



Dandelion Jazz Orchestra

mission statement + biography

Mission Statement

- To facilitate the composition and performance of new music for jazz orchestra
- To facilitate involvement of communities in the creation of new music, and for the ensemble's creative work to directly feed into community work and vice versa
- To have a joint presence in both London and Scotland, while working with other communities on a project-based basis



Biography

short

Dandelion Jazz Orchestra (DJO) is a new big band, based jointly in London/Scotland, with a focus on new music and community involvement. It was founded and is co-directed by euphonium player Martin Thomson and pianist David Swan, featuring Scottish musicians living in London. With a traditional big band line-up, the musicians of DJO come from a range of backgrounds including jazz, classical and traditional music. DJO blends these sounds with big band composition, creating innovative, exciting and soulful music with deep roots, while its community initiative seeks to link creative music-making within the ensemble to the wider community through performance.

long

Dandelion Jazz Orchestra (DJO) is a new big band, based jointly in London/Scotland, with a focus on new music and community involvement. It was founded and is co-directed by euphonium player Martin Thomson and pianist David Swan, who have been friends since high school. The members of DJO are mostly Scottish musicians living in London and are also old friends, having met in their teenage years through programs such as the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Scotland and jazz degree programs in London conservatoires. With a traditional big band line-up, the musicians of DJO come from a range of backgrounds including jazz, classical and traditional music. The music of DJO blends these sounds with big band composition, taking influence from the contemporary big band sound.



Intrinsic to the band is a focus on community – many of the members are workshop leaders and facilitators and learned to play through community music services. The band has links with Moray Concert Brass, a community brass band in the North-East of Scotland that Martin and others from the band attended as youngsters, and which DJO members have collaborated with on a number of occasions. DJO seeks to integrate community involvement directly into its work through composition and improvisation-based music workshops, in a way which links creative music makers in the band and with those in the wider community. Previously, Martin and David directed and organised a community choir in Moray from Primary school-pensioner ages in performances of Scott Stromann's Fantasia, arranged by DJO members for choir and big band, in a sell-out series of concerts in December 2018. DJO hopes to expand on this theme of performances with a direct link between contemporary music and community.

Central also to the DJO is the range of musical backgrounds the musicians are drawn from. Traditional music from across the world is a focus of many of bands' members; David is a member of up-and-coming Scottish traditional group Causeway Trio and Martin is studying Scandinavian folk traditions, incorporating them into his ensembles; other members are involved in Balkan brass music and others. Brass players for the group also run chamber ensembles such as Aeris Brass, Carnyx Brass and Sacred Bones, and members regularly perform in jazz projects across London and internationally. This mix of backgrounds in the performers and composers/arrangers for the group allows for an open-ended approach to music-making which has deep roots while remaining innovative.