

## **BASINGSTOKE MUSIC INITIATIVE MENTORING SCHEME**

### **Background**

Like many towns across the UK, Basingstoke has seen the small live music scene it once had disappear almost completely. This has not just been due to the pandemic, but in the 2 or 3 years prior to the Covid lockdowns, venues and festivals in the Basingstoke and Deane area had been slowly closing down, reducing the spaces for bands and musicians to play. Basingstoke is not a university town and therefore also lacks the organic DIY scene that emerges from a student population that places like Cardiff or Southampton benefit from. So, emerging from the pandemic in 2023, when Proteus was looking to programme some live music for its 'Smallest Festival in the World' event, it was hard to find a locally based diversity of talent, ready to play.

To address this lack of opportunity for bands and musicians in Basingstoke, Proteus collaborating with RB Music, funded by the BDBC Cultural Compact via the Governments' Shared Prosperity Fund, created the Basingstoke Music Initiative.

The project is due to run initially over three years and sees Proteus and RB Music management working together to establish opportunities at a grass roots level for musicians and bands to develop in Basingstoke. The first year of this project will enable the development of Basingstoke based music artists as performers via the offering of paid performance slots, mentoring and training opportunities, marketing/branding support and free rehearsal space. The ambition will be to engage up to 16 musicians/bands in the first year.

Over the life of the project we will link to venues and partners further afield to increase the opportunities for participants beyond Creation Space; these will include small venues who have a reputation for hosting high profile musicians & bands at the start of their careers; Ventnor Exchange in the Isle of Wight, South Street Arts in Reading, The Lounge Bar in Alton, The Boiler Room in Guildford & The Wedgewood Rooms in Portsmouth amongst others. The ambition will be to build a regional circuit of grassroots venues that bands and musicians working with us can benefit from in the future.

### **What is Mentoring?**

Successful mentoring partnerships can, have and will continue to change lives. They provide the structure and impetus needed for (both) participants to achieve continued growth and learning.

While roles and responsibilities will differ, mentoring is a two-way relationship involving help, support, role modelling, specialist advice and guidance - usually on the part of the mentor, in order to facilitate the achievement of the mentees' goals and to help them grow professionally.

Participants in the Basingstoke Music Initiative mentoring scheme will be offered:

- A maximum of ten 1 hour Mentoring sessions with experienced individuals from the music industry. These sessions can be taken in tandem if appropriate; for example as five sessions lasting two hours each, or as full days. Mentors may be established Artists or bands to support the development of stagecraft and live

work, industry experts on branding and digital distribution, or music business specialists. These sessions can be in person, delivered online or a combination of both.

- The opportunity to access free full days of weekend rehearsal space and evening rehearsal slots at Creation Space.
- Training opportunities (this may be in technical areas, vocal or instrument training, recording techniques etc)
- Access to equipment and instruments
- Automatic membership of a network of musicians and bands based in the region, with networking events and training opportunities.
- Ad hoc support and advice from RB Music Management

In addition, we will be programming 16 paid gigs per year, with up to five bands on each bill all at various stages of their careers. Roughly half of these gigs will be acoustic focussed, and will include music of diverse genres; including jazz and folk. Individuals or bands accessing the mentoring scheme will be automatically considered for these gig slots.

### **Role of the Mentee**

As a mentee, you will play many different roles during the course of your mentoring relationship. Here are some important things to keep in mind in order to make the most of the opportunity.

- Where do you want to be?

Identify the skills, knowledge, and/or goals that you want to achieve. Setting goals is essential to continued progress. These may evolve, often with the input of your mentor, but be prepared to take the initiative.

- How do you plan to get there?

Develop and maintain a mentoring action plan to suit you and your goals. Different personalities work in different ways, and knowing what works for you will save time and energy on both sides of the relationship. Collaborate with your mentor in the early stages to establish best practices and continue to evaluate these throughout the process.

- Ask for help.

Don't be put off if you find it hard to define specific goals and/or ways of working - it can be overwhelming and your mentor should be able to help. Don't forget, they're on your side! Honesty and communication are key to a successful mentoring relationship.

Return the favour. Mentoring isn't a one-way street. There will be opportunities for you to return the favour in a variety of ways. It's up to you to spot them and help out where you can, or simply ask!

- Make the most of it!

Take full advantage of the opportunity to learn from someone you admire and respect. Always be on time, be respectful and be motivated. There is no better way to thank a mentor for their time and effort than by taking the relationship seriously and working hard towards your goals and the pursuit of growth.

### **Benefits of being a Mentee**

- Gain practical advice, encouragement and support.

- Identify goals and establish a sense of direction and momentum.
- Learn from the lived experiences of others.
- Become more empowered to make decisions.
- Develop your communication skills and expand your network.
- Develop strategies for dealing with setbacks.
- Gain valuable insight into the next stage of your career

### **How to apply**

Simply tell us about yourself and/or your band, what you feel you would like help with, details of any previous gig experience and what your ambitions are. Please also send us a sample of your music, either as an mp3 file, link to streaming service or via YouTube. We're also happy to accept a voice note or filmed application if that's most comfortable for you!

We will then invite you for a chat and to see if we can match a suitable mentor to you. However, we cannot guarantee to match all mentees that we meet with, and we expect competition to be fierce.

There is no deadline for application, but all mentoring relationships must finish by September 2026.

Once we have matched you to a mentee, we will meet with you to establish a framework of SMART goals that you can chart progress with. We will also draw up an agreement between you and your mentor so all parties know what to expect and the sessions will start. We will require you to keep a diary of the mentoring relationship, noting how the sessions are helping you reach your goals. We may ask you to participate in a short, filmed interview about your experience, or to provide some written feedback that can be used in future promotion of the onward project. At the end of the mentoring agreement, we will meet with you to evaluate the project and measure the success of the partnership.

For more information, or to apply, contact: [mary@proteustheatre.com](mailto:mary@proteustheatre.com)