



# BIG NOISE DOUGLAS

## Community Engagement

Erika, Lloyd & Cameron

RESEARCH SCOTLAND  
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## INTRODUCTION

Erika is a mother to three children, Lloyd (10), Cameron (8) and new baby girl. Her two boys, Lloyd and Cameron, attend Big Noise after school clubs regularly.

She first found out about Big Noise after school clubs when Lloyd brought home a letter from school in P3. He had always been interested in creative activities like music and dancing, and had enjoyed participating in the Big Noise sessions within school.

Lloyd was particularly inspired by his aunt and grandfather, who both play musical instruments. His aunt recently gave him her violin, which he hopes to grow into.



I've always been into music. I was inspired by the Titanic ship and the song that was played when it sunk.

**Lloyd**



Because Lloyd had already demonstrated these interests, Erika thought Big Noise was a good opportunity for him to explore music further and develop his skills. Having seen his older brother attending Big Noise, Cameron was keen to join the minute his letter arrived from school, too.

For Erika, Big Noise provided an opportunity for the children to learn something new, which they would not normally be able to. She also feels that Big Noise offers a constructive way for the boys to spend their time after school. She notes that without Big Noise, the boys would not be learning to play instruments and learning from professional music teachers.



It was a good way for him to express himself.

**Erika (Mum)**



Initially, the activity was delivered at another school, and Erika was unsure about the children being taken to an unfamiliar location. She prefers activities that are delivered at school, or close to home. However, Big Noise is now delivered from the local community centre, which is walking distance to both school and home. Pupils are walked over from the school to the centre, by Big Noise staff.

Erika has also been invited to attend the Baby Noise group, which is designed for parents and infants. She has not attended yet, but is considering it for the future.



## THE ACTIVITY

At the sessions the boys take part in a range of games and group activities to develop their musical skills. The session starts with a snack, followed by a song during which they all share a bit about their day. They then move onto games and instrumental tuition in small groups.

Lloyd has now been attending Big Noise for three years. He attends three times a week and has progressed to playing an instrument of his own, which he brings home. He has been learning to play the violin, but having seen the range of string instruments available, he is also interested in the cello.

Lloyd enjoys almost all aspects of the club. He especially enjoyed getting together with pupils from a nearby primary school to play music in a big tent.

However, as he is in P6, Lloyd feels he is mature enough to walk to the community centre for the club on his own, without waiting for the Big Noise staff. In the future, he hopes to be able to play some of the music from the Titanic film soundtrack.

“ The violin is fun but I'm wanting to try something new.  
Lloyd ”

“ It was amazing!  
Lloyd ”

“ It's fun walking, but we could walk ourselves.  
Lloyd ”

Cameron has only recently joined the after school club and attends twice a week. As a member of the younger group, he has made cardboard instruments, learned about the different instruments in an orchestra and is now learning to play the violin. Like his brother, he is also hoping to move onto the cello, as there are lots of people in the cello class.

Both boys said that coming to Big Noise after school was a good option for them. Cameron felt that it was better than playing games on his Xbox, but not as good as playing with his new baby sister.

“ They seem to love it. ”  
Erika (Mum)





## THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES

Erika has noticed a range of improvements in her children's skills and confidence since they joined Big Noise. She loves seeing them so happy when they come from Big Noise, having enjoyed the session. And she also feels proud of their achievements. She noted that Cameron can be quite shy, but he seems more outgoing at Big Noise. And for Lloyd, she feels that the activity has helped him develop a sense of achievement.

The boys said that they had developed new skills around reading music, playing an instrument, teamwork and responsibility. Lloyd said that he feels lucky to play music at Big Noise, as he knows that not all children have the same opportunities as him.

Both Lloyd and Cameron said they felt more confident since they started attending the club. Lloyd feels much more confident in his playing, and is excited about the prospect of playing in an orchestra one day. He also enjoys the responsibility of taking his violin home and looking after it independently.

Lloyd had always wanted to try playing the guitar, but Erika was not sure about getting him one. Since joining Big Noise, he has been able to show his mother that he can take care of an instrument, and she has given him a guitar. He is now learning to play it at home. For Lloyd, the sessions are also a good chance to spend time with his friends, outside school, and in a small group setting.

“ They've become a lot more confident. It makes me really proud of them. ”  
**Erika (Mum)**

“ It's given him a sense of confidence in himself, that he's good at something. ”  
**Erika (Mum)**

“ There are some kids who don't even know what a violin is. ”  
**Lloyd**

“ It makes me feel more confident to play in an orchestra. ”  
**Lloyd**

“ It makes me feel included. ”  
**Lloyd**



## IMPACT ON HOME LIFE

Attending Big Noise has also helped to manage behaviour at home. Previously, the boys would argue or clash, as they were spending a lot of time together. This happens less frequently now, as they each spend time in separate Big Noise sessions after school.

The boys attend different sessions at Big Noise, on different days of the week. This means that when one child is at Big Noise, the other is at home with Erika. She feels that this has given both of them some time away from each other, to focus on themselves. It has also given her the chance to enjoy valuable one-to-one time with each boy. This has been particularly important, since the arrival of her baby daughter, who takes up a lot of her time and attention.



It's given them time apart, and given me time away from the tension.

**Erika (Mum)**



## WIDER IMPACT

The boys attend Big Noise along with pupils from their own school, and another primary school in the area. Erika feels that this has given them the opportunity to meet new people, and make new friends outwith their usual group. She likes that they have the chance to make friends with different people, who share the same interest in music.



It's opened that door for new friends.



**Erika (Mum)**



## WHAT'S NEXT

Erika is looking forward to attending the boys' concert performances, and possibly joining the Baby Noise group in the future.

Lloyd is looking forward to learning more pieces, trying the cello and playing in large ensembles more often.

| CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



**BIG NOISE DOUGLAS**  
**Community Engagement**  
Gemma and Ailidh

RESEARCH SCOTLAND  
JANUARY 2022



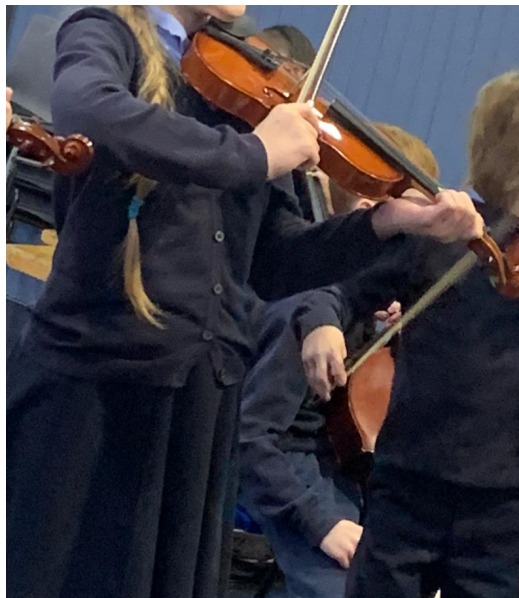
## INTRODUCTION

Gemma is mum to Ailidh, who is in P6. They first found out about Big Noise when Ailidh was in P2. Ailidh enjoyed the school sessions, so when the opportunity arose, Gemma was keen for her to take part in the after-school club.

Gemma felt very confident about Ailidh attending the after school club, as she had met all the staff through the Big Noise summer club. She found them very welcoming, and thought that they were skilled at engaging with young children.

“ I think she is quite musical, so I wanted to encourage her. ”  
**Gemma (Mum)**

“ They were really friendly and good with the kids. ”  
**Gemma (Mum)**







## THE ACTIVITY

When she first joined, Ailidh attended Big Noise twice a week. However, one of the sessions overlaps with an after-school sports club that she wants to attend, so she now goes once a week.

To begin with, Ailidh tried out every stringed instrument at Big Noise. She was then selected to play the viola. During the weekly sessions she is learning to play the viola through a range of activities, including singing, dancing and music-based games.

Ailidh finds all the activity at Big Noise a lot of fun. Recently, she particularly enjoyed having a special lesson with her music tutor, during which they wrote their own song.

Through the sessions she feels she is learning a lot about reading music, writing music, playing an instrument and working in a team. She has also made two new friends, who are in the year above her at school.

As well as the weekly sessions and summer club, she has enjoyed going on trips with Big Noise. Most recently she enjoyed a visit to Camperdown Wildlife Centre.

Ailidh also took part in a concert with Big Noise, which was held in a 'Big Top' style tent in the local community park.



## THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES

Over the past few years, attending the Big Noise after school club has had a positive impact on Gemma, Ailidh and their family. Gemma feels Ailidh probably would not have started learning an instrument without Big Noise. And since she started playing, Gemma feels Ailidh has developed new skills, and increased confidence.



Ailidh is a lot more confident. She does really enjoy learning the instrument.

**Gemma (Mum)**



At the outset Ailidh was shy and nervous about attending and would stay in the back of the group. Now she is happy to go each week and comes out of each session brimming with enthusiasm.

“ She comes out buzzing! ”  
**Gemma (Mum)**

Since picking up the viola, Ailidh has started to bring her family together to perform concerts. Her father, sister and grandmother enjoy this, and Gemma says that she can really see the progress Ailidh has made over time.

“ The difference in her playing is amazing. ”  
**Gemma (Mum)**

The whole family has also enjoyed attending the concerts organised by Big Noise. These events give them the opportunity to see Ailidh perform, and to meet other families in the area.

“ We don't normally have things like this in the community. ”  
**Gemma (Mum)**



## NEXT STEPS

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Gemma is looking forward to engaging more with Big Noise through concerts and trips. She hopes that Ailidh continues to play the viola, as she feels her daughter has a lot of potential.

Gemma recently heard that Big Noise has started an adult orchestra. She is interested in joining, but at the moment the rehearsal time coincides with her work. She is hopeful that she will be able to join in the future, perhaps picking up the viola and learning some skills from Ailidh.



# »BIG NOISE DOUGLAS Community Engagement LANA AND ELLEASS

| CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



RESEARCH SCOTLAND  
JANUARY 2022

## » GETTING INVOLVED

Lana is mum to Elleass, who attends the Big Noise Douglas after school club. They found out about the club after Big Noise came to Elleass' school when she was in P2. She is now in P6 and has been attending for four years.

Lana was keen for Elleass to join the club to help her meet new people and develop her personal skills.

Initially, Lana was worried that Elleass would not enjoy the activity. However over time, she has been pleased to see Elleass's enthusiasm grow. She has also seen a change in how Elleass engages with the activity. At first, the focus for her was on seeing friends and socialising. However, as her skills developed, the focus has shifted towards playing the instrument and learning skills.



I hoped it would help to widen her social skills and bring out a bit of confidence.

**Lana (Mum)**





## THE ACTIVITY

Elleass attends Big Noise twice a week during term time. She also attends the holiday clubs that run throughout the year. The first instrument she tried was the viola, but she and her mum felt that her heart was not in it. Elleass then switched to playing the violin, because her friend played it, and she has been enjoying it much more. She has also tried playing the cello, and thinks that it might be her new favourite instrument.

During the sessions she enjoys seeing her friends, having a snack, playing games and playing the violin.

For Lana, the Big Noise concerts have been a real highlight. She has enjoyed watching Elleass perform with her peers and others in the community. The concerts also provided an opportunity to see others in the community, such as Lana's nephew, who also plays with Big Noise.



The concerts have been wonderful...It was emotional.

**Lana (Mum)**



## » THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES

Elleass says that she really enjoys going to Big Noise. After the sessions she feels happy and energised. She loves learning to play the instrument, and feels like she is really achieving.

“ I have tons of energy.  
Elleass ”

“ I'm proud of her playing  
the violin. I tell everyone!  
Lana (Mum) ”

For Lana, the impact on Elleass has been significant, and she is delighted at how far her daughter has come since she first started.

Lana has noticed a real change in Elleass' confidence, particularly around playing at home. Previously Elleass was quite shy and didn't want to play her instruments at home. Now, Lana feels she is more outgoing. She also practices and performs regularly at home on the days that she isn't attending the after school club. And more recently, Elleass has started to teach her mum how to play the violin, too.

Playing the violin has helped bring Elleass out of her shell and given her a hobby that is becoming part of her identity. Lana feels that it is important for Elleass to feel she has something to take ownership of. This has been particularly important over the past year, as the family experienced some changes to their normal routine.

“ The change in her is  
phenomenal.  
Lana (Mum) ”

“ It's good that she's got  
something for herself, that  
she doesn't have to share.  
Lana (Mum) ”



It has also been helpful for the family to keep in touch with staff from Big Noise, over the lockdown periods in 2020 and 2021. Lana feels that she and Elleass have good relationships with the musicians and volunteers, and that they can reach out to them for support when needed.

Attending Big Noise has also helped provide the family with more structure and routine through the week. Lana now feels she has an additional two afternoons each week for household tasks, or to take time for herself.

“ It gives me a bit of a break too.  
Lana (Mum) ”

“ They're easy to talk to...it's good to know she has people to come to. ”  
Lana (Mum)



## NEXT STEPS

Elleass is enjoying playing the violin, and is also keen to try the cello. She is not sure if she would like to try any other instruments, but she hopes that when she grows up, she can work in an ice-cream shop.

Looking to the future, Lana hopes to see Elleass continue growing in confidence, with whichever instrument she settles on. She hopes that Elleass will continue to play music, and one day perform with an orchestra.

“ I would love to see her in an orchestra, that would be the icing on the cake.  
Lana (Mum) ”





| CASE STUDY: TRANSITIONS

# BIG NOISE RAPLOCH **Transitions** LEWIS

RESEARCH SCOTLAND  
JANUARY 2022



## INTRODUCTION

Lewis first started with Big Noise when they introduced brass, woodwind and percussion instruments to the offering at his school. He chose to play the oboe because it reminded him of his grandfather's chanter.

Lewis is currently a second year student at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. He received a full scholarship to study for a Bachelor of Music degree.



## THE ACTIVITY

Lewis attended Big Noise regularly throughout his school years. In addition, he also attended the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Junior ensembles and was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

For Lewis, the best parts of Big Noise were the trips abroad, particularly the trip to Venezuela. Lewis spent one week in Caracas, during which he was able to connect with members of the original Sistema programme. He described the experience as both dangerous and exciting. As part of the trip, Lewis was filmed by the BBC for the series 'The Big Trip', which documented the group's journey to Venezuela.

Growing up, Lewis tried lots of different activities, including street dancing and football. He feels that he stuck with music because of the unique opportunities and experiences that Big Noise offered. These made the programme stand out from others, and made it feel like more than a music group. He also felt that Big Noise was enjoyable because the setting was more informal and relaxed than school.

## » LEWIS'S JOURNEY

For Lewis, attending Big Noise helped him to develop skills, confidence and a love of music. Although he was already a confident young person, performing with Big Noise helped enhance this. And being in ensembles that were regularly performing new and challenging pieces helped him to develop teamwork, discipline and wider personal skills.

For example, Lewis felt that Big Noise helped him to establish good time management skills, so he is able to balance the competing demands of practicing, studying, exercising and socialising. He also feels that he has become more independent and adaptable to changing circumstances. These skills were particularly helpful when he transitioned from primary to secondary school, and again from secondary school to University, and living away from home.





Big Noise helped me to be adaptable to different situations.



Over the years, Lewis has built up strong relationships with the staff and young people at Big Noise. He felt that these connections were integral to his positive experience with the programme.

When he came to the end of his time at school, Lewis considered a few different options, including joining the police force. He initially attended the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, before taking a gap year and transferring to the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

During his gap year, he continued to play music whilst working at a local go-karting centre. Throughout this period, he remained in contact with his tutor at Big Noise, who supported him through the change in university and provided references for university and employment. He also volunteered with Big Noise, attended the summer programme and used the Big Noise premises to practice. This helped him to keep playing, during a challenging period when he was transitioning between universities.

The ongoing communication with Big Noise helped Lewis maintain his instrument. Woodwind instruments, like oboes, require ongoing care and maintenance, which can be costly. Through Big Noise, Lewis was able to have his oboe serviced, free of cost.



One of the biggest things about Big Noise is the bonds that are created.



He also felt that the people in Big Noise helped him form a wider network with professionals in the music industry, both in the UK and abroad. For example, he has performed with, and remains in contact with the Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles, which was based on the Sistema model. He also received a new oboe and a cor anglais, from a benefactor, through this wider network. He is extremely grateful for these endowments, as the instruments have helped his musical progress significantly. All of these connections have been valuable as he navigates his early career progression. Playing music is a central focus to Lewis' life, and a true passion.

He notes that he might not have found this path if he had not attended Big Noise as a child.



Without Big Noise, I wouldn't be doing music.



Connections are so essential to music.





## NEXT STEPS

After completing university Lewis plans to work, or study further for a post-graduate degree. In the longer term, he would like to develop a career as a professional musician. Ideally, he would like to perform with an orchestra. He also hopes to return to Big Noise, to share his expertise and lived experience of the programme.



The aim of Big Noise is not to create musicians, it's to create solid individuals.



| CASE STUDY: TRANSITIONS



# BIG NOISE RAPLOCH

## **Transitions**

### RYAN

RESEARCH SCOTLAND  
JANUARY 2022



## INTRODUCTION

Ryan joined Big Noise when he was in primary school. He initially started in the string ensemble playing cello, but afterwards moved onto percussion. As a child he enjoyed going to the after school sessions as he was able to spend time with his friends.

Ryan continued to attend Big Noise through high school until he was 18. After finishing school, Ryan completed an apprenticeship and now works in the technology sector. Whilst he still enjoys listening to music, he does not regularly play or perform.

Ryan continues to keep in touch with Big Noise, through his former music tutor.



It's a whole team effort in Big Noise, everyone plays their part.







## THE ACTIVITY

Ryan attended Big Noise up to four nights per week and took part in three different ensembles. He enjoyed playing a range of percussion instruments and felt that the repertoire was fun and varied.

He also travelled with Big Noise on several trips, locally and internationally.

His most memorable trips were to Arran, Italy, Sweden and Venezuela. The excursions abroad were simultaneously interesting, exciting and scary, taking him further from home than he had ever been. Although at times he felt nervous about visiting new places, he always felt safe, as he was with familiar tutors and adults from Big Noise.

For Ryan, one of the best things about Big Noise was the relaxed and friendly atmosphere. He felt that they were encouraged to socialize, get to know one another and engage in a supportive community. He thinks that if his friends had not also joined Big Noise, he might not have continued to attend, particularly when he was younger.

He also liked that it was not a traditional teaching environment, which allowed him to build a personal connection with his tutors. He found that these relationships facilitated useful discussions about personal issues, including his post-school options.

“ There’s nothing I would change about being in the programme. ”

“ The beauty of the programme is that everyone knows who you are, you can talk to anyone and everyone talks to you. ”

“ Big Noise is a safe place...you could go and talk to them if you didn’t want to talk to your parents or anyone else... I definitely did speak to my tutor about things that weren’t to do with music. ”

## » RYAN'S JOURNEY



For Ryan, participating in Big Noise provided a positive environment for him to socialize and develop a range of new skills. He feels that the activity helped him develop teamwork, communication and coordination skills. It also helped him develop more self-confidence and emotional resilience, which has supported his personal development. Whilst some of this learning could have come from school, Ryan felt that Big Noise was better placed to deliver these skills because of the relaxed learning environment.

“ It gave me my abilities and skills. I was quite a shy person and Big Noise definitely made me come out of my shell a bit. ”



Ryan reflected that, as a child, attending Big Noise sometimes felt like a chore, or a burden, particularly during his teens. However, he is very glad that he continued to attend – not only because of the skills it helped him to develop but also the qualifications he achieved, which helped him as he progressed into the world of work.

During his time at Big Noise, Ryan engaged in the Big Noise Youth Board, a group which acts as an advisory body to the staff team. This gave him the opportunity to take on a leadership role and develop his public speaking skills. He notes that he and others were encouraged to engage in these types of opportunities from a young age, which helped develop their confidence.

Big Noise helped Ryan transition from school into an apprenticeship, and has supported him with references as he applies for jobs.

Although Ryan is not interested in playing or teaching music, he appreciates that there is an offer of ongoing support from the Big Noise team.

He also notes that whilst he dedicated a lot of time to Big Noise, it did not prevent him from developing wider interests, and he was also part of a football club when he was at school.

For Ryan, Big Noise was always about much more than the music, it was a conduit to friendship, personal development, skills and support. He felt that during times of change in his life, Big Noise provided a valuable constant.



It gave me the skills to communicate in the job I have now - that ability to speak to people with confidence.



Ian's known me since I was six or seven years old. There isn't a better person to tell you who I am other than my own family.



I never set out to have a career in music...and it didn't stop me from doing other things.



There's more to playing music than the qualifications.





## NEXT STEPS

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Since leaving Big Noise, Ryan has donated his drum kit back to the programme, and his family supports the organisation through donations.

Ryan is working on building his career in IT and saving up to buy his own home. He knows that he can contact Big Noise at any time, and whilst playing music is not a priority in his life at the moment, he feels it is a valuable skill which he might return to in the future.

He feels very grateful for the experiences he had through Big Noise and hopes that more young people have these opportunities in the future.



I just wanted to give back.



We all want it to keep going and I want other people to experience what I have.





BIG NOISE RAPLOCH  
**Transitions**  
SYMONE

RESEARCH SCOTLAND  
JANUARY 2022



## INTRODUCTION

Symone first became involved with Big Noise when she was in P6, after Big Noise visited her school with a selection of brass and woodwind instruments. This visit sparked her interest in playing an instrument, and she was selected to play the trombone.

Although it was sometimes challenging to balance school work and wider priorities with her musical development, Symone continued to attend Big Noise throughout her school years, attending around four afternoons per week.

She is now a student at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, studying for a BMus Hons and Performance degree with trombone, alto trombone and euphonium. She keeps in contact with the Big Noise through her relationships with the tutors.



I was just so inspired that one day...I was so amazed and inspired by the instruments.





## THE ACTIVITY

During her time as a Big Noise student, Symone took part in the music theory lessons, symphony orchestra, symphonic band and jazz band. Through the organisation she has been able to travel the world, visiting and performing across Europe.

Her favourite tour was to Berlin, where she was able to meet members of the Berliner Philharmoniker – widely considered to be one of the best orchestras in the world. During this trip she had the chance to hear the orchestra play, interview some of the musicians and receive one-to-one tuition from them.

She has also enjoyed building strong and lasting friendships with other players and tutors at Big Noise.



It was amazing to hear them play Mahler's 6th symphony.



## » SYMONE'S JOURNEY



Big Noise started Symone on a musical journey, which has helped her to find a path in life. She now knows that she would like to pursue a career in music.

Going on tours and trips with Big Noise helped her develop her confidence around performing to an audience and speaking with new people. She also feels that it helped her become more organised, as she had to learn to balance a range of different priorities.

Symone notes that studying music and learning an instrument helped to develop valuable life skills such as discipline. It also helped her to develop a strong circle of friends, with similar interests.





Attending Big Noise regularly and being part of ensembles helped Symone to come out of her shell, as she was previously quite shy. Symone has developed a real love of music. In her spare time, she also plays with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra of Scotland and in a trombone quartet called Slideshow, with her friends.

Symone remembers that as a child, she did not believe she would go to university or develop a career. However, taking part in Big Noise helped her believe that she could. Before applying to the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, she had support from Big Noise to complete her application and prepare for auditions.



It's not even about the instruments...it's about so much more than that.



Big Noise put me in environments that made me want to do it.





## NEXT STEPS

Over time, Symone's ambition has grown and developed. Working with Big Noise, has helped her realise that she would like to pursue a career that involves music. Previously she had hoped to develop a career as a performer, however she now feels that she would like to do teaching and community outreach work, through music.

Big Noise is supporting her to develop the necessary skills. When possible, she works as a paid music tutor for Big Noise in Raploch, covering for staff and supporting group sessions. She also hopes to start volunteering at Big Noise in Govanhill, while she is in Glasgow for university.

Going forward she hopes to complete her degree and then take some time away from education before returning for a post-graduate course in education.



I know I want to give back, the way that Big Noise gave to me.

