

17 March 2016

Berkshire Maestros receives grants for gala concert

Berkshire Maestros has been awarded two grants to support the participation of children in their gala concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London on Sunday 1st May. *A Celebration of Music in Berkshire* will bring together over 1000 children from across Berkshire to perform on-stage at what must surely be the most prestigious concert venue in the country. Grants received from both Thatcham Town Council and Greenham Common Trust will support the involvement of children from the West Berkshire area.

Vanessa Harbutt (Marketing and Fundraising Officer for Berkshire Maestros) said:

“These grants are fantastic news for us! This is the biggest concert that we will put on this year and we want to give as many children as possible this special opportunity. However it is a very expensive event to put on, with the cost of transporting all those children to central London being one of the greatest costs. These grants will enable us to transport the children safely and securely, as well as transporting the instruments that they will use.”

The most complicated instruments to transport will be sets of steel drums for Berkshire Maestros partner organisation Culture Mix. 50 performers of Berkshire Youth Steel Percussion Orchestra will be playing two pieces as part of the concert programme and transporting those children’s instruments presents unique challenges!

Mary Genis from Culture Mix said:

“CultureMix is delighted to be involved in this fantastic opportunity for the Berkshire Youth Steel Percussion Orchestra to perform at the Royal Albert Hall. Working in partnership with Berkshire Maestros enables so many West Berkshire children to benefit from such an inspirational experience. Our thanks go to Thatcham Town Council and the Greenham Common Trust for choosing to support this once-in-a-lifetime chance.”

Louise McGahon, Berkshire Maestros Head of Voice and project manager of the Royal Albert Hall concert, added:

“This is the type of event that children do not get to perform in through their normal school lives. It will widen their musical knowledge and enhance their team-building and social skills. We have started our rehearsals and I have been delighted by the enthusiasm and engagement demonstrated by the children. They will gain a huge sense of achievement that will encourage them to not only explore music further but also to have the confidence to join local choirs and ensembles.”

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In addition to the massed choirs from the schools will be performers from Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra, Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra and Berkshire Youth Choir. Their numbers will be enhanced by the BBC Concert Orchestra. The programme of the concert will focus upon works from the BBC's *Ten Pieces* project which is an exciting initiative from the BBC that aims to open up the world of classical music to a generation of children and inspire them to develop their own creative responses to the music.

Tickets for this special concert can be bought directly from the Royal Albert Hall website or directly from Berkshire Maestros website.

For seats in stalls: <http://www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/events/2016/a-celebration-of-music-in-berkshire>

For seats in boxes: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/date/FDFKMI>

Follow #ACelebrationofMusicinBerkshire to receive updates about this special concert.



Ends

Notes to Editors

Berkshire Maestros

- Berkshire Maestros is a charitable trust providing music education opportunities to children and young people in Berkshire. Established in 1982 as the Berkshire Young Musicians Trust, it rebranded as Berkshire Maestros in 2006 and is the provider of music tuition in schools and music centres for Bracknell Forest, Reading, the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, West Berkshire and Wokingham Unitary Authorities.
- We run hundreds of bands, choirs and orchestras to allow children to build on their lesson experience. These take place at our music centres based in Bracknell, Wokingham, Newbury, Reading and Windsor

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- If you would like more information, please contact Vanessa Harbutt, Marketing Officer on 0118 901 2357, or email vanessaharbutt@berkshiremaestros.org.uk

Culture Mix

- CultureMix Arts Ltd is a not for profit organisation specialising in steel pan music, carnival arts, Caribbean culture, dance, entertainment and education for all ages and all sectors.
- CultureMix is the home of RASPO - Reading All Steel Percussion Orchestra one of the UK's premier steel bands.
- Their mission is to widely promote and raise awareness of the benefits of participation in carnival arts and music by encouraging access, education services to schools, professional development, employment and entertainment locally, nationally and internationally.
- If you would like more information about Culture Mix please contact Mary Genis on 0797 325 1919, e-mail mary@culturemixarts.co.uk or go to their website <http://www.culturemixarts.co.uk/>