



**A 5-year review of the
IBA Performing with Confidence Programme
at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
(2020 - 2025)**

by utilising

The Intelligent Behaviour Analytics Framework

January 2026



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Summary

Overview

This report gathers the last 5 years of student feedback for the IBA Performing with Confidence Programme at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. It shows that the programme has been overwhelmingly well-received by students. Supported by the IBA self-understanding reports, which are a core component of the programme, it combines, personalised support, practice tips and practical performance strategies, fostering self-awareness, resilience, and personal growth both as musicians and individuals.

Key Benefits Reported

- **Enhanced Confidence & Motivation:** Students feel more self-assured and enjoy performing more.
- **Reduced Performance Anxiety:** Techniques such as power poses, visualisation, positive affirmations, and the IBA framework help manage stress effectively.
- **Improved Self-awareness:** Understanding personal strengths, limitations, emotional responses, and interaction preferences.
- **Practical Skills:** Better practice habits, mental preparation, stress management, performance-mode practice and interpersonal effectiveness.
- **Personal Growth:** Positive impact extends beyond music to career planning, relationships, and overall wellbeing.
- **Reported Outcomes:** Reduced anxiety, improved focus, structured preparation, better social adaptation,

Programme Strengths

- **Engaging & Well-Structured:** Clear content, interactive sessions, small group discussions, and one-to-one support.
- **Personalised Insight:** Detailed IBA reports offer actionable understanding of personality, behaviours, emotions, and interactions.
- **Supportive Environment:** Safe space for reflection, sharing, and growth.
- **Practical & Relevant:** Strategies directly applicable to performance, practice, teaching and life.
- **Expert Instructors:** Praised for enthusiasm, care, and humour.

Challenges & Suggested Improvements

- **Minor logistical issues:** session timing and the volume of IBA personalised reports to read.
- **Suggested enhancements:**
 - o More personalised one-to-one sessions.
 - o Opportunities to apply techniques in a safe performance setting.
 - o Adjust pacing, provide materials earlier.
 - o Clarify the IBA framework with respect to neurodiversity.

Conclusion

The programme is widely considered transformative, insightful, and highly relevant. It strengthens confidence, reduces performance anxiety, and fosters personal and professional growth. Students strongly recommend that all RBC students—and even staff—participate if the programme is offered in the future.

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Introduction

Initial discussion and ideas for the *IBA Performing with Confidence Programme* began in 2018. The background, reasons for development and programme outcomes for academic years 2019-20 and 2020-21 are covered in the 2021 report [A Pilot Programme for Musicians to Optimise Musical Performance](#).

The initial aims and objectives in 2018 were and remain to this day, to:

- Assist music students at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) dealing with Musicians' Performance Anxiety (MPA), general low confidence and resilience levels.
- Design a programme that combines the Intelligent Behaviour Analytics (IBA) framework with performance anxiety techniques. The overall premise is that greater self-understanding, provided by the IBA framework, will give students significant insight into which performance anxiety techniques would be best suited to them, as an individual, and thereby assist them to navigate, manage and understand any performance anxiety challenges.
- Design a programme that could be taught in a group with minimal one-to-one input.
- Support the world-class music teaching delivered at RBC, by helping students optimise their practice, performance and study skills. Allowing students to realise their full potential whilst not being held back by low self-confidence, negative mind-set issues and potential misunderstanding of what approaches work for them, as an individual.
- Encourage open discussion and management of performance anxiety issues. Given that MPA *"affects musicians across the lifespan"* (Kenny, 2010) it seems prudent and fitting to help students address these issues when they are developing not only their technical and musical ability but also, crucially, gaining valuable performing experience whilst studying at a conservatoire.
- Provide an opportunity for holistic personal development with the accompanying overall health and well-being attributes this can offer.
- Provide a welcoming environment and positive space to make the most of each person's potential; the focus of the IBA framework is to celebrate the uniqueness and value of each individual.



In 2019, a pilot programme was designed and delivered by

- Katharine Lam, Senior Lecturer in Piano, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
- Prof. Adam Crizzle, Visiting Professor, Birmingham City University, School of Nursing and Midwifery.

Initial, indicative feedback from this first pilot group was very encouraging. The programme was broadly seen as successful in equipping students with:

- Greater self-understanding, increased confidence and resilience levels.
- Useful and relevant tips, techniques and mind-set reflections to manage and improve performance anxiety challenges.

Following the pilot programme, further content development and enhancement was undertaken. During the year 2020-21, changes and adaptations to the delivery of the programme were necessary because of COVID restrictions and the need to move sessions online. The current IBA Performing with Confidence Programme has been running successfully at RBC, since 2020, with minor enhancements over time.

This report is designed to include:

- A summary of RBC student feedback gathered between 2020 and 2025.
- Further information on the content and delivery of the RBC programme.
- Further information and wider application of the IBA framework. This includes the framework itself, where it is taught and the ongoing work and development which is underway, especially within the National Health Service (NHS).

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IBA Performing with Confidence Programme



***“Knowing others
is intelligence;
knowing yourself
is true wisdom.”***

Lao Tzu

***“Knowing
yourself is the
beginning of all
wisdom.”***

Aristotle



The IBA Performing with Confidence Programme is a unique offering for music students at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. It seeks to offer a depth of self-understanding combined with specialist approaches to music practice and performance. At its heart it aims to recognise the uniqueness of each individual and to put into practice the idea that *‘one size does not fit all,’* in terms of what is necessary for each person to thrive and build confidence in performance.

Taking a look at just a small selection of academic studies shows how the percentage of musicians who report suffering from MPA can vary significantly:

- 96% of musicians reported experiencing stress related to performance (Bartel and Thompson, 1994)
- Between 15% and 50% of musicians suffer from music performance anxiety (Kenny, 2011)
- 73% of adolescent musicians viewed their anxiety as a negative performance factor. (Fehm and Schmidt, 2006)

What is clear, however, is that anxiety concerning one’s own level of ability, rate of development, reliability in live performance and a feeling of vulnerability on stage is not uncommon.

The IBA programme is designed to help students navigate through the growing body of work into performance anxiety techniques for musicians and to be better informed about:

- the possible sources of their challenges
- which techniques are best suited for them, as an individual to try and why

Additionally, over the last five years, several students have discussed in class and in their one-to-one session that although they may always have had some issues with personal confidence and resilience, they have acknowledged that these levels have actually decreased since studying at a conservatoire. Whilst it is understandable that the study environment, course requirements, intensity of study and regular performance commitments at a conservatoire are quite different to what many undergraduate students have experienced in their school and/or college years, it is essential, in preparation for professional life where musicians are to give their best in performance, to find effective ways to sustain levels of personal self-belief and confidence with an ability to bounce back after any setbacks.

Student Demographic

- There is capacity and an allocated IBA full subsidy for up to 25 students a year to join the programme.
- Average class size, for students who complete the programme, has been around 13-18 students each year.
- All RBC students are eligible to apply.
- Since 2020, BMus, MMus, APD and PSP students have attended. Students have been represented across the following departments:
 - Keyboard (Piano & Organ)
 - Woodwind
 - Brass
 - String
 - Vocal
 - Composition
 - Jazz
- The programme is not for everyone; a small percentage of students drop out and do not complete the programme. This has occurred at any point after application (i.e. non-attendance at session 1) to roughly the mid-point of the programme.
- After the first session, the importance of regular, committed attendance is underlined. This is because the programme content requires students to be on track with ideas developed week by week and the class as a whole cannot function well with students dropping in and out. Inevitably, there is some limited student absence and leave required for performances, for example.

Programme Content

As an overview, the programme content starts with a focus on two main areas:

- The six stages of the IBA framework, designed to enable students to gain a good grounding in self-understanding and finding a holistic approach to life.
- Approaches and tips for daily music practice.

After these initial sessions, the focus homes in on aligning self-understanding with performance anxiety

Since 2020 the programme has been delivered within the following parameters:

- Eight core sessions, each lasting for two hours, with an additional Introduction session held in December each year.
- Sessions run from Jan/Feb to April/May each year.
- Sessions are usually held on a Sunday afternoon in term time (during academic year 2023/2024 Friday evenings were trialled but deemed less successful).
- A one-to-one session private and confidential coaching session is offered to all participants at the end of the programme.
- All students have access to the IBA software, questionnaires and personalised reports.



Optimising Musicial Performance

Katharine Lam (Programme Lead) and Adam Crizzle discuss the design and outcomes of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire health and wellbeing programme for musicians to optimise musical performance



2022 Conference

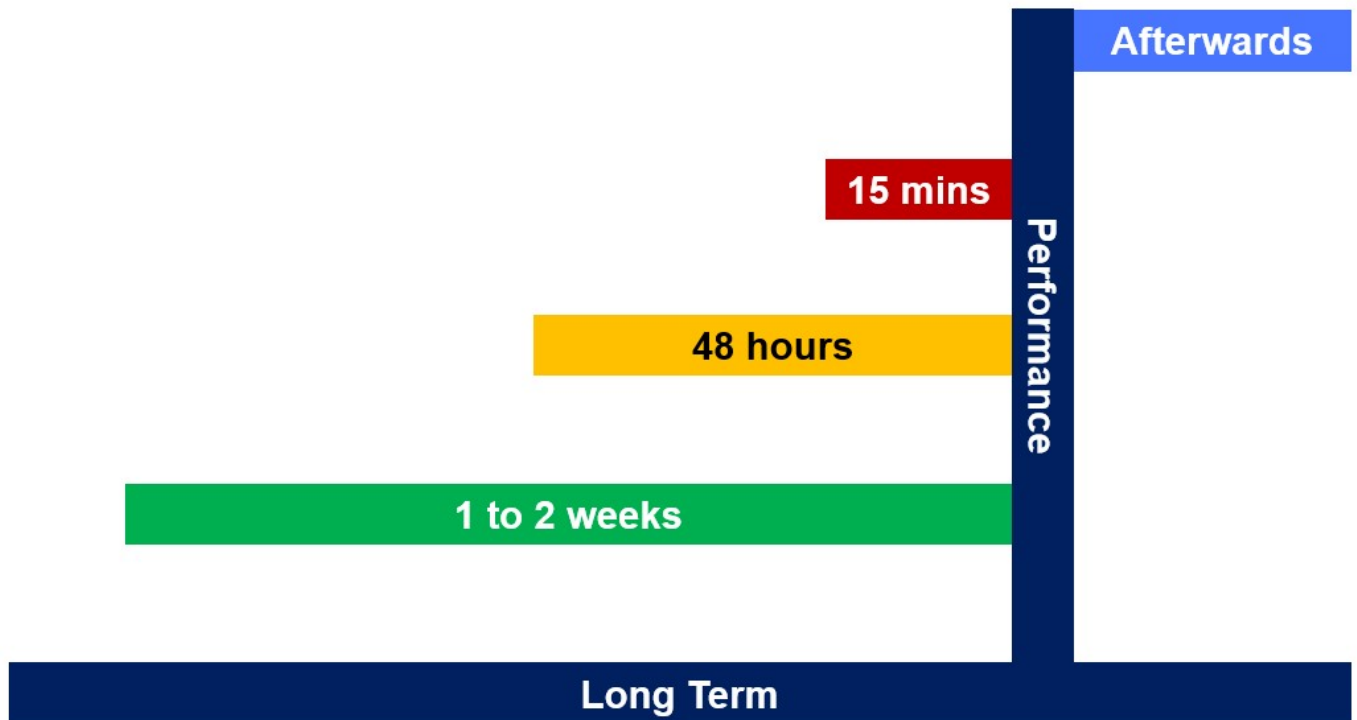
Students talk about their experience of attending the RBC health and wellbeing programme for musicians to optimise musical performance



2022 Conference

Interview with Arianne Bennett
(RBC Student)

Examples of Programme Content Aligned to a Standard Performance Timeline



Long-term

Examples include: looking at how we practise, reframing perfectionism, procrastination, fear of failure, the three states of inner voice, motivation, favourable and unfavourable pressure.

1 to 2 weeks before a performance

Examples include: goal setting, time management and practice schedule, venue and audience considerations, visualisation.

48 hours beforehand

Examples include: being prepared for performance schedule, mindset shift to performance.

15 mins beforehand

Examples include: Power poses, breathing tips, habits to bridge the gap into performance.

During performance

Examples include: Keeping focus and recovery from slips, behavioural need focus (IBA), the Four Fs, communication.

After performance

Examples include: sense of achievement, keeping perspective, objective review.

After students complete the programme, they are asked to answer a feedback questionnaire which includes:

- 19 Likert scale closed-ended questions, using a range of predefined options to measure opinions, attitudes, and agreement quantitatively.
- 1 closed-ended question with a yes/no choice
- 9 open-ended qualitative questions, allowing students to answer in their own words for rich, detailed insights that aren't captured by fixed choices.

Over the last 5 years 51 students have provided feedback. This represents approximately 70% of those who have completed the programme. As a rough estimate approximately 15% to 20% of students drop out between submitting an application and before the end of the programme.

A summary of feedback received from students is included within this report.

Project Funding and Future Plans

Since the launch of the project in 2019, all IBA software costs and Prof. Adam Crizzle's teaching costs have been funded by a full IBA subsidy.

In view of the student feedback results covering the last 5 years in this report, a full IBA subsidy award will continue for up to 25 RBC students per annum. The project costs and feasibility will be reviewed year-on-year.

IBA subsidies are provided by Hillcroft House Research Hub Community Interest Company.

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About Intelligent Behaviour Analytics



The IBA self-understanding framework aims to take an individual on an illuminating, empowering and validating journey of self-discovery and understanding of others.

Designed for the challenges of 21st century life, Intelligent Behaviour Analytics (IBA) is a streamlined and innovative holistic approach that can change how people view themselves and everyone else around them.

Developed over four decades, IBA is built upon eastern, western, ancient and modern philosophies and teachings.

IBA includes a new generation of holistic personality assessment which strives to go further and in much greater depth than 20th century personality testing.

Each person is unique and with the deep self-understanding that IBA provides, confidence and resilience can grow. In many cases this additional knowledge can give a person a voice that perhaps has not always been heard in the past.

- 1** The focus on in-depth self-understanding with positivity at its heart, makes the IBA framework a great choice for anyone looking for bespoke personal development. Unlike traditional personality tests, the IBA framework seeks to celebrate the uniqueness of the individual, without the limiting nature of prescribed and narrow categories or classifications. The holistic basis of the IBA framework means it draws on all-encompassing insight and wisdom from eastern, western, ancient and modern philosophies and teachings. Unlike anything currently available, this framework allows for immense breadth and depth covering what makes an individual tick and provides many people with 'light bulb' moments that help demystify why other people see the world from the lens they do.
- 2** Every human is multifaceted, and each person's life path is unique and will never be replicated by another. The IBA framework aims to help all individuals to reach self-acceptance and an appreciation of all the strengths and unique qualities we each possess. Furthermore, an understanding of how our strengths can turn into limitations, will help prevent us from being held back and allows each of us to maximise all opportunities available in this one life that we are living.
- 3** The IBA framework seeks to educate and illuminate rather than diagnose or prescribe. There are a growing number of IBA Coaches-in-training, who have studied at Birmingham City University and who are available to offer support with the IBA framework. This can be especially helpful to tailor advice to an individual's specific needs.



Developing and enhancing your self-understanding

Giving you a greater understanding of other people

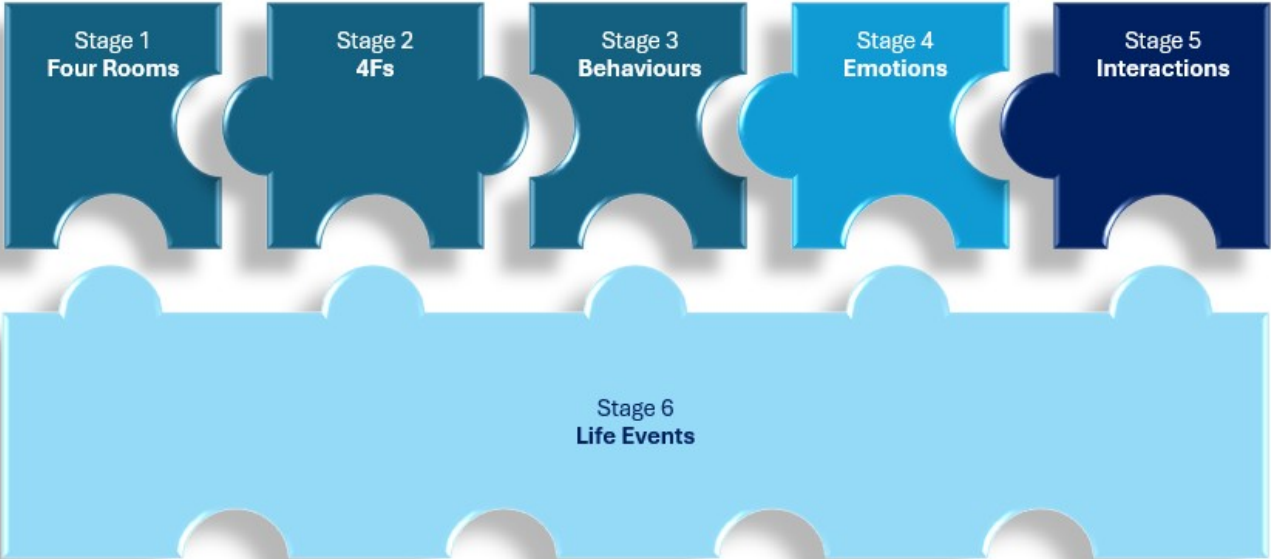
Celebrating and validating the uniqueness of YOU

Enabling you to lead a fulfilling personal and professional life

Helping you appreciate your strengths and to recognise the qualities you bring to the world

Giving you tailored solutions to overcome challenges so that you can maximise opportunities that come before you

Six Stages of the IBA Holistic Framework



Stages 1 to 3

The Four Rooms, 4Fs and your Behaviours

Stage 1

The Four Rooms concept explores the importance of a holistic and balanced life within the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects

Stage 2

The 4Fs stage introduces the individual to their primary, instinctive and deep-seated responses to situations in life.

Stage 3

Understand behaviour needs, motivations, strengths and limitations.

Stage 1
Four Rooms

Stage 2
4Fs

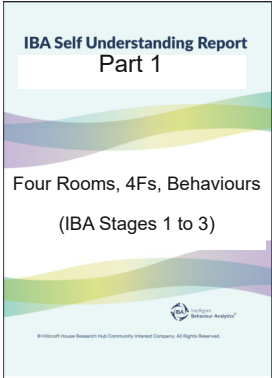
Stage 3
Behaviours

Stage 4
Emotions

Stage 5
Interactions

Stage 6
Life Events

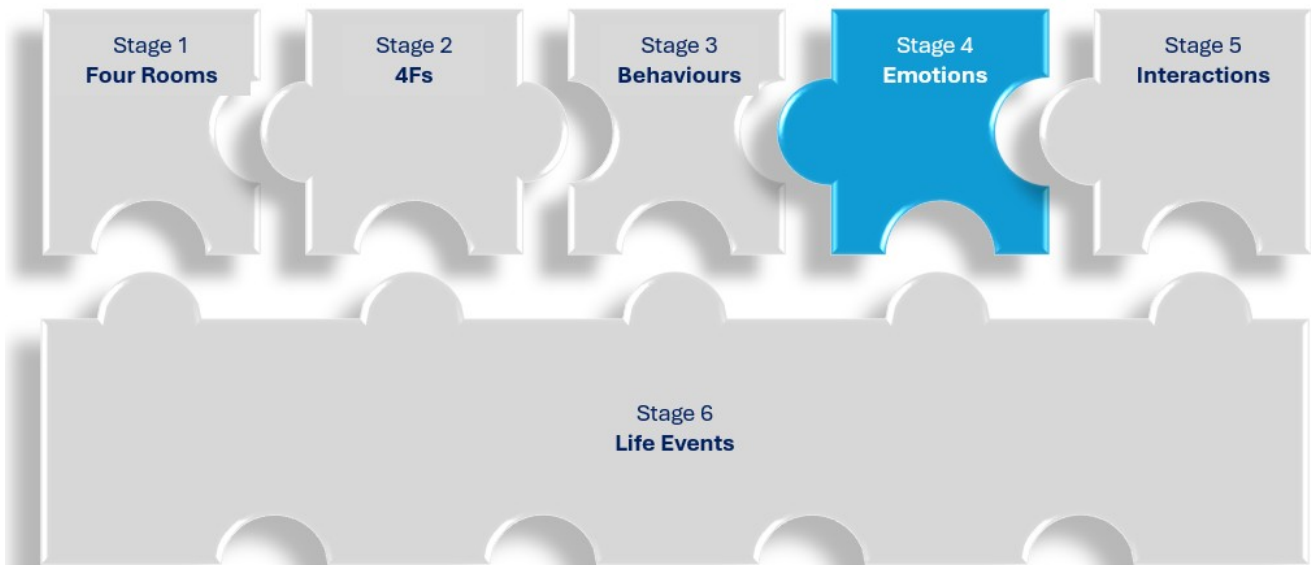
After individuals answer the first IBA questionnaire, the results of Stages 1 to 3 are included within Part 1 of the IBA Self Understanding Report



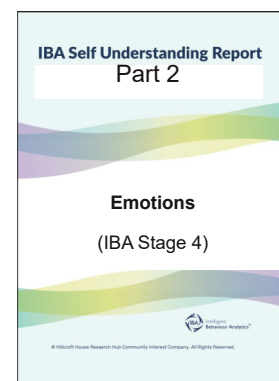
Stage 4 Emotions

Stage 4

Understand your emotional responses and the effect that escalating pressure may have on you.



After individuals answer the first IBA questionnaire, the results of Stage 4 are included within Part 2 of the IBA Self Understanding Report



Stage 5 Interactions

Stage 5

Discover in more depth how you interact with and process the world around you. This includes an understanding of the ways in which you deal with challenges and worries, your sensitivity levels and need for stimulus.

Stage 1
Four Rooms

Stage 2
4Fs

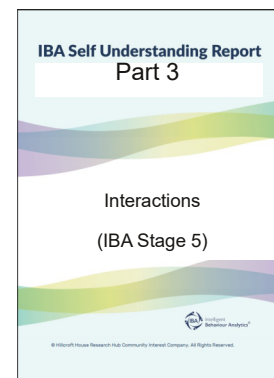
Stage 3
Behaviours

Stage 4
Emotions

Stage 5
Interactions

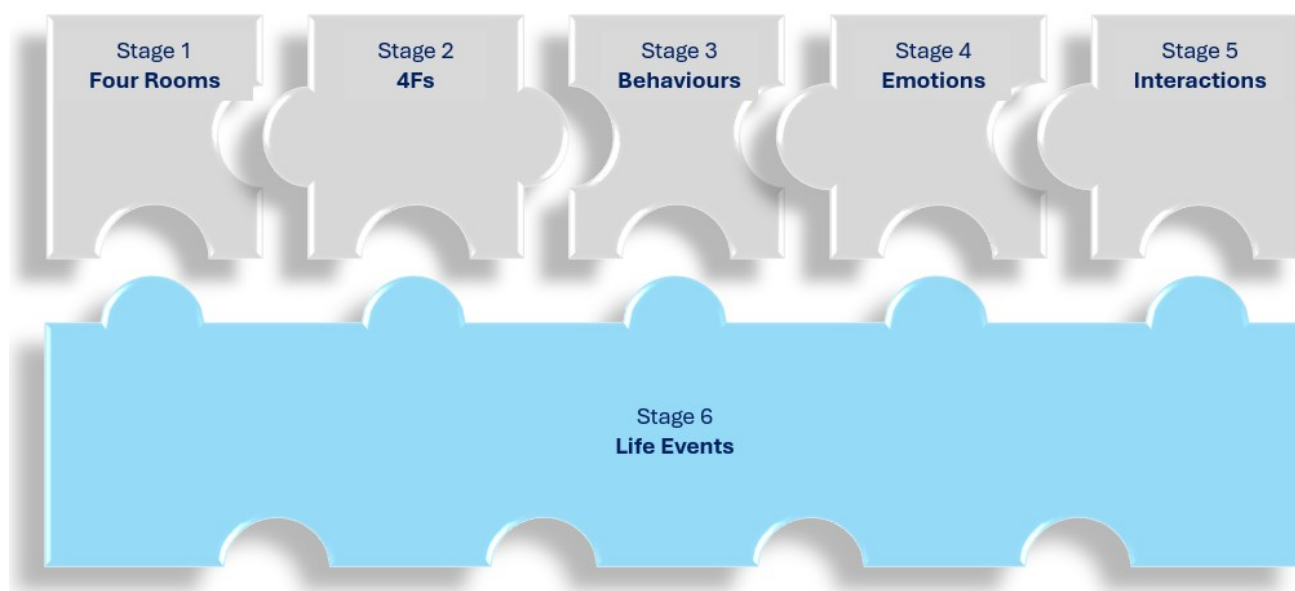
Stage 6
Life Events

After individuals answer the second IBA questionnaire, the results of Stage 5 are included within Part 3 of the IBA Self Understanding Report



Stage 6

Life Events



People respond to challenges in very different ways. What seems minor for one person may indeed be significant for another. Individuals may have been on the receiving end of someone saying, “*just move on*” or “*stop making a fuss*”. Alternatively, we ourselves may be the person saying these words to another.

Our life events play an essential part in how we develop and grow. For some, certain challenging events may be crushing and create long lasting stress and upset.

Negative events can profoundly impact an individual's physical health, mental state and emotional well-being. A person with high emotional and factual sensitivity levels may respond with feelings of self-blame and feel distress. Another person may invest excessive energy into blaming others for any perceived calamity. In doing so, they may lose perspective of what they can actually influence and what is outside their control.

Life Events is the final stage of the IBA framework. By understanding IBA stages 1 to 5, via the individual IBA reports, a person can go on to work with an IBA Coach and/or IBA Practitioner. The role of an IBA Coach is to put context upon past events and offer tailored, workable and realistic solutions for the present and future. This process can foster positive growth by enabling a person to positively move forward with their life, thereby increasing confidence and resilience levels.

Please note, on the RBC Performing with Confidence Programme, whilst life events are covered in a general, theoretical and over-arching sense, there is not capacity to take each individual student through their own personal life events. Some life event topics may come up in a student's one-to-one session. There have been a few cases where students have been signposted to further services such as the [BCU health and well-being service](#) for further support.

Intelligent Behaviour Analytics: A Novel Framework for Effective Leadership Style Transitioning

Intelligent Behaviour Analytics: A Novel Framework for Effective Leadership Style Transitioning

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Presented at the 19th European Conference on Management Leadership and Governance, ECMLG 2023 at Bayes Business School, November 2023

Abstract: The last three decades saw a reliance on the use of personality tests by businesses and organisations trying to gain a competitive advantage in the market through various such as recruitment, team building, leadership development and culture alignment. The commissioning of early 20th century personality models such as DISC and Myers-Briggs are claimed to provide valuable insights and benefits in various aspects of the employment process. They have however been controversially debated in the academic community due to issues surrounding validity and reliability. Discussions concerning leadership styles and leaders' responsibilities for managing employees, are similarly indeterminate despite being subject to extensive research and analysis for many decades. Academics have yet to provide a comprehensive explanation of the historic mechanisms underlying effective leadership. Instead, they have argued over factors such as a leader's traits, attributes, some relational or utilitarian versus collaborative modes of engaging a work force. Current leadership theory literature demonstrates a paucity of leader self-understanding and self-reflection. We consider these two attributes as fundamental qualities of effective leadership, whereby an individual can transform and enhance their use of any leadership style. In this paper, we propose an advanced 21st Century solution that leverages the Intelligent Behaviour Analytics (IBA) Framework, incorporating a deep and more effective understanding of leaders and their ability to transition between different leadership styles. Additionally, this framework offers methods for transitioning to more effective leadership styles based on situational requirements and takes into account a leader's own emotional and behavioural registers. This approach offers a structured opportunity for leaders to identify any issues, understand the reasons that these may develop and furthermore, evaluate the efficacy of their own behavioural traits and the way they, as individuals interact, manage and lead a team. The IBA Framework is a multi-stage, holistic approach that proposes to improve performance metrics, organisational culture, business outcomes and increased wellbeing.

Keywords: Leadership, Organisational culture, Intelligent behaviour analytics, Personality tests, Leadership styles

1. Introduction

Organisational culture was first identified in historical records as early as 438BC by Pericles who considered a culture of unified teamwork was key to Athens winning the Spartan war (Fisher, 2000). The early 1800's saw the topic of organisational culture emerge as a key theme in academia and business. Bestselling authors benefitted from claims they made that, in order to be successful, organisations needed to focus on their cultures' (Deal & Akenhead, 1981; Dyer, 1984; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Accordingly, management staff have been encouraged to consider the implications on their organisation of its culture (Ogbonna & Harris, 2002).

Defining organisational culture and establishing reliable, consistent methods to measure distinct qualities and attributes, has however been challenging for researchers. The literature promotes substantial diversity of viewpoints, making it difficult to arrive at some universally accepted construct. One of the more widely acknowledged proposals by Schein (1982), identified organisational culture as being a combination of artefacts, values, and basic assumptions. Later, Hawkins (1997) adapted Schein's model by subdividing it into artefacts, behaviour, mindset, emotional grounds, and motivational roots. The foundational contributions of Schein and Hawkins laid the groundwork for Professor Mannheim's influential reports, which garnered an impressive 97% consensus regarding definitions, amongst participants (Mannheim, et al., 2009). They proposed that culture is the collective set of shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and behavioural norms prevailing in the workplace. They articulated it encompasses local routines, traditions, ceremonies, and the ways in which individuals interpret and make sense of their immediate environment. Moreover, they viewed such cultures as possibly being far from uniform or coherent. This notion was evidenced earlier by Bourner & Chawla (2003), whose paper discussed potential issues arising from the role of subcultures emerging from different sections of the same organisation.

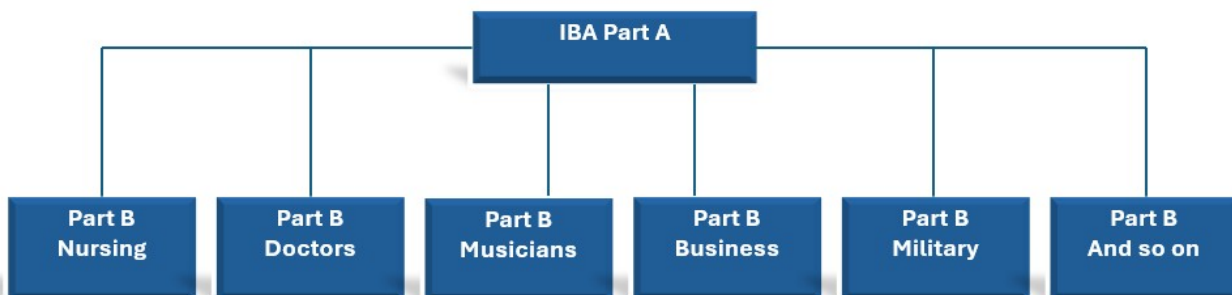
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Proceedings of the 19th European Conference on Management Leadership and Governance, ECMLG 2023

Individual IBA Programmes (a range of sectors)

In addition to the academic modules taught at BCU, IBA is used to support individuals in a variety of sectors. Bespoke, short programmes are developed to help address areas such as, employee health, well-being and personal development, organisational culture and team working.

At the heart of all IBA programmes lies self-understanding (Part A in diagram below) which is covered through the IBA six stages, online software and reports. Individual programmes are then tailored to suit the needs and specifics of the sector being addressed (Part B in the diagram below).



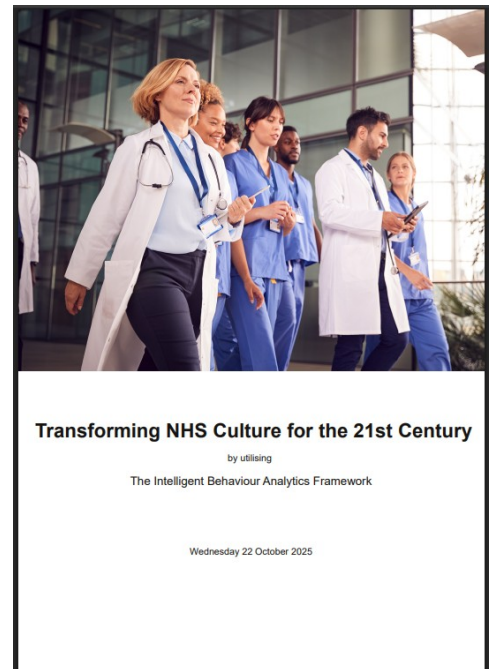
Wider Application within the NHS.

On 22 September 2025, a report titled [Transforming NHS Culture for the 21st Century](#) was presented at an NHS England, Regional event.

This report covers a case study at Birmingham Women's Hospital along with student voices who have experienced the MSc modules that have been built on the IBA framework at Birmingham City University

Owing to the impact of the results, the programme is being replicated at other NHS Trusts and content is being expanded to incorporate Doctors and Consultants.

Click image on right to read the report.



2025/2026 IBA Programme at Birmingham Women's Hospital

- Stage 1: Up to 350 Band 6, 7 and 8 nurses, midwives, clinical and non-clinical managers (in progress 2025).
- Stage 2: Approximately 50 consultants in obstetrics, gynaecology and neonatal (Starting 2026).

Programme Leaders: Prof. Adam Crizzle & Katharine Lam

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IBA Development Team

The expertise of those within the IBA Development span health education, medicine, psychology, military, music, wellbeing, business, leadership, organisational culture and software development.

This breadth and richness of human experiences and capabilities, including cultural, emotional, intellectual, and moral dimensions, ensures IBA development continues to be focussed upon the betterment of all, whether they are students at Birmingham City University, NHS employees or the 8 billion people who inhabit the planet.

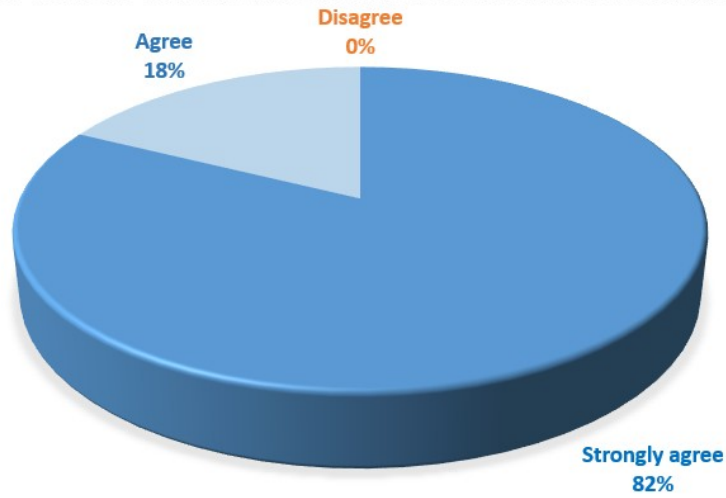
[Click on name below to read full bio](#)



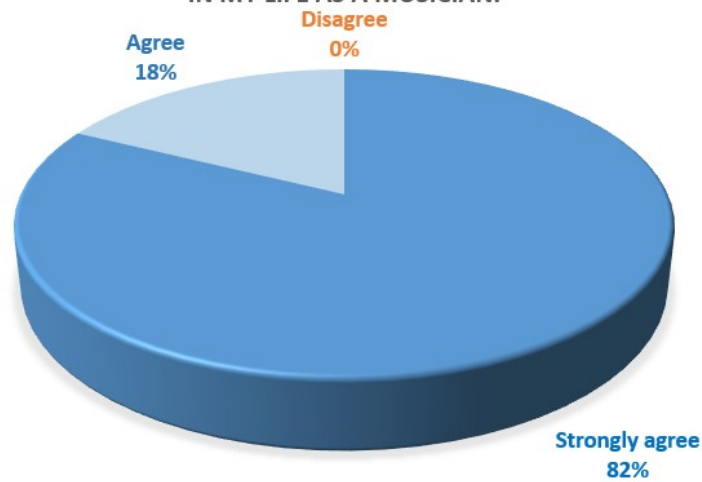
7

Student Feedback 2020-2025 (Pie Charts)

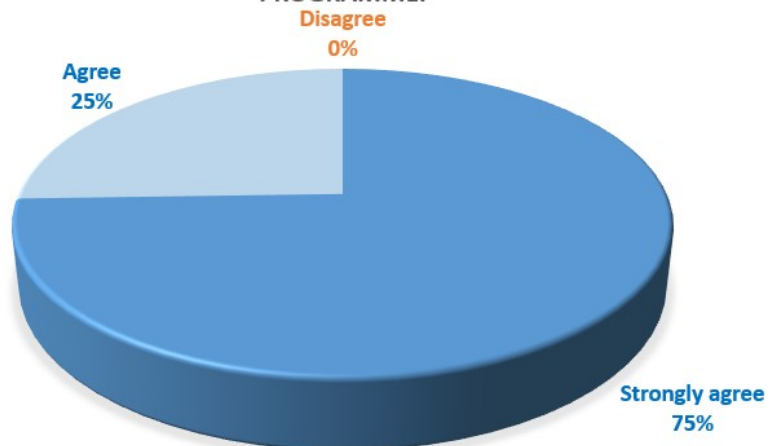
CLASS CONTENT WAS INTERESTING AND INTELLECTUALLY STIMULATING.



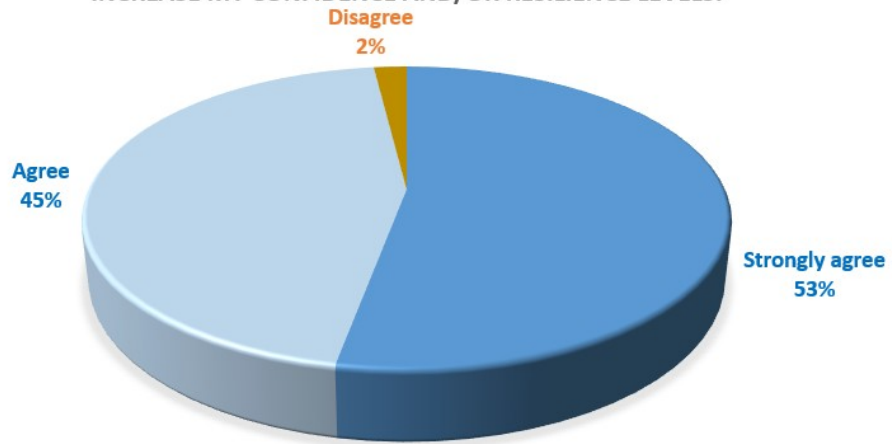
I HAVE GAINED USEFUL AND VALUABLE INFORMATION THAT ASSISTS ME IN MY LIFE AS A MUSICIAN.



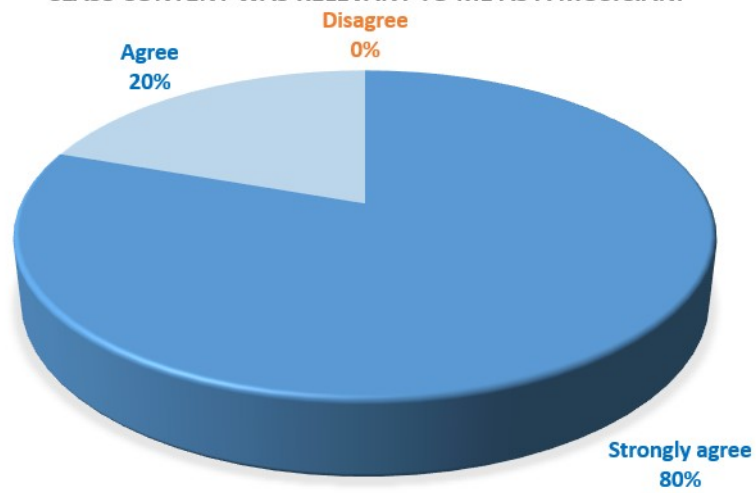
I HAVE GREATER SELF-UNDERSTANDING HAVING ATTENDED THIS PROGRAMME.



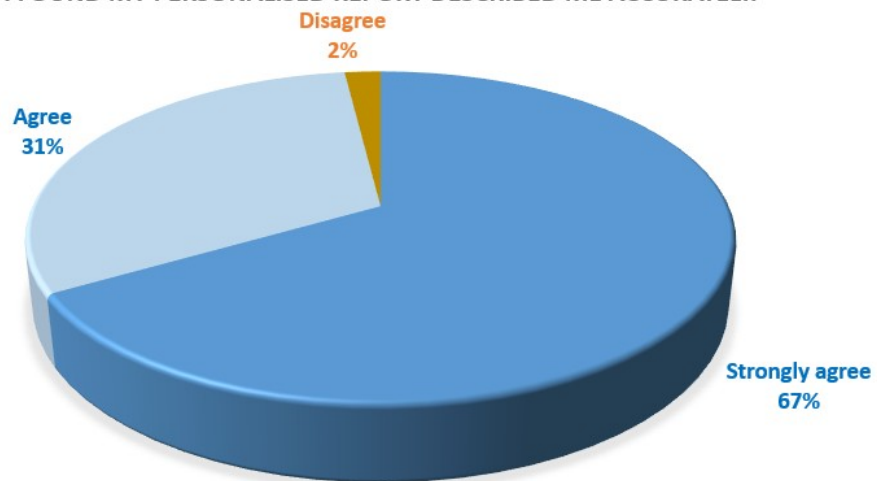
CLASS CONTENT AND ATTENDING THE PROGRAMME HAS HELPED ME TO INCREASE MY CONFIDENCE AND/OR RESILIENCE LEVELS.



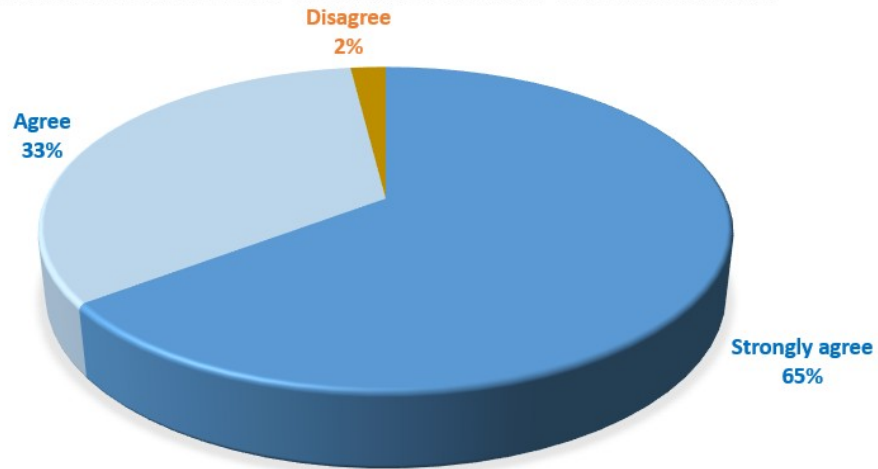
CLASS CONTENT WAS RELEVANT TO ME AS A MUSICIAN.



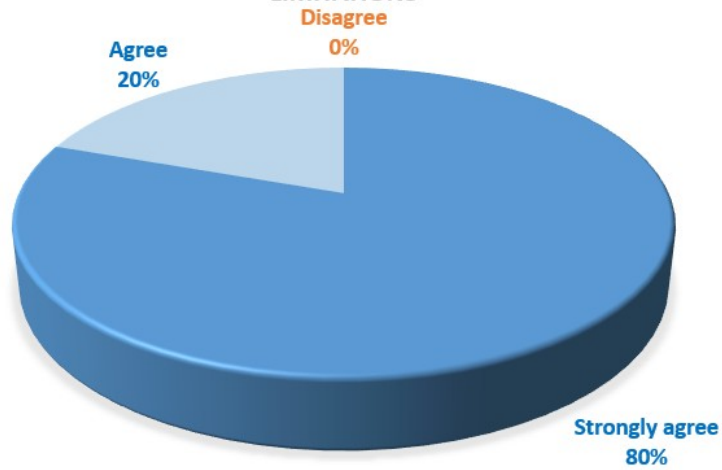
I FOUND MY PERSONALISED REPORT DESCRIBED ME ACCURATELY.



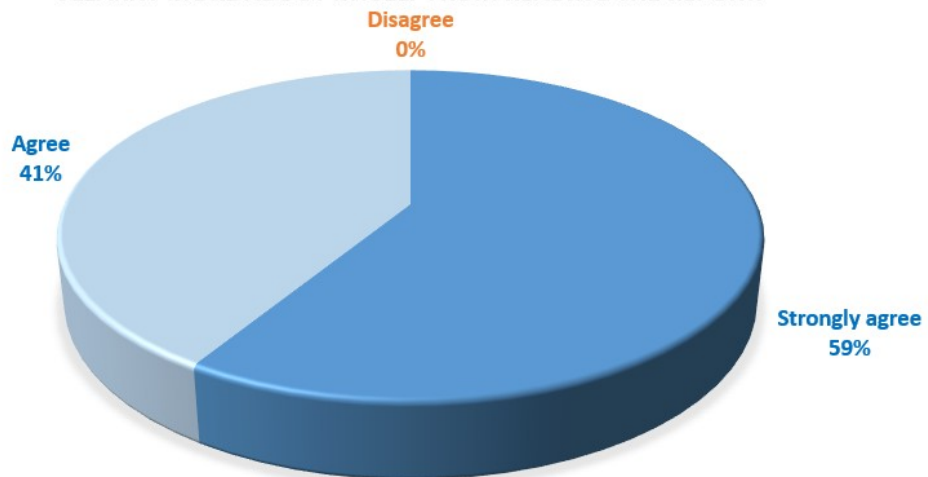
THE REPORT HAS HELPED ME TO APPRECIATE MY STRENGTHS MORE.



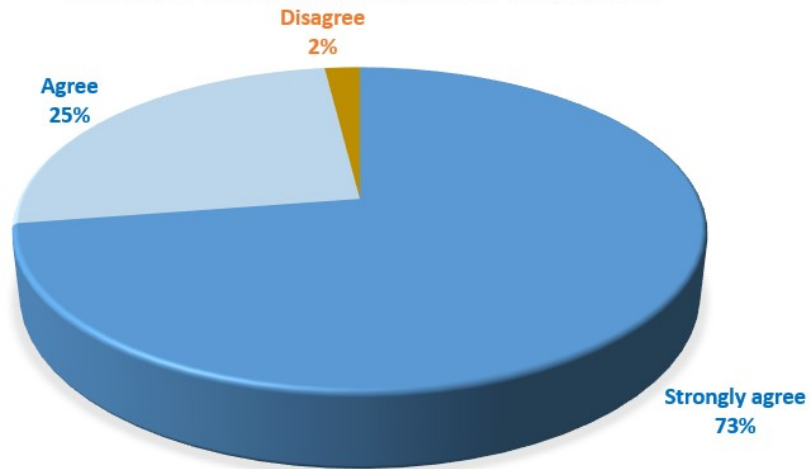
I UNDERSTAND HOW MY STRENGTHS, WHEN OVERPLAYED CAN BECOME LIMITATIONS



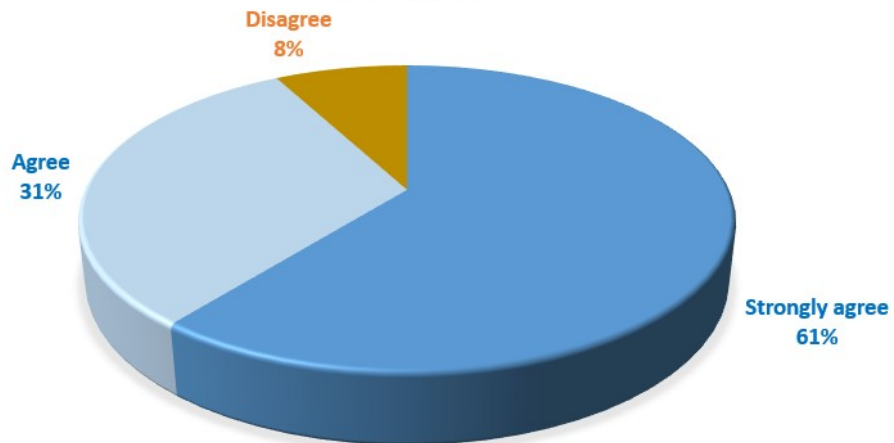
I LEARNT MORE ABOUT MYSELF FROM READING THE REPORT.



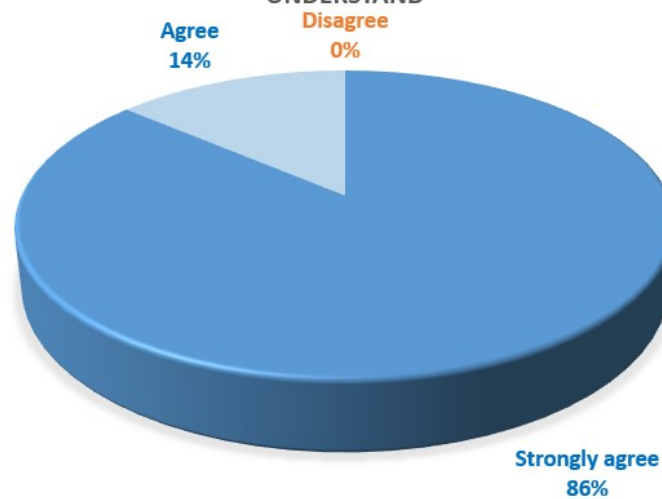
I AM LIKELY TO REREAD MY REPORT IN THE FUTURE.



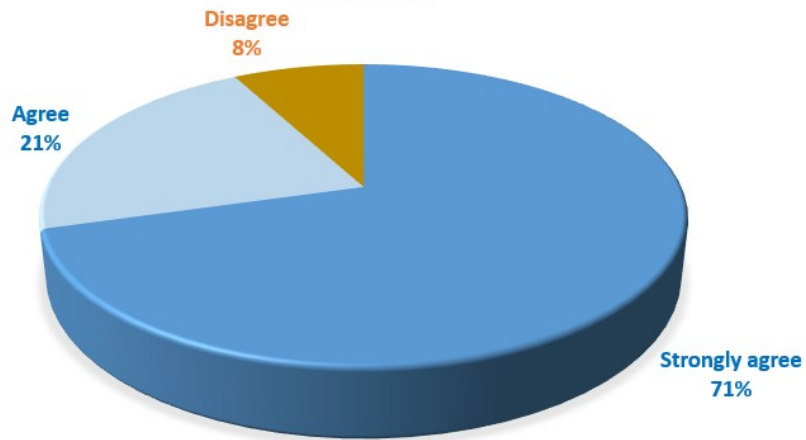
I FELT ABLE TO SHARE AND DISCUSS IDEAS WITH MY STUDENT COLLEAGUES.



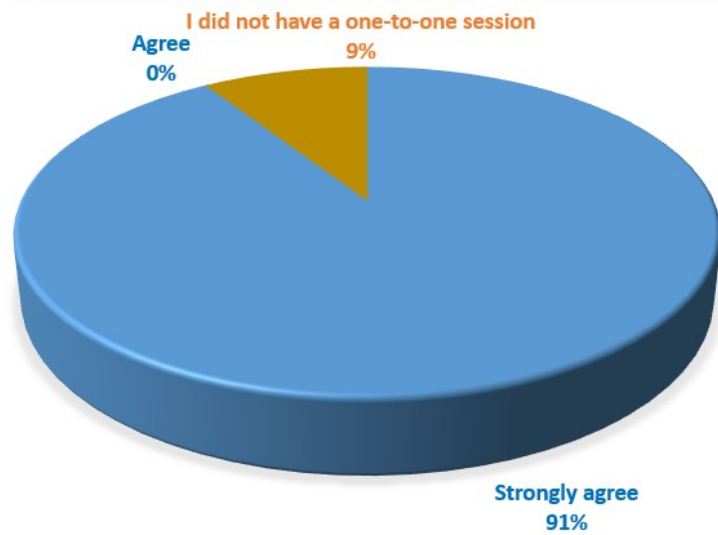
CLASS CONTENT WAS DELIVERED IN A WAY WHICH WAS EASY TO UNDERSTAND



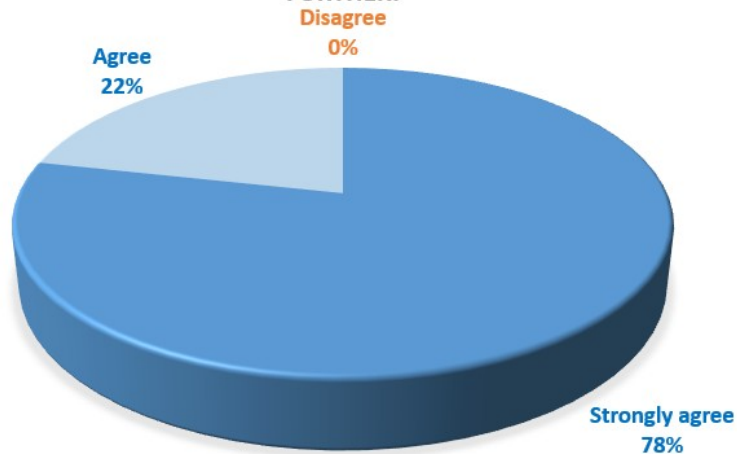
I FELT ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE IN CLASS AND/OR ASK QUESTIONS IF I WANTED TO.



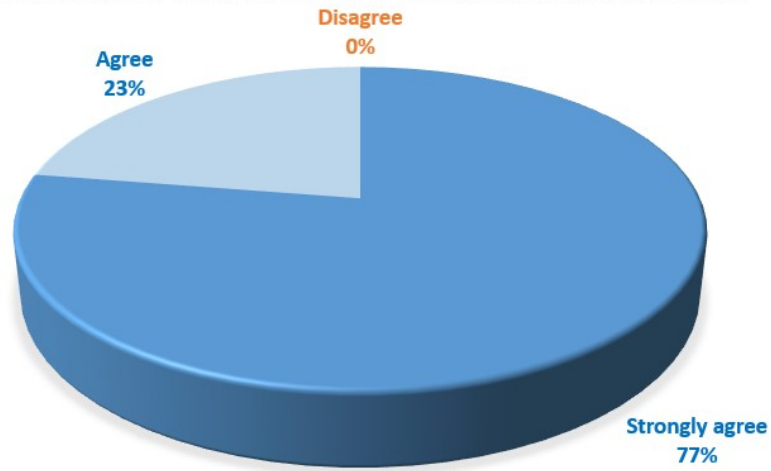
THE ONE-TO-ONE SESSION WAS TAILORED TO ME PERSONALLY



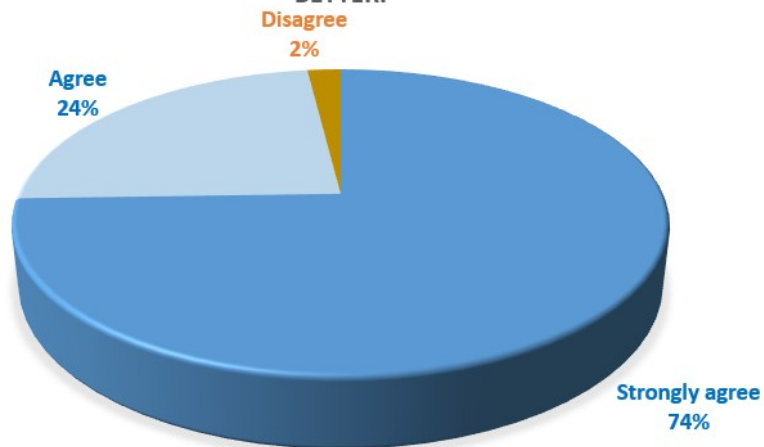
CLASSES GAVE ME NEW INFORMATION THAT I COULD REFLECT ON FURTHER.



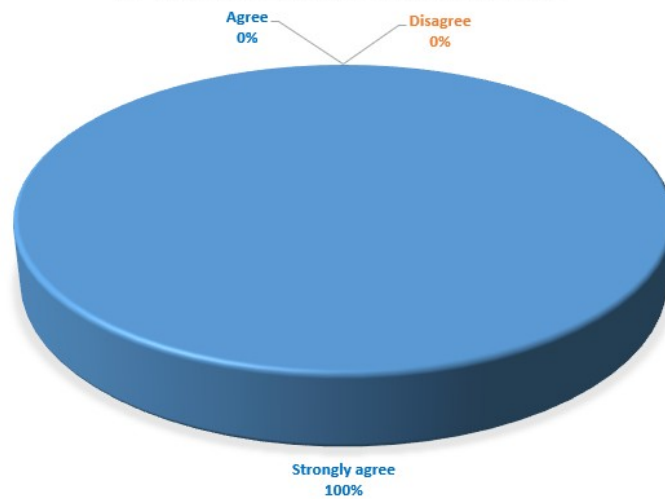
THE TUTORS HELPED MAKE THE CLASSES ENJOYABLE AND ENGAGING.



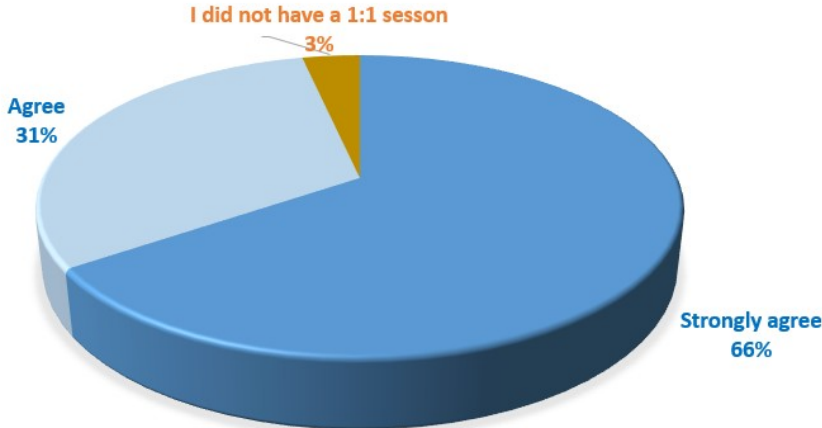
CLASS CONTENT HAS HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE BETTER.



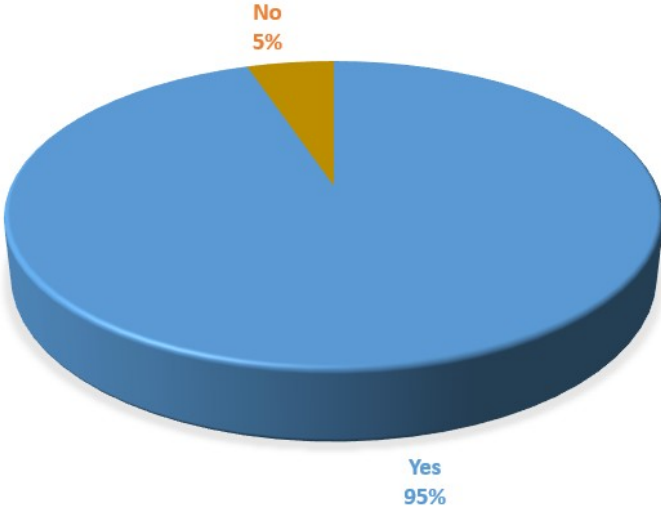
DO YOU THINK THIS PROGRAMME SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE AT RBC FOR STUDENTS IN THE FUTURE?



THE ONE-TO-ONE SESSION GAVE ME FURTHER USEFUL ADVICE, TIPS AND/OR INFORMATION.



HAS ATTENDING THIS PROGRAMME HELPED IMPROVE ANY PERFORMANCE ANXIETY ISSUES YOU WERE FACING?



8

Student Feedback 2020-2025

(Summary Responses)

Would you recommend other RBC students consider joining this programme if it was available in the future? If so, please give your reasons why.

Students overwhelmingly indicated that they would recommend the programme to other RBC students. Feedback highlights that participants found the programme highly beneficial in developing self-understanding, confidence, and emotional awareness, both as individuals and as musicians. Many students reported that the sessions helped them understand their own behaviours, reactions, and interaction preferences, enabling them to identify personal strengths and limitations and to adopt strategies better suited to their needs.

A recurring theme was the programme's positive impact on managing performance anxiety and stress. Students noted that it provided practical tools and coping strategies for performance, teaching, collaboration, and professional life, while also offering reassurance through shared experiences with peers. Several participants emphasised that the benefits extended beyond performance anxiety, contributing to improved wellbeing, self-care, time management, and long-term personal development.

Students also valued the programme's focus on individuality, highlighting that it encouraged a more compassionate and realistic approach to musical development, rather than constant comparison with others. The opportunity to understand different personalities and behaviours was seen as particularly valuable for ensemble work, teaching, and interpersonal relationships.

Overall, students described the programme as insightful, supportive, and widely applicable, with relevance not only to music study but to everyday life. Many expressed the view that it would be beneficial for all students, regardless of confidence level or prior experience with anxiety, and strongly supported its continuation and wider availability within the institution.

How have you benefited, personally, from attending this programme - please list as many points as you would like - these can relate to music or any area of life in general.

Students reported significant personal and professional growth as a result of participating in the programme. Many highlighted a deeper self-understanding, noting improvements in self-confidence, motivation, and the ability to manage anxiety, particularly related to performance. Through the guidance of the teaching staff and structured reflections, participants developed a clearer awareness of their strengths, limitations, and emotional patterns, enabling them to approach both music and life with greater clarity and resilience.

Students described the programme as providing valuable tools for managing performance anxiety. Many observed that their approach to practice became more efficient and intentional, fostering both technical and creative development. The emphasis on the “four rooms” and the IBA framework helped participants understand and navigate their mental and emotional responses, improving focus, self-regulation, and confidence during stressful situations.

In addition to personal growth, the programme facilitated enhanced interpersonal awareness. Students gained insight into the behaviour and perspectives of others, which improved their relationships, collaboration, and ability to respond constructively to feedback. They also reflected on life experiences and past challenges, reframing them as learning opportunities and “roundabouts” that contributed to growth rather than setbacks.

The programme’s holistic approach encouraged participants to consider their lives beyond music, integrating hobbies, health, and daily habits into their self-development. Many students expressed that this broader perspective strengthened their sense of purpose, motivation, and resilience, while helping them make more informed choices about their musical and professional paths. Overall, the programme was credited with fostering greater self-awareness, emotional intelligence, confidence, and a balanced approach to both music and life.

What were the best features of the RBC/IBA Health, Wellbeing and Performing with Confidence classes?

Students consistently highlighted the clear structure and accessibility of the classes, noting that the content was well organised, easy to understand, and presented in an engaging and logical way. The sessions were described as fun, relaxed, and highly interactive, creating a friendly and supportive environment. This atmosphere encouraged open discussion, reflection, and strong engagement among students from different years, instruments, and backgrounds.

The teaching staff were repeatedly praised for their enthusiasm, expertise, and genuine care for students' wellbeing. Their approachable teaching style, use of personal examples, humour, and ability to build rapport were seen as central to the success of the programme. Students valued having two presenters who complemented each other and maintained high energy and commitment throughout.

A standout feature of the course was its strong emphasis on personalisation. Students found the IBA reports, graphs, and detailed individual narratives to be extremely accurate, insightful, and transformative in developing self-understanding. Exploring human behaviour and personality in small group settings, as well as through one-to-one sessions, helped students feel understood, listened to, and supported. Many identified the individual sessions at the end of the programme as particularly impactful.

The course content was regarded as highly relevant to both musical performance and broader life contexts. Students appreciated the focus on performance anxiety, preparation strategies, practice techniques, and understanding behaviour under pressure, alongside discussions of balance across different aspects of life. The integration of psychology, science, and musicianship was described as meaningful, practical, and empowering, with benefits extending beyond the classroom.

Overall, students reported increased confidence, reduced performance anxiety, and a deeper understanding of themselves and others. The engaging delivery, variety of materials, group discussions, practical tools, and even small touches such as shared breaks and refreshments contributed to a positive and memorable learning experience that students felt would continue to support their personal and professional development long after the course concluded.

Are there any additional topics you would have liked to cover in the classes? If so, what are these topics?

The majority of students expressed high levels of satisfaction with the course content and structure. Many respondents felt the programme was well organised, comprehensive, and coherent, with several noting that adding more content could risk weakening its focus. A significant number of students stated that no additional topics were needed.

However, a recurring theme among those who offered suggestions was a desire for more time rather than entirely new topics. Several students felt that extending the duration of the course or adding extra sessions would allow for deeper exploration of existing material, more discussion, and greater opportunity for reflection and mindset change.

Some students suggested specific areas for further development, including strategies for managing performance anxiety (particularly understanding its causes, dealing with bad performances, calming techniques, and relaxation under pressure), confidence building and maintenance, perfectionism, low self-esteem, and habit formation. A few respondents also mentioned interest in practical applications such as handling job interviews, public speaking confidence, post-exam mindset, and sustaining motivation for future performances or competitions.

Additionally, several students expressed interest in more interactive and experiential elements, such as performing in front of peers to work directly with anxiety, increased peer exchange, or building a stronger sense of community through social or discussion-based activities.

Overall, while students largely viewed the course as effective and well-designed, feedback indicated that greater depth, longer duration, and expanded opportunities for discussion and practise performing would further enhance the learning experience.

Please do let us have any additional feedback on your personal experience.

Students expressed overwhelmingly positive experiences and gratitude for the initiative. Many highlighted the value and relevance of the classes, describing them as well-presented, engaging, and highly beneficial for both personal and professional development. Several noted that the programme helped them gain greater self-understanding, manage performance anxiety, and approach their musical practice and performances with increased confidence and reflection.

The teaching staff were consistently praised for their passion, expertise, and supportive delivery. Students appreciated the relaxed and pleasant learning environment, the interactive elements such as small group activities, and the inclusion of helpful resources such as book recommendations.

Suggestions for improvement primarily focused on time management, pacing, and sequencing of topics - for instance, introducing performance anxiety techniques earlier in the programme to allow students to apply them in practice. Other recommendations included increasing interactivity throughout, extending the programme duration, or offering additional sessions, and incorporating final recitals or informal social opportunities.

Many participants noted lasting impacts, including improved self-understanding, better coping strategies for performance-related stress, and, in some cases, personal growth related to mental health and wellbeing. Several students expressed a desire for the programme to continue in the future and would recommend it to peers, colleagues, and even staff, describing it as transformative, insightful, and life changing.

Overall, the feedback reflects strong appreciation for the programme's content, delivery, and outcomes, alongside constructive suggestions to enhance the experience further.

Have you tried any of the techniques or suggestions covered in the programme? If so, please give further info about the outcome.

Students reported actively trying a wide range of techniques and strategies to support their mental, emotional, and performance wellbeing. Many noted an increased self-awareness, observing their own behaviour in both every day and stressful situations, which helped them manage negative emotions and reactions more effectively.

Several students described practical applications in performance contexts, particularly during recitals or public performances. Techniques such as power poses, visualisation exercises, positive affirmations, and mental rehearsal scripts were commonly used to build confidence, reduce anxiety, and maintain focus. Students reported that implementing routines, forward planning, and run-throughs at performance times significantly decreased nerves and increased their sense of control. The concept of the “four rooms” (mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual elements) was widely cited as helping students maintain balance in practice and daily life, allowing them to focus on each aspect of their wellbeing and practice more effectively.

Students also highlighted strategies for managing thought processes, such as journaling to declutter the mind, using distraction techniques like the “pink elephant” to redirect unhelpful thoughts, and consciously understanding personal tendencies based on their IBA reports. This self-knowledge enabled them to adapt preparation and flex behaviour to align with their natural strengths, fostering realistic goal setting and reducing unnecessary self-criticism.

Beyond performance, students applied programme insights to everyday life, including managing relationships, resolving conflicts, and understanding others’ behaviour through their behaviour domains.

Overall, students reported that these strategies contributed to increased confidence, improved performance, reduced anxiety, better concentration, and a more balanced approach to both personal and professional challenges. Many viewed these skills as long-term practices, recognising that continued application would further enhance their wellbeing and performance outcomes.

Did you experience any significant challenges in relation to attending the classes or completing the programme? If so, please give any further information.

Most students reported experiencing no significant challenges while participating in the programme. Many described the sessions as enjoyable, engaging, and something they looked forward to, with several expressing a desire for more sessions. A few students highlighted the programme's supportive and welcoming environment, which helped them feel comfortable sharing personal experiences and emotions. Some noted that the sessions were emotionally moving and facilitated greater self-reflection and understanding of others.

The organisation and accessibility of the programme were frequently praised, with the timing of sessions generally considered convenient. A few students suggested minor adjustments, such as splitting longer sessions into shorter segments during the week to maintain attention and better fit into their schedules. One student noted that attending a one-on-one session felt intense due to the brief duration but appreciated the opportunity for deep personal reflection.

Only a small number of students faced minor practical challenges, including schedule conflicts, health-related absences, or travel considerations, but these were not seen as barriers to overall participation or engagement. Overall, the programme was described as well-structured, enjoyable, and beneficial to students' personal growth, emotional wellbeing, and preparation for performance.

Please give some further details on how you feel the programme has helped you with any performance anxiety issues you have been facing.

Students reported that the programme significantly supported them in managing and understanding performance anxiety. Many highlighted that the programme helped them identify the root causes of their anxiety and provided practical tools to address it proactively, rather than just reacting in the moment.

Several students emphasised the value of the IBA framework, which allowed them to determine which coping strategies worked best for them individually. They reported that the programme increased their awareness of when to rely on specific techniques and when to perform naturally, fostering a more grounded and confident approach to performing. The course also encouraged students to focus on mental preparation and broader career development, helping them plan long-term growth in a less pressured environment.

While a few participants acknowledged that elements of their performance anxiety remained, they felt better equipped with coping mechanisms, mental preparation strategies, and techniques to relax and stay in their own space before performing. They reported feeling more comfortable performing to teachers and audiences. Overall, the programme was praised for providing practical, personalised tools and fostering self-understanding, helping students manage stress and perform more effectively under pressure.

What do you feel could be improved about the programme?

Several students suggested improvements including offering more one-on-one tutoring opportunities to provide additional support and personalisation, as well as minor logistical changes such as more snack breaks or reconsidering the timing of sessions.

Some students observed that the pace could feel a little slow at times, particularly during detailed recaps which were designed for those who had missed a session. Extra suggestions include suggested sharing session materials, such as PowerPoint slides, immediately after each class rather than at the end of the programme and incorporating mini performance sessions or structured group discussions to provide a practical space to apply advice and reflect on experiences.

There was interest in exploring philosophical aspects of human behaviour and the relationship between music and emotions, indicating a desire for deeper engagement with the theoretical material. Additionally, one detailed suggestion focused on making the relationship between the IBA framework and neurodiversity clearer from the start, including refining questionnaire wording and explaining “flexing” before students complete it.

8

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