

# Sistema Scotland

*Transforming Lives Through Music*



## Annual Review 2015/16

*“Independent evaluation has confirmed Sistema Scotland is increasing the confidence, aspirations and self-esteem of our children and young people.”*

Fiona Hyslop MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs

*“Someday, we could become professionals!”* That was the response of one of the children in Sistema Scotland’s Big Noise Govanhill programme immediately after performing side-by-side with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at City Halls in Glasgow in May 2016. It is exactly the confidence, ambition and aspiration that our Big Noise programmes instil in the children taking part. We do not expect them to become professional musicians, but to take with them the critical life lessons of hard work, perseverance and the rewards that come from sticking with something that is difficult, as they develop into successful adults.



*Performing with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at Glasgow’s City Halls*

Sistema Scotland is now eight years old and our mission is unaltered: to transform lives and communities through music. 2015/16 was a year of consolidation, being our first full year operating three Big Noise orchestra programmes. During the year, we worked with almost 1,700 children across our Big Noise centres in Raploch, Stirling; Govanhill, Glasgow; and Torry, Aberdeen.

Big Noise is an early intervention social programme designed to bring about permanent change in the targeted communities. The work is intensive, immersive and above all long term. Guided and challenged by our inspirational team of teachers, the children work hard not only at music making, but at discovering

and developing their own potential as resilient and resourceful human beings who are equipped to deal with the challenges that face them in the communities where they live and in their future lives.

Big Noise provides a seamless pathway for the children, working with them from just a few months old in Baby Noise, through Nursery, during the school day for the youngest children, and then in the after-school and holiday clubs. Our delivery during 2015/16 included:



## Key Developments

This year has seen a massive endorsement of our work by the Scottish Government through their investment of a further £2.5million over four years, representing 21% of our budget expenditure. The support is drawn from five separate government portfolios recognising that our work has a direct impact on the social, educational and health needs of young people, as well as equipping them with skills in music and other forms of learning.

**Big Noise Raploch** continued its successful programme, engaging with around **460** children and young people aged six months to 17 years attending Raploch Nursery, Raploch and Our Lady's Primary Schools, Castleview School for children with complex additional support needs, and Wallace and St Modan's High Schools.



*Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop visits Big Noise Govanhill*

This year included a focus on engaging further with the wider community. For one week of the summer school and the Easter school, young musicians from Stirling and Clackmannanshire were invited to participate alongside the Big Noise Raploch children. This successful initiative saw 60 additional children join the Raploch children at Easter and garnered much positive feedback. As one parent put it on Facebook "Thank you for including my two girls in your Easter school. Their skills and confidence have improved 10 fold." We were particularly impressed with how the Raploch young people welcomed the other children and made friends, acting as ambassadors for their community.

**Big Noise Govanhill** further consolidated its position in the community working with almost **800** children aged 6 months to 10 years from Cuthbertson and Govanhill Nurseries, and Annette Street, Cuthbertson, Holy Cross and St Bride's Primary Schools.

Due to the huge number of participants, our home at Forsyth House is no longer large enough to accommodate all the children attending the after-school club so we are now also using the Govanhill Neighbourhood Centre which adds considerably to the complexity of delivery and staffing. A new initiative during the year has been the creation of the Govanhill Parents' Ensemble. Aimed at building relationships with parents, the group meets weekly and particularly enjoyed a session in May when members of The Noise (the adult orchestra and choir from Raploch) visited Govanhill for a joint rehearsal and social gathering.

**Big Noise Torry** enjoyed a particularly successful first year of operation, engaging with around **430** children attending Tullos and Walker Road Primary Schools and the associated Nurseries.

The programme has been established at the heart of the community and excellent relationships have been built with other local groups and the schools. Over 60% of the eligible Primary 3 children have engaged voluntarily with the after-school club, which is a wonderful endorsement of the programme in its first year.

## Performances and Residential Trips

Many of the outcomes we achieve with the children come from the hard work they do each day, and the long-term, supportive relationships they form with our team of inspirational and creative musicians. In addition, performance and residential trips are an integral part of the programmes, providing wonderful highlights and goals to work towards, building the confidence of the children and enabling them and their communities to celebrate their successes.

The full list for 2015/16 is too long to include here but has included:

- Ensembles from Big Noise Raploch performing with Nicola Benedetti at the Glasgow Royal Concert Hall as part of the *Italy and the Four Seasons* tour, and again with Nicola at the Perth Concert Hall playing *The Lark Ascending*; and playing for the first time led by their principal violin and without a conductor at the launch of the University of Stirling's Centre for Child Protection and Wellbeing and also at the opening of Audit Scotland's new offices in Edinburgh.
- Big Noise Govanhill children performing their first side-by-side concert with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra at Glasgow's City Halls; in their community at the local library, a dementia centre and Govanhill Baths open day; and further afield at the Children's Panel Awards ceremony at Glasgow City Chambers, the Early Years Scotland Conference, the launch of Scottish Refugee Week and at Glasgow Mela.
- Big Noise Torry children performing for a large gathering of staff at the offices of sponsors Total (E&P) UK Ltd; for teachers at the Aberdeen Learning Festival held in the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre; and at the Aberdeen and North East of Scotland Music Festival.
- Christmas and Birthday concerts held in each Big Noise centre, with the Big Noise Raploch Eighth Birthday Concert being attended by the Deputy First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney MSP.
- Residential trips to Gartmore House in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park for the Big Noise Raploch Red Strings and Concert Band, supported by student teachers and members of the Youth Board; and for the Big Noise Govanhill A and B orchestras.
- A trip for the Big Noise Torry children to see a rehearsal of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra's Christmas Concert, *The Snowman*.



*First Birthday celebrations at Big Noise Torry*

In early July, the Big Noise Raploch Symphony Orchestra undertook its second international tour. The orchestra travelled to Italy at the invitation of the William Walton Foundation, performing at *La Mortella* on the island of Ischia and a second concert in the Basilica San Pancrazio in Rome. This was a wonderful experience for the young people, giving them experiences and memories that will last a lifetime.

We encourage the young people to participate in music-making activities outwith Big Noise and, at a national level, ten have participated through membership of the National Youth Orchestras of Scotland;

seven at the National Youth Choir of Scotland Stirling Area Choir and three attend Saturday morning sessions at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Five trombonists attended the British Trombone Society event at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Big Noise Raploch Symphonic Band took part in the St Andrews Brass Festival and performed at the national finals of the Scottish Concert Band Festival where they received a Silver Plus award.

## Partnerships and Sharing Learning

We continued to welcome an extensive range of visitors to observe Big Noise sessions in Scotland and also responded to international invitations to share expertise and learning elsewhere. Our Director of Music visited Paris and Bordeaux at the invitation of two emergent Sistema-based programmes to offer advice and present Sistema Scotland's curriculum and pedagogy to local musicians, educators and politicians. The Programme Leader for Sistema Waikato in New Zealand visited Big Noise Govanhill, and Canadian based trustees of a funding organisation observed sessions in Raploch. Big Noise Torry hosted a visit by a representative of the Khanya Music Development and Training project delivering creative arts programmes for social change in the Gugulethu and Nyanga townships of South Africa. Following the announcement of a further investment by the Scottish Government, a group of senior officials representing the five directorates which will be contributing towards Sistema Scotland's funding over the next four years visited Big Noise Raploch. Our Chief Executive continues to participate in meetings of the Sistema Europe network.

In May Big Noise Raploch played host to a visit by the Lord High Commissioner (The Queen's representative to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland) as part of his week-long programme of formal engagements. His party observed a range of rehearsals and ensembles and was particularly impressed by a sharing session with the children of Castleview School for children with complex additional support needs. They heard from Head Teachers and representatives of Stirling Council how the introduction of Big Noise has benefited the Raploch community. The children were most impressed by the ceremonial sword worn by the Aide de Camp accompanying the party.

## Evaluation

We are ambitious to bring about permanent social change in the communities in which we work and are committed to learning from our experiences and sharing these lessons with others in the arts, education and social sectors. Our evaluation partnership with Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) is key to delivering on this priority. In October 2015, following the publication of their Initial Findings Report in May 2015 Carol Tannahill, Director of GCPH, joined our Chief Executive Nicola Killean to present these findings to guests at a seminar hosted by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation at their offices in London. A further opportunity to learn about the findings was available to our colleagues from around the world via a webinar which attracted around 120 live viewers from 15 countries. The GCPH report identifies seven distinct pathways through which Big



*Lord High Commissioner visits Big Noise Raploch*

Noise has the potential to significantly enhance participants' lives, prospects, health and wellbeing. In March 2016 the evaluation team published a paper in the International Journal of Public Mental Health focusing on just one of these pathways: "Hitting the right note for child and adolescent mental and emotional well-being?: a formative qualitative evaluation of Sistema Scotland's Big Noise orchestral programme." This paper was critiqued by two international expert reviewers and the special edition of the journal was led by the eminent Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health, Michael Marmot.

### Looking Ahead...

Big Noise Douglas is the next centre to be opened by Sistema Scotland. During the year, an extensive programme of work was undertaken following an approach in 2014 by a group of luminaries from Dundee, keen to encourage Sistema Scotland to open a fourth Big Noise centre in the city. The group established a charity named Optimistic Sound with the express aim of raising awareness, campaigning and raising funds for a Big Noise centre in Dundee. Negotiations with senior Dundee City Council officers resulted in the identification of the community of Douglas as a suitable location and in February 2016 the three partners (Sistema Scotland, Dundee City Council and Optimistic Sound) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate preparations for the establishment of a Big Noise Douglas in anticipation of the conclusion of a more detailed Partnership Agreement. We anticipate that the fourth Big Noise centre will be established in 2017 and will work with the children of Claypotts Castle and St Pius Primary Schools.

### Thank You!

2015/16 has been another year of remarkable success and wonderful experiences for the children and young people participating in our Big Noise programmes. As we continue to grow, and with our fourth centre on the way, it is increasingly difficult to provide a concise overview of the work our team of inspirational musicians do with the children every week, let alone over the course of a year. This is pioneering work that you, our supporters, are instrumental in enabling us to deliver. We are enormously grateful to our public funders and to each and every sponsor, trust, foundation and individual for the belief you show in our work through your continuing support. **Thank you!**

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