

# **An Ecology of the Large Jazz and Improvising Ensemble Scenes in the UK**

## **Aims of this study**

This doctoral research project at Birmingham City University (BCU) investigates large jazz ensemble scenes in the UK, with reference to similar scenes elsewhere in Europe. Addressing key issues within jazz, cultural policy, and media studies, it aims to explore sustainable ecosystems of professional large ensembles, organisations, and infrastructure, and to consider why these are currently relatively lacking in Britain.

The project will also explore the cultural, social, and economic contexts of the large ensemble within jazz, engaging with questions and challenges facing the contemporary jazz sector, and with wider academic discourse on cultural policy, value, and heritage.

## **Research questions**

The primary research questions are:

- a) What is the cultural, social, and economic value of the large jazz and improvising ensemble in the UK's wider cultural landscape, and how does this compare to elsewhere in Europe?
- b) What does 'success' and 'sustainability' mean for a large jazz and improvising ensemble, and what are the material and cultural conditions necessary for these to be achieved?
- c) How do contemporary large jazz and improvising ensembles currently operate within the UK cultural environment, and how could they operate better?

## **ABOUT YOUR PARTICIPATION**

The purpose of this sheet is to inform you about the project, so that you can decide whether you want to take part. Please read the following information regarding the study carefully before beginning your participation in the project.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and your decision to participate or not will not influence the nature of your relationship with the researchers or their institutions either now or in the future.

Consent to participation will normally be recorded in writing via a physical or electronic consent form, but can be obtained via alternative means on request. You may decide to stop being a part of this research project at any time without explanation.

## **Means of participation**

Participation will initially be in the form of a survey, during which you will be asked about your experience of large jazz and improvising ensembles. An in-person or online follow-up interview

may be requested, which will be arranged for a date/time which is mutually convenient for you and the researcher. Interviews will be expected to last between 60-90 minutes. An audio recording will be taken which will be transcribed, and you will be given the opportunity to review the interview transcript on request.

Following an interview, you may be contacted again later with a separate request for further participation through specific follow-up questions in order to give additional context on initial responses. This may be in writing, audio/video recording, or through a further interview. Consenting to initial participation does not imply or obligate consent to any additional participation in future.

### **Benefits and risks of participation**

Although you might not benefit directly, it is hoped that you will enjoy expressing your opinions on matters which could have potentially useful outcomes for the design and implementation of any future iterations of this research project. It is hoped also that the findings derived from this study will help stimulate and inform further research and professional activity in this area.

There are no foreseeable risks to health or wellbeing as a result of participating in this research project. Your participation in this study is voluntary and as such there is no provision for financial reimbursement of any kind. This includes loss, theft or damage to personal equipment (mobile phones, laptops, tablets) that may be incurred during the course of participation in the project.

### **Confidentiality/anonymity**

With your consent, your name, location (city/region, country), and/or organisation if responding in a professional capacity may be attached to your data, but only where this is necessary to give context and/or additional insight to the research findings. If you agree for this personally identifiable data to be attached to your responses during any public (online/offline) dissemination activity undertaken by the research team, please be advised that we are unable to guarantee your anonymity.

Any data that is potentially commercially sensitive will be anonymised and aggregated unless express consent is given for this specific information to be included. A separate consent form will be issued in this circumstance.

Any information collected during the course of your participation will be stored securely as below, and will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team without your express consent.

### **Data protection**

All data collected will be stored securely in accordance with GDPR. Data will be held on encrypted BCU OneDrive accessible only by members of the research team. It will be stored for the duration of the research project (currently estimated by end of 2029).

For more information, you can contact BCU's Data Protection Officer via email on [informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:informationmanagement@bcu.ac.uk) or phone on +44 (0)121 331-5288 or by post at Data Protection Officer, Information Management Team, Birmingham City University, University House, 15 Bartholomew Row, Birmingham, B5 5JU. You can also complain directly to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, further information available at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## **Participants' rights**

You have the right to give informed consent to your participation, to anonymity (unless this right is waived), and for your data to be protected. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without prejudice, and to request that any data you have supplied be withdrawn, destroyed (although this may not be possible if your data has already been anonymised and aggregated into research findings), and/or clarified. You must make this request no later than 31 December 2027 to allow the project results to be finalised and the doctoral thesis prepared for submission. You will be reminded of this in September 2027.

If you would like to stop participation, please inform Ben Cottrell immediately at the email address below. Your decision to withdraw will not influence the nature of your relationship with the researchers or their institutions either now or in the future.

Should you lose capacity to consent, your proxy or consultee may request withdrawal and/or destruction on your behalf if they believe this would be your wish, although as above, this may not be possible if your data has already been anonymised and aggregated into research findings. In any case they should inform Ben Cottrell of the situation immediately via the email address below.

If you have any questions as a result of reading this information, you should ask one of the research team before the study begins.

## **Funding**

This research project is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council via Midlands4Cities Doctoral Training Partnership.

## **Contacts**

More information can be sought at any time by contacting Ben Cottrell ([benjamin.cottrell@mail.bcu.ac.uk](mailto:benjamin.cottrell@mail.bcu.ac.uk)) and/or Professor Nicholas Gebhardt ([Nicholas.Gebhardt@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:Nicholas.Gebhardt@bcu.ac.uk)), including information about the final results of the study.

If you have a complaint, you can contact [ADM\\_Ethics@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:ADM_Ethics@bcu.ac.uk)