

Career Development Programme

Evaluation Report 2020

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
THE ABRAM WILSON FOUNDATION CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	3
THE NEED	3
OUTPUTS	4
EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	4
RESULTS	5
OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CAREER.....	5
TYPE OF SUPPORT RECEIVED.....	5
WHAT THE MUSICIANS FOUND MOST USEFUL ABOUT THE SUPPORT.....	6
STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE.....	7
PUBLICITY AND MARKETING	8
CONTRACTS AND CONNECTIONS	9
FUNDING	10
PERFORMANCES	10
RECORDINGS.....	11
AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS.....	11
WIDER BENEFITS TO THEMSELVES, OTHERS, AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY	12
SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	13
IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS PER MUSICIAN COMPLETING THE PROGRAMME	14

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2020

abram wilson
FOUNDATION

The Career Development Programme supported 16 talented up and coming musicians with over 85 hours of coaching and strategy sessions, and access to industry professionals

outcomes

Of those completing the programme:

- **100%** of participants felt that the programme had supported them to develop their career to a great extent.
- **75%** were supported to sign with a lawyer or manager or both and **50%** with a booking agent or label deal.
- Participants' social media collective increase was **161%**.
- All received support to successfully secure funding.
- Awards achieved during the programme included a Peter Whittingham Jazz Award, the Worldwide FM Award for Track of the Year and nominations for a Mercury Prize Award and 2020 Jazz FM Venue of the Year.

"All aspects of the programme have proved very beneficial. Fred's knowledge in the music industry and his strategic support have proved priceless!"
Sheila Maurice-Grey



"Being able to talk through ideas I have has helped to give me clarity in terms of maximising what I'm doing."
Cassie Kinoshi

"I've been able to ask advice in a really easy and natural way...that myself and musical peers aren't really familiar with."
Spencer Martin



"I think the programme is great in terms of helping artists to get more structure within their career."
Tyrone Isaac-Stuart

Introduction

The Abram Wilson Foundation Career Development Programme identifies & supports emerging professional musicians who have talent, but lack the expertise & networks to create a sustainable career due to socio-economic & mental health factors. The programme is person-centred, as the needs of each participant in the programme are agreed individually through the sessions and focused on their individual career journey.

It provides quarterly strategy sessions and monthly coaching, to provide support and develop their strategic planning. Additionally, the artists are provided with access to industry professionals and a minimum of one showcase opportunity during the programme. Artists can also participate in our Music Education Programme which provides them with paid opportunities.

The Need

Barriers to the music industry disproportionately affect those from disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds; 95% of workers in London in the creative industry come from advantaged backgrounds and those from diverse backgrounds constitute only 23% of the workforce (Pinoncely, V. and Washington-Ihien. (2019). Covid-19 has exacerbated these barriers. Lockdown has had a disproportionate economic impact on Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups (Hu, 2020). Due to the huge financial impact of lock down on the music industry 64% of musicians are considering leaving the music industry (Encore Musicians, 2020).

A recent survey of musicians showed that personal connections, a supportive social circle and mentorship are critical in sustaining a career as a musician (thecreativeindependent.com). Also, over two thirds of musicians said they made less than 20% of their income from music-related work. As such, paid opportunities, including teaching, are required to enable musicians to financially sustain their career.

We conducted a needs assessment in 2018 with musicians who also identified they needed more long-term strategic support, practical industry advice, introductions to contacts and mentorship. They also reported that financial constraints were a barrier to pursuing a career in the music industry. The Career Development Programme was launched in 2018 in response to this need.

Outputs

Sixteen artists were supported with strategy and coaching support in 2020.

Four artists joined the programme in 2018: Sheila Maurice-Grey; Cassie Kinoshi; Spencer Martin; and Tyrone Isaac-Stuart.

Women in Jazz (Lou Paley) and Nina Fine joined the programme in October 2019.

An additional three artists were offered support during the Covid-19 pandemic, on an ad-hoc basis, in response to the greater need in this period.

These three artists and another seven artists were recruited to our new 2020-22 cohort, starting in November 2020.

Seven artists supported our Music Education Programme.



Evaluation Methodology

Identifying improvements to, and measuring the impact of, the Career Development Programme is measured through questionnaires at a midpoint and final end point of the programme, as well as internal records on number of sessions and musician's achievements. The following results from the mid and end point questionnaires are from the four participants in the 2018-20 cohort and the mid-point questionnaire from the two participants in the 2019-21 cohort where this data was collected.

Where n=6 is indicated this refers to both mid and end point questionnaires; where n=4 this refers to data from the end point questionnaires only as not all questions are included in the mid-point questionnaire

Results

Overall development of their career

100% of participants completing the programme (n=4) felt that the programme had supported them to develop their career to a great extent

Type of support received

Over the course of the two-year programme the four participants felt they had received the following support.

- 🎵 Strategic Support: **100%**
- 🎵 High profile opportunities to perform: **50%**
- 🎵 Marketing and communications support: **50%**
- 🎵 Support from industry experts: **75%**
- 🎵 Fundraising support: **75%**

At mid-point (one year), both respondents had received strategic support and industry connections, and one respondent had received a performance opportunity to perform at Soho House.



What the musicians found most useful about the support

“All aspects of the programme have proved very beneficial. In particular meetings with Jennie and Fred. Fred's knowledge in the music industry and his strategic support have proved priceless!”

“Strategy Planning, Performance opportunity and fundraising support”

“Having mentorship and guidance in regards to strategizing and approaching contacts”

“It's been great having a shoulder to cry on and some heads to bat ideas about with... kind of like therapy, given AWF aren't specifically involved with much of my music then it gives our conversations room to expand and breathe.”

“Strategic Sessions with Fred Bolza, and open session with Nitim Sawhney”

“The fundraising support from Jennie alongside the support from Fred. They have been undeniably extremely helpful over the past 2 years and has been a great insight to have an industry viewpoint on creativity and the general strategy within the UK Jazz industry”

“In less than a year, AWF has worked closely with Women in Jazz to develop a new strand of their business: connecting Artists and audiences through digital content.

We worked closely with AWF to develop a strategic plan which involved designing and building the concept, developing the pitch right through to the execution of filming the content. Through the AWF personal contacts, we are also learning the nuts and bolt of the PR campaign which will accompany the new, digital strand.”

“Consistent and frequent feedback is the most useful thing and the space to take stock of growth over the past month as well as strategic support with emotional awareness...the increased frequency of sessions across Covid lockdown was really helpful too. Being able to talk through challenging decision making has been a HUGE support that has helped me to navigate my next steps in my career.”

Strategy and structure.

100% of mentees felt the programme helped them to develop a strategy with clear goals and milestones - 67% to a great extent 33% to a moderate or some extent (n=6).

“I think the program is great in terms of helping artists to get more structure within their career.”

“It's affected the way I desire to create a project. In particular, working in reverse (i.e if I want to make a project next year, I start from next year and work backwards rather than work from this year forwards)

“Has helped me create clear goals which I've achieved most of them. Helped me to understand the part of my career I'm at currently a lot more”

“Developed how to clearly explain ideas and thought-processes.”

“Being able to talk through ideas I have has helped to give me clarity in terms of maximising what I'm doing. The links to the educational side of things are great too as it's something I want to do more”

“I have been able to give more structure to my ideas, and learn what it takes to build a body of work.”

“It's helped me make decisions in the short term that match appropriately with my long term goals.”

“Thank you. I began this programme with a lot of ideas, they are slowly coming to light.

Support from Jennie and Fred has been invaluable, and meeting Luke (my engineer) was a 'Godsend'. Whilst on paper it may look like I haven't produced much, there has been much career development, and my work has spanned in both dance and music genres. I hope what comes next will illustrate this process. Thanks again!”

Publicity and marketing

All four of the participants completing the programme felt that the support had helped them to build their online presence, improve their brand and engage a wider audience through DIY marketing and communications to a small extent.

At the start of the project, the artists collectively had 41,927 followers across their social media platforms. 22 months later they had 109,505 followers, **a collective increase of 161%.**

Table 1: Social Media accounts, number of followers in November 2018 & September 2020, with percentage change

Social media account and artist	Followers Nov 2018	Followers Sept 2020	Percentage change
Twitter- Cassie Kinoshi	1277	2379	86%
Instagram- Cassie Kinoshi	1481	3163	114%
Twitter- SEED Ensemble	501	1364	172%
Facebook- SEED Ensemble	448	1340	199%
Twitter- Ms MAURICE Sheila Maurice-Grey	1163	1747	50%
Instagram- Ms MAURICE Sheila Maurice-Grey	2409	4844	101%
Twitter- KOKOROKO	1887	4814	155%
Facebook- KOKOROKO	13961	36790	164%
Instagram- KOKOROKO	8457	32100	280%
Twitter- Church of Sound	1039	1381	33%
Instagram- Church of Sound	2561	7285	184%
Facebook- Church of Sound	5154	7960	54%
Facebook- lunchmoneylife	1077	1582	47%
Instagram- lunchmoneylife	249	1125	352%
Twitter- Tyrone Isaac Stuart	263	279	6%
Instagram- Tyrone Isaac Stuart		1352	NA
TOTAL	41927	109505	161%

Contracts and Connections

- 🎵 **100%** felt the support they received helped them to make new connections to support their career 67% to a great extent (n=6).
- 🎵 **100%** (n=6) felt that the programme had helped them to develop a support network to a great or moderate extent
- 🎵 **100%** felt that the programme had helped them to read and understand a contract, two felt this to a great extent and two to a small extent.
- 🎵 **100%** felt that the programme supported them to negotiate a deal that was favourable to them (n=3; the other participant didn't complete the final questionnaire)

Contracts signed

- 🎵 **75%** (n=4) were supported to sign with a lawyer or manager or both.
- 🎵 **50%** (n=4) were supported to sign with a booking agent and/or negotiate a label deal.
- 🎵 One participant was helped to sign a publishing deal.

“I've been able to ask advice in a really easy and natural way and it's been useful to people around me e.g. learning about contracts and the mechanics of stuff that myself and musical peers aren't really familiar with.”

Funding

100% felt that that support they received helped them to secure funding for their music career, two people to a great extent, and two to a moderate/small extent.

100% , all four participants, had been successful in gaining external funding through funding applications/crowd funder/awards during the course of the programme.

Performances

On completion of the programme, **75%** (n=3) felt that the support helped them to access high profile performances to some or a moderate extent.

These mentees **doubled the number of requests** they had had for external performances from 2018-19 to 2019-20, one from approximately 30-60 performances and the other from approximately 75-150 performances.

The increase in requests for performances was particularly high given the UK lockdown from March 2020 due to Covid-19. Another participant had reduced their performances by 2 and had expected more performances later in the year due to debuting new work. (Data unknown for the other participant).



Recordings

- 🎵 In 2018 Spencer Martin released the EP *Living3000* with the band Lunch Money Life and in 2019 they released the album *lunchmoneylife STYLES* and the single *Unlimited Ice Cream Palace*. In April 2020 they released *Immersion Chamber* with the label Scenic Route.
- 🎵 In 2019 KOKOROKO, led by Sheila Maurice Grey and with Cassie Kinoshi on alto saxophone and vocals, released the self-titled EP. In 2020, under KOKOROKO released the single *Carry Me Home* with Brownswood Recordings.
- 🎵 In 2019 Sheila also supported recordings of Cherise Adams Burnett, Marcus Joseph, Sarah Tandy's *Infection in the Sentence* Album.
- 🎵 In 2019 SEED Ensemble, led by Cassie Kinoshi with Sheila Maurice Grey on trumpet, released their debut Mercury nominated album, *Driftglass*.
- 🎵 Tyrone Isaac-Stuart worked on his forthcoming album *Sick*.

Awards and nominations

- 🎵 In 2018 Sheila Maurice-Grey was awarded a Peter Whittingham Jazz Award; in 2019 she was awarded the Worldwide FM Award for Track of the Year with KOKOROKO. In February 2020 she was awarded an Urban Music Award and in August 2020 Sheila was nominated for an AIM Award.
- 🎵 In 2018 Cassie Kinoshi was awarded the Ivor Novello British Composer Award for Large Ensemble and the Cameron Mackintosh Resident Composer Award. In July 2019 she was nominated for a Mercury Award for *Driftglass* by SEED Ensemble, (led by Cassie) and won Jazz FM Breakthrough Act of the Year 2019
- 🎵 Spencer Martin was nominated for a 2020 Jazz FM Venue of the Year as co-founder of Church of Sound.
- 🎵 Tyrone Isaac -Stuart was awarded the Steve Reid Innovation Award in 2019.

Wider benefits to themselves, others, and the wider community

100% (n=4) were involved with AWF's Music Education Programme; all felt that their teaching or education skills had improved due to participation with one participant feeling she had developed to a great extent and the others felt they had developed between a small to a moderate extent.

"I was able to partake in a few workshops which I enjoyed thoroughly - in particular KOKOROKO @ Mossbourne... It has been amazing talking to both Jennie and Fred on a regular basis for general support."

"More confidence in abilities/ideas and understanding that I do belong in certain spaces."

"My participation has directly benefited both CoS & LML both as companies and as collections of individuals. Many people have been supported financially and spiritually as a result!"

"I have been able to give more structure to my ideas, and learn what it takes to build a body of work... It helped me to trust the process in career development."

Suggestions for improvement

- One participant felt they would have valued more mentorship sessions with other industry experts and more knowledge about the music business.
- Another suggested more support with finding a manager beyond providing recommendations for candidates.
- One participant suggested more sessions with other successful musicians, based on one session provided which was highly valued, which was also mentioned by another participant as one of the aspects they most valued, and more peer networking opportunities for those in their cohort.
- Two participants felt that the programme should be offered more widely with one suggesting it could be broadened outside of jazz musicians.
- Another suggestion was to include learning about successful processes as well as goals.

“As most of the mentors involved haven’t had conventional ways to their success, I think some of the most valuable information can come from learning their processes, for the sake of upskilling the mentee. As helpful as it has been to set targets, some of my most valuable gems over this year have come through conversation, and I think it’s worth highlighting the power of conversation in the program.”

Impact highlights per musician completing the programme

Cassie Kinoshi AWF supported Cassie's negotiations with her label jazz re:refreshed in getting a date for SEED Ensemble's much delayed first album release, Driftglass which led to Cassie's 2019 Mercury Prize Nomination. AWF connected her to a lawyer, and mentored her to identify her manager requirements. Since working with Cassie she has also been awarded the Breakthrough Jazz FM 2019 Award, and the Ivor Novello 2019 Award for Best Jazz Composition for Large Ensemble.

"Being able to talk through ideas I have has helped to give me clarity in terms of maximising what I'm doing. The links to the educational side of things are great too as it's something I want to do more."

Sheila Maurice-Grey. AWF supported one of Sheila's bands, KOKOROKO, sign a label deal with Gilles Peterson's label, Brownswood. AWF connected Sheila to a lawyer (at Clinton's) to equip her and enable her to negotiate a better deal. AWF supported Sheila to successfully apply to Help Musicians for the Peter Whittingham Jazz Award, which awarded her £2000 and KOKOROKO won World Wide FM Track of the Year 2019.

"All aspects of the programme have proved very beneficial. Fred's knowledge in the music industry and his strategic support have proved priceless!"

Spencer Martin AWF supported Spencer's band, Lunch Money's first EP launch in November 2018; their single release Unlimited Ice Cream Palace in Sept 2019; and their album Immersion Chamber with contract advice. AWF also supported Spencer to sign with an agent and to establish Church of Sound and Lunch Money as Ltd. companies.

"Thanks for everything! It's been a real honour & a pleasure and I feel so lucky."

Tyrone Isaac-Stuart. AWF provided Tyrone with a showcase opportunity at a White City House gig; negotiated h Club free mixing and mastering support; and supported Tyrone to plan the release of his album in late 2020. AWF supported Tyrone to successfully apply for the Steve Reid Innovation Award.

"I think the program is great in terms of helping artists to get more structure within their career."