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# Berkshire Maestros Newsletter for schools 2016 issue 2

## In this newsletter:

- [Reading Concert Band win Platinum award!](#)
- [Berkshire Young Musician of the Year \(woodwind and brass\) competition](#)
- [A Celebration of Music in Berkshire](#)
- [Royal Albert Hall photographs available to buy](#)
- [Easter courses](#)
- [Junior Music Festival at The Anvil](#)
- [BYSO Easter Course](#)
- [Double Reed Day](#)
- [County Group Auditions](#)
- [Schools Conference](#)
- [Hub Advisory Board meeting](#)
- [Members of Berkshire Youth Choir at the Proms](#)
- [Area Network Meetings](#)
- [Term dates 2016-17](#)
- [Please give us your feedback](#)
- [Music education in the news:](#)



Lynne Ellis, CEO  
Berkshire Maestros

## Dates for your diary:

**6 June**

[Windsor Music Centre:  
Clarinet Concert](#)

**10 June**

[Reading Music Centre Big  
Play Day: Woodwind](#)

**18 June**

Reading Music Centre Big  
Play Day: [Strings](#) & [Brass](#)

**24 June**

[Schools conference](#)

**24 June**

[Windsor Music Centre Big  
Play Day: Brass](#)

**25 June**

Windsor Music Centre Big  
Play Day: [Woodwind](#), [Guitar](#) & [Strings](#)

**25 June**

[Newbury Music Centre  
Garden Party](#)

## Welcome from our CEO

After the outstanding success of the recent Celebration of Music Hub Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, we are now

preparing for our final concerts of the year and getting very excited about the county groups tour to China, a spectacular end to a stunning musical year. We will be sad to see Andy Leask step down as leader of the Berkshire Youth Percussion Ensemble at the end of term and will miss him tremendously in this role. We will also be losing our Head of Percussion, Nathan Cole, in July and we wish him well as he takes up his new position in September leading music at Bradfield College. We will be looking to recruit some outstanding percussion teachers to fill these important roles within the organisation. We will also be expanding our provision in both the guitar and percussion departments by developing both classical and contemporary areas so watch this space! We are also creating a Choral Academy next year and developing our provision within choirs across the county as well as developing singing and choral opportunities for schools.

We are thrilled that our big Hub music conference, 'The Young Musician', is almost here (June 24<sup>th</sup> at Reading University) and are looking forward to welcoming nationally renowned music education colleagues, Dr Martin Fautley, Lin Marsh, Jonathan James, Sue Nicholls, Margareta Burrell and Rebecca Berkley to deliver key workshops throughout the day. This is an exciting opportunity to showcase music education in Berkshire and all colleagues interested in teaching and learning through music are welcome. We intend developing many new and exciting areas of support and CPD for colleagues and pupils next year so look out on our website for details of what is on offer during the holidays. Lots of courses and fun workshops being planned.

With garden parties, gala concerts and summer festive fun ahead, it remains a busy time. We are looking forward to our second Soundstage Summer Festival, an exciting contemporary event that was a stunning success last year. Our calendar for next year is already almost complete, do check the website for term dates. Maestros continues to thrive and grow with support and help from parents and teachers, we are so grateful for your help in all that we do and would welcome

**26 June**

[Bracknell & Wokingham Summer Gala Concerts](#)

**9 July**

[Newbury Music Centre Big Play Day](#)

**9 July**

Windsor Music Centre Summer Concerts: [Junior](#), [Intermediate](#) & [Senior](#)

**9 July**

[Soundstage Summer Festival](#)

**10 July**

[French Horn Workshop](#)

**12 July**

[Windsor Music Centre: Have a Go Evening](#)

Find all of our [forthcoming events](#) on our website

### **Popular on our website now:**

[Current vacancies](#)  
[Contact us](#)  
[Lessons in schools](#)  
[Term dates](#)  
[Schools](#)

### **Music education in the news:**

**Guardian 24 May**  
[University guide 2017: league table for music](#)

**Music Week 23 May**  
[BASCA research highlights lack of diversity in classical](#)

**BBC 17 May**  
[Sam Smith's former school drops music GCSE](#)

**Get Reading 6 May**  
[More than a thousand Berkshire Maestros children perform at the Royal Albert](#)

hearing from any parents and friends that could support at events or at music centres. Please do get in touch if you have some time to give or an area of expertise to offer to our wonderful PFAs.

Meanwhile I wish you all a wonderful Summer and wish all music students the best of luck in any GCSE/A level or instrumental exams.

Kind regards, Lynne Ellis CEO

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### **Reading Concert Band win Platinum award!**

Berkshire Maestros' Reading Area Concert Band has won a prestigious Platinum award at the National Concert Band Festival! The festival took place in Manchester at the Royal Northern College of Music on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> April, and the band returned home with one of the top awards. The band, who range in age from 13 to 18, initially won their place at the festival in November 2015 when they competed at the regional heats. At the festival they were competing against around 40 other bands, with many of the other band's abilities being much more advanced than that of Reading Area Concert Band's teenagers.

Congratulations to them, their leader Cathy Laney and all the other teachers involved with the band.

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### **Berkshire Young Musician of the Year (woodwind and brass) competition**

The Berkshire Young Musician of Year competition for woodwind and brass took place at Windsor Festival on 13 March 2016. Preliminary rounds took place across Berkshire in the preceding months with the final taking place at the Windsor Guildhall. With a renowned jury of clarinetist Anthony Pike, horn player Nicholas Korth and Jill Crowther from the Philharmonia Orchestra, the standard of participants was high. The overall winner was 17 year old Fiona Martin who played *Concertino* for flute by Cecile Chaminade. Well done to her and all of the other participants.

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### **A Celebration of Music in Berkshire**

#### [Hall](#)

**Morning Star 25 April**  
[Labour's Shadow Minister for media, culture and sport on future priorities in the arts](#)

**Guardian 25 April**  
[Musical play may boost understanding and long-term learning in babies](#)

**Arts Professional 22 April**  
[Academisation strains relationship between Music Hubs and schools](#)

**TES 21 April**  
[Lang Lang: How music can boost students' results, creativity and self-esteem](#)

**MiPro 20 April**  
[Music teacher job losses highlighted in new MU report](#)

**Telegraph 7 April**  
['My daughter is a talented musician, could she get a scholarship?'](#)

**Arts Professional 18 March**  
[Education reforms could open school doors to more musicians](#)

#### **Recent photos:**



Easter string course



Reading Concert Band onstage for their award winning performance

To see a Music Hub at its best, look no further than the Royal Albert Hall on May 1st 2016! Berkshire Maestros hosted 'A Celebration of Music In Berkshire' which exemplified diversity, variety and, above all, quality. Young people of all ages took the large audience on a whirlwind tour, from the Trolls of Norway (Grieg) to the Blacksmiths in Italy (Verdi), via Kerry (Gary Ryan), the seas around Britain (Cecilia McDowall), New York's wild side (Bernstein) and a Bull Fight in Spain (Bizet) taking with them, only *The Bare Necessities* (Terry Gillyson)! The first half of the concert comprised performances by three county ensembles and by the choirs from thirteen Primary School Choirs from across Berkshire.

Culture Mix is one of Berkshire Maestros (Berkshire Music Hub's) many partners. Their work with the Steel Pan Orchestra is exceptional and the young players performed with great confidence and musicality. Grieg would have loved the control and enthusiasm of this performance!

Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra is a relatively recent county ensemble, but has already achieved national recognition. Steve Christmas started the group and, for this concert, commissioned Gary Ryan to write a three movement work, which will also be played in China on their summer tour. The audience, and the composer, were treated to a very stylish and polished world premiere!

Berkshire Youth Choir, conducted by Chris Hann, then sang *Naming* from Cecilia McDowall's *Shipping Forecast*, with great verbal dexterity and humour, having been introduced by the equally witty James Baker!

Expert orchestral arrangements, by Andrew McKenna, were then played by the 'Staff Band' who accompanied the choirs from the primary schools with great aplomb! The young singers captured the hearts of the audience by their lively and evocative performances of 'Songs from the Shows', conducted by the charismatic Peter Hunt.



BYSO Easter rehearsals



Primary schools sing at the Royal Albert Hall



BYSO, BYC, BYV and the secondary schools choirs at the Royal Albert Hall



BYV at the Royal Albert Hall



BYGO at the Royal Albert Hall



Trombones at the Royal Albert Hall

Part two of this Celebration showcased the massed choirs from secondary schools in Berkshire and the Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra who, with their inimitable conductor Jonathan Burnett, burst onto the scene with the dazzling *Mambo* from *West Side Story*. BYSO's work with members of the BBC Concert Orchestra (another Hub Partner) had had a major impact on their playing and hence their performance in both the Bernstein and the Wagner and indeed all that followed.



Double basses at the Royal Albert Hall

The massed choirs will remember, for a very long time, the astonishing power that they summoned in the *Dies Irae* from the Requiem by Verdi. They also sang beautifully, works by Handel, Bizet (featuring the talented Berkshire Young Voices), Haydn (with six excellent soloists from BYC) and Mozart, all ably conducted by Ben Parry.

It was good to publicly meet Lynne Ellis, the new CEO of Maestros, who thanked all the performers, their parents (for all their support and taxi service!) and their teachers, many of whom were either on stage or were doing a brilliant job of stage managing the whole event!

Robert Roscoe

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### **Royal Albert Hall photographs available to buy**

Thank you very much to our photographer Steve Ambrose for taking so many fantastic photographs at the rehearsals and concert for *A Celebration of Music in Berkshire*. The quality of his images is impressive! We have made his photographs available for purchase via Photobox. Prices start from 20p per 6x4 print with numerous larger sizes, canvases and mounted/framed prints also being available. Please click [here](#) to access the Photobox gallery.

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### **Easter courses**

Nearly 300 String, Brass, Woodwind and Percussion pupils joined Berkshire Maestros staff at Leighton Park for the annual Easter Course. The theme was 'Music from the Movies' and the staff excelled themselves in finding exciting and fun film

themes to get stuck into. We had different bands for different standards and the 'Close Encounters of the Brass Kind' wowed us all in the concert - for some this was their first ever public performance. The older, more seasoned players played in 'Gone with the Wind Band' and performed 'Movie Blockbusters' to an 'eggstatic' audience. The String Orchestra worked very hard; in addition to sectional and full orchestral rehearsals they learnt circus skills with 'Circus Scene', enjoyed a Dalcroze session and participated in a rousing improvisation lead by Ben Stevens and Sean Law. The tuck shop was popular with over £730 being raised for local Music Centre funds – thank you very much to the volunteers who staffed this. The staff at Leighton Park were amazing and their help was very much appreciated; the pupils loved the hot lunch they provided on both days! Thank you to all Head Teachers who supported us on this course by agreeing to one or two days off school for their pupils so they could join in.

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### **Junior Music Festival at The Anvil**

*"Singing is strong in Berkshire!"* Peter Hunt was confidently able to assert this at the Royal Albert Hall in May after the stunning achievements of the West Berkshire Junior Music Festival concerts in March at The Anvil. Forty schools took part – that's 923 children! It was our most successful year, both in participation and response to the programme *Songs from stage and screen*. Each of the three nights was sold out and parents were thrilled at the quality of the entertainment which included individual school items – singing and dance – and groups from Newbury Music Centre. This annual event is a unique opportunity, provided by Berkshire Music Hub, for children to learn essential singing skills and to share the joy of performing together in a major venue, achieving far more than they believed possible. The engagement and support from schools is incredible and the whole event is a firm fixture in the musical calendar. One teacher commented: *"I have a choir Facebook page and was astounded by the amount of parents who left such positive comments about the whole evening"*.

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### **BYSO Easter Course**

Berkshire Youth Symphony orchestra had three intensive days of rehearsals during the Easter holidays, getting to grips with Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story*, extracts from both Verdi's and Mozart's Requiems, extracts from *Carmen* and many other popular works in preparation for accompanying the massed choir at *A Celebration of Music in Berkshire* at the Royal Albert Hall. The students were joined by players from the BBC Concert Orchestra who will support them onstage. We were extremely lucky to have these professionals playing side-by-side with the students and sharing the benefit of the professional expertise from some of the best players in the country. The orchestra covered a huge amount of repertoire, playing the best they had all year and, for the first time, played through the entirety of Bernstein's very challenging *Symphonic Dances*. All of the BYSO team are very proud of this fantastic effort from the orchestra.

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### **Double Reed Day**

On Sunday 17 April, Berkshire Maestros held a very successful Double Reed Day in Reading for oboists and bassoonists featuring reed making sessions and the opportunity to play in a Massed Double Reed Band. Thirty-two oboists and bassoonists attended from Berkshire and beyond, some players travelling from as far afield as Buckinghamshire, Southampton, Kent and Manchester to make the most of this specialist course! The participants received demonstrations and guidance for the reed making from specialist Berkshire Maestros double reed teachers with the bassoons (led by Jenni Cooper) making two reeds by the end of the day and the oboes (led by Helen Rawstron) making at least one due to the more detailed scraping involved. All the students came away with much greater knowledge of reed adjustment and the skills involved in making the reeds that are such a vital part of playing a double reed instrument successfully.

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### **County Group Auditions**

We are now accepting applications for students to audition for our county groups for 2016-17. Audition dates and links to submit an application for an audition are:

Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra - Monday 13 June, Monday 20 June and Monday 27 June (depending on your instrument). Apply [here](#).

Berkshire Youth Choir - Sunday 10 July. Apply [here](#).

Berkshire Young Voices - Saturday 16 July. Apply [here](#).

Berkshire Youth Guitar Orchestra - Sunday 10 July. Apply [here](#).

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### **Schools Conference**

Berkshire Maestros is delighted to be hosting the Berkshire Music Hub Conference 2016 *Developing the Child as a Musician* in Reading. Together with Hub partners Oxfordshire County Music Service and the University of Reading, this conference will bring together music teachers from across Berkshire and beyond to hear keynote speakers and network. The conference offers a variety of workshops and Continuing Professional Development opportunities for teachers involved with all aspects of music education to share good practice.

For more information and to sign up please visit our website

[here](#)



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### **Hub Advisory Board meeting**

The next meeting of the Hub Advisory Board will be on 14 June 2016 at 13:30. It will take place at Stoneham Court.

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### **Members of Berkshire Youth Choir at the Proms**

On Friday 9 September, some member of Berkshire Youth Choir will join other youth choir members to form the BBC Proms Youth Choir in a performance of Verdi's Requiem at the Royal Albert Hall. This concert will be the penultimate night of the Proms and will be conducted by Marin Alsop. You can listen to this concert live on BBC Radio 3 or watch it live on BBC Four.

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### **Area Network Meetings**

The next area network meetings have been arranged for:

**Wokingham** Secondary – Thursday 26 May 15:30 at Maiden Erlegh

**Reading** – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 15:45 at Oxford Road Community School

**West Berkshire** Secondary – Thursday 30 June 16:00-18:00 at St Bartholomew's in Newbury

**Windsor & Maidenhead** – Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 18:00-19:30 at Windsor Music Centre

**West Berkshire** Primary – Wednesday 19 October 16:00-18:00 at St Bartholomew's in Newbury

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### **Term dates 2016-17**

We have now confirmed next year's term dates.

Autumn term: Friday 9 September to Tuesday 20 December 2016.

Autumn half term: Monday 24 October to Friday 28 October 2016

Spring term: Tuesday 3 January to Friday 31 March 2017

Spring half term: Monday 13 February to Friday 17 February 2017

Summer term: Friday 21 April to Tuesday 25 July 2017 (closed 1 May 2017)

Summer half term: Monday 29 May to Friday 2 June 2017

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### **Please give us your feedback**

At Berkshire Maestros and the Berkshire Music Hub we are always pleased to hear from you about what you think we are doing well and what we need to improve upon. We have made it easier for you to share your opinions with us by creating a feedback function on our website. Please click [here](#) or go to the [home page](#) and click on the button half way down on the right hand side.





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