



Music in Quiet Places

Herefordshire
Historic
Churches Trust

PARTNERSHIPS BRINGING NEW AUDIENCES INTO CHURCHES

DEC 2017

What is Music in Quiet Places?

Music in Quiet Places was established in 2015 as a collaboration between Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust and Hereford Cathedral School (HCS) musical outreach department. It is run by a small group of interested parties from both organisations with the brief of presenting live performances in churches throughout the county using local musicians where possible. The current season began on 14 October and comprises 7 concerts; 2 in the autumn and 5 from April to June. David Furnival, Chairman of the HHCT, has led on the events for HHCT and has kindly provided the National Churches Trust and Churches Trusts Forum with information and updates so that their experience can be shared with other trusts.

The concerts are primarily a way of attracting audiences into churches and are an awareness raising opportunity for the HHCT. For the choirs, the events are performance opportunities. For churches the events are an opportunity to open and welcome people. HHCT divide income 50/50 with the hosting church. In the 2016-2017 season the concerts led to c£4,000 of income plus Gift Aid for HHCT.

Lessons learned

Agreements are essential, especially when incorporating professional musicians to lower the risk of cancellation. They now also have forms for churches to ensure that they will host as well as for performers to ensure they will perform. Public liability insurance is important. Licenses are important.

The first season highlighted the importance of sufficient car parking, lighting, heating and providing refreshments. A benefit of featuring choirs and/or Classical Music is that no sound equipment is needed. The needs of the performers are key. E.g. children must be able to get home safely.

The second highlighted the importance of involving the community in and around each church to gain local support for the event

Marketing

Some concerts are free, asking for donations, and others have a ticket price of £10 to £15. Sponsorship has been provided by the AllChurches Trust (owners of Ecclesiastical Insurance Group) and by Knight Frank Estate Agents.

Marketing the events has helped HHCT to develop its central message about supporting churches. The focus is on the increasing rarity and great importance of these "quiet places" for people's wellbeing in the turbulent modern world.

A benefit of the partnership is that marketing is shared. The school advertises to its network of parents, the church to local people and HHCT to its supporters. A leaflet featuring the full season's listings has focused HHCT's attention on marketing opportunities to help

and support the trust. In 2016 they designed new materials for the trust and featured opportunities to support the trust generally and through their Ride+Stride for Churches on one leaflet. The school produced the season leaflet, but HHCT has produced the one for 2017-2018 season. This year's leaflet has a blurb about each event concentrating primarily on the music but in most cases including an interesting or appealing fact about each church. The concerts have raised HHCT's profile in the county and enable them to have a direct ongoing relationship with the churches acting as venues.

Leaflets are distributed to HHCT contacts from their centralized database. Social media is used, Facebook in advance of and Twitter during each event. The Twitter feed is featured on the Home page of the HHCT website. They also have a blog.

Variables

Location is the main influencing factor. It is essential that churches are large enough to seat 200 people and that the site is accessible for the school and that there is sufficient parking for parents. The level of involvement by each church varies. Some are keen to be very involved and others are keen to just be a venue. Sometimes a local choir will want to perform too. Support within schools may change as personnel and priorities change.

As David explains, "Mostly HHCT trustees and volunteers do everything – we come along with the bar, the begging bowl, liaise with everyone and arrange content. There is some concern that congregations may not be involved enough."

Who comes?

Families, local people and trust supporters attend the concerts. The first two seasons built up a following of keen MIQP supporters. The reputation of the events has started to cause approaches by other musicians who want to participate.

Engaging audiences

Choirs take part because of the promotional opportunity for the school and the chance to perform. During the first season, David found that people who had little experience of churches asked a lot of questions and that once inside they wanted to know more about the building. David gives a welcome and likes to tell them a bit about the church. He asks them to leave remembering three things about it.

Refreshments are important, including plenty of soft drinks for the children, and these are organised by HHCT. They ask for donations rather than charging.

The competition

The annual week long Three Choirs Festival is a long established event which rotates between Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester Cathedrals. Some churches already held concerts. MIQP is unique in being a series of concerts held in different churches on different dates, often featuring churches that are not as well known or little used and in bringing a high quality musical experience to areas where people may struggle to have affordable access to cultural events.

Rising to the challenge of a new idea

HHCT seized an opportunity to make MIQP happen. The first season was successful because the formula is such a good one. It was a sharp learning curve and involved work and improvisation. The second drew on lessons learned and developed the concept further by experimenting with involving professionals. The third also draws on previous experience and is introducing new ideas once more to further cultivate their keen following and to try to keep growing the audience.

The success of MIQP has led to a number of new ideas. One is a season of silent films with live organ accompaniment in churches.

The potential for counties

There are Cathedral and Choir schools throughout the UK. In addition, there are many other educational establishments that may be interested in exploring performance in interesting venues. Some may be interested in incorporating the concept as part of an existing outreach programme. Each concert will have a ready-made audience of at least some parents and siblings.

Many churches have excellent acoustics. Where their capacity is limited, a county trust taking a lead role may help them to put on concerts for the first time, or to put on an additional concert, This gives them and your trust an outreach opportunity to groups that they might not otherwise encounter.

Trusts may equally have concerns around capacity and putting on any event involves organisation. The concerts may, however, offer exciting voluntary opportunities that engage new people, opening new marketing opportunities and access to potentially useful supporters. They are also an ideal vehicle for sponsorship from companies that have an interest in marketing themselves to the members of your audience, as well as those with an interest in churches.



The Churches Trusts Forum would like to thank David Furnival for sharing HHCT's MIQP concept with us. MIQP's development is being followed by the Churches Trusts Forum Fundraising Working Group, which David is currently Chairing. This case study has been prepared by the National Churches Trust. Photographs have been provided by the Hereford Cathedral School.

TOP CONCERT ORGANISATION TIPS

- Decide what you want the event to achieve and who your audiences are. You will have to work out with your partners what their expectations are. How do you want your organisation to feature in marketing and at the event? Why are you holding the event? How does it support your work to help churches?
- Use an online ticketing platform such as Eventbrite. This makes managing tickets, money and entry far easier. Decide if you are going to sell tickets or if entry is free. If it is free are you going to collect donations? If so, who should they be for? Should you divide income with the church or pay them a set fee? Ensure you ask people to sign up for Gift Aid. Ensure that everyone involved understands how money is to be spent, collected and distributed.
- Plan and share out the work. If you are having a larger event you may want to form a small working group, to plan all the main dates and deadlines. Ensure that partners are involved and that each party is clear on what they are bringing to and contributing to the event.
- The Government publishes useful information on running voluntary events online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events/the-can-do-guide-to-organising-and-running-voluntary-and-community-events>. As well as helpful suggestions on organizing and planning, their guide helps you to avoid legal issues. They advise people to think about common sense safety, access issues and insurance. Licenses may be required if you are providing alcohol and for some music use. If you are offering a raffle or lottery be aware of rules over finance.
- Use the events to raise awareness via social media. Twitter is very useful for the concerts. Be persistent with social media. It takes time to cultivate and to see the value. Take the opportunity to get great photographs of people enjoying churches to use in your publications and on your trust's website.
- Always provide a written letter confirming the arrangements or an agreement for any professional or amateur musicians or groups.