

Thursday 28th January 2016

Young musicians fundraising success for tour to China!

The young musicians at Berkshire Maestros have been hard at work fundraising for their forthcoming tour to China. As Chinese New Year approaches, Berkshire Maestros takes a moment to review what these youngsters have achieved so far.

In the Chinese Year of the Monkey, Berkshire Maestros will be taking 160 children and young people on a ten day tour to China in July. Maestros' groups Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra, Berkshire Youth Choir and Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra will perform concerts in Shanghai, Beijing and Tianjin to potential audiences into the thousands. With the whole tour costing £270,000, there is a significant requirement for each student to play their part in contributing to the target and they have all been busy in their own ways by carol singing, playing gigs, car washing and making craft items to sell.

Louise McGahon (Head of Voice for Berkshire Maestros) said: *"The students have been working very hard both independently and as part of our groups to raise the funds that they need to participate in this fantastic opportunity. The experience they gain from the tour will benefit them personally and socially as well as giving them some substantial musical experience to put onto their CVs. Even the process of setting an individual fundraising target and striving to achieve it will help them to grow in confidence and gain valuable life skills for the future."*

Each student is tasked with raising £900 towards their own costs of attending the tour, but the Corporate Team at Berkshire Maestros is also working hard to organise fundraising events for the groups. In December over £500 was raised by groups of students singing carols at Reading Train Station and at Sainsbury's in Calcot. Money is also coming in from a tuck shop that has been launched at the Reading Music Centre near Prospect School.

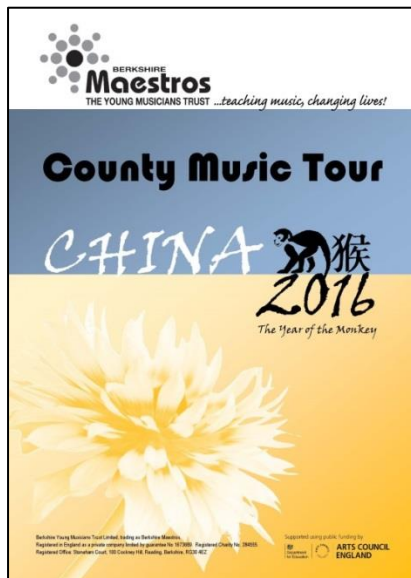
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Vanessa Harbutt (Marketing and Fundraising Officer for Berkshire Maestros) said: *"It has been wonderful to see so many of our learners becoming so enthused by their fundraising activity and there has been some genuine hard work taking place, such as the student who has been washing her parent's cars and her neighbours cars every two weeks. But there is still a long way to go to achieve our full target and we must keep focused on the final prize."*

Louise McGahon added *"We are also doing everything we can as an organisation to obtain fundraising and sponsorship collectively from other organisations and businesses so that our organisation is supporting the sterling effort being put in by our students."*

Dorian Edwards (Musical Director for Thames Valley Community Choir) worked with Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra in a recent concert which was raising funds for the tour to China. He said: *"I have had the pleasure of working with the BYSO on two occasions and I am proud to have shared a stage with this wonderful group of talented young musicians. I am delighted to have worked with them to help support their fundraising for their tour. Their dedication and developing musical skill makes them a fine example of Berkshire Maestro's commitment to offering young aspiring musicians the best opportunity to grow and refine their talents."*



Many of the students have come together to form their own chamber groups or ensembles so that they can take paying gigs to boost their funds. There are now numerous string

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quartets, barbershop groups and vocal ensembles available to hire for weddings and corporate events.

If you are interested in hiring an ensemble or if you want to find out how to make a donation to help the students raise more funds for this trip then please contact Berkshire Maestros using 0118 901 2370 or e-mail admin@berkshiremaestros.org.uk.

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