

Worlds in Collision: Music and the Trauma of War

Friday 28 June 2013, The Mansion House

TRANSCRIPT

Welcome – The Right Hon The Lord Mayor, Roger Gifford

Good morning and welcome to Mansion House, which has been – as I'm sure you know – the home of the Lord Mayors of London for some 250 years. From medieval to modern times, the mayoralty, the livery companies and the City businesses have met here, ostensibly to impress and entertain each other, one way or another. When your eye wanders around the room and picks out some of the lovely detail on the carvings here – while listening, I hope, to erudite talk and lovely music – think of the many generations that have been in and out of the House doing exactly the same sort of thing over the years.

Amongst my many predecessors were some of the UK's greatest philanthropists. They had the ability both to be wealthy and to become successful in the City, but also to care enough for the communities that they were looking after that they invested back into them. Many have taken a great pride in patronage of art and music, and Mansion House is really a monument to that kind of approach. Those were the days before income taxes, when philanthropy was an absolute necessity as much as a nice thing to have.

Mansion House is an 18th century, Grade I listed, Georgian town palace, built to impress and entertain, and has very much always been enriched and associated with the very best of music and art. You saw, I'm sure, the Harold Samuel collection of Dutch and Flemish 17th century paintings downstairs. There is a lovely new book on the Harold Samuel collection available from the Lord Mayor's Appeal website, very reasonably priced and proceeds go towards the Appeal. Elsewhere around the House you can see the most beautiful depictions of dancing, feasting and entertainment, such as here in the Ballroom. The sculpture decorations between the brackets supporting the gallery reveal very much what went on in the room; there are grapes and bottles here and there, and there are plenty of musical instruments. One of my particular favourites as a Scot, are the many, many depictions of bagpipes that we have on the walls. As an instrument of entertainment it is absolutely wonderful of course, especially effective outside. But they were also used for leading troops into war, and that is an interesting comparison to be able to make with the theme of the next two days. They were used to strike fear into the heart of the enemy when troops were led into war in that way.

So, as both the most recent occupant of this House and a very staunch supporter of The Musical Brain, I'm delighted that you have brought the conference to the Mansion House this year. I can't think of a better use of this room than to host this conference, Worlds in Collision: Music and the Trauma of War. May I say a very special welcome also to the serving soldiers playing a role in this conference and in the concert and to all those attending as delegates. Like you, Clare, my wife, and I very much subscribe to a belief in the power of music. It forms the core of this year's

activities, at least those not directly related to business. Clare and I met because of music; we sang in the same choir. We believe music transforms lives and it certainly has many, many uses over and above that of simple entertainment. Music is a common language that crosses all national and personal boundaries in a way that little else can. But you already know this; I will be preaching to the converted.

Nonetheless, I think it is very important that we all, as noisily as we possibly can, make the case for music and the arts and that we engage with the current debate on its value. How, after all, do you apportion value on something inherently invaluable and define the intangible? It seems so obvious to all of us but it is tough to make a hard investment case, so we need to make a noise about it. The Musical Brain is doing just that, making the case. Like linking medicine and music and providing a forum for discussion between scientists, psychiatrists, artists and the general public. You are doing vital work to improve our awareness and understanding of the effects of music and the arts on the human brain and body.

Clare and I are also very much committed to supporting excellence in music and making it accessible to all, building aspirations and supporting social mobility. The primary beneficiary of this year's appeal (every Lord Mayor has one) is a brand-new charity called the City Music Foundation which will fund performance opportunities and mentoring for musicians from all walks of life. A critical investment at a critical stage in a musician's career. We may not be tackling abject poverty in this charity, but we are tackling other poverties, like that of the mind, and without music the world would be a far poorer place.

Music and the arts, as we all believe I'm sure, are at the core of civilisation, and at the very core of our beings. It is what distinguishes us from the animal. The International Music Trust Fund, following its work with communities in the South American Andes, has said that music plays a central role as one of the performing arts that best captures the sensitivities and aspirations of communities and nations. Music is part of a larger social struggle towards the reinforcing of cultural identities and of community efforts to use music as a cultural resource, thus assigning social value to music-making as an instrument of human development. I feel I ought to repeat that but I won't, because it is very much behind so much of what we hear, particularly out of Latin America, about assigning social value of music making as an instrument of human development.

The City of London's great megaliths are making an important contribution to the welfare and cohesion of our communities themselves, I mean of course the Barbican, the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, the LSO, the City of London Festival. These are excellent examples, providing masterclasses in City schools and across London, and in the planning stages at Guildhall School for a GSMD music therapy centre working with GPs and referral units.

Participation in the arts and music has long been linked with well-being and happiness. Medical research, including by NICE, Chelsea and Westminster and the Arts Council has shown the positive effects on certain medical conditions, particularly for elderly and vulnerable people. Today's conference will explore the palliative power of music on trauma caused by military combat. This area, I suspect, is little understood and historically has been somewhat hidden in the shadows. We need to

bring things into the light and do right by the Armed Forces who sometimes make immense sacrifices to their personal cost. It is estimated that around one third of homeless people in Britain are former servicemen and women. One third. Too many perhaps are falling through the cracks; we need a different approach. We need to combat the mental and emotional scars of war as well as the physical, and perhaps this is where music can help. This conference has a vital role to play, I believe, in furthering understanding, treatment and care. We wish you every success over the next two days and I look forward very much to participating in much of the conference, especially tomorrow. Thank you very much.