

INTERNATIONAL PIANO FESTIVAL EVALUATION  
REPORT TO OXFORD PHILOMUSICA

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Annabel Jackson Associates  
The Priory  
54 Lyncombe Hill  
Bath BA2 4PJ  
Somerset  
Tel: 01225-446614  
Fax: 01225-446627  
Email: [ajataja@aol.com](mailto:ajataja@aol.com)

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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### **1.1 Background to the international piano festival**

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The international piano festival is an annual event that includes master classes, lectures and concerts. In 2009 it took place between July 26<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup> and attracted 18 participants and 15 observers.

### **1.2 Methodology**

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Our methodology consisted of an online survey of participants and observers. The questionnaire was written with the support of the ABO, as part of an exercise to help members with qualitative evaluation.

## 2 SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS

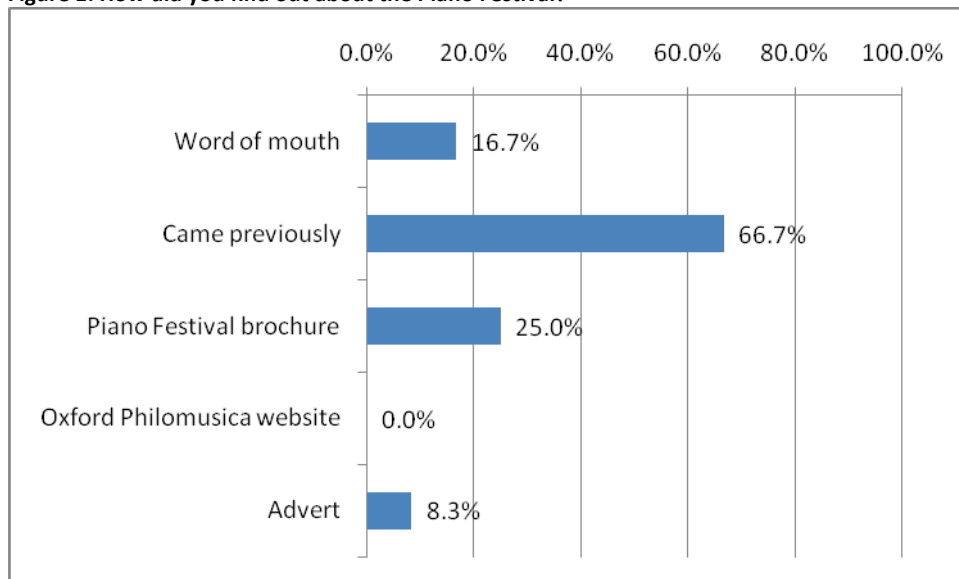
### 2.1 Introduction

We obtained responses from nine participants and three observers.

### 2.2 Background

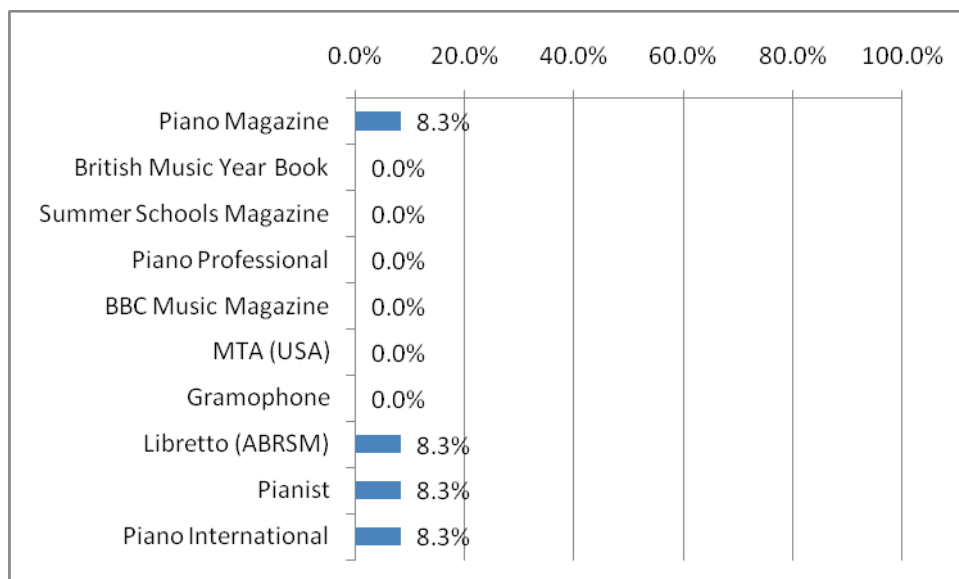
Most people found out about the Festival from their previous experience of attendance or from the brochure.

**Figure 1: How did you find out about the Piano Festival?**



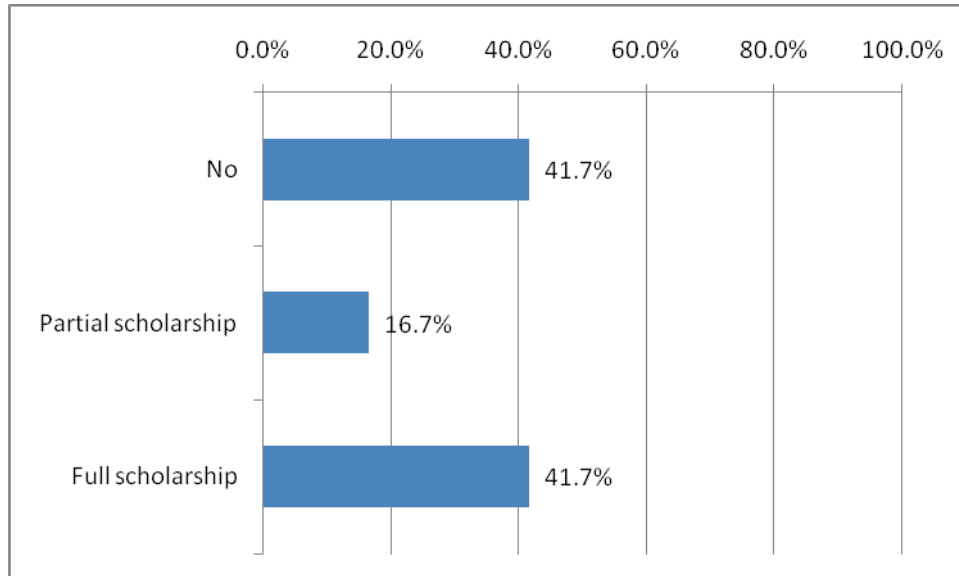
Participant had low awareness of the Festival advertising. 8.3% is one participant.

**Figure 2: Did you see the Piano Festival advert in any of these publications?**



More than half the respondents received some form of scholarship. All except three participants received a scholarship, so the survey is not biased in favour of those who received a scholarship, as might be expected.

**Figure 3: Did you receive a scholarship to attend this year?**



Eight of the respondents have attended the festival before, an average of 3.25 times.

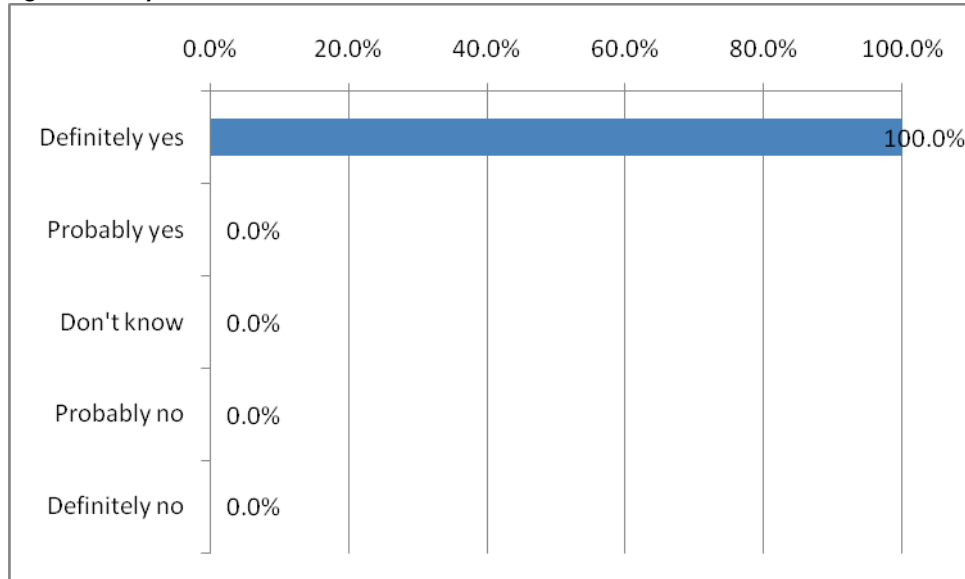
### 2.3 Ratings of the festival

Ratings of the festival were exceptionally positive.

**Figure 4: Was the festival:**

Answer Options	Definitely yes	Probably yes	Mixed	Probably no	Definitely no
Enjoyable	100%	0	0	0	0
Inspiring	100%	0	0	0	0
Well conceived	100%	0	0	0	0
Well designed	91.7%	8.3%	0	0	0
Relevant to you	100%	0	0	0	0
A good use of your time	100%	0	0	0	0
Value for money	100%	0	0	0	0

All respondents said that they will definitely recommend the festival to other musicians.

**Figure 5: Will you recommend the Piano Festival to other musicians?**

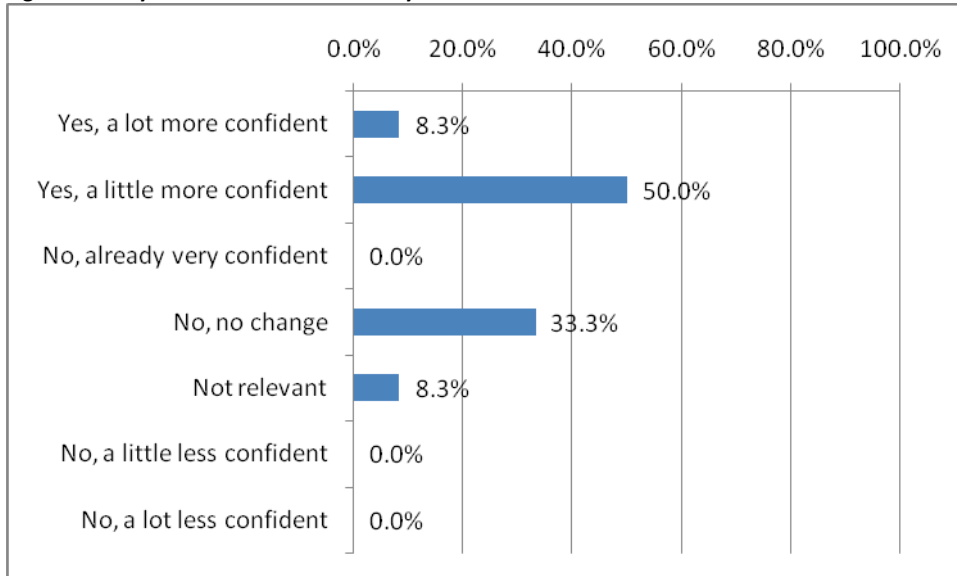
## 2.4 Impact on artistic practice

The festival was particularly effective in helping participants to think about music, perform, feel part of a community of artists, and learn new repertoire. These are the primary aims of the festival.

**Figure 6: To what extent did the Piano Festival open up new possibilities for you in term sof:**

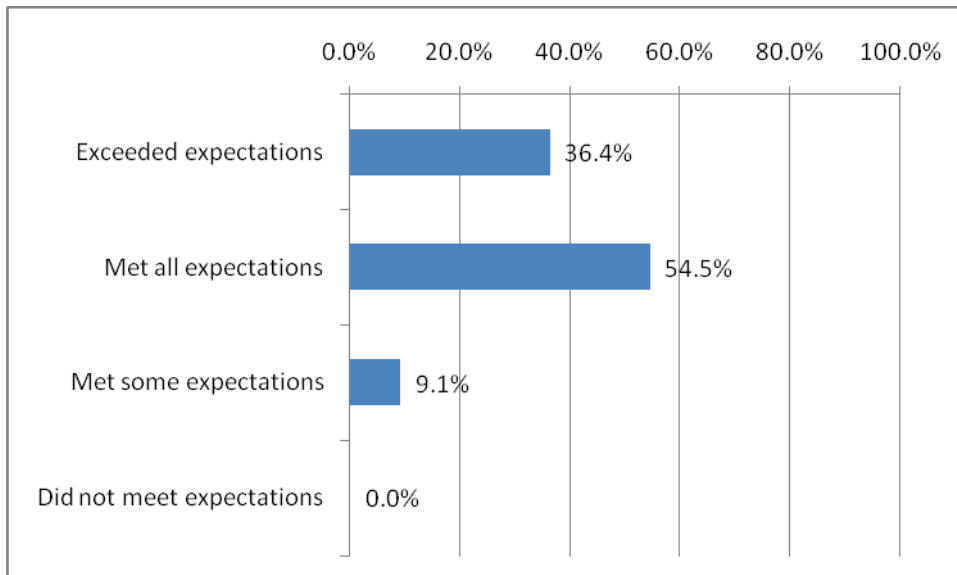
Answer Options	A lot	A little	Not at all
Thinking about music?	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Performing music?	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%
Learning new repertoire?	72.7%	27.3%	0.0%
Finding sponsors?	18.2%	36.4%	45.5%
Working with other musicians?	33.3%	41.7%	25.0%
Understanding more about the profession?	41.7%	58.3%	0.0%
Feeling part of a community of artists?	83.3%	17.7%	0.0%

Respondents are more confident about their future as musicians as a result of the festival but not greatly so. This is probably a good finding, as it suggests they appreciate the work and other factors involved in success.

**Figure 7: Are you more confident about your future as a musician as a result of the Piano Festival?**

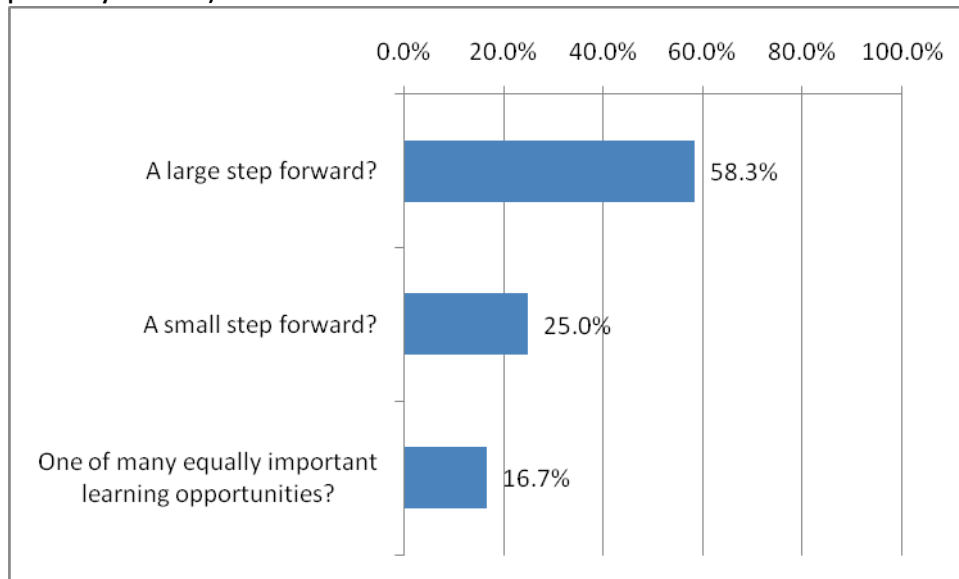
## 2.5 Overall impressions

The festival exceeded expectations for four of the twelve respondents, a very positive finding given the high level of previous attendance. As one respondent said: "Though it was my first visit, many people there were regulars and they said that the festival is getting better all the time."

**Figure 8: Did the Piano Festival meet your expectations?**

More than half the respondents saw the festival as a large step forward in their artistic development.

**Figure 9: In your overall artistic development is the Oxford Philomusica Piano Festival (this year's and any previously attended):**



## 2.6 Perceived strengths of the festival

The strengths of the festival are particularly in terms of the quality of artistic development, the high standard of organisation and the community feeling:

- **Quality.** “The festival brings in the best piano professors and very talented young pianists from different countries so it is very inspiring and a useful experience.” “The quality of the master classes was high, and there were many to choose from. The recitals every night were wonderful and inspiring.” “The teachers were absolutely amazing, and the fellow students I was surrounded with were a constant source of inspiration.” “Some of the teaching, particularly that of Marios Papadopoulos is inspiring.” The quality of teaching and performances are amazing.” “The opportunity to play for pianists who are still active and successful in the profession. Some of the professors are simply extremely inspiring and the lessons ring on for a long time after the course has finished.” “Incredibly high standard musical community.”
- **Depth.** “I liked my busy schedule during the festival.” “The 7 day course is very intense because you hear everyone perform at a very high level yet at the same time everyone, including the passive participants are very encouraging. It makes the student strive to push him/herself more to achieve the best but not in a competitive way in order to outplay one another”. “There are a good number of chances to perform and run repertoire publicly.”
- **Variety.** “There was a great variety of teachers and concerts which kept it interesting.” “Each participant gets to play for different professors when in most other summer academies case, every student is allocated a professor for the whole week. There are both pros and cons in this and sometimes the professor might need to listen to a student play more than one piece to get a better picture of the student.” “Great variety of teachers, you learn something from everyone even if it is just that you don’t like their style!” “The versatility of the professors

chosen: there is never one school of thought only. I can feel that a great deal of trouble is gone into ensuring a balance in professors.”

- Feedback. “The festival helps you to choose new repertoire. It is useful to attend a master class where the new piece will be performed and teacher will give tricks right away, so you know it much better even before you start to play the piece.”
- Work opportunities. “I often benefit in very different ways during the year which passes directly after each festival, often as a direct result, be it in terms of musical/personal connections, receiving concert opportunities and meeting important people.”
- Organisation. “It was a thoroughly enjoyable course that was admirably well organised and hosted.” “A tour de force of organisation, notably creating an appropriate environment for music.”
- Community feeling. “I have forged many strong friendships and have learnt SO much about playing, music and appreciating music.” “I always feel like a part of artists’ community because you are surrounded by musicians and every day you discuss concerts, music and master classes. And honestly each year I have a feeling of a bit emptiness right after the festival ends.” “The fact that everything happens in 2 major places (St. Hilda’s and Faculty) so one don’t have to go to many different places. The fact that participants live in the same college, eat together with the professors which give everybody an extra chance to communicate.” “The most enjoyable is the whole atmosphere! Participants and observers become friends and during the festival they support each other.” “Friendly, willing and helpful.” “A great place to meet people, I have met people who I think shall be life-long friends in music and life and I would never have made such valuable musical and personal connections had it not been for the festival.”

These comments are endorsements of the principles on which the festival is based.

## 2.7 Perceived weaknesses of the festival

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Many respondents said that the festival had no weaknesses. The main perceived weaknesses of the festival were the weak practice facilities. “I only wish the festival had better pianos to practise but otherwise I like everything!” “The practice pianos are lacking in quality.” “I don’t feel there are any major flaws, or at least any that cannot be helped. It would certainly be better to have more/improved practise facilities. Other than that, I have found it to be yet another delightful course!!”

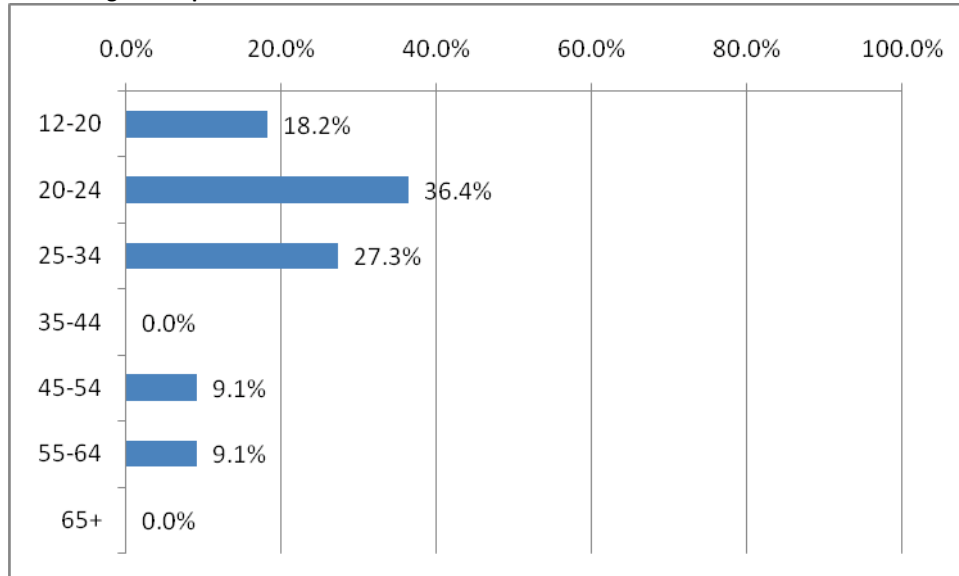
Individual respondents then made comments for improvement:

- The limited opportunity to play with other participants.
- It should last longer.
- It would be good to have some classes on dealing with the profession.

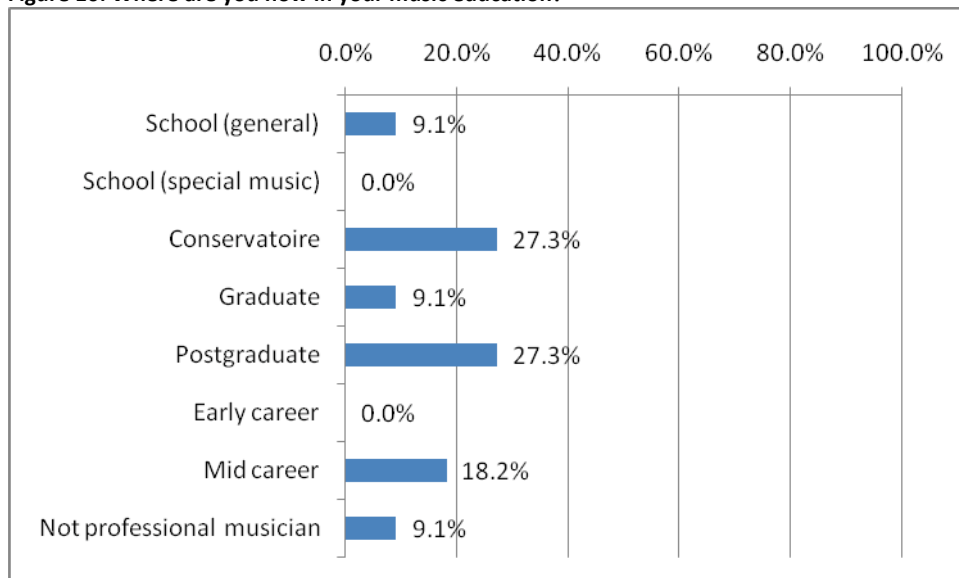
## 2.8 Background of respondents

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The age profile of the participants is fairly broad.

**Table 1: Age of respondents**

Stage in musical education is also fairly diverse.

**Figure 10: Where are you now in your music education?**

## 2.9 Conclusion

Feedback from the festival is extremely positive. The festival exceeded participants' expectations and provided clear benefits in terms of artistic practice. It was seen as well organised and well conceived.

No major weaknesses were identified.