

The Inner Vision Orchestra National Tour

England, June - October 2013



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Aim

This report, on the basis of participant observation, survey responses and informal interviews, focuses upon the experience of stakeholders in different aspects of the Inner Vision Orchestra tour – to consider how their interests were met and how these might be further promoted in future activities. It reflects on the significance for the future planning of the Inner Vision Orchestra and, more generally, on the requirements of blind and partially-sighted performers taking part in such a tour, and the practicalities involved in its organisation.

Introduction

The performances of the Inner Vision Orchestra National Tour took place between 14th June and 12th October 2013. Within England, it visited venues in Yeovil, Somerset (The Octagon), Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (The Stables), London (Kings Place), Stanley, County Durham (Ganesh Festival, Lamplight Art Centre), Southampton, Hampshire (Turner Sims Concert Hall), and Plymouth, Devon (Respect Festival, Theatre 1, Roland Levisky Building, University of Plymouth). Additional venues in Wales (Cardiff) fell outside the scope of Arts Council England support and are not discussed here.

The core membership of the Inner Vision Orchestra (IVO) consisted of 10 performers with a wide range of musical backgrounds and knowledge, including different aspects of classical Indian music, the classical Western tradition, jazz, Gospel music, blues, and the musics of Iran, Lebanon, and Japan (see Information Sheet in Appendix 2). Of this core membership, nine of the performers are blind and one partially sighted.

The author attended a pre-tour rehearsal and joined the tour for four of the performances, taking on some volunteer roles as well as mixing with audiences and venue staff. The perspective gained from this participant observation was augmented by informal interviews with performers, organisers, volunteers, audience members and venue staff, as well as by the responses to surveys issued by the tour organisers ([see Appendix 1](#)).

At the Venues



At the heart of the Tour are the performances at the various venues. This review starts from these, considering factors affecting the experiences of those both on and off stage.

Performance and Preparation

Audience experience and response:

The composition and expectations of the audience clearly varied between concert venues. There were, for example, contrasts between the Yeovil audience, largely over 50 years of age and drawing heavily on the theatre's established attendance base, and the more generationally-mixed audiences in London and at the Ganesh Festival in Stanley, many in the first case noting established interest in world music (some being familiar with the work of members of the orchestra), and many in the latter having a particular familiarity with South Asian music. At Milton Keynes, the management identified 34% as new attenders, 30% who mainly attended world music events at the venue and 36% as regular supporters who had attended a range of concerts.



Despite such differences, the reception of all performances was very positive. This was reflected in the direct response to programme items, in discussion with audience members, and in the 126 survey responses examined, which showed a largely consistent overall reaction across performances, with 99% of those returning the survey stating that they would like to see more of the work of the group in the future.

The programme mix was generally well-received. Though varying slightly between concerts, this always displayed a broad range of musical types from the Western and Indian classical to folk musics and new compositions ([see Appendix 2](#)). With a few reservations from those with more specific musical interests, audience members commented positively on the successful bringing together of different traditions and expressed interest in unfamiliar music and instruments.

*“Diversity it is really nice to see in one place” – “So many artists from the world can make one music” –
“...different musics can blend so well.” – “Classical and folk music can transform each other”*

As part of the policy of the IVO, while Baluji Shrivastav, the musical director, provided some framing remarks, there was no overall compere for the performances, with different members of the group introducing items in which they took a lead. This allowed for engagement of different musicians with the audience and aimed to build experience and confidence in presentation. In the opening concert the proportion of speech in relation to the music was relatively high – remarked upon in a few pieces of audience feedback. This issue was recognised by the IVO, and adjusted for later performances, with much reduced introductions in some cases. At the same time, some audience members commented that they would have liked some further information on instruments and music performed, going beyond the brief information sheets provided at most venues.

Fereshteh Khousojerdy introduces Chasmesiya Dauri and sings with the Inner Vision Orchestra, at the Octagon, Yeovil. (Video)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWwF0QBkwrE&feature=player_detailpage



In the performances of the latter half of the tour Baluji introduced a statement on the aims, pointing to the Inner Vision Orchestra both as a showcase for the performers involved and as a campaign for the recognition of the capacities and talents of visually impaired musicians, aiming at their fuller integration into the musical mainstream. This was a significant addition, in terms of presenting the distinctive role of the IVO and alerting the audience to the working challenges faced by visually impaired musicians.



Statement of Aims, as given at Respect Festival, Plymouth (Video)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=gDEidNdem1M#t=153

Respect Festival, Plymouth, Finale (Video)

Showing interaction with audience.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kER_ytYf4p0&feature=player_embedded



While there was positive interaction with the audience (particularly, through the introductions and through the encouragement of their involvement in some of pieces performed) the concert structure, in which the whole group was on stage only during the first half (the second half involving only Baluji Shrivastav and Baldev Singh), did limit the sense of connection achieved at the end of the performance. In the final concerts, an effort was made to correct this through the introduction of a concluding curtain call by the orchestra as a whole.

This also opened the way to more end of concert discussions between audience members and performers – including some concerning possible future engagements. However, it was also noted that the form of the stage affected the ease with which performers could interact with the public in the auditorium at the conclusion of the shows. As this relied heavily on approaches from audience members, it could better happen when the stage was more easily accessed and at audience level or of lower height (as at Southampton and Plymouth). In addition, at some venues departure timings were too tight to allow significant post-

concert discussions. If this aspect of interaction is to be encouraged, further thought will have to be given to how it can be facilitated – identifying suitable locations (e.g. in public areas outside the auditorium) and ensuring that time there is time to develop these connections.

1. *The mixture and wide range of music was appreciated by audiences and should be continued as a distinctive feature of the work of the IVO.*
2. *The introduction of individual pieces by the various members of the IVO is an important part of the collaborative ethos of the orchestra. But some additional discussion of content, and rehearsal of presentation, might be helpful in maximising what can be taken from this by the audience. Nonetheless, it must be recognised that in this there is a delicate balance to be struck between the provision of information and engagement with the personalities of the performers.*
3. *One possibility is the creation of a fuller programme to explain further the music and instrumentation – financial and personnel resources for this would need to be considered in future planning.*
4. *The group value their interaction with the audience, with the potential for the promotion of their work. If the post-concert interaction is to be maximised, both space and time must be made available.*

Sound Quality and Stage Layout:

In comparing venues, sound quality, with the ability to hear clearly both ones own and other instruments in the ensemble featured strongly in the assessments given by performers. Musical and verbal cues have particular importance in the coordination of performances.

Problems of with sound, including microphone failure and difficulties in hearing monitors, occurred on more than one occasion (and were reflected in one or two pieces of audience feedback). The range of unfamiliar instrumentation represented a challenge for the local sound engineers. While listings for sound set-up were sent in advance, it was apparent, in some cases that they had not been passed from venue management to sound technicians. The importance of sufficient sound crew and sufficient time for system set-up and sound checks became very apparent. The organiser of the Stanley event acknowledged in his feedback that organising sound for the group had been difficult and that the single technician had found it hard to cope.

While some more experienced performers found it easier to accept the length and complexity of sound set-up and sound check, others found this particularly stressful, seeing it as impinging upon on- site rehearsal possibilities and bringing them too close to the time of performance.

There was discussion of the possibility of the IVO having their own sound technician (as had been experimented with in previous performances). But it was recognised, given that a satisfactory audio technician could be found, this would add significantly to touring costs. Baluji Shrivastav raised the possibility of taking more control of sound, and simplifying sound checks, with portable technology. Experience in the use of his own mixer at one London venue suggests that this is a possibility, though it would involve more equipment to be transported.



Good interaction of performers with the sound engineers is also clearly important. This is enhanced by having sufficient time for the engineers to explain the layout and ensure that they are sharing common terminology with the performers (who were not in all cases clear about the positions of monitors and speakers). The location of microphones requires appreciation of the particular needs of performers – avoiding settings so close that they are easily touched by accident, and with the location always being made clear to the player or singer.

The on-stage layout and seating arrangements could lead to problems with audience sightlines to some of artist, of which the performers themselves could not be aware. (Audience feedback from one venue did include comment on the difficulty of seeing performers set further back on the stage.) Sighted members of the tour party were used to check sightlines from the auditorium at some later performances.

1. *The management of sound quality at venues is an area that requires further consideration.*
2. *At the least, the importance of the advance details of sound set-up needs to be stressed to venue managements, with their recognition the time and numbers of technicians needed to achieve this – especially if a good working understanding is to be developed with the performers.*
3. *In the longer term, other options, of a travelling sound engineer (recognising the need to fund this) or of increased use of portable technology may be pursued.*

Assistance at Venues

The level of assistance provided directly by venues varied significantly, in relation to the number of people available to help but also in their awareness of what was needed – in terms of requirements such as orientation and guidance, access to food and refreshment, and help with facilities necessary for guide dogs. For example, while at one venue there were additional members of staff provided, their lack of briefing and failure to make their role clear to the tour group effectively created an additional cost without benefit.

Venue-specific assistance was important in relieving pressures on travelling volunteers. This was especially so in the period soon after arrival, when familiarisation with the layout and the facilities was most needed and when the volunteers arriving with the orchestra were least able to provide it.

In some cases, volunteers from local organisations played important roles, much appreciated by members of the tour group. At Yeovil, for instance, the South Somerset Disability Forum was able to offer valuable support in a number of areas, from general guidance around the venue, to care for guide-dogs and assistance with the local transport. They treated the event as a positive learning experience for themselves – involving unfamiliar elements such as the guide-dogs – and offered friendly interactions with performers both at the venue and at the hotel accommodation. The Octagon management recognised the importance of their help, in providing types of support that had not been anticipated. At Southampton, also, there was collaboration between venue management and the University’s “Gift of Sight” volunteers.

While the performers differed in terms of the level of assistance felt necessary, shortage of local assistance/lack of volunteers was referred to by a number of them as an issue at one venue. A few favoured ratios of support as high as 1:2 or even 1:1. Good levels of support were seen as a way of reducing stress. However, while assistance with dogs was appreciated, guide-dog owners did experience concerns when they were not clear who was caring for their dogs – *“You need to know who is with your dog and that they know what they need to”*.

1. *Some venue-specific assistance is almost certain to be necessary – especially in relation to initial orientation.*
2. *It is important for tour organisers to explain to the venue management well in advance what the core needs will be.*
3. *When providing support staffing venue management need to clearly brief those involved on their roles in relation to these requirements.*
4. *Local voluntary organisations can play important complementary roles.*

Venue Layout

The ease of movement of the performers was affected by the physical layouts of the venues – both in terms of proximity of different areas of activity and the complexity of routes between them. There were issues of distance between facilities such as green rooms, dressing rooms, and toilets and of the distance of the preparation area to the stage. There was also variation in the complexity of the layout, and the number of potential obstacles between areas (both architectural and in terms of areas in which stage gear was deposited). These factors had consequences for the guidance support needed from volunteers, either local or travelling. The problems of more complex arrangements underlined the importance of initial guidance and orientation.

In some cases the distance from dressing area to stage was such that it was felt better to try to find a closer alternative space. This required flexibility from members of the tour group and a willingness by venue management and staff to agree such alternatives. Where there were accessible and comfortable sitting areas, with refreshments, these were much appreciated by the performers.

Guide-dogs also needed to be fed and watered – in addition requiring an area, ideally grassed, to which they could be taken out. The ease with which the needs of the dogs could be catered for had implications for the responsibilities of volunteer helpers. The presence of dogs in the auditorium during the preparation period

could, on occasions prove distracting.

The tour organisers noted the advantage of being able to visit a venue in advance both to see the layout and to discuss arrangements, as they had at Kings Place, helping to smooth the running on the day of that concert. Recognising that this



will frequently not be possible, good early contacts with the venue management remain important in addressing these issues.

1. *Whether or not an initial visit is possible, as part of preparatory contacts with venue management issues of physical layout should be discussed – e.g. clarifying the distances of facilities to stage and, perhaps, establishing if there are mutually acceptable alternatives if problems of access become apparent.*
2. *Where guide dogs are to be present, it is also helpful to clarify where they can be cared for.*



On Road and Rail – Travel Arrangements

The tour and the preparations for it required the members of the IVO to use a number of means of local and inter-city travel – each with particular challenges which can have implications in terms of the planning needed.

Cabs

The use of cabs, especially during the rehearsal period in London, revealed that, despite the duty to carry guide dogs both in public and private hire vehicles (carried over from the Disabilities Discrimination Act into sections 168 to 171 of the Equality Act of 2010) there may still be resistance and deeply negative attitudes among some drivers of vehicles. An incident in which an unsympathetic driver shut the cab door on a dog's tail caused deep distress for one performer and an understandable disruption at the start of one rehearsal session. This led to protests to the cab company concerned.

1. *For performers travelling with guide-dogs the attitude of cab drivers may present a problem. Where there are such failures, cab companies must continue to be pressed to fulfil their statutory duties – and to make clear to their drivers the necessity of doing so with good grace.*
2. *In more immediate terms, if companies with consistently good practice can be identified that information should be shared.*

Rail

Trains proved a broadly popular mode of transport for longer journeys, such as those to Somerset and County Durham. However, the arrangements required careful planning on the part of the organisers. Arranging advance group booking with disability discounts proved time-consuming, and the lack of flexibility with seat reservations made for some difficult choices between the value of pre-allocation of seating and risks of fare forfeits if difficulties arose for performers in reaching stations at the specific times required.

When trying to establish suitable meeting places for the performers to assemble at the large London termini (clearly describable and accessible points of assembly being essential), the information and advice gathered online and over the telephone was found insufficient, and potentially unreliable. It proved necessary for organisers to visit the stations to find appropriate locations.



While members of railway staff were generally actively helpful, the actual level of assistance and recognition of requirements varied considerably between stations, and assistance which had been requested in advance did not, in all cases, materialise. Use of the First Class Lounge was offered at Kings Cross (when a BBC film crew were accompanying the IVO), while at another terminus assistance did not appear for the outward journey - apparently the result of a request not being registered on their information system. Baluji Shrivastav, recognising that assistance with the transport of equipment and other luggage might not always be made available, has raised the possibility of the IVO acquiring a folding trolley of their own, for use in future touring.

Where help was provided in bringing the group onto the train the process could still feel rushed, with the difficulty of placing people, dogs and luggage (including instruments). The narrowness of some train seats made for difficulties in locating guide-dogs with their owners, while access to luggage during journeys could also be problematic. The organisers encouraged musicians to take responsibility, as far as possible, for their own instruments and other luggage, both as part of the confidence and capacity-building aspect of the tour, and to relieve the pressures on the travelling volunteer helpers.

Especially when the train was travelling onward from the station of disembarkation, given time constraints, it was found necessary to start thinking about de-training well in advance – advising members of the group to start preparing themselves, ensuring that all luggage had been located, allocating helpers to provide guidance.

- 1. The size and complexity of some stations, especially the large London termini, make the identification of meeting points suitable for those with visual impairment problematic. For the IVO organisers, it was found that a preparatory visit to the station was the most reliable way of selecting these.*
- 2. While valuable assistance was available from rail staff, and there is a clear advantage in making explicit requests for this in advance of travel, it is necessary not to put too great a reliance on a high level of such assistance. This means, again, ensuring that there are sufficient travelling volunteer helpers to help with boarding and de-training, and that performers are clearly aware of their own responsibilities – with the possibility of some additional facility to help with the movement of luggage and equipment.*

Minibus or Hire Coach

Experiences with travel by minibus or hire coach varied. The use of a 15-seater minibus for the transfer between London and Milton Keynes, driven by a volunteer, was seen as the most difficult of all the journeys by a number of the performers. Issues of limited space (with three dogs, instruments and equipment) and the time, both on the road and that taken in initial loading, were raised. The problems of loading in this case alerted the tour organisers to the need for pre-planning of the location of individuals, dogs and luggage.

More successful use of coach was made in transfers between accommodation and venue in County Durham, and for longer journeys on the Southampton leg of the tour, using professional drivers.

- 1. The use of minibus or coach is a viable future option, given a vehicle of sufficient size, and a driver familiar with vehicle and routes. But to minimise the stress of loading knowledge of the layout of vehicle and pre-planning of boarding and loading is desirable.*

Accommodation



Overnight accommodation was needed for four of the locations on the English portion of the tour. This involved both hotel accommodation and university residences.

As with the venues themselves, there were issues of ease of access and the need for clear initial

guidance to the facilities. The responsibility for assistance with initial orientation tended to fall on the travelling helpers and other sighted members of the tour party. Hotel and college staff, though willing to be helpful, could be limited in number and unfamiliar with the assistance required by blind patrons. This relatively intense period of activity drew in the author and members of the film crew recording the tour. Higher levels of assistance could also be necessary at meal times, especially in the context of self-service arrangements. These periods accentuated the need to arrange a sufficient helper base.

In terms of arrangement of rooms, the performers particularly favoured the sites where the whole party could be arranged along one corridor, as opposed to more dispersed, multilevel accommodation. This allowed for ready access to each other and, for some, gave the assurance that sighted helpers would be readily accessible, if required.

Some initial plans for the three guide dogs to be cared for overnight together, in one room, were soon abandoned as the importance of the overnight presence of the dogs to the owners became immediately clear. Rooms that could easily accommodate owners and dogs were necessary.

1. *For ease of communication and a sense of security, a simple, compact arrangement of rooms is desirable.*
2. *Room allocation will include those suitable for guide dogs to stay with their owners.*
3. *Arrival, and possibly meal times, can be high periods of need for assistance. A significant proportion of this is likely to come from the tour group helpers.*

Publicity, Promotion and Message Marketing

Publicity leaflets and flyers were developed at the beginning of the tour and used as a basic promotional tool throughout, supported by use of electronic media. However, beyond that, there were notable successes in attracting broader media attention, particularly from the BBC. With the assistance of the MRPR agency, a number of radio interviews were arranged which gave the IVO tour wide-ranging coverage. Radio pieces have included an appearance by Baluji Shrivastav on BBC Radio 4 *In Touch*, prior to the start of the tour, as well as appearances by IVO members on BBC Asian Network, BBC London, and BBC World *Update* – extending coverage to an international audience. In addition, the singer, Fereshteh Khousojerdy, appeared on BBC Persian Language Service, on BBC World *Outlook*, and was identified as involved in the Inner Vision tour when she was selected to be a participant in the BBC’s *100 Women* event in October 2013.



Fereshteh Khousojerdy, at BBC “100 Women”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=II0kqOAIzmw&feature=player_embedded

Members of the IVO (Takashi Kikuchi, Ziad Sinno, Baluji Shrivastav) speaking and performing on BBC World *Update*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lw-J9Sg4q6M&feature=player_embedded



Victoria Oruwari on, BBC London

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQOsPIT6wJ8&feature=player_detailpage



(See [Appendix 3](#) for further web links to broadcast media- related materials.)

Two sets of film-makers recorded a number of aspects of the tour. One from BBC World News *Fast Track* gathered material for a piece to be released in 2014. There was far more extensive filming by the independent documentarist Marie-Cecile Embleton (<http://www.cecileembletonphotography.com/>), present with her team for much of the tour activity, and who is currently preparing a full-length documentary.

In relation to the more localised promotion, the flyers and leaflets with basic tour information were made available, and in addition to the information given on Facebook (Baluji Music Foundation), through Twitter (@Baluji1), tweets were directed to possible interested parties in areas to be visited. MRPR worked with venues to promote interest from local press and broadcast media (for instance, Baluji Shrivastav gave an interview to BBC Three Counties Radio interview prior the Milton Keynes Concert). However, for publicity at the local level there was, inevitably, a greater reliance on the venue managements and event organisers.

Audience feedback suggests different primary sources of information at different venues – for example, indicating the importance of the Respect Festival website at Southampton, of venue brochures and mailings at Yeovil, or word of mouth/community contacts in relation to the performance at the Ganesh Festival in County Durham. Post-performance feedback from management at the Stables, Milton Keynes, offered some useful reflections on how they might extend promotion for such an event to, further enhance audience numbers. These included the suggestion of advance community outreach work and the desirability of mid-week scheduling to better suit schools or organised groups.

Electronic media, particularly through the Baluji Music Foundation website (<http://balujimusicfoundation.org/media.php>) and through YouTube (with links from Facebook and Twitter), have been used to give a perspective on the tour as a whole, including performances.



Preparations for the Show at the Octagon, Yeovil

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRliPr4o-0I&feature=player_detailpage

Rehearsal and Performance at Kings Place, London

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JYmYkW0wXk&feature=player_embedded

(See [Appendix 3](#) for further web links.)



At a more basic level, the decision, during the course of the tour, to create “**Inner Vision Orchestra Tour**” luggage labels and individual badges for all those involved in the proved a useful one. In immediate, practical, terms, it made for easier identification of group members by staff at stations and on trains, and for those giving assistance on arrival at venues. However, at the same time, it acted as a stimulus for interaction with fellow travellers – encouraging the spread of information about the orchestra in a very direct and personal way.

1. *The marketing strategy has been successful in generating broad coverage, with the prospect of ongoing publicity through the release of the documentary films.*
2. *In terms of local publicity for future audience generation, particularly in the context of one-off performances not connected to a wider festival or other event, whatever opportunities that can be taken to encourage community outreach/recognition of potential interest groups by venue managements should be taken.*

Wider Aims and Messages

In describing the aims of the tour overall, Baluji Shrivastav has underlined its potential for building experience and confidence amongst the musicians taking part. This he related not only to performance, but to experience in areas such a transport, promotional events, and the practicalities of differing venues. He has emphasised the importance of taking individual responsibility in the ethos of Inner Vision - noting, for example, that while some performers had experienced initial problems of time management, finding activities such as journey planning difficult, that in the latter stages of the tour there had been a strengthening sense of individual professionalism.

His aims for the IVO in general, include the development of self-awareness and discipline, timing and a of growing understanding of what can reasonably be expected in different settings, as well as development of the capacity to clearly communicate needs. From this perspective, part of the message to the performers, for their continuing development, is that that they need to know what it is that they need to know in relation to the different situations in which they are involved – this can range from practicalities of dealing with the transport system to an understanding what needs to be known to deal successfully with a photo-shoot or other media event.

Certainly, the tour substantially extended experience for many of those involved, and increased confidence was a theme which appeared regularly in conversations with them. There was also a growing ability to clarify what their requirements were in different settings. Discussions with the participants tended to confirm Baluji's contention that the high degree of media exposure early in the tour (particularly from the BBC) had contributed to a growing sense of a recognised professional enterprise, encouraging group solidarity and the related self-discipline.

There is an inevitable potential for tension between the aim of ensuring the smooth running of a tour by the provision of support and guidance and the additional aim of encouraging the confidence and self-sufficiency of visually impaired performers. The extent of support and assistance looked for by different members of the orchestra did remain variable. In part this reflects actual differences. Baluji, himself has stressed the insufficiency of the general label 'blind' as an indicator of needs. The various members of the group have different experiences and differing needs – as, for instance, between those with dogs and those without, or between those blind from early life or the later blind. However, the aim that volunteer assistants should actively support independence remains, with the recognition that empowerment goes beyond enablement; and the collaborative approach of those accompanying the tour has, in general, reinforced that aim.

Considering the Inner Vision Orchestra tour as a response to, and campaigning tool to encourage recognition of, the particular problems facing blind or visually impaired performers, it is notable that a number of the issues referred to in this report reflect those raised in the report "*Blind to the Facts- An exploration of the needs of the blind and visually impaired musician*" (Ludlow, 1995) commissioned by the Inner Visions Music Company (with the support of the Platinum Trust and RNIB) nearly twenty years ago, some of which were also reflected in RNIB's 2003 survey on issues in employment in the music industry. Amongst other things, "*Blind to the Facts*" noted the difficulties of getting engagements, affected by the

problems of finding representation (with the lack of agents willing to take on visually impaired musicians), as well as problems of transport arrangements, and limited opportunities for socialising in a professional environment which might encourage confidence-building through the meeting of like minds. Providing a point of meeting, advice on presentation, and the arranging of concerts were among the possible activities for Inner Vision identified in 1995, as well as the re-education of promoters as to the quality of blind performers, countering discrimination. The continuing challenges for visually-impaired musicians, despite some changes in attitude, have been recently acknowledged in a report in *The Musician* (Nicholls, 2012). The tour could, then, be seen as a necessary continuation of an ongoing process.



In relation to the expansion of audience awareness of the talents of visually impaired performers, audience feedback confirmed findings from surveys at earlier concert, that knowledge of any famous blind musicians from the UK was negligible. On the basis of returned feedback forms, the proportion having any previous experience of work by a group of blind performers was approximately 1/3, skewed to some extent by higher figures in London, and at the Ganesh Festival, Stanley, where figures reflected earlier events mounted by the organisers, Kalapremi. Amongst managements, the potential to expand awareness and audience base was acknowledged. The Octagon, Yeovil management stated:

“Following on from the brilliant performance at the Paralympic Games this event allowed us to host an event that really celebrated the talents and gifts of visually impaired artists. It gave us an opportunity to target and share this with disability and visually impaired groups in the area”

Overall, audience feedbacks showed a strong recognition of the achievements and capacities of the performers:

“So much talent” – “Absolutely exhilarating” – “If interested, anything can be achieved”

With some younger respondents more explicitly reflecting on their blindness:

“I think blind people are very good – it was amazing” – “Blind people are clever at playing without music” – “Blind people have eyes in their ears”

A single piece of feedback, while supporting the general assessment of the performance, questioned the degree of emphasis placed on visual impairment in the presentation:

“...you don't need to emphasize the fact that you're blind...I don't think that's needed. Anyone who sees you perform will have any doubts about blind people washed away directly”

While this is an isolated comment, it is a reminder that there is a balance to be struck between the level of attention drawn to the need for a group such as the IVO to present the talents of visually impaired musicians and the need to allow this talent to speak for itself in encouraging their recognition as part of the broader musical world. Currently, given the continuing issues in the employment of visually impaired musicians, the balance struck seems about right. But it may require adjustment in the future.



University of Plymouth Music Workshop – with Baluji Shrivastav and Ziad Sinno

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IGEGXsymDQ&feature=player_embedded

The tour has the potential for continuing impacts at various levels. These have included additional media exposure for the participants, for instance Ziad Sinno's December 2013 appearance on the BBC Arabic service. It has also revealed the potential for the involvement of some members in music workshops, of the kind that took place at Plymouth University, prior to the appearance at the Respect Festival – developing new skills to be taken forward into their future activities. In addition there has been an invitation to become involved with research being conducted at the Institute of Education on visual impairment and musical development (<http://vimusicians.ioe.ac.uk/>).

- 1. Overall, the tour has contributed to the broader aims of the IVO in terms of promoting the talents as well as extending the experience and skills of the participants – through the mounting of highly engaging performances.*
- 2. Baluji Shrivastav, has spoken an ultimate aim the Inner Vision Orchestra being to work itself out of a function, as the necessity for its role recedes – both sadly and fortunately, that aim has not yet been achieved.*

Contact details for any of the performers involved in this tour can be obtained from the Baluji Music Foundation (www.balujimusicfoundation.org)

Tel. +44 (0) 207 226 2094

Email: info@balujimusicfoundation.org

Or information from The Baluji Shrivastav website (<http://www.baluji.com/>)

Email: baluji@baluji.com.

Appendix 1

Organisers' Audience Survey Form



www.balujimusicfoundation.org

facebook: [balujimusicfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/balujimusicfoundation)

twitter: @baluji1

Thank you for coming to this event .

Please take a moment to fill out this form. It will help us continue to produce these events in the future.

Did you enjoy the performance?

.....

Would you like to see more of this work in the future?

.....

Have you ever seen a group of performers who are blind perform before this event?

.....

Has this event made you aware of different styles of music?

.....

Can you name one famous blind performer from the UK? If so who?

.....

Did you discover anything new from coming to this event? If so, what was it?.....

How did you hear about this event?

Any other comments?.....

Join our mailing list and leave your contact details on the back of this page

Appendix 2

Information Sheet – Kings Place

THE INNER VISION ORCHESTRA NATIONAL TOUR 14TH JUNE – 12TH OCTOBER 2013



Baluji Shrivastav has brought together incredible musicians from around the world who are blind or partially sighted. Their uplifting music moves between songs from Iran, Lebanon, Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, to soulful Gospel and Blues to sublime Indian Ragas and Western Classical compositions. Driven by the intensity of an inner vision they celebrate the power of music to transform lives...

kings place
music+art+restaurants

During this performance there will be a 20 min interval.
You are invited to take part in an informal Q & A session with the Musicians.

MUSICAL PROGRAMME IN NO PARTICULAR ORDER

Approx 50 minutes

A traditional Hindu blessing to open the show – Sung by Baluji Shrivastav.

KATIKA TOCATA

A fast moving vocalised rhythmic composition by Baluji using tabla (North Indian drum) syllables.

CHASHMESIYA DAURI

This is a duet from Afghanistan in Dari language brought to the ensemble by Fereshteh.

LOVE IS BLIND

by Linda Shanson. Peggy Scott recites the lyrics which are then sung by the ensemble.

KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI

Famous Indian film love song chosen by Victoria and sung together with Baluji.

TAMUNA KORUNAMA

Composed by Victoria in Kalabari which is the language spoken in River State in Eastern Nigeria. The song celebrates the grace of God.

SONG OF THE SEA

This is a Japanese folk song sung by Takashi, which is a mixture of traditional Japanese and western classical music. Composed by Narita.

PAZ (PEACE)

This is an improvised piece for guitar and sitar and tabla introduced by Rikki.

ALWAYS AND FOREVER by Victoria Oruvari

BENT AL SHALABIA

A duet in Arabic and Farsi sung by Ziad and Fereshteh. An extremely popular love song throughout the Middle East.

LA PASTORELLA – THE SHEPARDRESS by Rossini

Sung by Victoria accompanied by Abi on piano.

THIS SPECIAL PLACE

An ensemble improvisation in Gospel style.

DIGGY DIGGY DIGGY

A Lebanese song-with audience participation led by Ziad Sinno.

The Paul Simm Opera Prize, The Elizabeth Eagle Bott Memorial Scholarship Award, The Newman Thomas Commonwealth Award and the Eva Noreen Student Scholarship.

For more information, or to book Victoria for an event, please visit www.victoriaoruvari.com

ABI BAKER – Violin, keyboard

Born in the UK, 1990, Abi Baker took up a place at Wells Cathedral School where she studied piano with Michael Young, the then head of the keyboard department. Whilst there, she participated in many concerts and competitions, including the Audi Junior Musician Competition and BBC Young Musician of the Year. Abbi recently completed her studies at the Royal College of Music. During her time there, she developed a keen interest in early keyboard instruments and studied fortepiano with Simon Nicholls and David Ward, and harpsichord and clavichord with Robert Woolley. Abbi was the recipient of the 2007 Muzio Clementi Award for her work in the area of early keyboard instruments.

TRISTRAM LLEWELLYN – Keyboard

Visually impaired musician and composer with live performing and studio/production experience in a wide variety of settings including composition and performance with keyboards in duo and full line-up.

Tristram has organised and performed with other musicians at fund raising event at held at Conway Hall, Holborn, London. Provided pre-recorded music soundtrack and audio effects for movement artist Marie Malone. Attended sessions in Jazz studies taught by Ian Carr/Tim Whitehead reaching level three advanced class.

RIKKI JODELKO – Guitarist, vocals

Rikki has been playing since he was a child but started to take the guitar seriously from the age of 16. Rikki joined Heart n Soul for its second performance of the first Heart'n Soul show, "Rock'n Roll Dance", in February 1987 and has been a permanent member ever since. He has toured with the company many times in Britain, Europe and Korea. He has increased his experience by being involved with several recording sessions for Heart n Soul. Rikki's musical interests are strongly reflected in his playing and singing styles and are centred around, but not exclusively, most forms of black music: jazz, funk, soul, R&B and blues. Rikki has been working on the improv scene in recent years and has performed with Alison Blunt, a well-known violinist and singer on the European scene.

ZIAD SINNO – Oud

Ziad was born with cataracts and lost his sight because of glaucoma. He worked as semi professional musician and singer in the Lebanon, where he is originally from. He plays the violin, oud, guitar and keyboards. Ziad came to the UK to study physiotherapy but ended up studying piano tuning shortly before he went blind. He currently uses his computer and a midi keyboard controller to reproduce the songs that he used to sing during his life in the music industry. His ambition is to make his own cd with his own compositions.

FERESHTEH KHOSROUJERDY – Vocals

Born on the border of Iran and Afghanistan, Fereshteh always loved to sing, but was forbidden to do so by her family. It has only been since coming to the UK as a refugee, that she has been free to pursue her dream of being a singer. Encouraged by the Baluji Music Foundation, she is now fulfilling that dream as a key performer in the Inner Vision orchestra. Fereshteh sings in Farsi, Dari, Turkish and English.

BALDEV SINGH – Tabla

A respected tabla player, often performing in the Sikh community. He originates from Punjab in India.

PEGGY SCOTT – Finger cymbals

Peggy is one of our community musicians from Outlook Islington. We would like to thank the Arts Council Grants for the Arts, for their support in funding this project. And many thanks to all of our volunteers, helpers, well-wishers, friends, and for you to coming and sharing the joy of music!

For more information about the Inner Vision Orchestra please contact: 0207 226 2094 or email baluji@baluji.com

www.baluji.com | www.balujimusicfoundation.org
Baluji Music Foundation reg. charity 1130985

INTERVAL 20 MINS
2nd HALF – approx 45 mins

Classical Indian Music on Sitar and Dilruba by Baluji with Tabla accompaniment by Baldev.

ARTISTS BIOGRAPHIES

BALUJI SHRIVASTAV – Musical Director and founder of Inner Vision Orchestra

Baluji is a virtuoso multi-instrumentalist and composer from India. He is a leading campaigner for celebrating the positive contribution of blind people in society and particularly in music. He has performed and recorded with stars like Stevie Wonder, Massive Attack, Coldplay and Madness. He will be playing sitar, dilruba, gopi and naal.

TAKASHI KIKUCHI – Viola player

Takashi was born in Japan and in 1988 became a Graduate of the Tsukuba National School for the Blind. He went on to gain a teaching diploma, LRAM and became a post graduate student at the Royal Academy of Music. From 2003-2008 he was Research Associate at the Royal College of Music. He has won many awards including 2007 Cultural Leadership Programme Award in the UK, 2005 Anglo-Japan Foundation Award, and 2000 Lawson Award from the Royal Academy of Music 2000 Lawson Award from the Royal Academy of Music.

VICTORIA ORUWARI – Soprano. *Bmus Hons TCM and PGdip (Distinction).*

Victoria Oruvari is a frequent recitalist in and out of the UK. She has performed at various venues including Kensington Palace (with HRH the Duchess of Gloucester in attendance), Agip recital hall Lagos (with the vice president of Shell Africa in attendance), the royal festival hall, and Alexandra palace (with the President of Nigeria in Attendance). She is also a song writer, a professional singing teacher and choir director in London. Victoria's broad repertoire covers early Classical, modern Musical theatre, traditional Folk songs and Jazz. Her work attracted some media interest and Attitude Pictures, (a leading provider of TV content about the lives of people living with a disability) flew in from New-Zealand to film a documentary about Victoria and her music. She was later invited to Auckland to sing at their awards ceremony. Victoria has recently been invited to sing for the festival of different abilities in Italy where she performed with the singers from the Pavarotti foundation. Future plans include more studio recordings and concerts. Victoria's many awards include

Appendix 3

Web links for audio-visual materials

(urls as accessed January 1, 2014)

Video Collections:

<http://balujimusicfoundation.org/video.php>

<http://www.baluji.com/media.php>

Individual Videos:

On tour:

Preparations for the Show at the Octagon, Yeovil

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRliPr4o-0I&feature=player_detailpage

Inner Vision Orchestra at the Octagon, Yeovil – La bella pastorella

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=ZC54JQMRVYc

Inner Vision Orchestra at the Octagon, Yeovil – Song of the sea

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=cWtMLblxbll

Fereshteh Khousojerdy Sings with the Inner Vision Orchestra

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWwF0QBkwrE&feature=player_detailpage

Afghani Song, The Stables, Wavendon, Milton Keynes

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYTw4YfWwhI&feature=player_detailpage

Rehearsal and Performance at Kings Place, London

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JYmYkW0wXk&feature=player_embedded

The Ganesh Festival 2013

<http://vimeo.com/77028874>

Denise Leigh Performs with The Inner Vision Orchestra at Turner Sims, Southampton

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZ1rAVetrkc&feature=player_embedded

Welcome to the Respect Festival

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_JUsh9pUcQ&feature=player_embedded

Peggy Scott presents Love Is Blind

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8SC1iKxzKU&feature=player_detailpage

Respect Festival, Plymouth, Finale

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kER_ytYf4p0&feature=player_embedded

University of Plymouth Music Workshop – with Baluji Shrivastav and Ziad Sinno

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IGEGXsymDQ&feature=player_embedded

Media appearances

Members of the IVO (Takashi Kikuchi, Ziad Sinno, Baluji Shrivastav) speaking and performing on BBC World Update

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lw-J9Sg4q6M&feature=player_embedded

Baluji Shrivastav and Victoria Oruwari on the Sunny and Shay Show, BBC London

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQOsP1T6wJ8&feature=player_detailpage

Fereshteh Khousojerdy, at BBC “100 Women”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll0kqOAlZmw&feature=player_embedded

Fereshteh Khousojerdy, at BBC Persian Language Service

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82wvSYhJJaM&feature=player_embedded

Members of Inner Vision at BBC Asian Network

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivNqPgc8lGA&feature=player_embedded

Audio

Baluji Shrivastav Speaks on BBC4 In Touch

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio/player/b01s4g7x> (At 11min 20)

Rikki Jodelko speaks about the Inner Vision Orchestra on Resonance FM, 11 Sept 2013

<https://soundcloud.com/resonance-fm/18-30-00-world-city-live-22> (At 45min 20)

Pictures

1. Cover picture – Left to right: - Front row: Baldev Singh, Baluji Shrivastav. Middle Row: Fereshteh Khousojerdy, Ziad Sinno, Rikki Jodelko, Victoria Oruwari, Tristram Llewellyn, Peggy Scott. Rear: Takashi Kikuchi, Abi Baker.
2. Page 3 - Abi Baker (Courtesy of Marie-Cecile Embleton)
3. Page 4 - Baluji Shrivastav and Baldev Singh
4. Page 7 - A microphone is set up at the Octagon, Yeovil
5. Page 9 - In the Green Room, Yeovil
6. Page 10 – On stage – Southampton (Courtesy of Marie-Cecile Embleton)
7. Page 11 - At the station (Courtesy of Marie-Cecile Embleton)
8. Page 14 - Breakfast, The Manor Hotel, Yeovil
9. Page 19- Takashi Kikuchi and Victoria Oruwari (Robin French)

References

Ludlow, J. (edited by A. Meadows) ,1995. *Blind to the Facts: an exploration of the needs of the blind and visually impaired musician*. Inner Vision Music Company.

Nicholls, K., 2012, *VIP Musicians*, Report, *The Musician*, Autumn 2012, pp.34-36.

RNIB, 2003 *Issues in Employment in the Music Industry for People with Serious Sight Difficulties in England*. A survey with recommendations undertaken by the Music Education and Employment Advisory Service of the Royal National Institute of the Blind 2003