

MUSIC FOR LIFE

Annual Report 2016



To encourage a life-long love of music within our young people

sower**b**y
music

(Registered Charity No. 1061719)

www.sowerbymusic.org.uk

MUSIC FOR LIFE

A review of Sowerby Music's 20th annual programme for primary and special schools, the most ambitious and longest running outreach support to be organised by a music society in this country

SCHOOLS

Almost 4000 pupils attending 31 schools experienced *Music for Life* visits during 2016. The schools involved, mainly in the Hambleton District of North Yorkshire, were:-

Ainderby Steeple, Aiskew Leeming Bar, Alanbrooke, All Saints, Alverton, Applegarth, Baldersby St James, Brafferton, Broomfield, Carlton Miniott, Crayke, The Dales, Dishforth Airfield, Greystone, Huby, Husthwaite, Kirby Hill, Knayton, Leeming RAF, Mill Hill, Mowbray, Pickhill, Romanby, Sacred Heart, Sessay, South Kilvington, South Otterington, Sowerby, Thirsk, Thornton Watlass and Snape Federation, Topcliffe.

Our loyal family of schools regard the annual *Music for Life* sessions to be a “fabulous resource”. They highly value the relatively rare opportunity for youngsters to engage with live music and to be enthused by inspiring performers during both concert and workshop sessions.

PERFORMERS

Naomi Atherton (French horn) and James Manson (double bass & charanga)

Helen Bywater and Marianne Rawles (clarinet and saxophone)

Janet Fulton (percussion)

Barbara Grunthal (cello) and Ryan Breen (tuba)

Stewart Hardy and Sophy Ball (fiddle)

6pac Jazz Trio - Gavin Barras (double bass), Ben Gray (drums) and Andrew Stamatakis-Brown (piano)

Helen Quayle (trumpet) and Ben Hudson (bassoon)

James Stretton - World of Brass

Voice Matters - David Howard (tenor), Frances Brock and Julia Haigh (sopranos)

We are fortunate to have a pool of excellent performers who by and large return each year having developed a special relationship with Sowerby Music. However 2016 was the swansong for Voice Matters who have enthusiastically supported *Music for Life* for 15 years. During that time thousands of children have enjoyed their concert programme and learning two part songs and humorous action songs during the workshops. The trio invariably introduced and reinforced teaching points about vocal production and the importance of listening and thinking attentively when singing in a group.

STEWART HARDY and SOPHY BALL

This year Stewart returned with a new music partner Sophy Ball (both fiddle players). They had devised a new concert programme delivered at a cracking pace and combining lots of fun, factual information and pupil participation.

They explained the stylistic difference of sounds between violin and fiddle playing, demonstrating this with 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'. Children enjoyed listening to four traditional fiddle tunes from the North-East; they focussed on listening for styles of accompaniment, such as "who is playing the melody/chords?" and "who is playing the same tune/counter melody?" Czardas with its tempo and mood changes and contrasting sound effects of bowing arcs and plucking pizzicato was much enjoyed.

The workshop introduced the youngsters to ceilidh dancing where they learnt the relatively easy 'Circassian Circle' followed by the more difficult 'Bridge of Athlone' with 4 sections. Succinct instructions quickly helped to overcome initial apprehension. At first the pupils relied on the calling cues but were soon listening to changes in music for each part of the dance.

Boys and girls of all ages appreciated the social aspects of dancing. The discipline of dance increased their self-esteem particularly during the end of day sharing with the whole school.

NEW FEATURES

Thirsk Cluster's visit to The Sage Gateshead

In March, Sowerby Music bought tickets for 80 pupils from the Thirsk school cluster to attend a concert at The Sage Gateshead. The Royal Northern Sinfonia orchestra performed the BBC's 'Ten Pieces' which had been selected for a resource pack designed to introduce classical music to primary aged children in an accessible format. The pieces were familiar to the group who had previously followed the DVD in their schools; even more so for those from Carlton Miniott School who were involved in the filming of the series.

The pupils responded enthusiastically to the entire programme. Their favourite pieces were Grieg's 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' and Vaughan Williams' 'Lark Ascending' which evoked contrasting emotive and imaginative responses to music.

The visit provided the youngsters with the thrill of entering this world renowned music venue with its unique architecture as well as experiencing a live compered orchestral concert in the huge Hall One, after some anxious moments waiting for the electricity power to be restored!

Mini residency at The Dales School

Given the complex needs of young people attending The Dales School who learn mostly by sensory stimulus it was agreed that Janet Fulton (percussionist) would undertake a mini residency there. During 4 morning visits she was able to build a relationship with small groups helping individual youngsters to gain confidence exploring instruments and singing. She was considerably helped by staff with portorage and being fully involved in the workshops.

With the primary age group group, Janet was keen for pupils to explore different timbres of sound, pitch and lighter rhythms. The aim for the second group of post 16 students was to get them to do more thinking and to make decisions about how they would like to develop their orchestra. For example, they wanted to write a song as one component so she played a number of simple chord structures and each student took turns to sing their version of what the next bit could be.

The final session witnessed the world premiere of their work for the whole school and some parents. It was noticeable that some pupils were moving more energetically and using instruments for longer than previously. A lovely sound world was created by the primary group incorporating gongs and long chimes alongside much smaller instruments. The older group arrived early because they wanted to rehearse their piece and to make last minute changes. They excelled themselves during the performance. Even one young man who previously had found it difficult to leave the security of his seat played his part on the bells perfectly.

All of the youngsters enormously enjoyed their musical experience where they were introduced to a different language for interacting with people and a different space within which to explore feelings. A DVD of the world premiere can be viewed on Sowerby Music's website.

Janet, who is a vice president of Sowerby Music, also visited 2 primary schools during her 17th year with *Music for Life*. Her cross-curriculum workshops were much appreciated by these schools.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Music for Life visits are particularly useful to inexperienced or less confident staff. Their participation in the workshops introduces them to effective strategies for organising pupils and activities in class music lessons. One example mentioned by several schools involved in the post-visit evaluation discussions was how to enable small groups of youngsters to plan and develop their own ideas.

The workshops also provide the opportunity for staff to observe the level of concentration required and achieved by pupils in order to hone

individual contributions and to work co-operatively with others. They became more aware of both the extent to which children are prepared to work outside their comfort zone and of how to encourage reluctant pupils to participate.

All the performers prepare easily accessible follow-up generic resources for class music sessions. Examples of specific follow-up work generated by a *Music for Life* visit include using music to enhance literacy activities such as story telling, writing songs and using rhythms to develop poetry writing. Some schools were inspired to introduce music from different countries, folk music and to research families of the orchestra with the use of ipads.

LOOKING AHEAD

Sowerby Music Patrons fund 75% of the *Music for Life* budget. Thanks to their continuing support we are able to plan confidently to celebrate our 21st anniversary year in 2017 remembering the amazing legacy of our late chairman, Martin Hooper, who founded *Music for Life*.

Front cover photograph: Picnic at The Sage Gateshead for some Thirsk Cluster schools prior to the concert



Above: A South Kilvington pupil's first attempt to co-ordinate hands & feet on Ben Gray's drum kit

For further information: Pat Elton via www.SowerbyMusic.org.uk