

2 JULY 2015

Blazing a Trail for Music

Royal Opera House Trailblazer Schools enjoy a day of music in Thurrock

Royal Opera House Thurrock Trailblazer schools enjoyed two very different but equally exciting musical experiences on Wednesday 17 June. More than 600 children from schools across Thurrock joined in with making and listening to professional musicians from the **BBC Symphony Orchestra and BBC Singers**, and vocal group **Sons of Pitches** as the borough resounded to singing and playing.

More than 570 children from 11 Trailblazer Pathfinder schools across Thurrock attended the **BBC's Ten Pieces Schools Concert** at the **Backstage Centre** on the **High House Production Park** in Purfleet on Wednesday 17 June. The concert is part of the **BBC's Ten Pieces project**, inspiring a generation of children to get creative with classical music. The concert featured works such as Mars from *The Planets* suite by Holst, Benjamin Britten's 'Storm' Interlude from *Peter Grimes* and Grieg's In the Hall of the Mountain King from *Peer Gynt* plus pieces by Stravinsky, Beethoven and Mozart and others.

The celebratory free **Ten Pieces Schools Concerts** performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra and BBC Singers have taken place across the country in the last month, offering schools an opportunity to hear the Ten Pieces performed live. They also featured a range of children's responses to the music drawn from over 1300 creative responses from primary school children across the UK.

Gabrielle Forster-Still, Deputy Head of Royal Opera House Thurrock said 'It was wonderful to be able to give our Trailblazer schools the opportunity to

participate in such a great concert. They were so enthusiastic and engaged and so well prepared to listen. They loved the music and I'm sure that that will last into their adult lives.'

Caroline Roberts-Cherry, Executive Producer, Ten Pieces was delighted by the reception to the concerts from the Trailblazer schools: 'It was fantastically rewarding for all the Ten Pieces team to see the enthusiastic response from the children who were at the concerts. The Thurrock concerts were a real opportunity for the children to connect with Ten Pieces and we hope the experience will inspire their onward journey to learning more about classical music.'

Also on Wednesday, **Gateway Primary Free School** played host to **The Sons of Pitches**. This young vocal group performs contemporary music from pop, r&b and dubstep to their own original songs. They worked with students at Gateway to get them singing, beatboxing and improvising music. The students were treated to an 'on mic' performance from the group before getting involved themselves, learning how to put a song together from the building blocks to the finished article. The students also tried their hand at solo singing, creating music from scratch and vocal percussion!

Gateway Teacher and Cultural Champion for Trailblazer Clare Jones said: 'We would like to say a big thank you to The Sons of Pitches for all their hard work. The children and staff thoroughly enjoyed the day.'

Thurrock Trailblazer

Thurrock Borough Council is transforming education in Thurrock and Royal Opera House Thurrock is delighted to be delivering the Cultural Entitlement Pathfinder Initiative, **Thurrock Trailblazer**. The programme uses involvement in the arts to inspire and engage young people, raise aspiration and improve educational attainment.

The Learning and Participation Team is building on its strong partnerships across Thurrock and the wider cultural sector locally, regionally and nationally creating an exciting programme of activities for pupils and teachers in the 21

Trailblazer Schools across Thurrock. It has developed targeted offers for schools to take part in activities in Covent Garden and Thurrock and form new relationships between schools and other cultural providers.

For more information about **Thurrock Trailblazer**, please go to www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/thurrock-trailblazer

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Notes for Editors

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock has been offering innovative and creative projects and programmes in schools, colleges and across communities in the Thames Gateway for the past six years. In 2010, more than 1000 people from Thurrock, young and old, took part in creating and performing the spectacular Purfleet Opera: *Ludd and Isis*, the third large scale ROH performance created with communities in Thurrock. As a result of this work a Thurrock Community Chorus has been created with over 140 members of all ages. For further information, please go to: www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus. RM19, a new Youth Chorus for 11-25 year olds was started in 2012: www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/rm19-youth-singing-group.

Public and educational tours of the state-of-the-art Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House stage in Covent Garden are built are now available. Please go to www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours for further details.

The High House Production Park is supported by a unique partnership including Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills, the Royal Opera House and Thurrock Council: www.highhouseproductionpark.co.uk

BBC TEN PIECES

Stakeholder partners comprise the Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council Northern Ireland, Creative Scotland, Music Mark, Youth Music, ABO and Into Film, working alongside more than 230 Ten Pieces Champions who are supporting the initiative on a local level. These include music education hubs, music services and specialist music, dance and arts organisations.

BBC Learning plays a central part in meeting the BBC's purpose of promoting education and learning. Utilising the power of the BBC's big brands and key talent, the department puts learning right at the heart of the BBC and provides a variety of resources and learning opportunities for children, teachers, parents and adult learners. Working with partners and in local communities, BBC Learning aims to stimulate interests and encourage engagement through a variety of campaigns across all BBC genres and platforms.