

Review of the year

Everyone Matters regards bringing together young and old in a shared enjoyment of music as an important part of its remit, and the year to 30 September 2018 saw a further increase in the number of concerts in which young musicians performed alongside our professionals. Our work was dominated by a major intergenerational project supported by the London Community Foundation through its Youth Social Action Fund to promote youth volunteering in the capital; nearly 30 young Bromley musicians took part during half terms and the major school holidays in order to rehearse alongside our professionals and perform in local care homes and day centres for older people and disabled adults. The project began in July 2017 with just three concerts, and a further 17 concerts followed in the months between October and February. Four of the young musicians, working in pairs, acted as Youth Leaders; they recruited their friends to take part and assisted with choosing and arranging suitable music. Devising concert programmes to suit the groups recruited for each phase of the project was a challenge; it was good to discover that there are many published arrangements of popular pieces for flexible ensemble, and our library now contains a number of items that will be useful in the future. We had generous back-up from parents who gave time to taxi players and large instruments to rehearsals and concerts, who made endless refreshments in the kitchen, and who replied to emails when their offspring had failed to read them. Battling through Christmas traffic gridlock to reach a day centre in Chislehurst was one of the project's lows, but every concert was a joy, and a particular highlight was the family concert hosted by the Bromley Reform Synagogue, with tea provided beforehand, and an audience ranging from a group of older people from Park Court retirement flats to several very tiny children brought by parents and grandparents. The Synagogue invited the audience to make donations towards the work of Everyone Matters and this enabled us to mount several extra concerts in this YSAF project and to exceed all our targets.

The youth volunteering project was extended in an exciting way when it led to two days of "Percussion Side-by-side" workshops for primary age children, supported by the Good Luck Charitable Trust. A group of the young musicians who had become confident performers during the YSAF project now supported younger children to rehearse and perform a half-hour programme of energetic and entertaining popular music. Our team of professional musicians included Sarah Hatch, a percussionist skilled as both performer and teacher, and she was able to bring instruments and technical expertise that enabled 40 disadvantaged 10 year olds at Worsley Bridge Primary School on one day, and 30 mostly autistic 11 year olds at St Nicholas School on another day, to play exciting orchestral percussion such as timpani, bass drum, suspended cymbal, and even a large orchestral glockenspiel. She was assisted by a student volunteer from Hong Kong who was keen to gain the experience and was able to give her services to the project, and between them these two expert percussionists helped our teenage musicians support the young children to play real parts in each of the pieces. Everyone was kept busy, and at each school an intensive day of rehearsal culminated in a final concert to an audience of peers, teachers, parents and friends.

The Good Luck Trust also supported a new interactive "Carnival" programme for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties attending the Rutherford School Summer Club in July. A succession of small groups of children and care staff took part with our violin and clarinet duo in a series of rehearsal exercises that were designed to be fun in themselves and to lead to a sharing performance at the end of the day when most of the children were able to return and revisit the activities for a grand finale.

Our now annual collaboration with Langley Park School for Boys took place once again in September when an excellent group of mostly string and a few wind players worked for two intensive days alongside our professional trio of violin, clarinet and 'cello. The boys gained in confidence both musically and in chatting to their audiences at Burrell Mead Care Home, Bertha James Day Centre and the Beckenham Club for the Blind, and it was very rewarding to be able to share the project with family and friends at the now traditional final cocktail concert in the Langley Park School Performance Hall. As in previous years we were fortunate to have the committed support of Director of Music David Bullen, who once again not only helped to organise the project but conducted, played the keyboard and the clarinet and drove the minibus. Financial support came from the Good Luck Charitable Trust.

Altogether there were 65 concerts for older people in this period, and of these 20 were part of our intergenerational projects and a further three took place as part of a residential course rehearsing and performing alongside amateur musicians at Benslow Music Trust. The remainder were fully professional concerts given by musicians working mostly in pairs, the great part of these supported by a memorial fund donated by one of our Friends in memory of his wife who had been a professional singer. A few concerts took place in new venues, and most were given to maintain and develop our relationships with care centres in Bromley, Croydon, Kingston, Sevenoaks and Hitchin.

We continued to promote our ongoing series of "Music Matters" lecture-recitals and we are grateful to those of our regulars who subscribe to the whole series as this is invaluable in contributing to its success. Registers showed an average attendance that hovered around 25, some 50 to 60 different people attended at some point, and a total of 322 audience members were recorded throughout the autumn and spring series. We were happy to see that an increasing number of residents of Whitgift House Continuing Care Community were taking advantage of our invitation to enjoy free entry, this and our concerts in the Community Room being our "thank you" to the home for allowing us free use of the Chapel.

Our fund-raising event Midsummer Music, held in 2018 exactly on Midsummer's Day, saw a lavish programme in which violinist Nicoline Kraamwinkel and 'cellist Sarah Butcher gave their services alongside Margaret Archibald who hosted the event in her house and garden, joined by violinist Maya Magub and her 9 year old daughter Clara who were unexpectedly over from their home in California and free to take part. More than 50 Friends supported the event which we linked to a series of concerts in care homes and day centres including a long-awaited return visit to the Bradbury Active Age Centre in Kingston.

Current and Future Activities

Intergenerational projects are now a major feature of our work, including regular links with some local schools, and other groups of young musicians brought together by volunteer youth leaders for specific projects. Dialogue with teachers and care staff remains crucial as we strive to develop our programmes to be ever more relevant. Plans are under discussion to enlarge the scope of our now annual September project with Langley Park School for Boys. We hope not only to rehearse alongside a group of young musicians from the school in order to perform with them in care centres locally, but also to share a discussion in open forum with an invited group of care home managers. We want to find an opportunity for musicians and care home staff to share their experiences of what it takes to create a successful event, and to invite all the care professionals to stay on and enjoy the

final cocktail concert that traditionally we host in the Langley Park Performance Hall as a showcase for parents and friends.

Our professional musicians continue to give a significant programme of informal concerts in care centres, including some in which we invite musicians performing at Music Matters to visit care homes earlier in the day. Paul Barritt was just one of our Music Matters lecture-recitalists in January 2019 who was happy to perform during the day as well as in the evening, giving his programme “Birds in Music” to the Surbiton Club for the Blind before travelling on to Croydon. Ongoing dialogue with care centre managers helps us to meet special requests; for example, we know that the Jack and Jill Club is attended by a significant number of members who love to dance, and so we felt confident in October 2018 to offer this audience an experimental “Steps in Time” workshop with Dalcroze Eurhythmics teacher Anita Strevens.

Our links with Benslow Music Trust are evolving as Benslow seeks to develop new ways of reaching out to an ever wider community. Our concerts in local care centres are being rebranded for Benslow’s 90th anniversary year under the banner “Performing for Hitchin” and it is very exciting that Symonds House Leonard Cheshire Home is hosting the final sharing concert of the David Campbell Clarinet Weekend with some 30 or more amateur clarinet players and their professional coaches expected to crowd into the home’s activity room.

New funds have been raised thanks to a successful application to the St James’s Place Charitable Foundation. We are offering six schools for children with special needs, including many with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the chance to share a day of “Carnival” music-making. Two professional musicians will lead a process of exploration, rehearsal and performance in which children, teacher and carers will work together to bring the music to life.

Funds from the Good Luck Charitable Trust have been earmarked to support several workshops for children with special needs, including a pilot workshop in which rap artist Benny Silver will invite a group of autistic children to write their own rap, to be accompanied by other children providing the beats on live percussion through a creative process led by percussionist Sarah Hatch. Plans are also afoot to repeat the very successful “Percussion Side-by-side” project that was launched in summer 2018 as a spin-off from our major London Community Foundation Youth Social Action Fund intergenerational project. It is hoped that in July 2019 a group of young musicians will once again come together to play an exciting programme of popular music in which disadvantaged and autistic primary age children will be able to perform alongside them on orchestral percussion coached and supported by our professional players. We are hoping to link these workshops to a family concert at Bromley Reform Synagogue and dates are under discussion.

The memorial fund for John Morris has been growing and plans are under discussion for a new intergenerational project to celebrate John’s tireless work for young musicians through his administrative role at the Croydon Performing Arts Festival. Ideas include a possible new project in Sevenoaks, or to enable an already ongoing project to have the financial support it needs to continue.

Music Matters is currently nearing the end of its 2018-19 season, with highlights that have included a gala chamber performance of Weber’s Clarinet Quintet and a visit from Colin Lawson sharing the historical perspective gained in a distinguished career as academic, period instrument performer and Director of the Royal College of Music. Plans are just beginning to widen the scope of the series yet

further in 2019-20 with a diverse roster of musicians sharing their enthusiasms through live and recorded performances.