

Towards introducing basic acoustic education in the performance music curriculum

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BACKGROUND

Performance musicians, composers and conductors complete their extensive musical training without basic understanding of the fundamental acoustics concepts behind their practice, making their teaching and learning arguably incomplete

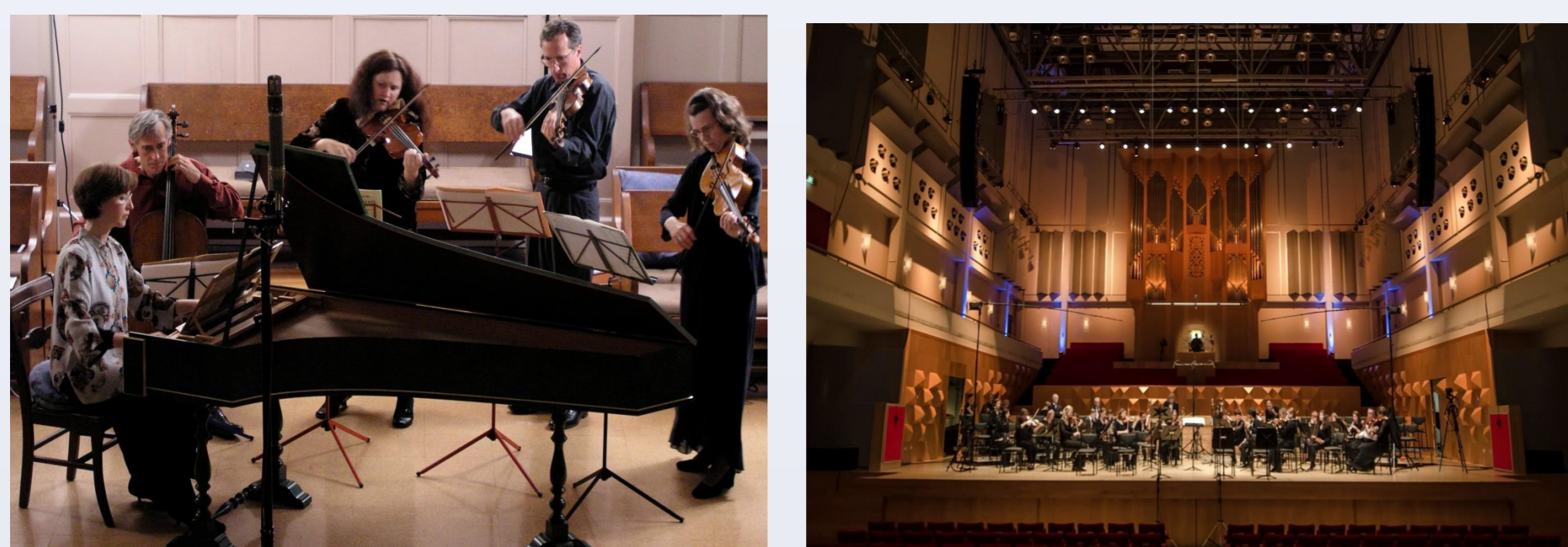


Figure 1 Two different venues used for music performances

It is theorised that the introduction of basic acoustics to performance music education can stimulate experiential and analytical learning by bringing essential contextual understanding.

RATIONALE

Need to address an identified gap in the curriculum

AIM

To determine the perceived value, suitability, and attitudes towards the prospective introduction.

METHODOLOGY

Documentary analysis, online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

Qualifying respondents: trained musicians, students, academics, researchers, conductors, composers, management, musically trained acousticians.

Descriptive and inferential statistical approaches as well as content analysis used.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

28 UK institutions from the performance music community participated in the online survey questionnaire. 464 valid completed questionnaires received. 22 semi-structured interviews conducted.

Interview Q10: How important do you consider the potential introduction of basic acoustics education into the performance music syllabus ?

"...Extremely important. Musicians create sound for a living. It's shocking that we are not better educated in the science of sound." (Senior performer and teacher, MMus)

RESULTS ANALYSIS (cont.)

"...It is in fact remarkable that acoustics haven't been incorporated into the curriculum earlier!" (Head of Guitar Studies)

"..I think It is a great idea, It should been thought earlier !"(Musical director, pianist and vocal coach)

"..This is a very important idea..!"(Prof Emeritus and world authority in musical acoustics, author of seminal musical acoustics book and musician, PhD)

Q9 Would acoustics in music education be beneficial ?

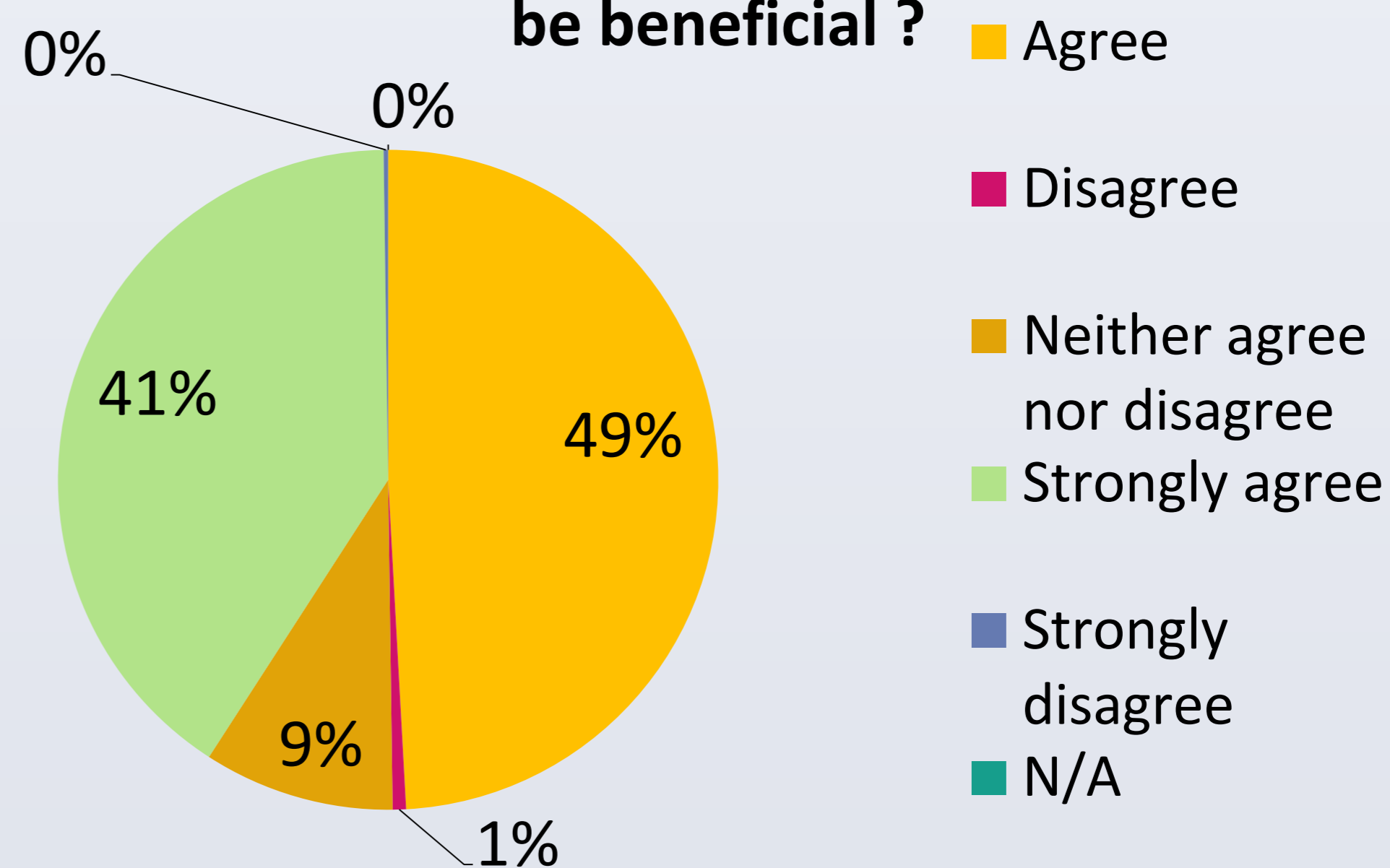


Figure 2 Responses to the online question: "Would basic acoustic education be beneficial in the training of performance musicians" ?

Identified Benefits: understand historical significance of acoustics, increase awareness of nature of instruments, appreciation other related professionals, expansion of musicians' worldview, improvement aural skills and performance, acoustics as related career change alternative.

Identified Barriers: Crowded curriculum, lack of qualified academics, lack of perceived value, cost

CONCLUSIONS

The vast majority of the performance music community in the UK believe that the proposed introduction would be highly relevant and beneficial and support the implementation.

Results evidence the perception of knowledge gap and show a potential demand for the introduction.

FURTHER WORK

Educate relevant education institutions on the values and benefits while challenging identified barriers and preconceptions. Design a stimulating course tailored to institutions, industry and students needs.