when you play violin cos it hurts your neck…you have to hold the violin and it really hurts (Girl, Year 4)
>
> *Q: How does it feel when you are playing your instrument, do you get a good feeling from it?* No, cos your lips sting (Boy, Year 5).

For others, these sorts of physical challenges primarily related to the duration of the music learning activities, where holding instruments for what were seen as excessive periods led children to express opinions such as the following:

> *Q: So which do you prefer, singing or violin?* Singing, because you don't have to do it for a long time. If you have to do violin for a long time it starts to hurt your arm (Girl, Year 3)
>
> We have breaks but not for too long and I'm still tired. You have to keep on playing (Girl, Year 2)

> Orchestra [practice], I don't like that, it's for ages, one hour (Boy, Year 5)
>
> It [instrument] gets really heavy if you have to hold it for ages (Boy, Year 6)

In response to this situation, a number of children spoke of how they derived more satisfaction from their instrument playing when they disposed of greater freedom and control over its nature and duration. The below interview excerpt was fairly typical in this regard:

> *Q: So what is your favourite part of your instrument learning?* Practising at home, cos you can do as much as you like, like 20 minutes, then stop, then come back to it (Girl, Year 5)

A further consistent trend to emerge, when we look across all of our interviews, concerned the ways in which children described the nature of their IHSE activities. This connects, we suspect, both with the kind of limits imposed on children's control over their playing (as above), as well, perhaps, as the broader sense of their music learning activity as primarily school-centred. At issue here is the sense of obligation which pervaded many children's accounts:

> *Q: Could you describe your music sessions?* They come in and get violins out and…when *IHSE Musician* asks us to play we do, when he tells us to stand up we do and when he asks us to sing we do. *Q: And do you like those sessions?* Ish (Girl, Year 3)
>
> Miss says practice makes perfect and violin is different to music because you have to do it, you have to do it…[pause]…because you have to do it (Girl, Year 3)
>
> *Q: So what was the performance like?* We had to play all the songs we learnt (Boy, Year 2)
>
> My Mum tells me I have to play my violin at least once a day (Girl, Year 3)
>
> On Monday you have to play on violin and on Wednesday you have to sing with *IHSE Musician* (Girl, Year 3)
>
> [I] do like doing it, it's just kind of a bit hard, well, we have to do it every, every week, but sometimes we have breaks from school, we have a week off school or a PD [staff professional development] day (Girl, Year 6)
>
> We have to play whatever the conductor tells us to play (Boy, Year 6)

In some senses, this may simply relate to the kind of language of encouragement associated with the IHSE initiative more generally. For instance, one child told us about the 'Posture Song' which he had been taught to help him remember how to hold himself during practice sessions:

> To play with correct posture, you must obey the rules,
> They'll help you play with perfection, they will help you play in tune,
> Sit forward in your seat, place bow on the floor [stomp, stomp],
> Sit tall, keep your head straight, look at the conductor… (Boy, Year 2)

That said, it was also clear that for some children (and especially the older children who expressed indifference or disdain for their instrument learning activities), the sense in which their participation was generally obliged (something which appeared to be amplified when children were allocated instruments rather than choosing them) was not always especially welcome. Others, in pointing towards what they saw as a limited range of choices and freedoms inherent to their IHSE participation (over things like repertoire, instrument choice, duration of learning sessions, performances), often set this in contrast to the way in which they approached popular music-related activities. Indeed, when children expressed notably avid engagements with popular music forms and associated activities (of the sort detailed earlier), this tended to be accompanied by generally less positive attitudes towards IHSE activities:

> I [would] like [to play] pop and rock when I get better, because it's got singing to it and everything, and the other one [classical music] is just like music with instruments (Girl, Year 5)

> I go on YouTube on my mum's laptop…I'm really into One Direction…I watch them with my friends…I don't really like playing my violin cos it's hard (Girl, Year 3)

> I don't like playing my instrument at school…*Q: Do you like music, would you say?* I like rap, I like Eminem. I listen to it on my headphones when I play Xbox. It makes me play better (Boy, Year 6)

Irrespective of children's attitudes towards IHSE, a further consistently expressed perception, amongst our respondents, was that the kind of music involved in the programme was best described by the term "calm".

> *Q: How would you describe the kind of music you do in your music sessions?* [long pause] Calm (Girl, Year 3)

> When I grow up I want to be a singer and dancer and to play…I came here to learn so I can play. I want to do calm music too (Girl, Year 3)

For some, this calmness (the term 'smooth' emerged often too) was appreciated. A number of children, mostly clustered in the younger age ranges, told us that they liked this quality of the music, with a number contrasting it with 'noisy' home environments or the 'loud' music played by older siblings (e.g., the 'scary' rock music played by an older brother). For others though, and especially those children who had expressed stronger and more numerous engagements with

popular music, the 'calm' nature of IHSE music meant that, for various reasons, it lacked interest:

> Normally like, ours [IH music] is like calm and smooth, but the music I listen to is loud (Girl, Year 5)
>
> Cos I thought they [IHSE initiative] would use not soothing instruments but stuff like piano, drums, the ones that can actually get beat in them. Like my brother used to have a guitar (Boy, Year 4)
>
> *Q: What kind of music do you play in your classes?* Boring music. *Q: Why is it boring?* Because it is (Girl, Year 3)

This finding appears to fall into step with previous research findings which have highlighted how some students feel estranged in music education when there is an emphasis on the established Western canon (Shepherd and Vulliamy, 1994; Vulliamy, 1977). Related, we feel, is the fact that when prompted to describe the kind of music with which they were engaging in their IHSE projects, children often used terms which appeared both to set it apart from popular music forms and frame it in terms of an absence or lack (e.g., "just instrumental", "just music", "just like music with instruments"). This perception of IHSE music as characterised by relative 'lack', when compared to popular music, was especially noted by children who expressed high levels of interest in the visual, symbolic and lyrical components of popular music. Yet the group of children who expressed perhaps the lowest levels of interest in their IHSE music learning were those who detailed relatively active home musical lives, but of a sort centred on popular genres. The influence of both siblings and parents appeared important in this, since the contexts and activities that children described very often implicated family members within their developing musical practices.

> I wanna be a music sort of person, sort of sing songs in front of people, like Katy Perry…I normally go to the karaoke with my mum, when I'm not at school [respondent breaks into chorus of 'Roar' by Katy Perry] (Girl, Year 6)
>
> *Q: So do you think you'll carry on with the violin?* When I get older I'm not gonna play it. *Q: No? Why?* It gets your arms tired. I would rather play the guitar…my Dad plays a guitar. He taught me how to play guitar (Girl, Year 3)
>
> My brother plays violin and the other one plays the guitar…he's learning me how to play One Direction 'What Makes You Beautiful'…he's got four guitars in his room (Girl, Year 5)
>
> My [older] sister plays drums…I'd rather play drums…I've been playing violin since half way through year three…its hard and boring, I don't really like it (Boy, Year 4)

Just as the presence, at home, of instruments associated with orchestral playing or else family members with experiences of more 'formal' music learning approaches, appeared to correlate with a broader valorisation of IHSE participation on the part of children, so the influence of non-formal approaches and popular music-related instruments tended to reduce this. This demonstrates a further way in which the degree of what might be termed 'cultural fit', between the valued-dimensions, practices and characteristics of children's out-of-school and pre-existing musical environments and those prioritised within IHSE, could bring important implications for the ways in which children derived value from their participation.

Individual Participant Portraits

In light of our effort, in the previous section of this report, to provide a picture of the overarching trends emerging across our cohort of child respondents, the following six 'portraits' of particular children seek to offer more insight into the more complex blend of factors at work within individual accounts. In some cases, these appear to confirm some of the above-detailed trends. In other cases however, the picture is a more complicated one which, as such, pays testament to the challenges involved in efforts to generalise about the relative salience of the different bases of children's cultural valuing. While we certainly see value in our efforts to describe overarching trends and themes then, the ways in which individual accounts diverged from or complicated those trends is also, we believe, worth acknowledging.

Portrait 1: Connor (Year 5, Old Park, Telford)

Connor's favourite free time activity is playing video games (especially *Minecraft* and *Fifa 14*). It offers "something to do" and he can play with his older brother, which he enjoys. He also likes football (he plays in a team at weekends) and going to the cinema with his Dad and brother. Does he like school? "Not really" he says, apparently unwilling to elaborate. So what do adults think is 'good' for you? Swimming and football, "because they're good for being fit". He agrees with this, these things are good for you.

When it comes to music he says that his favourite style is rap music "because it's got a lot of beat in it". His older brother likes that kind of music too; they listen to it on the radio or watch it on TV. What about IHSE? This is different, he says, from 'his' music, because "you make it yourself and it sounds different". So does he prefer to listen to music or play music? "Listening's better" he says. He is quite good at his instrument – the trumpet – though, finding it quite "easy", and he says that he has been progressed into the 'Creative Ensemble' group at school. He's also performed publicly quite a few times, although he does, he admits, "get nervous of it".

What about at home, do his parents show interest in his music playing? Not especially, although he does say that they'd like him to be an instrument player when he gets older. He doesn't like this sound of this prospect however "I'm gonna be a police[man] instead". What about practicing at home, does he enjoy this? "I did in year 4, but not in year 5 cos it just started boring me".

Portrait 2: Lauren (Year 3, Norwich Primary Academy)

Lauren talks of a range of activities that she values – baking, video games and music videos, mentioning in connection with the first of these how the pleasure stems, in part, from doing it with her mum and sister.

Her taste in music is similar to many of her age: Michael Jackson, Beyonce and Taylor Swift, but not Justin Bieber since "all he talks about is girls". For her, pleasure seems to be closely linked to physical activity. Swimming is an obvious example. And in the sense that pleasure derives from the physical, so too, it seems, do aspects of cultural value. Asked to explain why she thinks swimming is good for her, Lauren talks of how it gets you to use your legs and arms. Music, too, is viewed like this: it is good for the brain – in the same way that swimming is good for the arms and legs.

The music that she does not like is also understood in physical terms: it is "too low".
This framing of cultural value finds expression in her antipathy to IHSE. Playing the violin is frustrating because she has to keep playing the same song. She sees no value in the improvement that might come with repetition. In any case, she'd prefer to play the recorder than the violin she says.

It seems that Lauren dislikes IHSE because it is hard to do, but just what 'hard' means is not straightforward – boring, repetitive, difficult, arduous? And this attitude may, in part derive, from her sense of her mum's valuing of IHSE. Lauren's sister also plays, but, it seems with much more enthusiasm than her.

Portrait 3: Julia (Year 2, Old Park, Telford)

Julia's pleasures include a familiar list (baking, cinema, swimming) and their value is clearly marked by the fact that they are shared with other members of her family. Her "favourite thing to do in the world [is] visiting grandma and having [the] best family in the world".

Besides the role played by her family, these pleasures are often associated with physical experiences. Swimming means going underwater, where it is "peaceful". The pleasure of playing music – which she mentions with baking, etc., – is also physical: playing rhythms and beats, using the bow on her cello. And when she's asked what is 'good' for you, as opposed to what is pleasurable, she talks of "Doing physical things…sports things". Music falls within this way of attributing value. Playing music: "gets your arms moving…it's not good to watch TV all day".
Julia seems to experience difficulties in reconciling her personal musical tastes – *One Dimension*, *Katy Perry*, *Justin Bieber*, *Tinie Tempah* – with her IHSE pleasures. She likes all the activities associated with IHSE activities, but when she's asked to choose a favourite one she opts for giving a performance. This is her chance to shine, she says, an opportunity for people to see how good you are. The only hint of frustration comes when she talks of how she likes to play around and make up things on her cello. She would, she says, like to do more of "her own things".

Portrait 4: Ali (Year 6, Hawthorn Primary, Newcastle)

Music isn't a favoured aspect of Ali's life, and in fact he has little desire to continue with IHSE (or any other music tuition) upon leaving primary school. In part, this decision is taken because he will be attending a specialist Islamic school, and so he sees limited opportunities for musical engagement in the future. Perhaps more pressingly, however, Ali sees IHSE as very much a scholastic activity, considering it irrelevant to his life outside school.

Ali has a passion for video games, and in particular enjoys playing the *Grand Theft Auto* series along with his older brother and cousins. He also cites *Minecraft* as being particularly enjoyable for both his own gameplay and watching videos of others online. When asked why he particularly enjoys this game – which is concerned with creating and building objects in a virtual world – he remarks "to get my creativity up".

Not all aspects of *Minecraft* appeal to Ali, however. The soft instrumental soundtrack to the game is considered "boring", "calming" music, which isn't to his tastes. Indeed, music isn't really something that Ali makes a point of listening to. When pressed, he reveals that the music of *Justin Bieber* has some appeal, but can't articulate why. His appreciation for the music taught within IHSE is similarly unspecific. When describing the music he plays on his French horn, Ali details the names of the arrangements and is either unwilling or unable to say much about what he thinks about sounds and the experience of producing them.

Portrait 5: Adam (Year 7, Formerly of Hawthorn Primary, Newcastle)

Adam is a pupil currently at the Excelsior High School (in Newcastle), having left Hawthorn Primary in 2013. In addition to returning to Hawthorn for IHSE tuition twice a week after school, he also attends the Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) at The Sage Gateshead every Sunday.

Adam takes pride in his achievements as a trombone player, offering his (successfully completed) grade 1 mark sheet to the interviewer when asked how he is getting on with trombone playing. The sheet provides evidence of his music prowess, and Adam says that he is eager to work towards his grade 2. In fact, he notes "'I find it easy now" when reflecting on the progress he has made.

Although Adam talks about some recreational activities he enjoys, such as video games (*FIFA*; the *Call of Duty* series) or playing football, a passion for musicality is evident in his talk, although, somewhat surprisingly, this centres far less on trombone than it does on beatboxing. Indeed, during the interview Adam is very keen to show a clip, on the interviewer's smartphone, of his favourite British beatbox artist. He also showcases, at numerous points throughout the discussion, his beatboxing abilities and the range of different sounds he can create while beatboxing.

While he does get the opportunity to play music on the trombone which he enjoys – such as the theme from the popular game *Skyrim* – he speaks of still getting the urge of wanting to beatbox

in ensembles and in practice sessions, acknowledging that there doesn't seems to be scope for this particular talent within IHSE. Towards the interview's close he does talks of putting a clip of his musical efforts on Facebook though. Ah, so will this be a clip of him playing trombone? Apparently, it will not. A girl he knows has asked him to "put a video of you beatboxing for me please". Ten people have now asked him in fact: "All my friends are going to get this now". Haven't his friends asked him to do a trombone video? "No" he replies, chuckling a little at the suggestion.

Portrait 6 - Grace (Year 4, Catton Grove, Norwich)

Grace tells us that playing music is her favourite free time activity: "It's just really fun when you get to learn new songs…I just got really interested in how you learn it and what you have to do". She takes her violin at home at weekends and practices first thing on Saturdays and Sundays. She also likes swimming (which "makes you strong"), going to the cinema and doing homework. She likes school and especially writing stories.

What kinds of activities do the adults around her say is 'good' for her to do? Playing music she says. Her parents think she will be really good at playing music one day, just like her older brother (he's been playing for 11 years). So what does *she* think is 'good' for her to do? She agrees: it's playing music, especially the way you have to hold it properly and bow carefully.

Grace likes the fact that her parents and brother watch her play in public performances. At one event: "You know when there's a big pause after you've finished [playing a piece], he [older brother] actually shouted 'Yay!'. It was really funny". She likes listening to music too, her favourite style being what she describes as "soft sort" of music. Although she can't quite put any names to it, she says that she hears it at home and in films sometimes. She adds that she doesn't really talk about music with friends at school. Why not? "I just don't think anyone else knows about that kind of music". As for the future, Grace would like to carry on learning violin, but, she says, this is far from certain: "I have piano too, so can't choose".

Summary

A number of key themes emerge from the foregoing discussion. In many ways the nature of these highlighted the need for us, as researchers, to recognise how factors lying outside of children's encounters with IHSE musical instrument playing could pre-dispose them towards the adoption of particular kinds of stances towards it. Thus the role of parents and siblings in validating IHSE instrument learning emerged quite prominently. So, it seemed, did children's broader attitudes towards schooling and the school environment (as a source of validation in its

own right)[5]. Similarly, the ways of engaging with and uncovering value in cultural activities as prominent within peer groups – especially as the upper ends of the age range – appeared to incline children towards seeing value in IHSE activities to greater or lesser degrees. While such pre-dispositions very often fed into how children understood their IHSE activity, in a number of cases – such as where some children discovered a previously untapped aptitude for instrument learning – they appeared, at first glance, to be less significant. What often accompanied such aptitude-recognition on the part of children, however, were several processes of validation inherent to IHSE activities (e.g., recognition by teachers, progression into the 'Creative Ensemble'). In these cases then, external sources of validation remained important (certainly within children's *accounts*).

In other respects however, the more immediate and embodied dimensions of children's encounters with IHSE instrument learning activities came to the fore. Challenges in handing or holding instruments, or else perceptions of the sounds created as somehow lacking in desirable qualities were notable here. Indeed, the absence, within IHSE initiatives, of some of the valued visual, representational and kinetic aspects of popular music forms emerged fairly prominently within numerous accounts. At other times the nature of IHSE participation as, for instance, typically obligatory in nature, set it in contrast to some of the valued dimensions of popular cultural activity (where there lay associations with freedom, choice, self-directedness and play).

These matters alert us to fact that children's responses to IHSE *qua* cultural and artistic activity could not be meaningfully understood or articulated without reference to the broader systems of valuing which permeated children's cultural and indeed social lives. It is for this reason that the patterning of correlations detailed in the foregoing section seeks to draw attention to the numerous (albeit quite complex, variegated and occasionally conflicting) ways in which children's valuing of IHSE initiatives corresponded with the kinds of cultural and social investments operating within other domains of their lives.

[5] Indeed, it is important to recognise the degree to which IHSE activities were often seen by children as explicitly school/learning-focussed activities (and it may be for this very reason that many children had relatively little to say about their cultural aspects).

5. Cultural Valuing: Parents, Teachers and IHSE Musicians

In this section of the report we detail the ways in which parents, teachers and IHSE musicians described the value of IHSE projects. One matter in need of attention at the outset of this discussion – in order to help readers contextualise what follows – concerns the predominantly positive nature of the accounts gathered from these groups. That is, when compared with the much more varied testimonies of the children with whom we spoke – at the level of their expressed valuing of IHSE as a cultural initiative – almost all of our adult respondents spoke of the initiative in quite glowing terms. In some ways, this situation may well relate, certainly in terms of school staff and parents, to the commonly expressed feeling that participating schools and children were fortunate to have been selected, by funders and supporters, for involvement in the IHSE programme. Indeed, the recognition that such musical provision was not on offer to neighbouring schools appeared to furnish those chosen (and their related stakeholders) with a sense of the project's 'specialness' (e.g., "we are really fortunate to get this" - School Staff Member; "obviously we are very lucky" - Parent). In a number of ways, this general sense of good fortune appeared – in itself – to be seen as a source of value; it offered schools and communities a sense of distinctiveness and, on occasion, brought welcome media attention.

A further factor liable to have influenced the nature of the accounts that we gathered from adults relates to the fact that, as was not the case for the children with whom we spoke, this sample was self-selecting. Thus the parents whose accounts we accessed had actively made themselves available to us (where most others did not). We therefore suspect that this is likely to have skewed our parent sample in the direction of those who were both willing and able to speak to us (focus groups were held immediately after the school day) and who considered the project to have been worthy of their rhetorical support (thereby potentially limiting involvement from those either unavailable or who might have felt otherwise). Similarly, in terms of the teachers with whom we were able to speak, these were usually selected for us (by school heads) on the quite understandable basis of their relatively higher levels of involvement and engagement with the project. On numerous occasions, these school staff members also held responsibilities relating to the organisation of the initiative in their schools (a factor which may well have disinclined them, at least in part, to critical commentary). We deem it appropriate, before moving on to discuss our findings, to make readers aware of such limitations in our sample of adult research participants.

We would broadly characterise the findings from our discussions with adult stakeholders in two ways. Firstly, while there were some areas of overlap between children's and adults' accounts of how the initiatives delivered value (and parent interviews appeared to corroborate children's accounts in particular ways, as detailed below), for the most part, the ways in which value was understood and attributed by adults diverged from the accounts of children. Secondly, there emerged a general trend which saw school staff and parents laying comparably more emphasis on what are understood in the arts literature as 'instrumental' outcomes. By comparison, IHSE

musicians placed greater emphasis upon the more 'intrinsic' dimensions of project activities. That said, members of each of these three groups did, on occasion, offer thoughts which ran against this general trend and which, in respect to certain matters, converged.

One such point of convergence concerned how the value of the initiative was discussed by parents, school staff and IHSE musicians in terms of children's peer co-operation and support, teamwork and collaborative learning. While this was only occasionally alluded to by our child respondents, it was noted by adults as a much more central dimension of the project's value.

> Well for a start they realise they've got to work together and their being able to work with each other has improved (School Staff Member)

> Certainly *daughter* has gained a lot more patience with other pupils in understanding that everybody's got their own level and that support and encouragement is really important. I've seen a change in her on that side of things because she didn't used to have an awful lot of patience with other people before she really got on the road with this. Maybe it's part of her maturing as well but I certainly think that it has helped with that, being able to understand other children of her own age or younger (Parent)

> It teaches how to work together as a group, that's one thing. It also teaches kind of respect for each other…it's a very important thing actually I think, to be part of something very big like an orchestra (IHSE Musician)

> I think the children are learning to care about each other, care about their instruments, learn about appreciation you know, sitting and listening and clapping and caring for each other. And actually helping each other and saying you know, 'this is where your string goes' or 'this is where this goes' and doing that kind of social valuing each other role that you may not get so much in academic lessons really (IHSE Musician)

While some of our child respondents certainly alluded to ways in which they would assist each other in their music learning, in the main they did not recognise this as an especially prominent component of their experiences of IHSE initiatives (when, for instance, compared to the numerous accounts of co-operative activity detailed in out-of-school settings, and especially in relation to the previously-mentioned video game *Minecraft*). A further way in which our adult interviewees' accounts of IHSE's value diverged from those of the children related to the personal skills developed which were seen – largely by school staff – as crucial to pupils' broader academic development:

> I don't think there's many other things you could do that would have the impact that this [IHSE initiative] will, just because of all those softer, non-cognitive skills that are involved in learning music. And some harder skills such as memory, repetition and patterns…and coordination, but yeah concentrating and having to listen and wait your turn, our children find that really hard…I'm not sure that many other curriculum areas

> could have the same impact that music can and can hit so many different kind of personal skills (School Staff Member)

In some cases, children's perseverance in relation to learning activities was seen as a key challenge facing educators working within our case study schools, but also something which – by virtue of the important place of practice and repetition within instrument learning – the initiative stood to deliver on:

> They [children] just don't have resilience, they don't have that perseverance, they give up very quickly. If something's hard for them, they just can't develop that perseverance to keep going and keep trying. If it gets too hard they'll generally down tools or walk off rather than try to overcome a problem. I'm hoping it [the HSE initiative] will develop that and begin to have an impact on that kind of perseverance and stamina that we know our children need…it's going to be hard work because the children are at a point with learning an instrument where actually now you have to practice and you have to do it 50 times to get it right to move on. It's quite difficult to reach that kind of ridge where you've really just got to work hard to get over it (School Staff Member)
>
> *Q: So what do you see as the key challenges facing your student body here, in terms of progressing within the project?* It's that keep going and keep trying [thing] really, sticking at it yeah, without a doubt...it's about learning that if I'm going to learn how to do this bit, it means I've got to do it lots and lots and lots and lots of times until I've got it. (School Staff Member)

IHSE initiatives were therefore seen, by virtue of the central role of practice and determination in achieving progress, as holding the potential to bring particular value to children's learning skills.

> I don't think you can really easily measure the value because a lot of what we see isn't measurable against a tick chart. It's engagement, it's concentration, it's smiling even when they've done it wrong and not giving up (School Staff Member).
>
> Their concentration is improving, their ability to learn (School Staff Member)
>
> It's hard to find things that are not just curriculum-based about developing perseverance and stamina and this (IHSE participation] is a really good way of trying to do that (School Staff Member)

In other cases, children's ability to memorise song parts was valued, again by school staff mostly, as was an increased level of attentiveness or what were termed 'listening skills':

> Our chair of [school] governors hasn't really seen an awful lot of the project, [but] he came to one of our concerts…and he said he couldn't believe the focus of the

> children….the way the focus moved from *classroom teacher* to the adult leading their group, back to *classroom teacher* again, he said it was incredible to watch. And every child stood there and knew every single word of those songs. And the quality of sound was beautiful as well. So that's something we're hoping will now kind of, that ability to learn and memorise will continue to develop (School Staff Member).

> Children's attention spans have greatly improved since we've been doing music. They listen better, they pick things up much faster…we noticed it especially at Christmas, across the whole school, the children learned the songs much faster than we've ever learnt songs before (School Staff Member)

> Obviously there's an element of coordination and listening skills, so they are listening more carefully to things (School Staff Member)

> It's very good for them, I think, to work as a group and actually listen to each other, to do something and be patient (IHSE musician)

Calmness – something which many children saw as characteristic of the music involved in their IHSE learning – was also a termed touched upon up by teaching staff, as something intrinsic to the learning activity. In such cases however, the sense in which the term 'calm/calmness' was used appeared to be less centred on the aesthetic qualities of the sounds involved (as was the case with children's accounts), but rather in terms of the calm and methodical approach required in developing instrumental skills:

> I think music is incredibly valuable. I love music myself, I've sung in a choir for many years and do all that kind of thing. I think children can get a lot out of it, so sort of the calmness, the actual fact that they have to like be very methodical to get better at a musical instrument (School Staff Member)

On other occasions, school staff drew much more explicit links between the curriculum and those elements of the project which they perceived to be of value:

> It's actually much bigger than we'd realised…even simple things like learning a poem. They pick up the beats and the rhythm much faster than I'd ever thought we would have done (School Staff Member)

Where school staff were perhaps most direct in drawing links between IHSE projects' value and educational matters was, as also emerged through our discussions with children, in terms of how music instrument learning provided opportunities for some less academically-gifted pupils to discover previously unrecognised aptitudes. For school staff, such musical 'giftedness' was noted for its ability to produce broader benefits for such children:

> We've noticed we've got a whole range of individual children that we've really noticed it's made a big difference to them. We've found some very talented children. *Child* in Year 4 is incredibly musical, very, very talented. So that's been quite interesting to virtually give him any instrument and he can play it (School Staff Member)

> I mean we have children who come back who've been in high school and this is probably their second or third year in high school and they still come back and strangely enough those are the children perhaps who are not always academically the most, the brightest academically, they're not always academic achievers but they have got that gift. And it is a gift and it is a talent and they can bring pure pleasure to people (School Staff Member)

In contrast to some of the ways school staff related the project's value in terms of its contribution to pupils' academic engagement and progress, the parents with whom we spoke tended to note more diversified benefits such as enjoyment and self-confidence:

> She sees it not really as learning, she sees it as enjoyment, learning for enjoyment rather than learning in the classroom because you have to [laughs] (Parent)

> Her confidence and her being able to get up and do things in front of people has just been fantastic (Parent)

This theme of self-confidence was also noted by IHSE musicians, although this related more (as might be expected) to confidence in music performance and learning:

> the first time we did a performance…the kids were terrified, the kids were really frightened. We had kids being sick, we had kids who were wetting themselves and we'd have kids who'd absolutely refuse to go on. And now they just swan on, they don't mind if it's the *names several performance venues* you know, they don't, you know, it doesn't bother them, they just do it. They just do it and it's just what they do. And what fantastic opportunities and confidence-building, you know? (IHSE Musician)

> Hopefully at the end of the session everybody's done something that they feel that they've done well rather than continually learning something. So I think that helps to really build confidence, the fact that they all feel that they've done something kind of properly really (IHSE Musician)

While, as has been noted, there was a general disconnect between questions of value when it came to adults' and children's accounts, a number of the issues which emerged regularly in children's accounts, especially in terms of challenges, did resonate with teachers and IHSE musicians. Prominent amongst these was the degree of physical difficulties many children had encountered in their instrument learning:

> There are just some kids who actually find it hard and whether it's a mechanical thing, they're just not getting it (School Staff Member)

> Obviously there are some children that find it more difficult than others but…it's just all a case of actually getting going, physically going on the instruments (School Staff Member)

> As I look round the room and as I see the children developing there are children who have kind of difficulty with holding the bow, they can't, what's the word for it, their motor skills, the motor skills are very, very poor (IHSE Musician)

> Sometimes it's coordination as well, that we'd never noticed before from their writing, sometimes they haven't got that as well. But they're building on it and from when in previous years when I might have removed certain bits so you didn't knock them, now we don't (School Staff Member)

In line with the ways such challenges inhibited a valuing of IHSE by a number of children, the wide divergences in children's progress and levels of engagement were noted by both IHSE musicians and school staff:

> You've got children with very, very different needs. You've got some children that are just like flying literally, they've got those instruments and they're off, and you have to keep those young people engaged as well as those young children that are struggling a little bit (IHSE Musician)

> The level of engagement…that's the really important thing for us at the moment because if we lose these children then it's very hard to get them back again…we're writing lists of children that might need more input or are struggling with certain aspects of their playing or don't seem to be enjoying it for one reason or another (IHSE Musician)

> It [level of children's engagement] does vary. Some are completely hooked on music and loving it, others are dipping their toe in a bit more than they perhaps were (School Staff Member)

> I went to see a brass session yesterday and there was a proportion of the class that obviously weren't engaging with it as well as they should have been (IHSE Musician)

Another factor emerging from our adult discussions which appeared to correspond with the findings emerging from our interviews with children, concerned the important role of the home as a site of validation:

> Parent 1: It's nice though because they want to show you the stuff.

Parent 2: They do, they do.

Parent 1: They learn something and then they bring their instrument home and want to show you what they've done.

Parent 2: My daughter gets hers out straightaway on a Friday night when she gets home and shows us what she's been doing.

And it's lovely to hear her play at home and practice and it really, you know, it just has given her an enrichment and a view on something else that she didn't have before, so that's nice (Parent)

Associated with such parental validation was the way that some school staff described how IHSE initiatives had encouraged more parents to visit the school, especially for musical performance events:

> Well when I first started [at this school] the parents wouldn't get involved in anything really, really didn't want to get involved and they were frightened to. But now that they're seeing that their children are doing something that's really, really different and really, really exciting they're more prepared to come. And that's gradually got better and better…I have seen much more of the parents or carers or whoever it is coming in the last couple of years (School Staff Member)

What also emerged however – again echoing the findings emerging from our discussions with children – was the fact that higher levels of parental engagement and support were only forthcoming from certain sections of the community:

> I get the impression, certainly the people I see, it's always the same faces actually you know, the people who'll be coming in to pick them up at the end of an ensemble session and it's always the same group of parents (IHSE Musician)

While our focus on how adults' understood the value of the initiative has thus far centred largely on broadly 'instrumental' outcomes (educational engagement, self-confidence, listening skills, teamwork, etc.), it was clear, from our discussions with adult stakeholders, that such matters could not be meaningfully separated from the specifically cultural dimensions of the initiative. The following interview excerpt illustrates the point well, especially in terms of how the behavioural expectations associated with certain cultural experiences connected (in a way which appears to be valued below) to the behavioural expectations of educational contexts:

> I mean, taking a group to the Symphony Hall…whereas at the beginning of the project ours [pupils] used to find it hard to sit still for five minutes and you're taking them to an hour's concert where they've got to sit still and clap in the right places and do the right things and not make a noise, you know. Their experiences have increased and they wouldn't have had the opportunity before…just seeing the look of awe of them walking into these places and these buildings, you know. (School Staff Member)

The above excerpt, as well as alluding to behavioural qualities linked to the exceptional nature of such a cultural experience for the children concerned, also suggests how value is here understood, however implicitly, in terms of the accumulation of cultural capital. This sense in which the project was of value to children for its ability to provide them with knowledge and skills relevant to a 'higher' cultural form was one which emerged on numerous occasions throughout our discussions with adults:

> It's widened their [children's] horizons, it's given them, you know, greater life chances (School Staff Member)

> I've heard parents who've been able to say they've heard their kids talking about Beethoven you know and who they, what their favourite bit of music is that the kids play, you know, and how it brings them to tears (IHSE Musician)

> To raise their aspirations away from what's just here I think is [good], you know, to have just some of them seeing that there is a life outside *local areas*, that there's a world out there that they could be involved with (School Staff Member)

> I mean, when you hear a child say "Oh I actually heard such and such on the radio, I heard a piece of Bach" and you think "Hang on, this is really something" …because that child may not have known [that] if they were not involved (IHSE Musician)

Here there was an associated sense in which engendering a taste for certain cultural forms and experiences amongst the children would lead them to be more open-minded, to seek out 'new things' and 'aspire' in a more general sense. Indeed, this notion that the distinctive use of such a musical form might serve to 'raise the bar' (see below) was considered relevant not just the children involved but also to host communities as well as school staff:

> The kinds of music [employed]…have raised the aspirations, the bar, the level, the expectation for all of us, and that's not just the kids, that's all my staff… because a lot of my staff never had listened to any kind of orchestral music (School Staff Member)

> I would hope it would make them [children] more likely to look at new things, I would hope that that would mean that they're a bit more open-minded to new things. It's not really about the children I think at this stage, I think that's about the families and I think it's about the families seeing what opportunities are open to them, so around the community and it's about the families picking up on that rather than the children (School Staff Member)

This issue of cultural capital transfer as a key site of value generation within the initiative was a somewhat vexed one however. The below interviewee, for example, recognises the degree of

cultural (dis-)continuity between symphonic orchestras and the likely cultural contexts of her pupils' future lives:

> What I'm pushing [for], and not always exactly what *IHSE Project Partner* wants, but I try and get in here [the school] as many other musicians who are not playing orchestral instruments or who are playing orchestral instruments but not playing classical music. Actually these kids are more likely, I think, to use their instruments playing in…say in a street band or in a band in a pub or you know, being the trumpet section in a rock band. Now that's great, as far as I'm concerned you know, because I think that is more likely [to happen] than they will end up in orchestras…I think we've got to show them [children] that "Right, you've learnt to play your trumpet and now look, you can play it in this kind of band and in that kind of band" (School Staff Member)

Indeed, the ways in which some IHSE musicians discussed the repertoire used within practice sessions also demonstrated an implicit acknowledgement that the nature of the initiative's cultural dimensions (as well as the associations of these) presented certain challenges in terms of sustaining children's engagement:

> Instead of just practising with no relation to anything, we used the *Frozen* [Disney film] backing track so that the kind of engagement and interest in it was …it was a transferrable thing of "Oh look it's music that's on a film that you like" …So I think always realising that you can do that, and not being restricted to "we are doing music and we can only do these things" is really important…I mean obviously, you know, they're obviously more engaged in the music because they can see this connection (IHSE Musician)

Similarly, for the school staff member cited below, the incorporation of 'modern culture' components into the IHSE initiative was, when it occurred, seen as an important undertaking in terms of encouraging pupils' engagement:

> So it really is exposing them to something that they don't know anything about and to some extent that's quite good because they've got no preconceived ideas of what they're going to hear. So they could be just fascinated by it. And I think with some of the work that we've done, the very original orchestra concerts that *IHSE Musician* led, he was doing film music. And it was about kind of, yeah, film music is classical music as well. It's [about] that way you find in, to connect the classical music with modern culture (School Staff Member)

On other occasions, IHSE musicians spoke of ways in which they had sought to counter some of the negative perceptions of the repertoire (as detailed to us by children) by attempting to encourage a sense of ownership over the learning activity on the part of children. As the below quote suggests however, this was attempted without any necessary compromise of the project's focus on instrumental technique learning:

> I can adapt what we're trying to do to…not to compromise the technique and not to compromise what we're learning, but to make it feel like it was your, like the student's idea (IHSE Musician)

Perhaps reinforcing some of the key differences between the ways the value of the project was understood by children compared to adults, the following interview excerpt directs significance away from questions of musical form (something which emerged quite prominently within children's figuring of cultural value) and instead locates this in the distinctive nature of the teaching methodology and group music making involved in the project:

> It wouldn't make any difference whether it was jazz, popular music, classical music, folk music, it's still the process of learning and the engagement in making music as a group is the key kind of core driver for what we're doing…the only thing I would say is, about the classical symphony orchestra, it's quite, how can I put this, it's got quite a tradition of how it's set up and the palette of sounds within the symphony orchestra is more than you would get within a rock band…whilst we don't say classical music is definitely the vehicle for this project, because it's not, music is the vehicle for the project, the classical western tradition of course provides us with the strongest prewritten methodology of teaching music, which is probably why it was chosen as opposed to you know, folk or jazz (IHSE Musician)

Summary

As noted at the beginning of this section, it is interesting to note the divergences between the ways in which cultural value was figured by children and adults respectively. In many ways this in unsurprising since IHSE is most explicitly focussed, certainly in terms of the elements which made up the initiatives with which we engaged, upon children's musical instrument learning activity. Where children were thus generally figuring cultural value in terms of either enjoyment/pleasure, adults tended to see this in terms of what they thought, more instrumentally, would be beneficial for children's development. For teachers this came in the form of pupil's personal or 'soft' skills, for parents in terms of personal attributes (such as confidence and motivation), while IHSE musicians tended to also emphasise factors inherent to the learning activity and its cultural dimensions. Here notions of cultural capital transfer were notable. Where adults' discussion of the cultural aspects of the project overlapped most often with those of the children with whom we spoke, was around the subject of the programme's adoption of a classical music paradigm. Here we encountered some implicit recognition, on the part of adults, of the disjuncture between many local children's pre-existing musical value frameworks and key dimensions of children's IHSE participation. Here there appeared to exist something of a tension within some adults' accounts, between, on one hand, notions of cultural capital transfer and the widening of horizons/raising of bar and, on the other, the perceived need to align children's music learning activities with their broader and pre-existing cultural investments.

6. Conclusions

Within this research project we have sought to focus upon the ways young project participants understood the cultural value of their musical playing and learning activities within IHSE. We began, then, in the hope of maintaining a focus upon children's responses to the moments of cultural experience implicated in their involvement. We have certainly gained numerous insights into the ways in which our research participants, and especially children, experienced IHSE involvement. Repeatedly however, our desired focus upon experiences of the specifically artistic or cultural dimensions of IHSE activities could not be easily contained. That is to say, reported experiences of cultural or artistic encounters very often called forth values and meanings which stood at one step removed from children's actual artistic or cultural activity within IHSE initiatives.

In examining our young respondents' accounts, we therefore find it notably difficult to extricate what might be considered 'intrinsic' from more 'instrumental' values. Indeed, where activity was valued for apparently non-instrumental ends (such as improving at playing one's musical instrument, apparently for its own sake), it would not necessarily be accurate to say that its value was thereby 'intrinsic' (i.e., only accountable in terms of the self-sustaining value derived from that activity or experience). Children's positive evaluation of elements which might be considered intrinsic to the cultural encounter therefore often appeared to rely – for the ultimate source of their value – upon appeals to relations, experiences or intentions (e.g., modifying relationships, accessing resources of various kinds), which were not strictly 'cultural' in their nature.

While this may well have appeared to be the case because our young research participants were unable to easily articulate the dimensions and nature of their 'intrinsic' valuing of participatory experiences, we cannot help but wonder whether the situation would have been substantially different with older participants. That is, we are aware that attributions of specifically cultural or artistic value necessarily depend on people's ability, whatever age they may be, to actually express it. While it may have been the case that our young research participants did not possess the linguistic facility to delineate the specifically artistic or cultural dimensions of IHSE participation that they valued to us, they were nonetheless able, however inadvertently, to reveal ways in which their understandings of cultural value necessarily had recourse to broader webs of meaning, the composition of which undermined attempts to separate out the 'intrinsic' from the 'instrumental'. Thus, as was the case for many of the children with whom we spoke, the attribution of value to the distinctively 'cultural' elements of their IHSE participation (and there can be few more distinctively cultural encounters than playing instrumental music) were either not amenable to verbal communication or else pointed towards purposes, justifications and underpinnings which stood at one step removed from aesthetic encounters and experiences, reaching instead into wider domains of children's lives.

In response to such a claim about the inevitable intermingling of the 'instrumental' and the 'intrinsic', critics might argue that such underpinnings were, in actual fact, decidedly

'instrumental' in character; where, for instance, children were motivated to engage with aesthetic matters in order to subsequently 'show (off)' their instrumental abilities for family members at home, they may have done so in an effort to affect or modify these relationships to some (instrumental) end. Children might thus, it could be argued, stand to benefit in any number of ways; from earning a 'treat' to experiencing feelings of satisfaction at generating pride on the part of parents. Either of these 'outcomes' might thus be seen as capable of being transferred into benefits (of a strictly non-cultural nature) for children. Yet any attribution of instrumentality to such outcomes (for children) serves, at the same time, to denude the meanings of such encounters of their rootedness within webs of meaning and consequence which are, in themselves, underpinned by *other* values. Any attribution of 'instrumentality' would therefore require – for it to have any real purchase – further elaboration about the nature of any 'ends' ultimately sought. At this more fundamental level of recognising value in selected phenomena and experiences, distinctions between 'the cultural' and 'the social' become increasingly difficult to sustain, since, it seems to us, questions about what might be considered as 'good' in cultural terms are bound up with broader questions about the 'good' life (see Knell & Taylor 2011).

In effect then, our questions about 'cultural' value inevitably begged further questions about the deeper values underpinning it and about the sorts of ends, goals or desired states of affairs towards which these directed attention and energies. Perhaps then, the term 'cultural value' is a particularly thorny one in certain ways, or, to be more specific, in at least two ways. Firstly, there does not appear to be any easy way of understanding attributions and estimations of 'cultural' value which meaningfully set that 'valuing' apart from the 'non-cultural'. The 'cultural' then, and the way in which cultural experiences and activities are interwoven into individuals' biographies, necessarily implicates the social, the personal, the ethical and so on, since any attempt to pin down the distinctively 'cultural' (in terms of value) necessarily broaches questions about *value* and *values* in a much wider sense. Secondly, and relating to this matter of 'value' and 'values' in this wider sense, we feel it important to note that within this research project it was at no point the case that we were dealing with questions of 'value(s)' in the abstract. That is, both our findings and our attempts at analysing them consistently alerted us to the fact that in order for something to be even relatable to questions about 'value' there must, as has been elsewhere noted (see, e.g., O'Brien 2010: 20) be someone *doing the valuing.* It is always a question of *whose* values/valuing we are dealing with, of whose particular conception of flourishing is under consideration.

Furthermore, this 'who' is not – we would tentatively suggest – necessarily to be understood in the singular. Indeed, our findings point towards ways in which the foundations or bases of expressions of value, by individuals, were often both *common* (i.e., also invoked by numerous other individuals) and *shared* (i.e., rooted in familial or other relationally significant networks). This was perhaps made especially clear to us through our exploration of children's accounts of the cultural objects and experiences of value to them, since we were then presented, time and again, with accounts which drew family, friends and other relationships into their midst. In such cases it did not so much appear to be the case that cultural experiences could be valued only by

virtue of being shared with others at the moment of their unfurling. Rather, the values embodied or articulated by absent others, or else even enacted within other contexts of familiarity, could also function as important sources of cultural experience's validation. Thus the bases or sources to which children's valuations often appealed seemed to point towards pre-established understandings of some objects and experiences as amenable to certain kinds of valuation, as well as previously modelled, normalised or socialised understandings of '*how* to value'. In relation to such modes of valuing, there appeared to exist (in line with the sorts of correlations within children's accounts as detailed at length above), a certain patterning of dispositions and classifications. This operated a way which reminded us of Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* (see, e.g., Bourdieu 1984; 1990). Here we understand this concept in a way which maintains, in clear view, a sense of *habitus'* strict indeterminacy and which recognises that the complex nature of people's cultural encounters and chosen practices 'cannot be explained either by the extrinsic, instantaneous determinisms of mechanistic sociologism or by the purely internal but equally instantaneous determination of spontaneist subjectivism' (Bourdieu 1990: 54).

One example of such indeterminacy at work in the context of our research, might relate to the valuing of IHSE by children who, in the course of their mandated project participation, uncovered an aptitude for musical instrument playing. This discovery and the intrinsically rewarding nature of their learning, appeared to subsequently deliver valuable meanings to them (potentially transferable beyond music learning contexts), as well as opening up new opportunities and experiences. Such children's pre-existing investments in popular musical forms (and associated activities) thus did not prescribe their responses to IHSE participation, even though they may have appeared to do so for many of their similarly inclined, but less musically able peers. At the same time however, it might be noted that some such children, such as Adam (see Portrait 5), also suggested ways in which the meaningfulness of their music learning could be partially constrained by their other cultural investments (such as beatboxing), and those of their peers.

Such indeterminacy notwithstanding, we perceived the ongoing role of musical (and cultural) socialisation within homes, families and educational environments as liable to influence children's propensity to see their IHSE participation as more or less amenable to their ways or practices of valuing. The differences between these seemed to undergird the varying accounts we uncovered on the part of different children as well as those of the adults with whom we spoke. We therefore agree with claims to the effect that:

> an understanding of cultural value requires a better understanding of what drives individuals and communities in their behaviour and in their choices. Cultural value must be seen as a phenomenon embedded within the very practices of valuing. (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2014: 128)

Although our data are undoubtedly limited in allowing us to make any strong claims about the broader 'practices of valuing' embedded across our chosen case studies' host communities, we

nevertheless hope to have made some contribution towards an understanding of the nexus of factors which coalesced around children's approaches to value in relation to their IHSE participation.

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