

Orchestrating Security Success: How B:Music Transformed IT Operations

B:Music, the Birmingham-based arts charity behind Symphony Hall and Town Hall, faced growing cybersecurity challenges with a small IT team and diverse user base. To protect its operations and enable productivity, B:Music partnered with Softwerx to implement a layered security strategy powered by Microsoft 365 E3, the Microsoft Defender Suite add-on, and Softwerx's MXDR solution, secure365®. The solution delivers 24x7 threat monitoring, rapid response and expert support, helping B:Music strengthen resilience, improve compliance and unlock greater value from its technology investments.

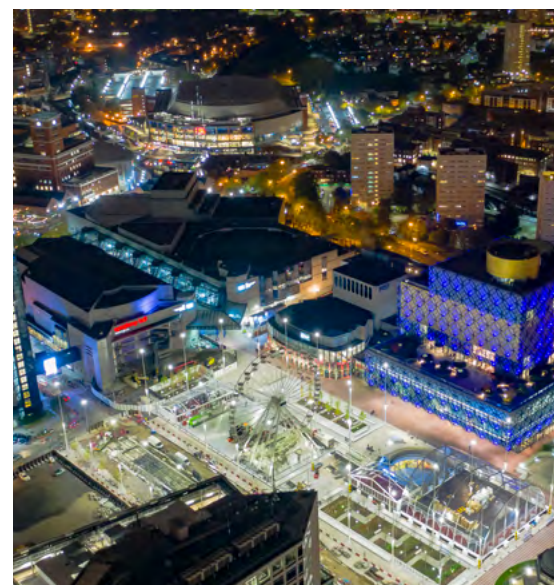
Making the arts available to all

Incorporated in 1996, B:Music is an arts charity based in Birmingham. Dedicated to inspiring a love of music through performance, participation and learning, the charity manages two world-class venues in Birmingham: Symphony Hall and Town Hall. Here, it hosts a wide range of live concerts featuring local, regional and international artists. Beyond staging performances, B:Music supports emerging talent through development and performance opportunities and delivers extensive learning and participation programmes, including workshops and educational outreach.

Balancing IT ownership with cybersecurity

After years of reliance on external IT service providers, B:Music wanted to regain control and bring IT back in-house. Head of IT, Gary Albrow saw this as an opportunity to rebuild IT in a way that supported staff and improved productivity while embedding robust security into the company's core operations. However, with a two-person IT team responsible for both day-to-day IT operations and cybersecurity, delivering on such an ambitious transformation while keeping pace with a rapidly evolving threat landscape was difficult.

B:Music
Town Hall & Symphony Hall



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Gary Albrow,
Head of IT, B:Music

"IT and cybersecurity are two very different functions, each needing its own expertise," says Albrow. "When you're focused on keeping the IT running, you can never be fully focused on security. We needed external support from a dedicated team whose focus was to stay on top of security and most importantly, we needed people we could rely on."

Adding to the challenge was B:Music's diverse user base. The organisation includes full and part-time employees, remote workers, volunteers and casual workers. All of these employees need controlled access only to the systems, applications and data relevant to their roles and work with a mix of corporate desktops, laptops and mobiles as well as personal mobile devices and point of sale systems. Many worked irregular hours, including late nights, which further complicated security management.

B:Music needed a solution that would provide robust protection with minimal friction for its workforce while ensuring that, as a charity, every pound spent delivered clear value.

Transforming IT security with a 24x7 MXDR service

Having worked with Softwerx for many years in a previous role, Albrow knew the team's expertise and approach could deliver the security capabilities B:Music urgently needed. After a competitive tender process, Softwerx was selected to help overhaul the organisation's IT security posture.

With Softwerx's guidance, B:Music defined a security strategy that combined Microsoft 365 E3 licences with a layered security approach, integrating third-party tools to strengthen protection. Role-based security and least-privileged access were implemented to ensure users only had the permissions they needed, reducing risk without disrupting productivity.

At the heart of the strategy was secure365, Softwerx's managed security service built on Microsoft's advanced security stack. This included Microsoft Defender for 365 and Defender for Endpoint for real-time threat detection and response, Intune for device management and Microsoft Sentinel for SIEM capabilities. Together, these tools provided comprehensive visibility and control over B:Music's environment.

Secure365 gave B:Music access to a 24x7 Microsoft Managed eXtended Detection and Response (MXDR) service, backed by Softwerx's UK-based Security Operations Centre (SOC). This meant continuous monitoring, rapid incident response and proactive threat intelligence, all without the cost and complexity of building an in-house SOC.



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secure365 transforms B:Music's cyber resilience

Softwerx's secure365 solution has played a pivotal role in strengthening B:Music's security operations. By providing 24x7 monitoring and response, the SOC ensures that critical threats are identified and escalated quickly, minimising risk and enabling swift action. Since implementing the solution, and by partnering with Softwerx, B:Music has seen an improved response time to detect, triage and manage any threats that could harm their infrastructure; an increasingly critical advantage as the cybersecurity threat landscape continues to evolve.

"With threats evolving faster than ever, a 24x7 security operations team is essential, but we simply couldn't afford to build that ourselves" says Albrow. "secure365 gives us round-the-clock monitoring, rapid response and access to Microsoft experts who can close the gaps that our small team simply couldn't."

The benefits of this continuous protection have had a noticeable impact on Albrow and his team.

"The Softwerx team advises me of threat attempts and takes appropriate action to deal with them if I'm not available, for example out of hours," says Albrow. "This creates a comfort blanket. It means I can sleep at night. By the time they call me, the threat has already been stopped."

Beyond security, B:Music has unlocked greater value from its Microsoft licences. Upgrading to Microsoft 365 E3 has delivered optimised benefits such as larger mailboxes and increased SharePoint storage, ensuring the organisation gets maximum return on its investment.

Staff awareness has improved, too. When a supplier was hacked and a spam email sent down the supply chain, B:Music employees recognised the threat immediately and took the right action, a clear sign that security culture is strengthening.

For Albrow, the partnership strikes the right balance. "As a charity, every investment we make into IT and cybersecurity needs to be justified and deliver value. It's a balancing act between stopping threats and managing budgets. Softwerx helps us achieve that."

"Softwerx is a true extension of our IT team," says Albrow. "They understand our organisation and our unique needs as an arts charity and entertainment venue. They're supportive, reliable and always focused on delivering the best solution at the best price. For me, that honesty and openness is invaluable."

Looking ahead to compliance and continuity

B:Music is continuing to build strong foundations to stay ahead of the changing threat landscape. "We have plans in place to further strengthen our layered security approach with targeted user awareness training to ensure our staff stay vigilant as threats evolve," says Albrow. "With support from Softwerx, we're preparing to enhance our incident response and continuity plans and expand our use of Microsoft technologies like Purview and single sign-on. Softwerx's partnership remains central as we work to extend SOC coverage and gain even broader visibility across our environment."

Your roadmap to resilience:

Take the next step with Softwerx

At Softwerx, we empower mid-market organisations to unlock the full potential of Microsoft Security.

Through expert consultancy, strategic guidance and hands-on support, we help businesses optimise their Microsoft infrastructure, security posture and licensing. Our UK-based 24/7 Security Operations Centre (SOC), alongside our flagship Managed Detection and Response (MDR) service, secure365®, leverages Microsoft 365 Defender and Microsoft Sentinel to deliver real-time threat detection, rapid incident response and intelligent security event management.

We make enterprise-grade cybersecurity both **accessible and affordable** — tailored specifically for the needs of security-conscious mid-market organisations.

Our approach guides you on a clear, tailored security journey — from initial audit to actionable outcomes — all shaped around your business's unique needs. Powered by Microsoft technologies and enriched by deep domain expertise, we take you through a structured process of discovery, assessment and expert advisory.

We transform insight into measurable impact — helping you build a resilient, future-ready security posture with confidence, clarity and the ability to protect what matters most while driving innovation forward.

Get in touch to explore how Softwerx can help secure and strengthen your business.

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