

4th August 2016:

Berkshire county youth music ensembles: outstanding concert tour to China

A large cohort of over 150 young musicians from Berkshire Maestros' county groups has just returned from a hugely successful concert tour to China. Members of Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra, Berkshire Youth Choir and Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra visited China for nine days at the end of July 2016, performing concerts in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai to capacity audiences. The students, all aged between 14 and 19, were accompanied by a team of dedicated and enthusiastic teachers from Berkshire Maestros.

Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra's performances included such seminal works as Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* and a selection of traditional English music, whilst Berkshire Youth Choir took an all British programme, introducing the Chinese audiences to a wide range of traditional styles. Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra was an unusual feast for local music lovers and they delighted audiences with their eclectic mix of traditional and modern guitar repertoire leading to several standing ovations.

Adam West, a member of Berkshire Youth Choir, said:

"The China tour was incredible. It gave us all an amazing insight into a very different culture; the food, the language, the surroundings. We had an unparalleled opportunity to perform in some unbelievable venues and were also able to absorb the beauty of two massive cities by night. It was an amazing experience to perform in such impressive concert venues that are on a different scale that we just don't have here in the UK.

Sightseeing highlights for me included visiting the Great Wall of China and seeing Shanghai from above up the Jin Mao Tower. We also enjoyed a visit to the Forbidden City and our flashmob of 'A Crazy Little Thing Called Love' in the local markets was such fun. This epic adventure was a truly special experience, one that will stay with me for the rest of my life."

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Berkshire Maestros is immensely grateful to the Payne-Gallwey Charitable Trust, the Cardy Beaver Foundation and the Gordon Palmer Memorial Trust for providing financial grants to support the students' fundraising.

#BerkshireLovesMusic



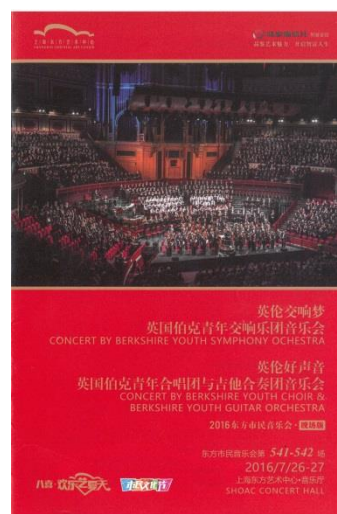
Jonathan Burnett conducting BYSO



Steve Christmas conducting BYGO



Chris Hann conducting BYC



Shanghai concert programme

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

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Bracknell Forest, Reading, the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, West Berkshire and Wokingham Unitary Authorities.

- We offer numerous bands, choirs and orchestras to enable children and young people to make music together in groups and to develop their performing skills, confidence, social skills and self-esteem. These ensembles take place at our music centres based in Bracknell, Newbury, Reading, Wokingham and Windsor. We have a group for every young musician.
- If you would like more information, please contact Vanessa Harbutt, Marketing Officer on 0118 901 2357, or email press@berkshiremaestros.org.uk