

27th April 2016

1,500 Berkshire children to perform in gala concert at the Royal Albert Hall

On **Sunday 1st May** the music education charity Berkshire Maestros will take over 1,500 children from Berkshire to perform in a gala concert at the Royal Albert Hall. *A Celebration of Music in Berkshire* will bring together primary and secondary school children from across the county to sing and play in what must surely be the most prestigious concert venue in the country.

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. 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.”

The children have been rehearsing their pieces at school for weeks. They will come together as a massed choir to sing pieces such as the *Hallelujah Chorus* by Handel and *Mamma Mia* by ABBA; such a large number of children singing will be sure to raise the roof!

Berkshire Maestros is putting on this concert in partnership with Culture Mix who will be bringing a steel band to the stage. Their Berkshire Youth Steel Percussion Orchestra will be playing two pieces to open the programme.

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 Berkshire children to benefit from such an inspirational experience.”

Also appearing will be Berkshire Maestros showcase groups Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra, Berkshire Youth Choir, Berkshire Young Voices and Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra. They will be supported by players from the BBC Concert Orchestra.

The pieces being performed range from traditional choral works by composers such as Mozart and Verdi, to songs from musicals such as *Oliver!* and *West Side Story*, and also a

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world premiere of a new guitar piece by Gary Ryan. Much of the inspiration for the choice of pieces has come from the BBC's *Ten Pieces* initiative.

This concert will be an event that will create lifelong memories for the children who participate. It is one of the many ways that Berkshire Maestros is teaching music in order to change lives.

Lynne Ellis, Chief Executive Officer for Berkshire Maestros, said:

"BBC's Ten Pieces is a truly innovative and accessible scheme that is opening up the world of classical music to new generations of children, inspiring them to create their own compositions and develop as musicians."

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