

Slide 1: SURF AWARD WORKSHOP: CREATIVE REGENERATION: The Glasgow Barons (finalist)

Slide 2: Who we are and what we do

On moving to Govan in 2016, I immediately saw the potential to fill its huge, Victorian spaces with classical music. Their acoustics were designed to the highest standards for my genre, but were wrong for pop, rock etc and existed off radar so lay, to my ears, under-utilised. Our name doesn't deny or glorify the imperial exploitation of the ship building Barons, but rather acknowledges two things about Govan: first, wherever I turned, I saw heritage and many elderly people who had been active in it. Second, Govan's ship building appeared to be driven by men, but it's the women, Mary Barbour, Elisabeth Elder, Lady Pearce among them, whose legacy we enjoy today. Govan is a matriarchy. Toxic masculinity runs through sectarianism, football, drug dealing and long-term unemployment; people need hope. If a classical orchestra is going to make sense to Govanites, we have to address these wider issues.

Slide 3: pics

TL (top left) Govan Old

TR (top right) Riverside Primary at the Pearce Institute

BL (bottom left) Thea Musgrave's Night Windows with Amy Turner

BR (bottom right) Strings Drums and Rap

None of what we do is that new to orchestras. The difference is we are sustaining our programme in one area of deep multiple deprivation, getting to know Govan's mosaic of communities and designing innovative projects and concerts to awaken people's creativity. That way we can create meaningful impact and change where it's needed over time. I fashion elements of small town North American, German and Finnish orchestras, whose community relations go deep and are well researched by their national orchestral associations, then I find local allies on the street, asylum seekers, rappers, radio stations and artists to work with. Most of my players, for whom the world normally stops south of the Clyde, live a few tube stops from Govan. Therefore, we have a highly efficient operational carbon footprint.

Slide 4: Why we were shortlisted

Govan Men's Samba Band was my first bold initiative with local men recruited through Unlock Employment, who help the long term unemployed back to work. This lasted 6 months with a core of 8 members. We used music to get our mojo back and would march on the spot for 2 hours a week learning the rhythms. As many were not afforded instrumental lessons, Samba was a quick, accessible path to group music making and raising energy. We would parachute culture onto the deprived shoppers of Byers Road and Buchanan Street wearing hard hats and visibility jackets in Brazilian colours. Govan Reminiscence Group, the custodians of Govan's heritage, teamed up with singer/songwriters Norrie Maclver and Ainsley Hamill to create and perform 20 songs about Govan's heroes and heroines, backed by my string ensemble, couched in programmes of

classical music set in Govan Old Parish Church. I commissioned Alasdair Nicolson to write a trumpet concerto about the medieval Govan Stones for Tom Poulson, which we premiered in Govan Old and at St Magnus Festival.

Our journey with Scottish rap began with Jonny and Jamie, two local lads mentored by Sunny Govan FM, who rapped with drummers at the African Arts Centre in Ibrox and a full string section playing Warlock's Capriol Suite in a 40 minute production called Strings, Drums and Rap. Once we'd got over the initial shock of each other, I commissioned Steg G, their mentor, to write a Scottish hip hop album with them, Solareye, Empress and Freestyle Master. I transcribed it for 10 piece amplified ensemble and performed Gordon McPherson's "The Baby Bear's Bed" alongside the live premiere of the album, first here in Fairfield Working Men's Club, then in Barrowlands' Revue Lounge. The album won Scottish Alternative Music Award for best hip hop. I have commissioned Steg's next album on toxic masculinity, responding to the Govan riots of 30<sup>th</sup> August 2019 and the more recent drug related street violence experienced here since Lockdown. We hope to premiere that in Drygate Brewery on 9<sup>th</sup> January.

Slide 5: pics - TL Govan Men's Samba Band @ St Enoch, BL Musicians in Exile @ The Grand Ole Opry, TR Musicians in Exile at the Community Hub Govan Road, BR Riverside Primary @ the Pearce Institute

Musicians in Exile became a hit. I sought asylum seeking and refugee musicians through various agencies, who came to Govan to play together. This sounds easier than it was. Many had not brought instruments, so I had to buy what I could within the limits of my budget to get them going. Some had not learnt enough English, as the common language across many cultures, or played very elite forms of music that didn't readily fit into a multicultural band. However, with three skillful facilitators, we did weekly rehearsals and a gig every two months in Govan's Grand Ole Opry. We won the 2019 National Diversity Award as Community Organisation for Race, Religion and Faith, as well as the Voluntary Arts EPIC Award for Scotland. More importantly, the band was embraced by the local community as something special to them, hearing the voices of these people they saw on the street every day, communicating through music.

All through this, we performed classical orchestral concerts that explored community needs and desires. Our St John Passion celebrated the reopening of Govan and Linthouse Parish Church on Good Friday, with communal hymn singing before, during and after Bach's masterpiece. Our performances of Thea Musgrave's Night Windows and Eddie McGuire's Junk Shop Blues inspired amateur art and primary school music projects around their themes of paintings by Edward Hopper and Joan Eardley. We teamed up with Live Music Now to turn the Elderpark Library Reading Room into a recital hall holding some 70 listeners.

Slide 6: Ongoing challenges

Unsurprisingly, some folk resisted the idea of an orchestra in Govan, but the huge difference is that I live here, not just another parachuting professional saying what's good for them. The inverse snobbery I met from people who tore my concert posters down or attempted,

unsuccessfully, to sabotage me in other ways, comes not from a fear of gentrification, but part fear of something unknown from the standpoint of a very limited comfort zone, and more tellingly, a lack of faith in themselves that they deserved the best, on their doorstep, for next to nothing. All our concerts are £3/£1 concession.

The gentrification question is vital to Govan and the Glasgow Barons. Yes, we do put on high quality professional concerts in Govan attracting people from across Greater Glasgow to help Govan become a thriving arts hub. But the key lever of gentrification is private landlords who have the power to make rent untenable for those on low incomes (and artists like me). Govan, with three housing associations, only has 25% housing stock in the hands of private landlords, so we have an indigenous population who likely won't move regardless of what happens around them. This makes the challenge of regeneration all the more exciting, as the question is not how to gentrify, but how to electrify those already here and bring people from widely different backgrounds together in the same space enjoying the same music. This works best when we cross-market classical concerts with Musicians in Exile gigs, creating a loyal and diverse following. However, Govan is divided in itself and music plays a part: karaoke, tribute bands, open mike nights all exist to sell alcohol; hymns in church services delineate denominations, the Orange and Hibernian Walks use music to divide and dominate the streets, football chants at Ibrox draw lines in the sand. Additionally, those who want an all-singing all-dancing participatory Govan will be sorely disappointed, as people's energy levels just aren't there. So I use music for music's sake to bring people who otherwise wouldn't share the same space together to simply sit and listen. That in itself is a victory.

Slide 7: pics -

TL audience takes to the floor for Musicians in Exile @ The Grand Ole Opry

BL Norrie McIver sings Songs of Govan Old at St Saviours Primary

TR Glasgow Barons Street Orchestra at Pirie Park Primary

BR The Air in Between with rapper Freestyle Master @ Fairfield Working Men's Club

When I won the Artist in Residence Contract from Glasgow Life to consult Govanites on their artistic dreams and visions, I found highly articulate people passionate about creativity, but often lacking the wherewithal and confidence to realise it. The socio-economic divide between my players and many Govanites is enormous, and needs continual experimentation and adaptation to address.

Any arts organization can parachute in and temporarily ameliorate deprivation, but only one with a sustained strategy can help reverse it. I do this by finding allies with the same objectives, attracting new people to Govan, continually being a conduit for local creativity and paying people who actually live here to deliver goods and services.

Slide 8: Our response since lockdown

A glorious plan was set for 2020, and then Coronavirus happened! We managed to do an orchestral flash mob round Govan on 13<sup>th</sup> March, then it was game over.

So, we have retained our facilitators for Musicians in Exile to work with everyone online. Whilst producing some nice music videos, we all suffer from the fact that working online

creates 4x the work for a quarter of the impact. However, just to keep everyone motivated, mentally well and together, this move has proven successful.

Sunny Govan 103.5 FM asked me to do a weekly show on Sundays at 8pm, which I call Quarantine Classics, mixing classical music with local musings and information. Radio has been vital during lockdown for disseminating information and bolstering mental health as so many here have no internet access. This makes the typical response of multiscreen videos from musicians' living rooms somewhat redundant.

The Food of Love Gigs are my response to the rapidly decaying situation in Govan. The lunatics really have taken over the asylum. As so many had the rug pulled out from under their feet by lockdown, drug dealers have taken advantage of the instability and ruled the streets. Many vulnerable people who had put so much work into building personal resilience were set back. Drug addicts lost control of addictions and went psychotic. People who weren't addicted, became so. Salvation Army, Unlock Employment, Govan Youth Information Project, Make, Do and Grow and Govan Housing Association have been touring the streets every weekday since lockdown giving free food, sanitary products, WiFi, toys and info to residents. I brought in one player wearing a face mask to play at Govan Cross on Wednesdays to cheer everyone up. Local feedback confirmed that this move was a great escape from the despair of reality.

Slide 9: pics -

TL Solstice Brass Food of Love Gig @ Govan Cross

BL Balász Renczés Food of Love Gig @ Govan Cross

TR Musicians in Exile online sing Persian song Saaghie Mey Kharan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-wmvf9-cAU>

BR Link to Sunny Govan Quarantine Classics 28.6.20 <https://www.mixcloud.com/paul-macalindin/quarantine-classics-28620/>

In Phase 3, we intend to stage 50 minute concerts in the graveyard of Govan Old Parish Church with socially distanced players and audience, and we will try to do this before summer is out.

It would be inappropriate to suggest that we have grown through lockdown, as the suffering inflicted on many during this time is tangible on top of deep ongoing deprivation. But we are where we are, we're making the best of it, and reaching people through radio, internet and live performances that we otherwise wouldn't have found.

The skillset I'm developing keeps this organization as agile as possible so that we can fashion Barons-shaped jigsaw pieces together that someone may bring into their lives for the duration of a concert or maybe longer, and grow into something special for their personal story. That, to me, is infinitely more rewarding than telling someone what's good for them, but it takes tenacity, sensibility and sacrifice. Only through sacrifice can one achieve transformation and Govan, which has suffered deprivation for so long in spite of considerable investment, needs to be transformed.

Slide 10: Contact Details and membership of organisations

