



'building on the experience we have gained at schools, concert halls, orphanages and galleries such as the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington and the National Portrait Gallery in London. After the success of our production of *Peter and the Wolf* in Trafalgar Square for the opening of the 2005 BBC Proms, we have taken the project a step further by designing Art & Music workshops and concert performances for children aged 6-11'.

But back to our very first performance at Wilton's Music Hall. The children were mesmerised by all the musical instruments played by the London Myriad Ensemble. They jumped with excitement trying to catch a swarm of hand-made 'bees' as they swooped overhead, tied to long thin poles, as Satoko played *The Flight of the Bumble Bee*. There were many offers to hold up the decorated boards illustrating the animals residing at *Old MacDonald's Farm*. There was great excitement as Njabulo made his grand entrance from the balcony, singing Zulu folk songs.

The best was yet to come as Darren narrated the story of *Peter and the Wolf*. The theatre was hushed and each child riveted as the story unfolded. There was an audible gasp as Chris, the French horn player, suddenly appeared in the mask of a sinister wolf. All the while the artists were deftly painting their murals in glorious colours. As the children left, one little boy excitedly said to Gillian, 'Thank you Miss.

It was much better than a DVD!'

Last May, two further performances were given at Wilton's and in July, we took the programme to schools in Oxford at the invitation of composer George Fenton, performing at the inaugural arts festival at the wonderful new performance space at The North Wall.

Our collaboration with Wilton's will continue into 2008 with *The Rhythm of Life... Our Musical World*, featuring the Concordia International Ensemble of musicians, actors and scenic artists. Concordia will also continue its *The Healing Power of Music* series of music and art workshops for children and Atrium concerts at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.



Children arriving at Wilton's, with their decorated 'leaf' entrance tickets

Photos: John Dunbar and Warwick de Winter

building the teacher's strength at the actual moment of taking the lesson.

The teachers are all highly experienced trained primary teachers who have individual methods of delivery and wide knowledge of classroom experience and so the work needs to be incorporated in such a way that it can feed in through their daily work. Overseeing this from inside and behind the scenes are the essential core people, some of whom have the challenging task of timetabling each project and administering it. Some of these people are from the LSO and some from the Hackney Music Service. The main course directors are firstly Rachel Leach, composer and animateur (the orchestra's preferred term used to describe someone who can animate and bring to life a project or idea, in this case musical), who leads the training sessions involving key elements of musical language, listening, notation and analysis. Rachel compiles, composes and arranges the music for each class project, overseeing this and the resulting performances in the schools. Richard McNicol also directs the course, he is a renowned animateur who developed and led the LSO's education programme from 1993 and conducted

many of their education concerts. Until recently, he has led many of the creative workshop days, helping to develop compositional ideas in the classroom and widening the teacher's listening experience of European Classical music. Teachers also have tutors for guitar, recorder and voice, and at one point during last year's second year cohort there were two additional animateurs. External music educationalists, a senior lecturer at Exeter University and a music educational consultant from London evaluate the course.

With this support network including LSO players and assistant animateurs, the teachers put to use in the second year all they have acquired in the first year. The second year is a progression beginning with much support for the teachers in term one, leading hopefully to more autonomy from them in term three. The safety net is moved slightly out of the way, so to speak! Each project is centred round a particular theme or composer. We recently completed the second year of the scheme for the first time. The final project was based on Berlioz and his *Symphonie Fantastique*. Rachel, having composed and facilitated this project reminded the

teachers of their new autonomous role! The emerging scenarios from class to class ranged from a slight confidence crisis to a feeling of exhilaration from having discovered that they could do this and enjoy the resulting rewards.

The icing on the cake and the conclusion of the practical input to the course was a finale at the Barbican with the LSO and the nine participating schools. Part of this involved the classes performing their own composed pieces and a song about Berlioz, which they learned with their teacher to be sung together on the day. When the day came, the buzz in the air was tangible and the "tingle factor" arrived for me when one of the teachers, who at the beginning of the course had had very little music teaching experience, was leading her class and conducting them with a confident precision and animation that could easily have emanated from someone with the aforementioned roots in music making and grounding in the language of music. Her apparent new empowerment will undoubtedly enhance the future music-making of her pupils.

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