



# ALL TOGETHER NOW...

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How to set up outstanding music  
partnerships between schools

A selection of case studies from cross-sector partnerships

Edited by Tom Arbuthnott with Peter Hatch







# Schools Together

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# 'Schools which collaborate are better than those that do not.'

Tom Arbuthnott, Schools Together Group



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This project comes from a simple instinct: that schools which collaborate are better than those that do not. Partnerships bring fresh ideas, productive relationships and useful structures into schools - and help all of us to do better at our core job of educating young people, no matter which sector or phase we sit in.

Indeed, partnerships that cross sectors can be the most productive of all. There is an energy and excitement to the projects in this volume that is testament to that.

The Schools Together Group was formed in April 2016 to promote the value of partnerships. It is composed of representatives from both sectors, and we hold two seminar events a year alongside an annual conference, which takes place in York in 2018. There's no charge to join the group or its membership list. We are keen to be connected with as many partnership co-ordinators as possible.

To this end, this publication seeks to help partnership co-ordinators, perhaps particularly those who are just starting out. The abiding problem with partnership work is that most efforts to assess impact wind up comparing apples and pears - a volunteering project between two schools will probably look very different to one which focuses on science. We thought that it might help to bring eight different music projects together, and to see if we could work out some insights from their synergies and differences.

The contributors to this volume came round a table at the Centre for Research and Innovation in Learning at Eton College in January 2018 to compare notes. The synthesis in the introduction to this volume emerged from the comments made and the ideas produced in that session.

The appendices referred to in this volume, as well as the case studies themselves, are intended to be held on the schoolstogether website ([www.schoolstogether.org](http://www.schoolstogether.org)) to be freely available to any partnership co-ordinator or musician. Please feel free to add to this shared resource by contacting me: my contact details are below.

We would like to thank Eton College for its financial support for this project.

**Tom Arbuthnott**

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Chair, Schools Together Group, 2017-18.

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# Ten Insights in to Music Partnership Projects

Tom Arbuthnott, Schools Together Group

## INSIGHT ONE

Music is a great way into partnership activity.

Our initial suspicion in putting this project together was that music partnerships were particularly easy to get off the ground, largely due to musicians' instinct to perform, and the likelihood that Directors of Music are going to care very much about spreading the benefits of music over as wide an area as possible.

We found this to be true. Music lends itself unusually well to simple outreach projects, like that described by Ed Yeo in the [Music in the Community](#) case study. All it takes is a great instrumentalist, a band with more chutzpah than quality or a single Visiting Music Teacher with a little spare time – and a performance in a local school can generally be fixed up in little more than a phone call.

Furthermore, music is clearly an area where the independent sector and the state sector complement each other. Even the smallest prep school often has outstanding musicianship, and, if it could only see it as such, can be a centre of excellence in a local community. The absence is one of vision, rather than one of capacity. On the other hand, beyond the outstanding regional music hubs, often small state sector schools, especially primary schools, find it difficult to expose their children to musical opportunities of any kind, especially to music of the very highest quality. Match the two, in a combination that recognises local need, and we are on fertile ground.

## INSIGHT TWO

The more complex the partnership, the more complex the possible project: but you need to have done the simple projects to get on to the complex ones.

As above, the simplest projects represent an entry point to partnership activity. What is really exciting, though, is the way in which those projects can be scaled up.

The most complex projects, like [Romany Wood](#), [Noye's Fludde](#) or [Wassail!](#), are all backed by highly complex partnerships, bound together by more than just willpower. The advent of Multi Academy Trusts in the state sector has created a sophistication in the relationships between schools that is most conducive to outstanding, partnership-based music projects. The involvement of Oakham School in [Noye's Fludde](#) shows how an independent school can contribute, providing expertise without any of the somewhat frightening demands for accountability that sometimes emerge from government.

The independent sector, indeed, is not geared to replicate the complexity which is evident in the state sector if it is to aspire to the very best music projects. The very best MATs, such as the David Ross Education Trust ([Noye's Fludde](#)), are creating systems whereby numerous schools can aspire to shared goals, and can allocate the resources where they need to in order to make great things happen. The strength of independent

schools has always lain in their independence. However, music projects stake a claim for collaboration.

Nonetheless, complexity does have its drawbacks as well as its benefits. We explore a couple of the difficulties faced by the **Noye's Fludde** project, either where too many hands get embroiled in the project, or where project partners find themselves competing with each other for publicity.

### INSIGHT THREE

Simple projects are about the epiphanic moment. Complex projects take that moment and do something extraordinary with it.

When analysing the outcomes of music projects, it is clear that the same point about complexity arises. Music is unusual in terms of school life through the emphasis that it places on the epiphanic moment, which is where a student, possibly from a disadvantaged background, is exposed to quality music for the very first time – whether this moment comes from singing in a choir, listening to opera or participating, possibly with an easier part, in an orchestra.

As Martin Leigh puts it, “There are moments in life which put you on a different course.” Simon Toyne writes much the same thing, “High quality art can change people.”

The great thing about this epiphanic moment is that it is easy to measure. Just take a baseline of the children in the project using a questionnaire like that provided by Ann Wright in the **Young Leader Programme**, and demonstrate progress by counting the number of children who have had a new experience.

As your project becomes more complex, though, more complicated measurement mechanisms also become possible. Dale Chambers’ project, **The String Scheme**, which started with an epiphanic focus, has tracked the number of children who have participated and who have gone on to take up an instrument, and to an increasingly high level. The best projects are going to act as a magnet, to get children into music, and also as a bridge, to connect those children with wider music partnerships and opportunities.

Schools do, though, need to be aware of the fine line between subsidy and partnership. We felt that there were some projects where partnership work was simply replacing some activity that should have been taking place anyway within the target school. In this case, the relationship becomes a sponsorship rather than a partnership.

### INSIGHT FOUR

Music is an agent of school improvement.

A school with music is a better community than one without. This provides a very specific yardstick to use in music projects (which does not apply in other areas). There is not a single school which has an outstanding music department that is not itself outstanding.

Quality music projects can lead to outstanding outcomes elsewhere in the curriculum. DRET measured one school whose investment in Music, through becoming a Singing School, helped its English and Maths SATs results rise from 28% to 72% in just one year.

## INSIGHT FIVE

Lobby for dedicated partnership time within your school.

Two of the music projects represented here benefited enormously from dedicated time during the week that could be devoted to partnership activity. Both King Edward's School (**Romany Wood**) and KCS Wimbledon (**Partnership Choir & Production**) dedicate their Friday afternoons every week to non-sporting co-curricular activities. Every child in the school is therefore free at the same time – and, crucially, this is a time where local schools are in session. This enables complex projects such as the Partnership Choir & Production or Romany Wood to find their home, without the inordinate complexity of finding a slot during the week where the same pupils can elect to be free.

## INSIGHT SIX

Start with choral music – and think about the repertoire.

In terms of starting out with a partnership project, choral music works outstandingly well – any child, whatever their musical hinterland, can participate meaningfully.

Furthermore, a choral event also enables the benefits of a music project to be shared widely throughout a community. The best projects will think about the parents as well as the children. The **Romany Wood** project included a budget which enabled parents to be brought in from Small Heath, Shard End and Chelmsley Wood to watch their children perform at Birmingham Symphony Hall. While the impact of this is difficult to measure, its value would seem to be self-evident.

That said, there are certain pieces of repertoire that work particularly well with partnership projects. We hope to assemble such a list, which will be posted on the SchoolsTogether website ([www.schoolstogether.org](http://www.schoolstogether.org)) for all to access. As **Wassail!** shows, one sometimes needs to think carefully about music from one religious tradition in a multifaith context – although the **Noye's Fludde** experience shows the pervasive magic of some religious music in the right context, in energising some pupils to “ask for hymn-singing in Assembly.”

There's no reason, though, why a project can't also serve to create repertoire. **Wassail!** tells of the United Learning experience of building up new repertoire from composer Alexander L'Estrange. Even better, this process can involve the children as agents, as pilots and as connoisseurs.

## INSIGHT SEVEN

Don't see impact assessment as an afterthought, but weave it in to your project from the word go.

Small-scale partnership projects, musical and otherwise, often forgo impact assessment: it is seen as red tape, bureaucracy or needless faff. However, it matters. If we are going to build constituencies of support for partnership projects, whether in government, in the media or in our own senior leadership teams and boards of governors, then we need to show that these projects are more than window-dressing, and that they have a genuine impact on the pupils who participate.

Often, those involved in music projects, such as Catherine Barker at United Learning, have expertise in this anyway, as it is usually a requirement of the funders of larger, more complex music projects that impact assessment should be done – and, moreover, that it should take up to 10% of the budget. To your average partnership co-ordinator, this emphasis seems unbelievable – and yet it is really important in proving to school leaderships, sceptical publics and politicians that these projects are of real value.



But it doesn't have to be difficult. Partnership co-ordinators can use some of the tools referred to in this volume, such as questionnaires, permission slips and other proformas, all of which we hope to assemble on the Schools Together website, along with resources on surveymonkey or Microsoft Forms – to make impact evaluation easy. Even qualitative data, collected in the right way, can be used to create word clouds, which take little time but paint a powerful picture. You'll find an example in the **Romany Wood** case study. It's just so important to make time for this. That said, adapt the questionnaire to your own purposes: be very clear about what you are trying to test or find out.

Your projects should have clear objectives and success criteria, and you should demonstrate your reflectiveness in setting these and using them in a continuous process of self-improvement.

One of the most difficult aspects of partnership work, particularly that which seeks to address disadvantaged children, is that impact assessment needs to be contextual. Children who are harder to reach should count for more – and, again, more complex projects can incorporate this from the word go in their schemata for impact assessment.



#### INSIGHT EIGHT

ISSPs are only part of the spectrum of possible partnerships. Tie your partnership design to the local musical context.

There are lots of stakeholders in music education. Schools are only part of a vibrant musical commonwealth.

In particular, music partnerships must work with Music Mark and the Music Education Council. There is a lot of analysis out there that you can take advantage of in targeting and assessing your project. Why not identify a ward with a very low level of music participation and show that you've done something about it? Or build a long-term element into your 'epiphanic' project so that you can track how many children have taken up instruments as part of that initial experience?

If you are lucky enough to have a major venue in your backyard, that can be a real plus, as they often tend to have outreach programmes themselves, often with a specific schools focus. As Martin Leigh puts it in **Romany Wood**, the 'jaw-dropping' nature of performing in Birmingham's Symphony Hall in front of 1,500 supporters turns a good experience into a stellar one. Even if not, your local independent school might act as your nearest jaw-dropping venue – a school orchestra can perform Holst's *The Planets*, so you don't need to go into London to do it.

All local hubs have specific local issues – the independent school needs to link into these and be ready to offer help. Some of the most successful ISSPs are those that work within a defined geographical area, and bring a number of independent schools together with a number of state schools. This can also help solve the problem outlined above – that independent schools are often better at working with state schools than with each other.

Indeed, the partnerships developed here can have all sorts of contingent benefits. There is a lot of expertise within local music hubs – for example in the appraisal and/or professional review of Visiting Music Teachers – that can be shared through effective partnership.



## INSIGHT NINE

### Don't forget the fundraising.

Lots of people feel passionate about music. Current parents of a school are a major constituency, as outlined in **The String Scheme**. It is always possible to raise money for projects, especially when you build from the ground up.

Further to Insight Seven, you must remember that evaluation enables fundraising. The event is going to be the culmination of a given project. Objectives need to be stipulated and monitored as you go along, in order to create a strong perception of success.

Videos and interviews are really valuable in communicating success, as the **Wassail!** and **Partnership Choir & Production** projects have found. A videographer for an afternoon only costs £600. It might help if there is space on the Schools Together website for video, or at least for YouTube links.

## INSIGHT TEN

### Good relationships are crucial: and a wider outreach strategy is needed.

Some complaints from across the sector tell of open arms being proffered by independent schools, and rejected by state schools. This harks back to a 1980s narrative of a cold war between the sectors. This is outdated: in a world where free schools and academies dominate the state-maintained landscape, we are seeing the emergence of a reciprocal narrative stressing the development of an educational commonwealth.

In some places, distrust and lack of understanding does exist, needing to be broken down. Often, the person leading a music project is in a good place to do this, by talking musician to musician. **The String Scheme** tells how Dale Chambers voluntarily taught a Dalcroze / Kodaly course to build trust and develop relationships in Guildford. It can help to operate within a wider outreach strategy. Certainly, successful projects should breed other successful projects, whether in science or sport, drama or debating.

It is welcome that increasing number of schools are appointing partnership co-ordinators at SLT level. This person has the clout to be able to make projects coherent within and between schools – and, increasingly, should have the expertise to apply consistent impact assessment and communications frameworks across different projects. Equally, this person will be able to put plans in place to challenge the most common problems facing partnership projects: a lack of succession planning, the common need to script Memoranda of Understanding and the deployment of various strategies for getting reluctant partners involved.

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# A selection of case studies from cross-sector partnerships

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## CASE STUDY

# Swing Band Tours

Tom Arbuthnott, Schools Together Group  
Martin Leigh, King Edward's School, Birmingham



### ABSTRACT

**An entry-level project which sees swing bands from an independent school going on the road for a day each year to give concerts in local primary schools.**

### PARTNERSHIPS

King Edward's School, Birmingham  
King Edward's High School for Girls  
Primary Schools

### OVERVIEW

This is a very easy partnership / performance project for any school with excellent music to get off the ground. It delivers outstanding performance opportunities for pupils, and can be a starting point for generating strong musical relationships.

### BACKGROUND

King Edward's School and King Edward's High School for Girls have two joint swing bands, which play a repertoire of jazz classics. In the autumn these tend to be Christmas-related; in the summer, a less seasonal repertoire is developed. The Junior Swing Band features boys and girls at the outset of their performance careers. Better musicians will graduate to the Senior Swing Band during their time at the schools.

The 'swing band tours' are now an established part of school life. The senior swing band, which has pupils in exam classes from Years 11 and 13, spends a day just before Christmas visiting 3-4 local junior schools and performing half-hour concerts in each; the junior swing band, which has more boys from non-examined years, does the same in the final week of the summer term. On a typical 'tour' day, the band will play to over 1,200 primary school students.



**It delivers outstanding performance opportunities for pupils, and can be a starting point for generating strong musical relationships.**

The project emanated from intersecting objectives from the Director of Music and the Director of Outreach. The Director of Music wanted pupils to be able to access more – and different – performance opportunities, especially the type of opportunities that require resilience and adaptability to make them work. The Director of Outreach was keen to develop relationships with primary schools across the city, especially those in far-flung areas such as Walsall, Sutton Coldfield and Solihull.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Typically, a tour will involve 3-4 primary schools. Some ask for two or even three concerts to be run consecutively, depending on venues and size of school. Particularly for the summer tour, some schools are very keen to run outdoor concerts. When the weather is fine, this is lovely – but can result in scheduling difficulties when it rains. Again, this reinforces the resilience and adaptability needed from the musicians.

Over four or five years of swing band tours, visiting over 20 schools, not a single school turned down the opportunity of a concert.



## FUNDING

The costs of the project are minimal – clothes pegs for outdoor concerts and portable music stands. Clearly, these can be used repetitively! We did find that it was well worth hiring two ‘roadies’ for each tour – either boys who had recently left or members of the school community who could be suborned into manual work! This meant that the musicians could concentrate on looking after their instruments when arriving at a new school, and that the piano, drums and amplifiers could be set up quickly and efficiently. One never knew where the parking space was likely to be.



It is a very non-threatening way of  
starting a relationship  
with a school.



## NARRATIVE

The concerts would be animated by the band leader, a teacher. He would elicit sometimes surprising responses from the pupils, notably:

**‘So we have two different types of guitar in this band. Does anyone know what they’re called?’**

**‘An air guitar, sir?’**



## IMPACT

The project worked really well, and led to various other outreach links with the schools that we visited – art projects, maths projects or other music projects. It is a very non-threatening way of starting a relationship with a school.



Over 1,200 pupils might be exposed to music  
on each of these days.



Over 1,200 pupils might be exposed to music on each of these days. Some will have taken their music studies more seriously as a result: certainly, head teachers, in our experience, are always keen to have more music performance within school. Often concerts were written up in the weekly parental newsletter or tweeted from the school Twitter account, which helped to spread our reputation of King Edward's as a school actively involved in partnership.

As for the musicians, it was an exhausting and tiring day: but one that they welcomed as a useful and interesting experience.

### **Tom Arbuthnott**

Director of Outreach and Partnership  
Schools Together Group

### **Martin Leigh**

Director of Music  
King Edward's School, Birmingham

## BIOGRAPHY

### Tom Arbuthnott

Schools Together Group

Tom Arbuthnott is Chair of the Schools Together Group, 2017-18 and Director of Outreach and Partnership at Eton College. Formerly Director of Outreach at King Edward's School, Birmingham, he believes passionately in the power of partnership to drive excellence in education.



## BIOGRAPHY

### Martin Leigh

King Edward's School

Martin Leigh is Director of Music at King Edward's School in Birmingham.



## CASE STUDY

# Music in the Community

Ed Yeo, Eton College



### ABSTRACT

An entry-level project which sent performers out to local primary schools, and used the energy gained therein to organise pupil-led community concerts on Sundays for small children locally.

### PARTNERSHIPS

Eton College  
Local Primary Schools

### OVERVIEW

For a long time, the Music Department at Eton has been engaged in a number of small-scale projects, including workshops for brass players in local primary schools and joint performance opportunities through relationships with local music services and hubs.

We were invited to make suggestions on how to further develop these projects and relationships, and to foster an ingrained culture of partnership within the departments and wider school environment. A number of ideas were floated, and as a starting point we fixed on two small-scale projects.



...we committed to establishing a series of  
Sunday afternoon 'Children's Concerts'  
aimed at young people  
between preschool and Year 6.



### PARTNERSHIPS

In their Lower Sixth year, boys at Eton have the opportunity to take part in Community Engagement projects on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. The range of activities on offer is diverse and ever-growing, including hospice visits, sports coaching in secondary schools, Maths mentoring and acting as a teaching assistant in a number of primary schools in the local area. In September 2017, a new project was offered entitled 'Music in the Community', and six boys volunteered to take part in the scheme. Their principal engagement was to visit primary schools in the Michaelmas term and lead some form of short music-based workshop and activity with students in Year 3 and 4. Other than the dates being fixed in the diary and the transport laid on, it was up to the boys to devise and manage these sessions as they saw fit.

## BACKGROUND

Eton has a full music programme, with a large number of events throughout the academic year, but at this point in time there was no provision for regular musical events targeted at the younger demographic in the local community. Following some research, and looking at Community Engagement projects offered by other schools, we committed to establishing a series of Sunday afternoon 'Children's Concerts' aimed at young people between preschool and Year 6. It was felt that it would not take a huge amount of work to get this project off the ground, and with staff and boys expressing enthusiasm for the project in its nascent stage, we believed there was scope for a popular series.

It quickly became apparent that there was an opportunity to marry these two strands together, and to give the Community Engagement Group the opportunity to widen their 'brief' and responsibilities. Alongside their fortnightly visits to local primary schools, the boys also became the primary promoters and 'concert managers' of this concert series – taking the lead on devising the structure of the event, organising the practicalities and advertising the concerts within the local community.



## NARRATIVE

### PROJECT 1 – Primary School Music Workshops

The boys returned to school in September, and had three weeks to plan and devise their workshop material. They benefited from having quite a diverse range of musical tastes and interests, including a classical flautist, pianist, drummer, guitarist and a keen actor with a musical theatre interest. The boys quickly decided that using singing and voice work as the principal medium would be the simplest and, perhaps, most accessible way to make music with the children. They sourced and rehearsed a number of short warm-up songs and activities including rhythm games ('Don't Clap this one Back!', 'Splat') with the idea of building up to learning a song as the main activity in the session. They divided up roles and responsibilities, and went into their first school with enthusiasm, energy and, it must be said, not inconsiderable nerves...

## LEARNINGS

The first session met a potential stumbling block when, instead of one year group filing into the hall, the entire school, some 210 children, arrived expecting musical entertainment. The boys met the challenge with courage, although it clearly limited the effectiveness and measurable 'success' of the session. It was very difficult for the boys to keep that number of different-aged children engaged, and their activities devised for 30-40 students did not necessarily lend themselves to over 200 individuals.

The most useful and effective ten minutes of the entire afternoon were during the bus journey home. The boys proved themselves to be highly reflective and realistic about the session, and spoke sensibly and creatively about how they could overcome the same difficulties were the same thing to happen again.

The rest of the term's placements went rather more smoothly, with the boys constantly refining and developing their ideas and delivery to match their audience. The most common themes in their post-activity debriefs included: pace of the sessions, too much 'faff' time between items, choice of repertoire, division of roles and responsibilities, success in engaging all the students.

“.....  
'over 70 parents and children are attending the  
concerts, and the series has become an established  
fixture in the musical diary for each term.'  
.....”

Towards the end of November we sat down to plan the projects for the following term, and the boys suggested they would rather work with a smaller number of schools more regularly, in order to build up better relationships with the students. This also meant they could devise a more challenging and linear project, as they would be seeing each school four times over the course of the term. The boys created a project that built on the previous term's work, with a clear set of musical objectives that they wanted the to children to achieve.

The visits went well, and at the time of writing the boys have just led a short workshop/concert in one of the host schools, together with children from another school and a small audience of parents and teachers. The boys have clearly enjoyed the project, and learned a great deal about how to engage young children in music-making. It was certainly not all successful, and the boys proved constructively critical when they considered the 'if we could do it all again' question in the wash-up to the project.

### **Wash-up themes included:**

- Choice of song is key. The most popular or recent hit from a movie seldom makes for the most effective or musically accessible repertoire.
  - The amount of time it took to get through the material was surprising.
  - To begin with, we tried to do too much too quickly.
- .....



- It became clear that reinforcing material and concepts was key – a good performance one week didn't guarantee they'd remember it in a fortnight's time.
- Less talking, more singing and music-making.
- Have a plan, but be prepared to adapt or move away from it if necessary.
- Seven year-olds are a remarkably astute and critical audience!

## NARRATIVE

### PROJECT 2 – Sunday Afternoon Children's Concerts

One of the first elements to consider was who was to be involved, who was to lead the sessions and who was to perform. It quickly became apparent that a natural, and as yet largely untapped resource, came from the school's visiting music teachers, who proved very receptive to the idea of leading the sessions. Another key tenet of the project was that the boy musicians at Eton should be very actively involved, both in the planning and the performances, and that this should provide a different performance platform than the usual concert hall or chapel service.

Following some brief research, members of the local community highlighted Sunday afternoons as a suitable time for these concerts. This crucially also suited our boys, as this time of the week tends to be rather quieter in terms of extra-curricular commitments. 30 minutes at 2:15pm was decided on, and three dates put into the school diary for the coming term. A selection of visiting music teachers volunteered to devise and lead the sessions, with a broad title given to each concert – 'Spotlight on Woodwind', 'Journey Around the World', 'Animal Crackers!'.

The boys took on a significant amount of the practical workload involved in staging the concerts – preparing the performance space, 'staffing' the concerts and providing refreshments. This sense of 'ownership' was an important factor in the devising of the project and, whilst not necessarily directly responsible for the musical content, they have taken an increasing lead in fronting the sessions and engaging the children. Having a dedicated team taking on these practicalities also allowed the leader of the session to concentrate solely on the musical delivery.



We also advertised the concerts in the primary schools involved in the Music Workshop projects led by boys in Year 12.



## COMMUNICATIONS

Publicity for the concert was achieved primarily through a poster campaign in the local community, word-of-mouth and social media. We also advertised the concerts in the primary schools involved in the Music Workshop projects led by boys in Year 12.

## IMPACT

The first concert proved a popular and very enjoyable event, with positive feedback from adults and children alike, and audience numbers have grown pleasingly since the first session in September 2017. At the time of writing, over 70 parents and children are attending the concerts, and the series has become an established fixture in the musical diary for each term.

## LEARNINGS

It is of course also important to reflect on the impact that the project has had on our own students, and what refinements and developments can be made. The boys have met new challenges – they've discovered that trying to engage and maintain the attention of a three year-old is not quite as easy as they may have originally thought, and it has become clear that repertoire choice is important. The boys have learned new skills and tricks involved in communicating with a responsive but not always predictable audience. Interestingly, the boys themselves were keen to maintain that these concerts were truly that – an opportunity to perform in front of a younger audience in a concert setting (however informal or noisy), rather than just entertaining childcare for half an hour.

### Early practical refinements:

- Too much chat between musical items meant a loss of concentration and interest.
- Be careful not to start the concert with too lively a warm-up – early experience showed it made it tricky to settle the children afterwards!
- Overly long musical items and too much of the same thing resulted in wandering attentions.
- Variety is key – different instruments, musical styles and different combinations (duet, trio, solo) are required.
- 30 minutes is long enough.
- Consider some form of practical activity for the children during the concert which would keep them busy but still engaged in the music. e.g Can they draw the instruments?

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The most effective and impactful tool has been this cadre of boys who are engagement-minded and willing to take a risk. The synergy of the two projects under the boys' stewardship has been very interesting and exciting to watch, and has given the projects an added dimension of energy and enthusiasm. It's also proved that projects, in their early stages, don't have to involve huge numbers of people or be in themselves innovative – some boys making some music with or for children in the local community has worked well, ...and has given our students the opportunity to take a lead and also take a chance.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- Wider engagement with the local community.
- Option for 'workshop' style sessions that actively involve and engage the children for half an hour.
- Marrying up the two strands of boy involvement in the Community Engagement Projects. Encouraging more children from the link primary schools to come to the concerts. This may also lead to those primary school children themselves performing in one of the concerts. The workshops that take place weekly on a Monday afternoon could be in preparation for a performance opportunity in a Sunday concert.

### Ed Yeo

Music Master and Head of Musical Outreach and Partnership  
Eton College

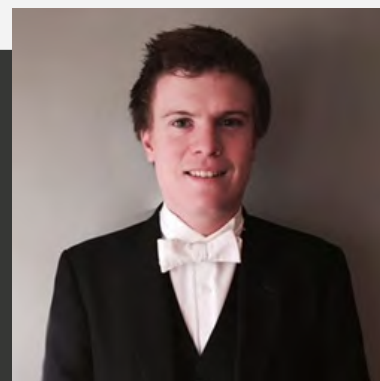
The synergy of the two projects under the boys' stewardship has been very interesting and exciting to watch, and has given the projects an added dimension of energy and enthusiasm.

## BIOGRAPHY

### Ed Yeo

Eton College

Ed Yeo studied Music at the University of Durham where he was also a choral scholar in the Cathedral Choir. He taught in Oxford for two years and has been on the full-time Music staff at Eton since 2012, where amongst other responsibilities he co-ordinates the musical outreach and partnerships projects.



## CASE STUDY

# Young Leader Programme

Ann Wright, VCM Foundation



### ABSTRACT

A low- to mid-complexity programme which will support independent schools in training up pupils to be musical ambassadors.

### PARTNERSHIPS

The VCM Foundation  
Colleges  
Primary schools  
Secondary schools  
Music Hubs

### BACKGROUND

The programme trains young people to lead music workshops for primary -aged children. It encourages musicians, as well as pupils who are willing to sing, to use music to build their teamwork, communication and leadership skills.

**The foundation introduced the programme to Bradfield College in 2012. It was designed to:**

- Enhance the Music Department's opportunities for musicians.
- Create an activity that IB Diploma pupils could use towards their Community, Action and Service requirement (CAS).
- Be used as part of the Bradfield Diploma for Year 10 and 11 (all pupils are encouraged to contribute to the wider community and think about teamwork and leadership skills).
- Develop the College's outreach to local primary and, eventually, secondary schools.

In 2014 the foundation began delivering the programme at St Benedict's, Ealing and in 2016 at the City of London School for Girls (CLSG).

Both St Benedict's and CLSG wanted to provide opportunities for their musicians to develop their musical and leadership skills, as well as to reach out to local primary schools. For CLSG the programme gave them the opportunity to include pupils from the City of London's secondary school academies, and reach City of London primary schools.

## FUNDING

Programme costs vary according to how many members of the VCM team are involved in delivering the project, how many training sessions the Young Leaders have in preparation for leading workshops, and how many workshop sessions the school would like to provide for primary schools.

The funding generally comes from the independent school's annual music budget, although Bradfield College initially also used some of the College's outreach budget for the programme.

## NARRATIVE

Our programme continues to develop.

The Young Leader Programme is firmly established at all three schools and has grown in terms of its reach and impact on both the independent and state school young leaders, and primary school children.

In 2014 Bradfield College began inviting secondary school pupils from Theale Green Academy to participate in the programme. They joined Bradfield pupils in a workshop with VOCES8, 4 evening training sessions with members of Apollo5, a day of visiting local primary schools with Apollo5 to help lead workshops in these schools, and then for a massed singing event at the College involving all the primary school children.



By 2016 the College's Music Department had a waiting list of pupils wanting to participate in the programme as did Theale Green Academy. They also had more primary schools asking to work with the young leaders than they could accommodate.



The programme has also grown at St Benedict's and now includes not only a day where the young leaders work with local primary school children and with VOCES8, but also a day at the VCM Foundation's home, the Gresham Centre, when the young leaders help lead a workshop and concert for primary school children from Hackney and Tower Hamlets. Young Leaders at St Benedict's have also taken responsibility for leading singing sessions during school open days and at St Benedict's Junior School.

At CLSG the programme has succeeded in engaging harder to reach pupils from City Academies. One academy has begun to use the programme as part of the Arts Award and interest in the annual project has led to discussions about expanding the programme.



## LEARNINGS

The main challenges in delivering a Young Leader Programme that involves an independent school and one or more secondary schools or academies, are communication and ensuring that pupils of varying musical abilities are supported, encouraged and challenged throughout. Much of this can be managed through careful planning and delivery by VCM's singing leaders. Communication between schools however, requires someone from the school hosting the project to send regular reminders to the schools involved and work closely with VCM.

It is often a good idea to begin with a pilot project. By keeping the number of participating secondary schools to 2 or 3 for the pilot, the host school can get to know staff and pupils more easily and identify potential problems quickly. Feedback can also be gathered throughout to allow everyone involved to respond to things that are working well and address any problems.

## IMPACT

Partner schools all want to continue participating in the projects and another independent school will begin their Young Leader Programme in September with a view to including a local secondary school. Primary schools report that the workshops led by the Young Leaders inspire the younger children to continue singing. Even boys in Years 5 and 6 are happy to sing when led by their secondary school peers.



Young Leaders consistently report that the programme helps improve not only their musical skills but also their confidence and their leadership skills.

In 2016 the VCM Foundation commissioned Professor Susan Hallam to evaluate the Young Leader Programme. One hundred secondary school pupils in Surrey participated in this evaluation.

### Highlights of this study include:

- 94% of participants indicated it helped build their confidence.
- 98% of participants indicated it helped develop their leadership skills.
- 92% indicated that the impact on their leadership and teamwork skills would continue after the project finished.



Young Leaders consistently report that the programme helps improve not only their musical skills but also their confidence and their leadership skills.



A number of Young Leaders have gone on to read Music at university. Some are training to become professional singers and at least three have become music teachers. Numerous Young Leaders report that the programme changed their musical aspirations and encouraged them to pursue singing either through formal studies or informally through ensemble singing.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

### Sharing the Project with the Music Education Sector

In the case of the Young Leader Programme, VCM has so far delivered the programme for six Music Hubs across the country (as well as for the schools mentioned in this case study). In September 2018 the foundation will begin a Young Leader Programme in partnership with Cambridgeshire Music, the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University and Cambridge Early Music.

Bradfield College has shared its experiences with the project through the MMA and with the London Chamber Orchestra's Education Project Manager.

As part of the City of London Corporation's schools, CLSG is committed to partnership working and the Young Leader Programme is part of a wide partnership programme involving the City's schools.



Through its use of singing as the means to teach leadership and teamwork skills, as well as to develop musicianship, VCM's Young Leader Programme has the potential to reach pupils in all types of schools around the UK.



Through its use of singing as the means to teach leadership and teamwork skills, as well as to develop musicianship, VCM's Young Leader Programme has the potential to reach pupils in all types of schools around the UK. The programme has helped secondary schools struggling to build a choir; encouraged more boys to sing; supported hundreds of pupils to develop their confidence, leadership and teamwork skills, singing ability and musicianship, and supported primary school singing. The programme has also given both independent and state secondary schools an exciting way to reach their local community through music-making and skill development.







The programme is also gaining international attention and I have been invited to give a presentation about it at The International Symposium of Singing and Song in June 2018.



VCM's partnership with Cambridgeshire Music and the Young Leader Programmes will be evaluated by a member of the Faculty of Education. Students from the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University will participate in the programme, learning both how to deliver workshops in schools and how to support partnership working.

The programme is also gaining international attention and I have been invited to give a presentation about it at The International Symposium of Singing and Song in June 2018.

Partnership working can provide a wealth of opportunities and valuable experiences for schools, pupils, teachers and communities. I would be happy to discuss what we have learned with anyone who is considering a partnership project.

### **Ann Wright**

Director of Education  
VCM Foundation

## **BIOGRAPHY**

### **Ann Wright** VCM Foundation

Ann Wright is Director of Education for the VCM Foundation whose vocal ensembles, VOCES8 and Apollo5, combine their performing with an inspiring and wide-reaching education program. In addition to leading and managing singing projects across the UK and in France, Ann researches and evaluates arts organisations working in partnership with schools, and the impact these partnerships have on pupils of all ages and abilities.



## CASE STUDY

# Partnership Choir & Production

Peter Hatch, King's College School



### ABSTRACT

A medium-complexity project which sees a range of different schools, primary and secondary, collaborating every year on a themed partnership production. This brings music together with the other performance arts.

### PARTNERSHIPS

King's College School  
St Mark's Academy  
Coombe Boys' School  
Coombe Girls' School  
Perseid School  
Cricket Green School  
Ricards Lodge School  
Raynes Park High School  
Bond Primary School

### BACKGROUND

Now in its fourth year, The Partnership Production, featuring the Partnership Choir, at King's College School takes place annually at the end of the spring term in the Collyer Hall Theatre at King's. Over 360 King's pupils are involved in community projects weekly on Friday afternoons; many of these feature the arts. The staff involved in these considered that it would be beneficial to draw all of these together so that they could culminate in one high-profile production, rather than a number of standalone performances, and so The Partnership Production was born.

The performance itself is very much seen as the end of a journey which is more important than its final destination.

### NARRATIVE

Each year the Director-in-Residence at King's chooses a story, which is then divided into scenes, each of which is then allocated to a different community project. The Partnership Choir's role in the production is to provide underscoring to scenes and to perform between scenes. A range of topics and stories have featured in previous productions including, two Canterbury Tales, The Pilgrim of Love (one of the tales of the Alhambra by Washington Irving), The Man who Planted Trees by Jean Giono and the medieval story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. The choice of material is extremely important, since it should be accessible, have themes which resonate with the cast and include a wholesome moral outcome. It is vital that all



members of staff involved are fully apprised about the material. Therefore a meeting of all staff involved takes place at the beginning of the academic year to launch the performance and discuss the possibilities. The choir draws its pupils from up to four different schools within the Wimbledon ISSP each year, St Mark's Academy, Coombe Boys' School, Coombe Girls' School and King's have participated in the project. Pupils meet together during the course of the autumn and spring terms to rehearse, either at King's or at one of the other schools. This enables the pupils to get to know each other and build relationships as the year progresses. Music staff from all schools are involved in helping to teach the repertoire and occasionally pupils have also taken a leading role. Up to 40 pupils have sung each year.



In addition to the choir, the other schools in the production have included two special schools, two secondary schools and a primary school, each of which performs a scene with pupils from King's. Over 150 pupils perform on stage annually in this production. Each scene is devised by the staff and pupils involved, with the overall director ensuring that there is a sense of continuity between the scenes. The Director-in-Residence visits each project during the course of the year to share ideas. All pupils involved in the production meet three times for run-through rehearsals with the Director. There is also a technical rehearsal. A dress rehearsal takes place during the afternoon of the day of the performance, which always takes place on the last day of the spring term, since all school facilities are available for use as term ends at 12.00pm. Due to the nature of the project, staff can share good practice and learn from each other through co-directing. Often pupils involved in the choir have been able to use the songs for their GCSE Music ensemble submissions. The project has strengthened the relationship between the schools involved since it has generated new staff contacts. King's pupils are in charge of designing and building the set in addition to composing original music to underscore the production.

The performance itself is very much seen as the end of a journey which is more important than its final destination. The rehearsal process enables pupils to work together with their teachers to prepare a performance of a high standard for the audience which is made up of parents and staff from the schools involved.

## FUNDING

The project is funded by King's and the Friends of King's. This covers costumes, materials for set, a stage manager, transport and sheet music. The total cost is in the region of £3000.



The most difficult thing about this project is ensuring continuity from year to year when staff leave schools.

This can be overcome by building excellent relationships with each school, especially with the Head Teacher, so that the project becomes embedded into the life of each school.



## LEARNINGS

The most difficult thing about this project is ensuring continuity from year to year when staff leave schools. This can be overcome by building excellent relationships with each school, especially with the Head Teacher, so that the project becomes embedded into the life of each school. Timing and the rhythm of the rehearsal process is also an important consideration, in addition to availability of facilities.

## COMMUNICATIONS

News about this project is communicated, by King's, via the Schools Together Website, King's Partnerships Twitter account and the King's website. Additionally, all schools involved publicise the project through their own social media accounts.



The project has been a huge success, enabling children from a wide range of backgrounds to perform together and work towards a common aim.

The project builds confidence, raises aspirations, encourages pupils to work together as a team and generates a real sense of community.



## MUSIC

The choir repertoire is chosen to fit with the theme of the production. It is always helpful to choose music which is accessible to a wide age range; in the past, pieces have included a selection from the film Les Choristes by Bruno Coulais, arrangements of spirituals, El Vito arranged by Emily Crocker and Sumer is Icumen In. The accompaniment for each piece is arranged for a small ensemble of instruments.

## IMPACT

The project has been a huge success, enabling children from a wide range of backgrounds to perform together and work towards a common aim. The project builds confidence, raises aspirations, encourages pupils to work together as a team and generates a real sense of community.

### Peter Hatch

Director of Partnerships & Outreach and Head of Academic Music  
King's College School

## BIOGRAPHY

### Peter Hatch

King's College School

Peter Hatch read Music at the University of Manchester. Whilst still at university, he led a music composition outreach project involving 30 primary school children at the Bridgewater Hall. He found this project inspirational and has worked passionately in this field during the past 19 years, spearheading cross-sector arts projects in a wide variety of primary and secondary schools in South West London, Kent and Northern Ireland.



## CASE STUDY

# Romany Wood

Martin Leigh, King Edward's School, Birmingham



### ABSTRACT

An ambitious medium-complexity project bringing a vast primary-aged choir into Birmingham's jaw-dropping Symphony Hall for a bespoke performance alongside the KES / KEHS symphony orchestra.

### PARTNERSHIPS

King Edward's School  
King Edward's High School for Girls  
Birmingham Symphony Hall  
Primary Schools

### BACKGROUND

It was an idea rooted in opportunity and generosity. King Edward's School (KES), working in partnership with King Edward's High School for Girls (KEHS), has a symphony orchestra of unusual scale, quality, and ambition. It's an extraordinary asset, 98 players strong, one we wanted to develop and promote by sharing it with others. The opportunity was King Edward's outreach programme, with its 200 annual events, its links, at last count, with 223 state-maintained primary schools, and its annual reach of 12,000 boys and girls. King Edward's Outreach won Best Independent-Maintained School Partnership at the TES Independent School of the Year awards in 2015.

The city of Birmingham is an opportunity, too. Its diversity is thrilling, the needs of many communities - often side-by-side in geography with areas of great affluence - real and pressing. At its physical heart is Symphony Hall, one of the world's great concert halls; at its educational core the two independent and seven grammar schools operating under one foundation, the Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham. Both the foundation and King Edward's School share a charitable purpose, widening access through assisted places, and through outreach work. The foundation funded the King Edward's Summer School, for instance, and its financial support made a project as complex and ambitious as Romany Wood possible.



...to perform together at Symphony Hall,  
to make music and meet each other, and to build relationships  
and links between disparate communities.



But it all started with a pupil at my wife's former school. He came from horrible deprivation, from one of the most excluded parts of Birmingham, and was a musician already of tremendous skill and still greater potential. His intelligence and energy, and the paucity of opportunity available to him I often remember, and he was the person I wanted to reach and whose aspirations I wanted to transform through Romany Wood.



The vision was to share KES/KEHS Symphony with primary-age pupils from across our city; to perform together at Symphony Hall, to make music and meet each other, and to build relationships and links between disparate communities. The participating schools would have the chance to start or grow a choir, the music leaders were to be generously supported, encouraged and trained; KES/KEHS Symphony would be challenged by and developed through an unfamiliar repertoire and the different musical challenges of working with solo voice and choir; a performance would be an opportunity to learn together in and from a world-class concert hall.



Romany Wood is a cantata for massed children's choirs, symphony orchestra, soprano soloist, and narrator. The music, by David Gaukroger, is both accomplished and attractive. Its vocal lines are completely appropriate for young voices, its music combining skilful pastiche with witty appropriation; the words, by David Carr, tell the story of a woodland wedding. It's a work I had performed before, and I had a good relationship with the composer.

And, whilst the preceding sounds impressive, and the vision behind it ambitious, it's these individual relationships that make a project of this size and ambition possible to conceive, and practical to enact. My relationship with the composer, and our contacts in the primary and preparatory schools; the relationship of a certain head with her peers, the trust that allowed us to offer a group of partnered schools this huge proposal, to be heard and be believed; the confidence that the splendid boys and girls of King Edward's would acquit themselves with skill and élan, be flexible, generous, and positive in making great things happen.

#### NARRATIVE

The project was conceived in June 2015, ran through the 2015-6 academic year, and culminated in a performance in June 2016. Contacts were refreshed and renewed in autumn 2015, through visits, invitations to concerts, and through the King Edward's outreach programme. And Symphony Hall was booked (it's important to remember that major venues work several years ahead, and bookings need to be made significantly in advance).



The participants were grouped into hubs by geography and by musical experience: it was more convenient for schools in the East of the city to work together, for instance. By contrast, one preparatory school is effectively a choir school, and its pupils would need significantly less support than others.



The first gathering of music leaders was in February 2016, a workshop day, run at one of the hub schools. The project was introduced, its vision outlined and its timetable agreed, and an experienced choral animateur worked with the group. Her brief was not only to teach the choir leaders the music of Romany Wood, show its strengths and warn of its pitfalls; but also to build confidence in them, model for them techniques for working with young voices, for building choirs. The leaders left with a packet of vocal scores or libretto booklets tailored to and sufficient for their choirs, a full score, and CD recordings of the work, and of its accompaniments. Although many of the music leaders were tremendous musicians, others had little experience; these recordings meant that the work could be taught without a piano and our packets meant that the cost of reproducing music was assumed centrally.



Symphony Hall is a large venue, and the vision of the project was not only that Charlie from Edgbaston would perform on stage with Sam from Chemsley Wood, but also that their parents and extended family would see them so doing.



Rehearsals started in the summer of 2016, assuming that one new musical number would be mastered in each weekly rehearsal. Members of King Edward’s staff and trusted musical colleagues were available to visit each school during this time, to support and to encourage. The whole enormous choir was rehearsed in two groups (we could not find a space large enough for it to rehearse together) in the weeks before.

Symphony Hall is a large venue, and the vision of the project was not only that Charlie from Edgbaston would perform on stage with Sam from Chemsley Wood, but also that their parents and extended family would see them so doing. Music has the potential not only to raise children's aspirations, but also change the way they are perceived by their peers and family; memories of Charlie's last, dreadful, parents' evening could be washed away by an angelic young face on stage. Tickets were thus allocated to each school according to the number in each choir. Although the tickets had a face value, and every ticket was paid for (and thus given value greater than its cost), the head of each participating school was asked to make an individual decision about how much to charge. This means that Charlie's parents paid the full face value of their tickets, but Sam's entire family were able to come for a nominal charge; that financial disadvantage was as far as possible not a factor in whether the parents were able to attend.



But this was not the only barrier. Symphony Hall and the city centre of Birmingham are close physically to some communities, but worlds away in accessibility and aspiration. Lifting these families' horizons was part of the business of Romany Wood. We encouraged the most enterprising heads to work together, chartering a fleet of buses to bring families from their clusters of schools to the centre of our city and their children's performance. This was the hardest outcome to measure, but our instinct is that this may have been the most profound good to come of our project.

The concert itself brought together 800 participants from 15 diverse schools, required a feat of logistics akin to the D-Day landings (you might be surprised how few lavatories there are backstage in the world's great concert halls), and raised nearly £1400 for Birmingham Children's Hospital.







## IMPACT

The outcomes are hard to measure - although the photography we commissioned tells its own story. But heads and music leaders were kind in their response:



.....  
'Romany Wood is an initiative which has captured both hearts and minds of children and teachers.'



.....  
'Without doubt this project has greatly enriched the lives of our children and families and will raise aspirations that all children can "aim for the stars"!' .....



.....  
Poppy in Year 5 said that this would be a 'once in a lifetime experience we would never forget'.



.....  
'It is a once in a lifetime experience singing in a venue such as Symphony Hall and they are very excited.'



.....  
'The enthusiasm for music on their faces is amazing to see.'





## WHAT'S NEXT

What comes next? The relationships cemented by Romany Wood continue in formal and informal collaboration, and the project lives on in memory and in choirs throughout Birmingham. Many of the participating schools continue to improve, in which improvement pupils' musical involvement surely has its part to play. We believe that the success of Romany Wood has helped teachers and leaders to take risks and to think big thoughts, promoting aspirations, not only musical, but social and academic too. There are boys, now my pupils at King Edward's who might not have applied to an independent school without the encouragement of Romany Wood.

And we are thinking big, too. We hope to commission a second work from David Gaukroger, this time telling the story of our city, its extraordinary achievements and its glorious diversity. If funding permits, this will make possible the purchase of sets of classroom instruments for participating schools, instruments to be used for the first time to perform Second City.

### Martin Leigh

Director of Music

King Edward's School, Birmingham

## BIOGRAPHY

### Martin Leigh

King Edward's School

Martin Leigh is Director of Music at King Edward's School in Birmingham.



## CASE STUDY

# The String Scheme

Dale Chambers, RGS Guildford



### ABSTRACT

A long-lasting, complex project which built on entry-level foundations to get hundreds of primary-aged children playing string instruments in Guildford.

### PARTNERSHIPS

RGS Guildford  
Investec International Music Festival (IIMF)  
Southern Pro Musica (SPM)  
Surrey Music Hub  
Lanesborough Preparatory School  
St Thomas of Canterbury School  
Sandfield Primary School  
Boxgrove Primary School

### BACKGROUND

The RGS String Scheme arose from an anxiety that fewer boys applying to our school were learning string instruments. As a strong string section forms the backbone of all 'traditional' music-making that the School's music department is proud to present, there was general support for 'something to be done.'



The scheme, led by Walija Chew who is a 'cello tutor at the RGS, flourished and continues to run nearly ten years on.



### NARRATIVE

Initially, RGS approached its associated, but separately managed prep school, and after nearly six months of negotiation we set up a 'string scheme' in Year 4. The scheme was compulsory for all pupils and was taught in curriculum time with lesson and instrument provision provided free of charge. It was hoped that after this introduction many boys would carry on learning in Years 5 and 6 but this would be at their own cost. The scheme, led by Walija Chew who is a 'cello tutor at the RGS, flourished and continues to run nearly ten years on.

About a year later, amongst the climate at the RGS of a general encouragement of staff pursuing individual outreach projects, Dale Chambers, the Head of Strings, approached a local primary school with the idea of setting up a similar scheme.

It should be admitted at this point that Dale's own children attended the primary school which certainly helped to establish the relationship and made contact and access much simpler. Frankly, the primary Headteacher met the idea that the funding could be found with total disbelief, and that the RGS would be able to provide the staff with the necessary skills to deliver it. In response to this, Dale taught a Dalcroze/Kodaly course to the Year 4s for a term, free of charge, to gain trust and also to allow time to source funds.

After four years of successful delivery, the scheme was extended to another local primary school, this time through a partnership with the Investec International Music Festival. Starting in a new school, without an established link brought its challenges. Each school has its own particular culture and different understandings about the time and space required to deliver the programme were real issues. Embedding routines and gentle (and, at times, not-so gentle) pressure were required to ensure that over time there was a growth of understanding. The end result is that the scheme is now well established, in its third iteration and generating pupils who wish to continue learning.



Then a year later, IIMF suggested that if the scheme could be extended to a third school it would apply to the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS) for a grant for a four-year project; the grant was awarded to cover instrument purchase and tuition costs for four years from 2018 onwards. This third school is a three-form intake school and roughly doubled the size of the scheme.

The String Scheme now teaches 180 children per week, in Year 4 in three maintained primary schools, in addition to continuing at the prep school. Currently, a further 40 children attend string orchestra rehearsals as they continue with their studies in Years 5 and 6 and we anticipate this will grow to approximately 90 children, as the new scheme matures. In total, The String Scheme will be teaching 270 children per week throughout the academic year for a period of four years.

Following the one off capital cost of the instrument purchase of £30,000, the annual running costs are roughly: tuition £15,000; instrument maintenance - £1,500; music printing £150.

Of those who have completed the scheme, between 15% and 20% of pupils have decided to continue with their studies. The lessons are usually arranged through the Surrey Music Hub and instruments are generally 'sold' to the pupils at around £40 on the proviso that they are bought back at the end of the pupil's use. This ensures a steady flow of half and three-quarter sized instruments cheaply available to pupils which is important as, in our experience, often the biggest barrier to continuing with lessons is not the cost of the lessons but the inertia on behalf of parents who are uncertain about which instrument to choose.



.....

**It brings together private schools, local music hubs, sponsors and children and gives many a taste of something they would not otherwise experience.**

.....



Children on the scheme give two concerts a year, one at their school and one at the RGS, and those who continue with their studies give three concerts a year, one of which is on stage at G Live as part of the SPM Family Concert, playing side by side with the professional orchestra.

.....



## FUNDING

.....

Finding the money was challenging. Dale set about writing to local companies (estate agents, lawyer's firms etc. and to the RGS parent base of musical children). Additionally, he approached commercial sponsors through his connections with the European String Teachers Association. There were two elements: raising money for tuition costs and also sourcing the instruments. With strong support from the Headmaster and Governors, the RGS management agreed that the project should go ahead and that, in addition, the RGS would act as guarantor against any losses not covered by fundraising.

.....



### By the end of the first year, the following had been sourced:

- Instruments were loaned free of charge by a local music shop. They were then bought by the scheme at around 50% of retail at the end of the first year.
- RGS parents donated a total of £500pa with the promise of 10 year funding.
- A trust fund donated £5000.
- The local music hub paid half of the tuition costs and counted the tuition 'on its books'.
- Allianz gave a significant discount for insurance.
- Strutt & Parker estate agency gave £2000.
- The RGS paid the balance (around £2000).

Subsequent years were financially enhanced by a grant from SPM, a professional orchestra, which had in turn been awarded a contract by Guildford Borough Council to deliver, amongst other things, education outreach to children in the borough. Subsequent expansion of the scheme has only been possible due to the generous funding by the IIMF and Community Foundation for Surrey. Amazingly, the bottom line is that the RGS from the second year onward did not have to contribute financially in cash terms to the String Scheme, though, of course, the hidden cost is Dale's time: all of the administration for the scheme is essentially paid for by the RGS via his salary.



The String Scheme is a glorious meeting of need and generosity. It places music at the heart of the community, in schools where it is so sorely needed...



#### MUSIC

The music for the scheme was written specially by Walija Chew who was a young student in London at the genesis of the Tower Hamlets project, led by Sheila Nelson. Sheila invited Walija to adapt the violin music for this scheme for 'cello.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Although we have not sought publicity, the scheme generates political interest: it was visited by Nick Gibb and Michael Gove when they were at the Department of Education and will be visited by Anne Milton in the near future. BBC South Today has also run a feature on the scheme and there have been articles in national publications as well as the local press.



## IMPACT

The String Scheme is a glorious meeting of need and generosity. It places music at the heart of the community, in schools where it is so sorely needed, and celebrates achievement in all its forms. It brings together private schools, local music hubs, sponsors and children and gives many a taste of something they would not otherwise experience.

So is it worth it? Dale Chambers expresses it thus: 'It is not the numbers of people who continue that is the point. It is certainly not about recruitment to the RGS - indeed, the numbers of boys applying to the RGS who have been through The String Scheme is minute in the grand scheme of things. Nor is it about the first 'graduates' of the scheme, now in the Sixth Form, who are gaining their diplomas in music on the violin or 'cello. Rather, it is those children who do not find life easy, whose home lives are not all they might, or should, be. It is the severely disabled boy in a wheelchair who struggled manfully with the 'cello for a year who, on going to a special secondary school has taken up music as part of his therapy sessions; or it is the child with serious behaviour problems, needing a constant one-to-one at school, who takes to the violin and, after, a few weeks, his carer has a 30-minute break because the child has become a normal learner. It is about the feeling of confidence that the whole school community gains as music-making becomes 'normal', routine and inclusive - it is aspirational without being elitist'.



...of all of the children who carried on learning following graduation from The String Scheme since its inception at the first primary school (8 years), only ten of those are no longer learning.



But if you want normal, boring evidence, it is this – of all of the children who carried on learning following graduation from The String Scheme since its inception at the first primary school (8 years), only ten of those are no longer learning. This means that 100 pupils are out there in Guildford secondary schools still struggling with the complexity that is learning to play a string instrument.

### Dale Chambers

Head of Strings  
RGS Guildford

## Dale Chambers

RGS Guildford

Dale Chambers is responsible for creating The String Scheme in Guildford and is active more widely in music education, recently serving as the Chair of the European String Teachers Association. He is also Orchestra Manager of the Southern Pro Musica which holds a substantial grant from Guildford Borough Council to provide classical music in the borough.



Funded by



## CASE STUDY

# Wassail!

Catherine Barker, United Learning



## ABSTRACT

**A project which commissioned new music to support the development of new repertoire for high-complexity, collaborative music projects across a large group of schools.**

## PARTNERSHIPS

United Learning (70 schools)  
Southwark Cathedral  
Royal Northern College of Music

## BACKGROUND

United Learning is a large schools group, currently made up of nearly 70 schools spanning across England, from Poole to Carlisle. The group engages with students from both the state and independent sectors and across all age ranges. Our group serves a diverse community, much of which is in the highest level of social deprivation: according to a DfE working paper we have the overall third most challenging intake of 20 large academy trusts. As part of our drive for school improvement, we place great emphasis on a strong arts education that broadens the horizons of our students and provides life-changing opportunities. We also want to inspire our teachers with events, training and support that brings out the best in United Learning staff. Importantly, through bringing together our students and staff we can achieve more through collaboration and partnership work, extending the opportunities offered to pupils across the entire group – for young people and staff from a wide range of backgrounds.

“.....  
‘All I want to do now is sing wherever I go!’  
.....”

The group has a history of supporting the creation of new music. ‘Every purpose under the heaven’ was commissioned as a gift to the United Church Schools Trust/United Learning Trust from Sir Ewan and Lady Harper to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. This project featured premieres in Sheffield and Westminster Abbey with the Combined Choir & Orchestra of United Church Schools Trust & United Learning Trust, with the composer, Howard Goodall, conducting. Following this, in 2016 over 1,000 students from across the group performed ‘Zimbe’ by Alexander L’Estrange at the Lyceum Theatre in London, conducted by the composer and the ‘Call Me Al’ band.

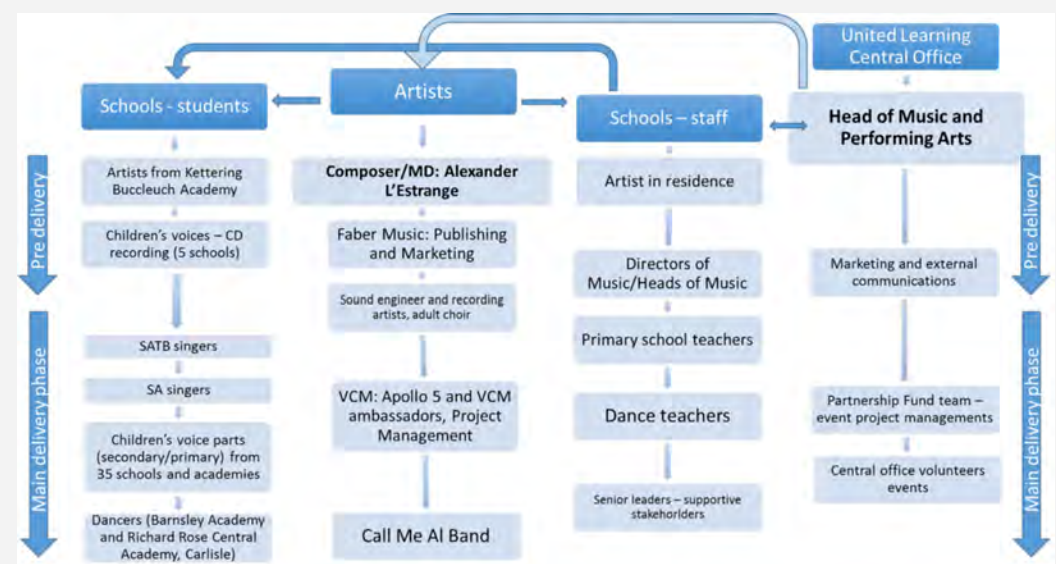
To capitalise on the momentum from these performances an ambitious cross-arts project, Wassail!, was planned around a new commission from Alexander L'Estrange, a leading British choral composer with track record in creating community choral works.

## NARRATIVE

### The priorities for Wassail! were:

1. To develop a mechanism for musical collaboration – i.e. to commission a piece that was accessible yet challenging, engaging as many schools as possible in the project: encouraging collaboration across our network and, as a legacy to the project, provide a vehicle for more schools and communities to work together in the future.
2. To inspire young people to get involved in the arts and take up singing, to continue singing, and experience from the associated benefits of performance: increased well-being, confidence, motivation and enthusiasm for learning.
3. To inspire staff and address their training needs by working directly with professional musicians, the composer and other musical partners: increasing staff confidence and professional motivation.
4. To advocate more broadly for music in schools in a challenging national context: winning the argument for music in all schools, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum/co-curricular offer.

### This ambitious project drew on skills and experience from across the education and music sectors:



### STAGE ONE – Commission/pre-delivery

Planning the commission began early in 2016. Alexander L'Estrange was keen to write a work for Christmas, seeing a gap in the market for a seasonal work: the songs themselves would draw on the very best of the English folk carol tradition, suitable for secular or sacred use. This theme allowed the group to link back to our founding purpose (as part of the United Church Schools Trust) and capitalise on seasonal repertoire that could become part of our schools' traditions following the planned performances at the end of 2017. The piece would also be scored for children's voices, SATB and 5 piece band, and feature a piano reduction for the vocal score.



Once the broad overview of the piece and potential of the project was defined, we submitted a large Arts Council bid. It had been hoped that the reach of the project would involve the English Folk Dance and Song Society, extending the activity into music hubs in Manchester, West Sussex and Northamptonshire (where we have a concentration of schools and could further extend the benefit of the new commission into primary schools and county ensembles). However, this bid was unsuccessful, and the scale of the project was retained within the United Learning group. Although disappointing, this did allow us to maximise the experience for our pupils and we were able to retain ownership over the entire project.



...we place great emphasis on a strong arts education that broadens the horizons of our students and provides life-changing opportunities.



Alexander L'Estrange began working on the piece in early 2017, completing the work early in the summer so that it was ready for perusal by the publisher. With a piece to promote, the venues were provisionally booked (Southwark Cathedral in London, 27.11.17, and the Royal Northern College of Music, 28.11.17) and the project was promoted to schools through our internal newsletters, to staff, enrichment leads and senior leaders – with an explainer video and project outline, alongside the ability to sign up through our intranet, 'UnitedHub'.

Alexander was keen to maximise on the momentum of the project, and worked quickly to create a CD of the work and the supportive resources for schools, recording instrumental and vocal parts from his home studio. The recording of the adult choir for the CD took place early in the summer of 2017, made up of the composer's choral friends and family and including a small number of United Learning and Faber staff. The recording was hosted by a United Learning school; Dunottar School in Reigate. This performance also acted as the proofread for the first edition of the work before it went to print during the summer. Prior to going to print, Alexander delivered a creative workshop at Kettering Buccleuch Academy in Northamptonshire, where he introduced the material to a group of talented artists and the academy's artist in residence. This group went on to design the cover art work, inspired by the themes of the work; included in the imagery are the Wassail! Cup, the Holly and the Ivy, 3 Ships and the Angel Gabriel. This was hurriedly delivered to the publisher in time for editing and inclusion on the final print edition, and the design elements feature throughout Wassail!.

With the score at the printers, the supportive resources for teachers were further developed, with considerable consultation with teachers from primary and secondary schools. Once created, the pack for teachers included: guide parts in SATB, guide parts for children's voices with audio cues from Alexander L'Estrange, children's score PDF with audio cues included in order to guide novice score readers through the notation, lyric sheets, PowerPoint presentation of the score with linked audio, and the PowerPoint as a video for rehearsal purposes. This extensive pack was uploaded to UnitedHub, available from the start of the new school year



in 2017 alongside the vocal score books that were purchased for every school taking part in the project.

At this point in delivery, the in-house web developer at United Learning developed a microsite, a small, simple website linked to our enrichment work, was created: featuring a video introduction to the work, twitter feed (#singWassail!) vlog gallery, news gallery and image gallery, it was straightforward to keep 'live' with new content following any activity.

## **STAGE TWO – Main delivery phase**

During the Autumn term in 2017, schools began rehearsing their singers for the concerts. At this point, schools who hadn't initially opted into Wassail! were approached personally, making sure that all schools had been given the opportunity to take part: any barriers that could be removed were addressed, such as by increasing staff training for non-specialists, supporting with transport costs, engaging with senior leader stakeholders and communicating directly with new staff in schools or schools that had recently joined the group. Additionally, schools were encouraged to learn the whole work, but were also made aware of when they would be taking a more prominent role on stage, so that these pieces could be learnt from memory and to a high standard (this was also a logistical necessity at Southwark Cathedral, where performance space was at a premium). With music to promote the work, we were also able to develop the multi-disciplinary strand to the project, selecting strong dance faculties in the north who were able to enhance this premiere performance with folk-inspired movement devised by staff and students. Again, the event plan containing all details for the concerts, was shared on UnitedHub, saving time and repeated email queries from the large number of schools taking part.



.....  
...through bringing together our students and staff we can  
achieve more through collaboration and partnership  
working, extending the opportunities offered to  
pupils across the entire group.



From early October, additional activity in schools began. Firstly, to complete the CD recording of Wassail!, Alexander L'Estrange completed a mini recording workshop tour around five schools in the group, across the state/independent sectors and encompassing both primary and secondary schools nationally, capturing the children's part for each piece in Wassail!

Secondly, support from the VCM Foundation was launched: beginning with a teacher CPD session at the Gresham Centre in London, where staff were introduced to warm up techniques and guided through the material in the work which was relayed live online, through Skype for Business, and then saved on UnitedHub in order to complement the supportive resources that had already been developed. This CPD session was followed by numerous workshop visits across the country, from Bournemouth to Barnsely via Manchester and London, all delivered by vocal ensemble Apollo 5 and the vocal ambassadors from the VCM Foundation.



Some schools chose to hold combined rehearsals, where schools were geographically close, but aside from internal workshops, schools rehearsed the material independently, making use of choir rehearsals, enrichment activity or class time, dependent on which group they had selected to take part in the performances. This had been approached in a wide variety of ways, with music teachers selecting established school choirs, new SATB ensembles, audition-only ensembles, KS3 singers, and even whole year group choirs and class choirs, where the musical material became embedded in the curriculum for the term. The #singWassail! hashtag allowed schools which were fluent in social media to share their rehearsal footage online, creating buzz and momentum as we moved towards to the première concerts.

Momentum continued through more activity directly before the concerts: to celebrate our very best musicians in the group, in the final run up to the events, a solo singer competition was held through UnitedHub. Staff were encouraged to submit a short recording of their best student performing the introductory phrases (What sweeter music can we bring...). Two strong singers in the south were selected to perform at Southwark Cathedral. At this point, schools also shared their final student lists so that an extensive programme featuring every single pupil name was created: an important momento for those taking part in the project, who also took home posters and certificates of attendance on the day for presentation back in school.



...for each element of delivery an associated press release was created that schools could adapt to their own setting.



### **The concerts**

The project culminated in the two première concerts, held back-to-back at the end of November. Following rehearsals during the day, approximately 550 staff and students performed to a packed Southwark Cathedral, accompanied by the Call Me Al band, and supported vocally by Apollo 5 who also led during selected moments of the concert. Performing side-by-side with the professional musicians who had coached students during the workshops was an important element of the project, giving confidence to the school performers, and ensuring that there were enough strong adult singers to give these important premières the best first performance possible. At the Royal Northern College of Music, approximately 450 staff and students performed at the second première, including the dancers from Barnsley and Carlisle. Being a music college, this venue provided further rehearsal space and larger breakout spaces, enabling Apollo 5 and the vocal ambassadors to lead more of the musical delivery throughout the day. United Learning central office staff supported with logistics throughout the day, from registration of students, liaising with the venues to the inevitable tidying and herding that takes place when large numbers of students come together. In addition to United Learning staff, a videographer was contracted for both days to capture the events, creating an essential tool for further promotion of the work in the group and a momento of the events themselves. The message of this film was agreed in advance, ensuring that the correct footage was captured and interviews with staff and students were planned effectively.

## FUNDING

This was an extremely large-scale project, where £55,000 was budgeted overall to cover all aspects of delivery. This included commission costs, workshops and travel, venue costs, artists costs for performances, travel support for schools, scores, printed materials and filming. On-costs for United Learning, such as salary costs for staff, web development and marketing are not included in this figure.

.....

It has provided a fantastic networking experience.

.....

## COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing, in particular, was essential in telling the story of the project from start to finish: 8hwe, a marketing agency, work with United Learning on external communications, and for this project they liaised effectively with United Learning staff, Faber and Schools Music to ensure that there was appropriate support in place for everyone involved. For example, for each element of delivery an associated press release was created that schools could adapt to their own setting (for the artwork, CD recording, workshops, performances). This content was embedded within the microsite and automatically updated on the Wassail! page. And, with the copy written, schools only needed to provide a quote and an image: an important time-saver for schools who needed to concentrate on the musical material.

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## LEARNINGS

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A large-scale project is high risk: there was huge investment from the start with commissioning, and there were multiple stakeholders to keep on board. In hindsight, the content of the work was a barrier to some United Learning schools: our academies, in particular, are multifaith, and the seasonal festive piece was a challenge for some communities to engage with, despite being secular for large sections. While some schools were able to address this, using a folk choral tradition as a way into British heritage and values, others found it more challenging – especially if they were without a music specialist. Additionally, the large collaborative events involve huge numbers amongst members of the public; waiting around time should be minimised, while also allowing enough time for breaks and food. Managing expectations before the event (reminding staff and students to bring a reading book, snacks and water etc) and sharing rehearsal schedules in advance is critical to maximise buy-in and foster understanding in advance.

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## IMPACT

As soon as the concerts had taken place, we sent all staff who participated post-event surveys, making use of Microsoft Forms. This is enabled for mobile forms, so worked well for teachers who are time-limited. The initial data shows us that the project was received overwhelmingly positively:

- 100% agreed that following taking part in the Wassail! choral project, their students were more enthused about choral singing.
- 95% agreed that their students more confident when performing since Wassail!
- 100% agreed that the Wassail! project provided their school with an exceptional and high quality performance opportunity.
- 75% of teachers developed their practice or learnt something new.

An open-ended question was included in the survey:

### **Following taking part in 'Wassail!', what have been the main benefits to your pupils and staff?**

These responses allowed us to capture the individual success stories in each school or academy, also providing excellent material for marketing and further promotion. Responses included:



'Huge benefit in inspiring our singers - approachable material sensibly arranged, in a fab venue with inspiring leader and live band. Those who attended will enthuse others in the school to participate more in school singing and other UL events.'

**(Independent school DoM)**



'CPD within music events and events on a larger scale which is something we are keen to develop. Students have thoroughly enjoyed the process and have shown how dedicated and talented they are. Their confidence has sky rocketed since the event.'

**(Academy music teacher)**

'We have developed our team work as a choir and pupils have had a chance to 'gel' together, spending the whole day rehearsing and on the trip, rather than a quick lunchtime rehearsal. Pupils have had the experience of working with professionals. Our boys in particular loved the basses joining them in the rehearsal. Great role models and made singing look 'cool'. It's such a job to persuade older boys to sing – they have come away full of enthusiasm and ready to begin our next work. As staff we have fully benefited from working with professionals and have taken away lots of inspiring and creative ways of encouraging children to develop their musicality. We have also got some wonderful pieces to perform in the End of Term Service and our Winter Concert. We're also looking at the possibility of a full performance of Wassail! next Christmas, perhaps the second half of our Winter Concert.'

**(Independent school DoM)**



‘Exceptional opportunity to be involved in such a large-scale, high-quality performance. The opportunity to work with professionals, and alongside other schools is invaluable to both students and staff. A real ‘feel good factor’ about something they never thought they would enjoy so much (traditional songs). Once in a lifetime experience for some students of singing in such a beautiful venue to a large audience (although probably not as they are in United Learning!)’

**(Academy Faculty Leader)**



A wonderful conclusion to the project was nomination for, and subsequent winning of the Music Teacher ‘Best Classical Education Music Initiative 2018’: this was voted for by popular vote, through the Classic FM website, and is a great testament to how schools and the broader public have received the piece and project as a whole. The award will further ensure that the piece itself has legacy beyond our premières, and has satisfied our need to advocate for large musical projects that make the case for music in our schools. Following the award, in our group alone, four schools are reintroducing music back into the KS3 curriculum after years of no provision, and schools are increasing staffing in this area – all at a time when the national picture suggests otherwise. This is the real legacy of Wassail: more music making, and recognition of the power of music to draw out the best in everyone.

## WHAT’S NEXT?

Feedback has been incredibly important for us to build the narrative as we lead into our next planned large-scale performance, tentatively planned for Summer 2019. This will be a fully multi-disciplinary project, engaging music, drama, dance and art teachers from across our group, partnering with significant national arts organisations for delivery and embedding activity within curriculum as much as possible. It is likely to be based around opera also, facilitating a cross-arts approach and providing the stretch required for engaging as many schools as possible across our diverse group.

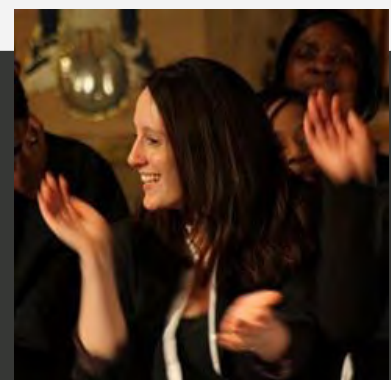
### Catherine Barker

Head of Music and Performing Arts  
United Learning

## BIOGRAPHY

### Catherine Barker United Learning

Catherine Barker is the Head of Music and Performing Arts in United Learning. Alongside supporting teachers in the group, she also leads groupwide events and has developed the groupwide cultural festival and KS3 curriculum. Prior to United Learning, Catherine led faculties in outstanding inner London schools, where she began her career as the first Teach First music teacher.





## CASE STUDY

# Noye's Fludde

Simon Toyne, David Ross Education Trust



## ABSTRACT

**A high-complexity project with ambitious social goals which brought together schools across an MAT with an independent school in a collaborative performance.**

## PARTNERSHIPS

Nevill Holt Opera  
David Ross Education Trust  
Oakham School  
Rutland Music Hub

## BACKGROUND

The Music Strategy for the 34 primary and secondary academies of the David Ross Education Trust began to be implemented in September 2015. One of the first things we wanted to address was the amount and quality of singing taking place in the schools, with the aim for every school to have a regularly-rehearsing choir allied to meaningful singing in the Curriculum. Key to delivering this was providing guidance for primary music leads and support for secondary heads of music through CPD, as well as mounting some high-profile Trust-wide events in which schools would take part and be able to compare their progress against each other. We held a number of Carol Services in churches across the region (Northants, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and the Humber), soon followed by Primary Music Festivals in Grimsby and Northampton and a Secondary Music Cup in Newark. Schools took part with enthusiasm, but the ambition and musical quality was uneven, depending in part upon the musical experience of the teachers leading the students, but also upon the access of schools to regular high-quality, professional music-making.



One of the first things we wanted to address was the amount and quality of singing taking place in the schools, with the aim for every school to have a regularly rehearsing choir allied to meaningful singing in the Curriculum.



It soon became clear that the biggest need was for students, teachers, senior leadership teams and parents to experience professional musicians working with them – not only so they would be inspired by them, but so they could see what children can actually do. Too often the musical bar was being set too low, with the result that music as a discipline, and as a subject, was being under-valued. We needed to emphasise the length of time involved in the process, how quality

increased with a professional approach to preparation and rehearsal, and to provide a public showcase of our seriousness of intent... that music really matters.

Nevill Holt Opera had enjoyed a partnership with our leading secondary academy, Malcolm Arnold Academy in Northampton, and had recruited children from MAA to sing in productions in *La Bohème* and *Carmen*. This partnership developed to include 'Write an Aria' workshops in our 10 secondary academies, followed by free tickets to the dress rehearsal of their summer productions. As a result we decided to put on Britten's community opera *Noye's Fludde* in a spectacular existing staging by Oliver Mears from Northern Ireland Opera.



## PARTNERSHIPS

Nevill Holt Opera took full ownership of the project, including the artistic and musical direction, engagement of the principal artists (Jonathan Lemalu, Heather Lowe and Petroc Trelawny), production management and undertaking funding applications. We committed to recruit and train all the singing children (around 85 in total) from our schools in Northamptonshire; Oakham School led the recruitment and coaching of the large orchestra, with its students working alongside musicians from the Rutland Music Hub; and the CBSO provided the principal players for the orchestra.

## FUNDING

This was a large-scale project as part of the Nevill Holt Summer Opera Festival. The major funding of the project came from the David Ross Foundation and Garfield Weston Foundation, with around 20% of the overall costs raised through individual donations. The project was awarded a sizeable grant from Arts Council England as part of its 'Grants for the Arts' scheme – central to the success of the bid was the partnership between a professional opera company (Nevill Holt Opera), players from an Arts Council supported orchestra (CBSO), a leading independent school (Oakham), a large number of state schools through a multi-academy trust (DRET) and, essentially, all partnered with the local music hub (Rutland Music Hub).

## NARRATIVE

Although the vital behind-the-scenes work was being undertaken from the beginning of the academic year, the key work on the ground began in February 2017 and continued until the performances at the beginning of July 2017. We began with a week of workshops in our Northampton schools, in which over 2000 students experienced Jonathan Lemalu singing (including a 'Flashmob' lunchtime performance in the Atrium at MAA) and 300 students took part in workshops in which they devised truncated versions of Noye's Fludde. Casting took place the following weekend from among these students, and they were coached over the next two months by Simon Toyne, DRET Executive Director of Music, in visits to their schools.



It soon became clear that the biggest need was for students, teachers, senior leadership teams and parents to experience professional musicians working with them – not only so they would be inspired by them, but so they could see what children can actually do.



With an operation of this size, we needed to minimise disruption to schools, and so the production rehearsals took place every day during the summer half-term (a condition of being accepted into the cast was to be available for this), with on-site rehearsals then taking place in the final week of June during afternoons and evenings. Orchestral rehearsals took place on consecutive Sunday afternoons at Oakham, with separate trumpet and handbell rehearsals being held at schools and being supervised by Nicholas Chalmers (NHO Artistic Director).

There were four performances in all, on the first Saturday and Sunday afternoons in July, all playing to large and appreciative audiences, many of whom had not experienced an opera before. The Dress Rehearsal had taken place on the previous Friday afternoon, at the end of an away-day for DRET's Headteachers, meaning that the whole Senior Leadership Team of the Trust was able to see the work.

## LEARNINGS

With many different organisations working together, there was occasionally an uncertainty about who was in a position to make decisions, but these moments were negligible. When we produce the work again (hopefully in Grimsby in 2019), the two areas which will be tighter will be the co-ordination and supervision of transport arrangements for the children (which will be entirely managed from one source, including chaperoning / staff help), and the co-ordination of publicity during and after the event. Each partner involved generated their own publicity, with the result that there was an inequality in the acknowledgement of all the partners in communications and social media – in future, there will be one organisation creating and co-ordinating press releases.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Both Nevill Holt Opera and the David Ross Education Trust have communications teams who worked on the project. In addition to local press, there was substantial social media coverage, as well as the word-of-mouth generated by the amount of children and number of schools involved. Through NHO, Jonathan Lemalu appeared on BBC Radio 3's In Tune to publicise the project; as a result, the show played to a total audience of 1600 people (many more than budgeted for).

## MUSIC

The central focus of this project was the outstanding work by Benjamin Britten, tailored so beautifully to children's voices and mindsets. Everyone engaged in this fully, and the production as a whole had strong artistic integrity. But an unforeseen consequence was the way in which the children engaged with the three hymns which lie at the beginning, middle and end of the opera. For most, this was their first experience singing hymns – wonderfully, many of them went back to their schools and have asked to sing hymns in assembly. The schools have obliged!

## IMPACT

The overall aim of the project, led by Nevill Holt Opera, was "to bring together all of the essential elements that make Nevill Holt Opera a great destination for the arts in the East Midlands; opera, education and community engagement in a beautiful setting. This was recognised within the community when the production won Best Event at the Leicestershire Tourism Awards 2017.

### **The objectives were as follows:**

- 1.** To enhance the lives of young people in the region by providing a performing opportunity for them with a professional company.
- 2.** To engage a large number of local school children in live music-making and introducing a new generation to opera.
- 3.** To achieve the highest possible professional standard – creating a collaboration between professional musicians, directors and school-age pupils.
- 4.** To engage and inspire a broad spectrum of young people who might otherwise not have had an opportunity to engage in opera.
- 5.** To engage parents with classical music and opera.
- 6.** To demonstrate to school Principals, Senior Leadership Teams and teachers what children can achieve with the appropriate level of challenge.
- 7.** To attract a different audience to the final performance than the usual festival audience - an audience that might not otherwise be able to access live staged opera.
- 8.** To make a high-quality performance that focused on teamwork, community and enjoyment, bringing together children from different schools and backgrounds through Opera and music.



All of these were achieved with remarkable efficiency. 68% of the audience were new to NHO and 30% had never seen opera performed live before. Similarly, before the project 63% of the children performing had never seen opera performed live before. 38% of the children did not sing in a choir, and 25% of the children did not play a musical instrument. They all do now!

Participant feedback includes: 'My opinion of opera was that it was a world that only certain people belonged in, but now I realise that opportunities like this give access to people who didn't know about opera, and even people who have never sung before.' All performing respondents stated that they would be interested to participate in a similar opportunity in the future, with one saying 'It was brilliant! If there is any chance of this type of thing happening again, I would accept in a heartbeat.'

From a Trust perspective, all the key decision-makers saw the dress rehearsal, and some returned over the course of the weekend with their families. This has led to a real sense of engagement in the development of the Music programme across the Trust, with Heads and Principals being able to see the effect on the students in their schools. The amount of growth in our schools since then – including our award-winning Singing Schools Programme – has been significant.



...the production won

Best Event at the Leicestershire Tourism Awards 2017.



#### WHAT'S NEXT

The relationship between Nevill Holt Opera and the Trust continues to develop excitingly. Across the Spring and Summer Terms 2018, 100 secondary students from all of our academies are taking part in the Bel canto project, receiving regular one-to-one tuition from NHO artists from a Nevill Holt Songbook including songs such as Caro mio ben and Verdi prati. These students then become Young Friends of NHO, attending the dress rehearsals of Figaro and Powder her Face, and a 50-strong Trust Choir is being formed from these students. We are committed to mounting a similar community opera every two years, and are exploring the possibility of restaging Noye's Fludde in Grimsby Harbour in July 2019.

**Simon Toyne**

Executive Director of Music  
David Ross Education Trust



“.....  
‘My opinion of opera was that it was a world that only certain people belonged in, but now I realise that opportunities like this give access to people who didn’t know about opera, and even people who have never sung before.’  
.....”

“.....  
‘It was brilliant! If there is any chance of this type of thing happening again, I would accept in a heartbeat.’  
.....”

## BIOGRAPHY

### Simon Toyne

#### David Ross Education Trust

Simon Toyne is Executive Director of Music of the David Ross Education Trust, where he is responsible for the development of music across over 30 state primary and secondary schools in the East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber. He is President-Elect of the MMA and is a Director of the Eton Choral Courses.





For more information, contact:

**Tom Arbuthnott**

Chair of Schools Together Group 2017-18

[www.schoolstogether.org](http://www.schoolstogether.org)

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