



NATIONAL SURVEY

Last summer the Federation undertook a national survey of the activity. The response reflects the membership of bands across all regions and from all performance styles. Of several observations that can be made from the results, our activity attracts broadly the same number of male and female members and our retention is good across the school and college transitional phases. Each of these two observations are very positive attributes and not ones that all youth arts can identify.

Age and gender profile

Based on membership of bands from ages 5 to 21									
5 - 7 yrs		8 – 11 yrs		12 – 14 yrs		15 – 18 yrs		19 – 21 yrs	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0.9	2.1	12.5	13.9	15.5	18.1	14.1	12.3	5.2	5.4
3.0		26.4		33.6		26.4		10.6	

22+ membership, many also leaders			
22 – 25 yrs		25 +	
M	F	M	F
3.2	2.7	7.3	4.4
5.9		17.6	

The survey indicates that proportion of female percussionists and brass instrumentalists is, we believe, higher than is usually experienced in other areas of youth music. The survey showed that 4.8% of our membership is from non-white British backgrounds.

Instrumental and performance gender breakdown

Drummers		Brass		Woodwind		Orchestral percussion/pit		Colour Guard	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
70.6	29.4	52.7	47.3	26.8	73.2	34.0	66.0	5.6	94.4

The activity's inclusivity is further proven by the fact that 24% of those bands who responded include one or more disabled members. The range of challenges vary, but bands are to be congratulated on another example of our activity's ability welcome all young people.

The activity prides itself in the speed with which young people can be engaged in performance, traditionally because of introductory instrumental teaching by rote. This approach, now given credence by the Sasuki methodology developed in Japan, is also how many areas of every country's cultural heritage is passed between generations. It is interesting that the survey provided evidence that 50% of bands now teach their members to read music.

An argument offered to explain why the marching band activity in the UK has not gained a presence in schools, is that its volunteer leaders have understandably seen their role as a community service not as a career path, and this perception has remained with successive generations of our leadership. Our survey shows however that 23% of bands now have leaders with formal music or choreographic qualifications, and a further 22% have a nationally recognised non-musical leadership qualification. This does not take into account additional leaders who have received training from their parent organisation – such as the Scout Association, The Boys Brigade and the Cadets.

Thanks to all those bands who took the trouble to complete the documentation. We hope all bands can use this information when seeking support.

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