

Media Release

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More than 1800 Berkshire children to perform at Royal Albert Hall spectacular

On the evening of the 11th March 2019, more than 1800 children from schools across Berkshire will take to the stage, at the UK's most prestigious venue, the Royal Albert Hall for a sensational celebration of music and song. Entitled '*Music Leads the Way*' the event is organised by local charity Berkshire Maestros and will include performances from Berkshire County Youth Choirs and Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra (BYSO).

The massed primary schools choir will perform songs from Nigel Hess' breath-taking musical *RATS!* – an alternative look at the Pied Piper of Hamlyn.

Berkshire Maestros has obtained special permission from the family and estate of the late Johnny Dankworth to perform one of his masterpieces, under the title *Further Experiments with Mice* which will be narrated by special guest - BBC Radio Berkshire's Andrew Peach.

Other highlights will include popular movie favourites Beauty and the Beast, The Incredibles, The Mission and James Bond and will culminate with a performance of John Rutter's *Feel the Spirit* by the massed secondary schools choir, featuring soloist Rebecca Lodge from the Royal Opera House.

In the months running up to the event, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) will be working with Berkshire Maestros to offer a series of workshops to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEN/D) schools across the county. Students will be introduced to Aaron Copland's Wild West inspired *Hoe Down* and will then be supported in composing their own pieces in small groups. Groups from each school will be invited to perform their work at the Royal Albert Hall, alongside BYSO and the RPO.

Lynne Ellis CEO of Berkshire Maestros said:

"Taking part in such a large scale event, at a world class venue like the Royal Albert Hall, is an experience that children and young people will remember for the rest of their lives. Those taking part are already very excited and it is encouraging to see the level of commitment they show to learning and rehearsing the music.

"I am particularly proud to see Berkshire Maestros working with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to offer students from SEN/D schools this rare opportunity. This project reflects our aim to bring music into the lives of all children and young people across Berkshire. It will be wonderful to see so many groups of students working and performing together!"

The evening will be packed with enchanting pieces that we all know and love as well as introducing the audience to some they may not have heard before. With music that will thrill, move and uplift everyone, this is bound to be an unmissable experience.

Tickets for this unique gala concert go on sale this week from the Royal Albert Hall box office. www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/

More information about the event can be found at www.berkshiremaestros.org.uk

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Note for Editors:

Berkshire Maestros:

Berkshire Maestros is a long-established children's charity offering musical education opportunities to children across Berkshire, regardless of ability, background or circumstance. We work closely with schools across the county to allow all children access to music and the opportunity to play an instrument. Through our seven music centres, we offer children of all ages the chance to sing, play instruments and enhance their life-skills through music.

Our choirs, orchestras and ensembles perform at prestigious venues across the county and beyond – helping the children to develop their team-working and communications skills as well as building their confidence.

Headquartered in Reading, the organisation has centres in Bracknell, Newbury, Windsor and Wokingham as well as satellites in Caversham and Hungerford. Further expansion is planned for the coming year.

Berkshire County Youth Choirs

Berkshire County Youth Choirs bring together young singers from across the Royal County of Berkshire to enjoy singing, whilst learning interesting repertoire and developing important techniques. They are trained and directed by Berkshire Maestros, lead organisation of the Berkshire Music Education Hub, which provides high-quality musical education for children across Berkshire, regardless of background, ability or circumstances.

The county choirs are selective and entry is by audition only, but the emphasis is upon finding singers with potential who love making music with others. The combined choirs currently have a membership of approximately 180 children, ranging from 8 to 18 in age.

Berkshire Youth Choir (BYC) – ages 15 to 18 (school years 10 - 13)

Berkshire Young Voices (BYV) – ages 11 to 15 (school years 7 - 9)

Berkshire Children's Choir (BCC) – ages 8 to 11 (school years 4 – 6)

Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra

The Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra (BYSO) is the culmination of a student's orchestral training in Berkshire. It comprises more than one hundred of the most advanced and experienced young orchestral musicians in the county.

Intensive rehearsal schedules enables the orchestra to tackle challenging repertoire and prepare for the level of playing and commitment required for life beyond the youth orchestra, at national level and subsequently at university or conservatoire.

Members of BYSO have the opportunity to work in partnership with other organisations and professional soloists as well as performing for many different audiences at prestigious venues.

More about the event:

For more information please contact press@berkshiremaestros.org.uk