

EDUCATION

Review 2025/6

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The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment is a Registered Charity No.
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INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty-six years, our education work has continually grown and now engages thousands of people nationwide in creative music projects. Our participants come from a wide range of backgrounds and we pride ourselves in working flexibly, adapting to the needs of local people and the places where they live. The extensive partnerships we have built up over many years across the country ensure maximum and lasting impact for all those who work with us.

OUR MISSION

We believe that the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (OAE) is a leading voice in the orchestral education sector. We will always strive to develop our partnerships so that the broadest, most diverse communities may enjoy and experience the arts, and so that participants, teachers, partners and stakeholders all have a valued voice.



The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes, King's Lynn

OUR REACH

WELCOME!

At the OAE we love embedding ourselves in the communities where we work. Our national residencies involve teacher training, workshops and concerts where local people of all ages have the opportunity to hear the OAE and perform alongside us. From theatres to pubs, from schools to care homes, we delight in being right at the heart of every community we work in. During our 2025 / 26 season we enjoyed residencies in Bishop Auckland, York, Lincolnshire, Plymouth, Bradford-on-Avon and King's Lynn. We also performed concerts and ran coaching projects and workshops in Basingstoke, Brighton, Cambridge, Coventry, Ipswich and London. We are grateful to Orchestras Live (our partners in County Durham and Norfolk), the National Centre for Early Music (for partnering with us in York), Plymouth Music Hub (for our work in Plymouth) and the Wiltshire Music Centre (for our work in Bradford-on-Avon), as well as numerous music services across the country.

OAE North

County Durham and Yorkshire
Bishop Auckland – KS1 *Full of Surprises* tour; York – KS1 *Full of Surprises* tour.

OAE East

Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk
Cambridge – OAE Experience concert; Gainsborough, Nettleton, Spilsby and Skegness – *A Day at the Pond TOTS*; King's Lynn – *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* community opera; Ipswich – Musical Connections.

OAE West

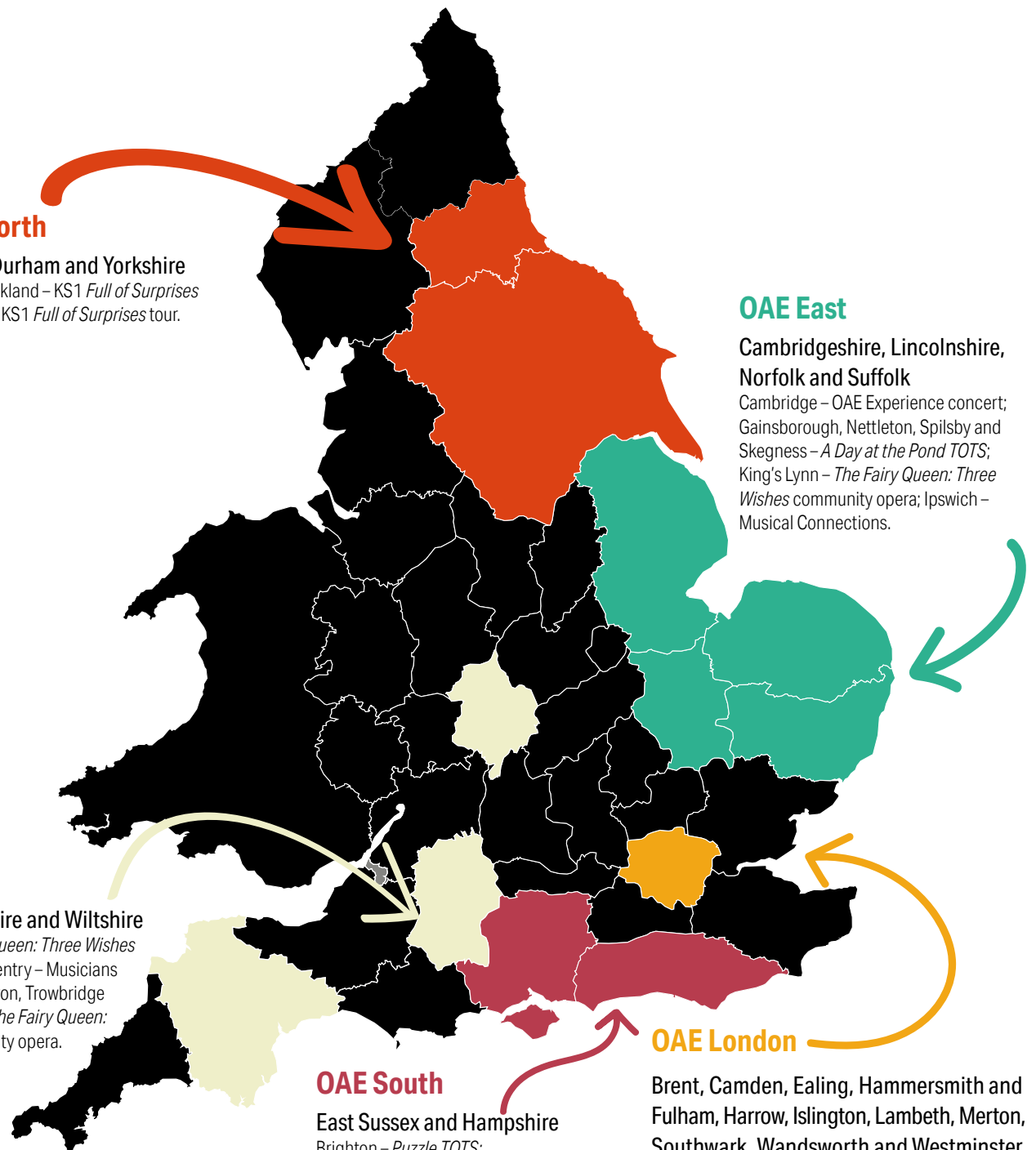
Devon, Warwickshire and Wiltshire
Plymouth – *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* community opera; Coventry – Musicians on Call; Bradford-on-Avon, Trowbridge and Chapmanslade – *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* community opera.

OAE South

East Sussex and Hampshire
Brighton – *Puzzle TOTS*; Basingstoke – Musicians on Call.

OAE London

Brent, Camden, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Islington, Lambeth, Merton, Southwark, Wandsworth and Westminster
A host of projects from TOTS to schools concerts to community events.



MUSIC SPEAKS

As we continue our 40th anniversary season it has been a time to reflect on the past but also the future. Who'd have thought back in 1986 that in 2026 the OAE would be resident in a school, performing all over the world to huge acclaim, whilst at the same time working closely with communities around the country to share our love of music. I passionately believe that music is for everyone everywhere, whether on the concert platform, in a care home, a school, a special needs setting or on the street.

I am ever humbled by our special needs work both for the reaction from the students we work with but also the effect it has on us as players. The continuation of our *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* Arts Council strategic tour in King's Lynn, Plymouth and Wiltshire has been a wonderful opportunity to share this brilliant work with communities around the country. Our *Full of Surprises* shows toured to County Durham and York where children were treated to the surprises in Haydn's symphonies. A new residency in Harrow brought together two primary schools, a special school and a high school (including 150 recorder players!). Our residency at Acland Burghley School continues to bear fruit with our Ground Base, Musical Connections and newly formed OAE Collective projects running throughout the year, alongside the highly successful Dreamchasing Young Producers programme. We're known in the community and feel very much part of it.

I feel very privileged to be a part of the OAE community and, after more than a quarter of a century working with the OAE, I continue to love it more than ever! Music speaks to everyone in different ways and I hope you enjoy reading about our latest season of musical adventures.

CHERRY FORBES
Education Director



Cherry Forbes



Life of the Sea, Queen Elizabeth Hall

2025 / 26 IN NUMBERS

30,036 Participant interactions

16,015 Live audience

62 Concerts

497 Workshops

61 Primary schools

9 Secondary schools

7 Special Educational Needs settings

1 University setting

in **19** towns / cities / villages across England

FLAGSHIP

Life of the Sea

For our Queen Elizabeth Hall community opera in 2026, we expanded a project which had its first outing back in 2023. Inspired by Handel's *Water Music*, Hazel Gould and James Redwood's beautifully crafted chat-show-style show explored issues of plastic pollution in our oceans. On 3 June our host, Adam Courting, explorer Tim the Trawlerman, and producer Lynne, joined dancers and musicians from Acland Burghley and Northgate secondary schools, the OAE 'house band' and a 90-strong 'live audience' from Little Ealing, Richard Cobden and Netley primary schools for an unforgettable evening.

Alongside music by Redwood and Handel, our expanded version of the 2023 show featured works by Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, Henry Purcell, new compositions by students from Acland Burghley and Northgate schools and a medley of sea-themed folksongs, performed by beginner string players from Richard Cobden Primary School – nicknamed the 'Fiddlers on the Reef'. The show also featured two Dreamchasing Young Producers as on-stage camera operators.

"It was amazing to see young people playing with a professional orchestra but also working so well together"

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *LIFE OF THE SEA*

"I have seen this work over the years in a number of different locations across the country from King' Lynn to County Durham. Every time it has been both powerful and delightful, appealing with its infectious good humour to teachers and parents as much as the young people engaged so effectively on stage. It is another brilliant demonstration of how the energy of great art, Handel's music, for example, can be translated and delivered to fascinate and enrich today. Quite apart from planning and concept, it is about the sheer determination and commitment to work on a sustained basis over a long period with a strong diverse team on fundraising, planning, composition, animation and production – to achieve consistent excellence."

Sir Nicholas Serota, outgoing chair of the Arts Council, who steered the landmark Durham Commission said in 2017: 'Too many pupils lack access to high-quality cultural education and too few universities ask applicants to show that they have an appetite for the arts and the broader humanities as well as the core academic subjects.' He was sitting on my row last night and when I thanked him for coming, he said to me, 'I wouldn't have missed it for the world.' He meant it. It must be good for him to see that the OAE, like many great organisations, did respond to what he asked and have done their bit to help put right what has been going awry."

CRISPIN WOODHEAD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

"Inspiring"

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *LIFE OF THE SEA*

"The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's glorious education team were in full swing with *Life of the Sea*. Hundreds of young people on the Queen Elizabeth Hall stage, this was communal music making at its very best – serious in its intent, excellent and inviting in its execution, unashamedly for all. Parents and participants bubbled with excitement and achievement, a wonderful start to anyone's arts education. I shed a tear"

MOIRA SINCLAIR, FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION, CURRENT CHAIR OF CLORE LEADERSHIP AND CHAIR OF THE FACTORY INTERNATIONAL IN MANCHESTER

OUR STORY

WHAT IN THE WORLD? is the UK's most popular chat show, presented by national treasure Adam Courting. In tonight's edition he's interviewing explorer and guest of honour, Tim Dickinson, about his adventures on the oceans. Alongside the live studio audience, we look behind the scenes at the recording of the show. Along the way, we meet fascinating guests and hear music from the OAE house band, all linked to the life of the sea. But when Tim reveals a great new discovery – a hitherto unknown island in the middle of the Pacific – Adam, the other guests and the audience begin to realise that something's fishy!

The new land mass isn't what our explorer thinks it is... it's a garbage patch in the middle of the ocean! Distraught at this realisation, Tim quits exploring on live TV. But when the studio audience give him some support and encouragement, he realises that all isn't lost and leaves to lead the clean-up!

HAZEL GOULD, WRITER AND DIRECTOR



Life of the Sea, Queen Elizabeth Hall

"The thing that is unique about my work with the OAE is the relationship the Orchestra and its musicians have with its core repertoire. OAE musicians are not only extremely knowledgeable about the music they play, they are tirelessly inventive in how they bring that music to life, always searching for new ways to express musical ideas which best suit the performers and their instruments on any given day. This means that whether we're in a workshop or a concert setting, their playing fizzles with creativity and excitement, energising and inspiring the room.

Most of my work centres around creating new music with and for groups and in this area too, the orchestra's ethos strongly imprints on the work we create. Without losing any of their musical identity, players are able to bend and flex to share their musicianship with participants whether groups are rocking out or creating dreamy soundscapes. Cherry is a fabulous match-maker, putting together teams of musicians whose skills and personalities perfectly fit each unique project. The musical and inter-personal brilliance of these musicians makes my job of facilitating creative work stimulating, enjoyable and nourishing. The result is that each project offers a completely unique musical experience, only made possible because each and every person in the room is able to bring their whole self to the process.

I feel so privileged to have had such a long and rich relationship with the orchestra, its musicians and its music – I'm so grateful for all of the support players have given me over the years and I can't wait to see what the future holds!"

JAMES REDWOOD, COMPOSER AND ANIMATEUR



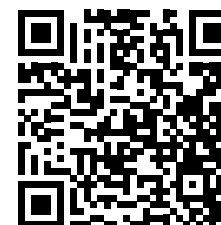
Life of the Sea, Queen Elizabeth Hall

NORTHGATE MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

Students from Northgate High School joined the OAE at the Queen Elizabeth Hall for our community opera, *Life of the Sea*. Alongside musicians from Acland Burghley, they became our onstage band and choir to the delight of many parents who had travelled from Ipswich for the performance.

"I just wanted to express my sincere thanks for the brilliant OAE trip. H had a fantastic time! He thrived on the experience and performing on stage with the orchestra – it is something he will remember for a very long time. The trip and workshops have been great for H not only with his music but also building his confidence and independence."

PARENT OF NORTHGATE STUDENT



Listen here for the opening Overture of *Life of the Sea* featuring music by Handel and Redwood.

The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes

This season, we continued our UK tour of our community opera *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes*. Composer James Redwood and writer Hazel Gould's creative magic seamlessly blends the story of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and music of Henry Purcell's 1692 opera *The Fairy Queen*, creating a wonderful new adventure for the whole family. It's about wishes that come true and what happens when they do, as we learn about friendship, love and telling the truth...

OUR STORY

It is the 365th birthday of the Fairy Queen, and she wants her party to be the most magical night of the year. She wants music, dancing, entertainment and...mischief! Her loyal sprites are set to work, playing tricks and creating havoc for hapless humans they find in the forest. Meanwhile Tim and Kirsty are both invited to the party. They are secretly in love with each other, but are too embarrassed and full of worry to tell the truth. When Puck, the leader of the sprites, finds them in the forest, they are the obvious choice for magical trickery for the Queen's entertainment. They are both granted three wishes, but as Puck knows "Human beings don't always... know what they're doing". As they move through their wishes, their choices become increasingly disastrous, much to the amusement of the Queen and her guests, until finally they realise, that all they really need to do is tell the truth.

KING'S LYNN

In October, we were joined by nine primary schools, the Gliders rock band (from a local secondary school), and singers from the King's Lynn Festival Chorus (KLFC) for two performances of *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes*. Eight aspiring young actors from local primary schools performed as sprites alongside the cast (Kirsty Hopkins, Simone Ibbett-Brown, Timothy Dickinson and Lynne Forbes) to help tell this story of magic, mischief and mayhem.

"What a wonderful experience it proved to be for both staff and children. Feedback from parents, staff and children has been wonderful and I cannot praise the OAE team enough for their support and encouragement of the children, staff and KLFC as a choir. Should there be future opportunities to work with the OAE we would be delighted to do so and would certainly recommend the experience to any school offered the opportunity.

PRIMARY TEACHER AND SINGER IN THE KING'S LYNN FESTIVAL CHORUS

"It was wonderful to see local people on stage alongside professionals; you created such a wonderful experience for the performers and audience. I was enthralled by the children from the local primary schools; they had such joy on their faces to be part of the production – I have no doubt you inspired and raised the aspirations of many involved. Last night a new generation of performers from West Norfolk were born!"

CARRIE MANSFIELD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE GARAGE

"It was the best experience of my life."

CHILD, KING'S LYNN

"I mostly liked the orchestra because of all the wonderful sounds."

CHILD, KING'S LYNN



The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes, King's Lynn

WILTSHIRE

In Bradford-on-Avon, students from four local primary schools, the Random Band (St Laurence Secondary School), and the Wiltshire Music Centre chorus joined the OAE for two more performances of *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* at the Wiltshire Music Centre. The cast worked with eight young actors from Christchurch Primary School in the run up to prepare them for their roles as mischievous sprites.

We love to hear from our audience after our shows and the following letter from someone who had never seen our work before after coming to the *Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* at the Wiltshire Music Centre is wonderful!

"I was truly transfixed by the quality of the production and the sense of fun and mischief that pervaded the stage alongside tears, passion, longing and resolution. The message: the necessity to dare to speak one's truth, and the trouble caused by fearing to do so, was profound; and expressed through superb music, song and theatre enveloped in creative brilliance. It was immensely moving to see the local school children along with community singers, joining members of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, to collaborate in this outstanding performance. I was transfixed. Such creative and inspired performances can easily pierce the hearts of those lucky enough to be present. To witness such inclusion and community collaboration in action is inspiring and of immense value; it ripples out way beyond the performance itself into society. At its best it nurtures and stretches those touched by it, introduces fresh ideas of what is possible and sets course to new horizons.

Such opportunities offered to communities, and children by OAE's educational and outreach activities are priceless: opening doors, opening minds, inspiring and changing lives. It was immensely moving being present to watch this: to see how each person on the stage was clear and focused in their role and a part of something far beyond their usual individual selves. Everyone was included and everyone on stage of value. If such collaborations were widespread across this country we would undoubtedly be immeasurably enriched.

They shine a light on how, with a collective will, excellence can be shared and no one left out in the process."

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *THE FAIRY QUEEN: THREE WISHES*, WILTSHIRE

PLYMOUTH

In Plymouth, we performed two SEND-focused *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* shows at the Plymouth Central Methodist Hall for an invited audience of family and friends. Over 200 primary children from four local schools took part, while ten students from Cann Bridge School joined the orchestra and soloists, Kirsty Hopkins and Timothy Dickinson, onstage.

"It has been a true privilege to work alongside such professionalism with the Education team at the OAE. The team has provided a deeply meaningful musical experience for all involved, with care and attention paid to all corners of the project. This was certainly achieved here in Plymouth through meticulous planning and delivery, brilliant communication and resourcing. I have also heard verbal feedback from school staff (teachers and support workers) who said that the project was above and beyond their expectations. Several expressed that they felt more confident in their own singing abilities and were more willing to sing in front of the children too! The performances far surpassed what they were expecting and brought all the threads, musical materials and explanations together into two fabulous performances with parents joining also.

As a musician / facilitator, I feel that my own practice has been invigorated. I feel more confident in my own abilities, having been surrounded by such positivity and support. This project has reminded me why I chose a career in music / education and community – how music can be that levelling place where everyone can feel included. I feel refreshed and open to trying more creative approaches when considering different kinds of collaborations, thinking about teaching styles within our tutor team, training for school staff, and generally restating the importance of music in education and in our lives as a whole.



Students from Cann Bridge School. Credit: Emma Vinnicombe

I truly appreciate the care taken to provide an inclusive experience and this was elevated in this project with us when children from Cann Bridge special school were able to create original songs and musical material that was then professionally orchestrated for the musicians and children to perform together. The primaries were definitely impressed by these original songs which they had not experienced or heard until the day of the performance. Teachers and support staff from Cann Bridge were extremely emotional about witnessing the development of initial ideas back in familiar spaces at school that had then flourished and been shared with everyone in the beautiful space during the performance. Orchestra members openly shared their emotional reactions to the original pieces too, which felt extremely genuine. Kirsty, for example, told me that she will be remembering 'Kirsty needs a hug, she needs to see us - here's a hug from us to you...' on the days when she feels less strong and needing comfort. What a gift from Cann Bridge to Kirsty! A beautiful two-way exchange indeed. We will never forget this project. We know that you work right across the country and meet so many people, but for us all here in Plymouth this was truly Fairy Queen magic with all the bells and sparkles on!!"

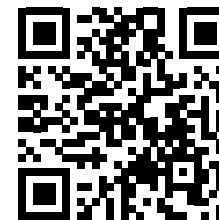
**ANNA BATSON, LEAD MUSIC TUTOR, EDUCATION,
PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS, PLYMOUTH YOUTH MUSIC SERVICE**

"I'm still on cloud 9 from today! I can't stop telling everyone how amazing it was! It's been such a privilege to work with you, Jo, Jared and of course Anna. What an experience it was for all of us to be sat alongside the orchestra!"

LEAD TEACHER, CANN BRIDGE SCHOOL

"Why do we bother paying for Netflix subscriptions when we could have an experience like that? It was so amazing!"

CHILD, PLYMOUTH



**Watch here for an interview
with Matthew from Cann
Bridge school.**



Cann Bridge School Artwork, collated by Emma Vinnicombe

RESIDENCIES

One of our aims is to become local wherever we work and we delight in being right at the heart of all of our communities. Our national residencies involve training, workshops and performances for local people to hear and perform alongside the OAE. During the 2025/26 season as well as our *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* flagship project, we enjoyed residencies in Bishop Auckland, York and Lincolnshire. Each residency is built on strong partnerships, working where local stakeholders have a real voice in the development of our work and decide where it is targeted.

We are really grateful to Orchestras Live (our partner in Norfolk, County Durham and Lincolnshire) and to the National Centre for Early Music and the York Music Hub (our partners in York). We also really value the close relationships we have with over ten music hubs across the country.

COUNTY DURHAM

In County Durham we were joined by ten primary schools for two performances of our Key Stage 1 show, *Full of Surprises*, in Bishop Auckland Town Hall. Presented by James Redwood, the show introduced students to Haydn symphonies including 'The Clock', 'The Farewell', 'La Chasse', 'Le Matin' and of course 'The Surprise Symphony'!

**"Beautiful music and amazingly educational for the children. James's energy was perfect.
What a show. Please return."**

PARENT, BISHOP AUCKLAND *FULL OF SURPRISES*

YORK

We also took our *Full of Surprises* show to the National Centre for Early Music in York for another three performances. Nearly 300 primary children from six local schools took part, singing alongside the OAE; all truly joyous occasions!

"My favourite part was when they were so quiet and then really loud!"

STUDENT, YORK *FULL OF SURPRISES*



"It made me feel happy!"
STUDENT, YORK *FULL OF SURPRISES*



Full of Surprises, County Durham



The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes, Kings Lynn



The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes, King's Lynn

"Huge thanks for an amazing experience for the children, staff and adults. We enjoyed ourselves so much and we thank you for the opportunity it gave our children, to experience live music and perform with such an amazing orchestra"

TEACHER, YORK *FULL OF SURPRISES*



Full of Surprises, York

"Loved watching how much my child enjoyed it – great fun."
TEACHER, BISHOP AUCKLAND *FULL OF SURPRISES*



Full of Surprises, York



The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes, King's Lynn

ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL

In 2020 the OAE moved into Acland Burghley School and since then we have had the pleasure of having our office, music library and rehearsal space on site. But there is so much more to us being in the school, from music being the soundtrack to the playground to our established programmes of Musical Connections, Ground Base, OAE Collective and Dreamchasing Young Producers, to dance and cross art projects, curriculum support and our ever-growing relationships with staff and students.

As we end year six of our residency at Acland Burghley it feels natural for us as an organisation to be based in a school. Our relationships with staff and students are deepening, the branches of our tree are growing and, most importantly, we are going on this journey together.

A Snapshot of the Year

CURRICULAR

Year 7 Introduction to the Orchestra

During their first term, the whole of Year 7 hear the Orchestra perform with the Year 10 Music GCSE students. Those who play instruments then join the OAE for an improvisation session.

Ground Base

Monthly sessions in the Acland Burghley Base for students with autism and complex needs to support wellbeing

Musical Connections

Creative music sessions throughout the year

Creating Excellence

Creative music project for Year 10 GCSE Music students

OAE Collective

A new project targeting high-achieving instrumentalists at Acland Burghley.

EXTRA CURRICULAR

Dreamchasing Young Producers Programme

- Weekly sessions, regular special events and OAE office drop-in throughout the week; Specialist training in lighting, production, film craft, costume techniques, management, budgeting, photo and video editing
- *Life of the Sea* technical and production support and filming
- *Grease (scenes)* – BTEC Musical – lighting and sound production support
- *Bugsy Malone* – school musical – props making, lighting and sound production support
- School Prom – lighting and sound production support
- Southbank Centre concert attendance
- Trip to see *Peter Grimes* at the Royal Opera House and backstage tour
- Lighting, camera and sound production support at TOTS concerts

Other Enrichment Activity

- Southbank Centre concert attendance – Acland Burghley Concert Club and student attendance
- Creating a Musical Environment – opportunities to hear the OAE and OAE Experience ensemble in rehearsal
- Work experience placements for students and volunteering placements for Duke of Edinburgh students
- T Level placements
- Annual Winter Concert
- Monthly staff socials
- Community Open Rehearsals and Concerts
- Year 7 Music Day during the Acland Burghley Summer School

Additional Special Projects

- *Breaking Bach* – a new dance work choreographed by Kim Brandstrup, performed by dance students from ABS alongside professional dancers at the Edinburgh International Festival and Enescu Festival, Bucharest
- *Life of the Sea* community opera
- ABS TOTS concerts for the local community

ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL IN NUMBERS

456 TOTAL student involvement, including:

170 Year 7

18 GCSE Music

30 Musical Connections

17 Dreamchasing Young Producers

25 Ground Base

26 Creating Excellence

27 Life of the Sea

7 Breaking Bach

90 ABS Summer School

247 Community open rehearsal attendance

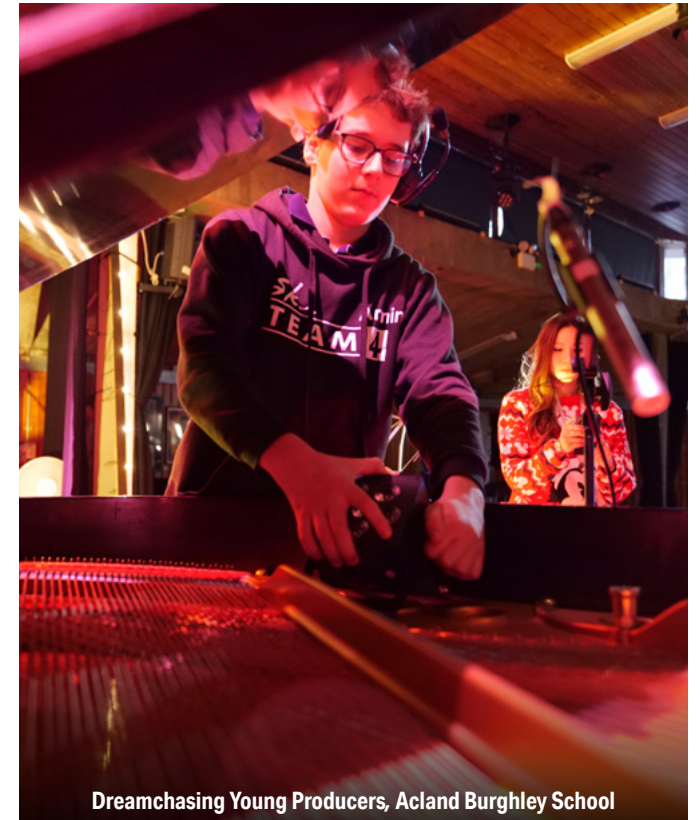
29 students attending performances, **727** local families,
49 school staff, **1255** live audience



Winter Concert, Acland Burghley School



Bugsy Malone, Acland Burghley School



Dreamchasing Young Producers, Acland Burghley School



Breaking Bach at the Edinburgh International Festival



Baroque to Brutalist, Acland Burghley School

About our work at Acland Burghley School

"Seeing our community, our students, our staff and the OAE completely in sync in a body percussion piece was also truly magical and a wonderful reminder of the value of having the OAE in residence."

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM, ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL

Summer School

Each summer, new Year 7 students are invited to a week-long summer school before the start of term. The week gives them a chance to get to know their new school environment and meet some of their teachers. We run a music day in which students meet and make music with the Orchestra and sing and play alongside their peers. It's also a great opportunity for us to meet them in an informal setting and find out about their musical likes! We are increasingly finding that around half of the new intake each year met us during their time in primary school through our London schools programme. In 2025 our music day was expertly led by Raph Clarkson.

"It is an extraordinary opportunity and a real privilege to have the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment leading summer school sessions for our incoming Year 7s. To work alongside musicians of this calibre before they've even properly joined the department is a rare and formative experience; it is an experience that helps them settle in, build confidence, and feel part of our musical community before their very first day. It sets the tone for everything that follows: the joyous feeling of playing together, a sense of belonging, and an early glimpse of just how far music can take them, even if they are not previously trained! A tremendous thank you to the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment for giving up their time and resources to make this engaging day possible."

MUSIC STAFF, ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL

Year 7 Introduction to the Orchestra

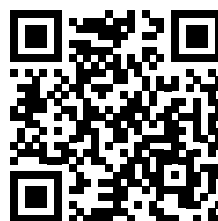
As part of our universal offer to students at Acland Burghley, we run workshops at the start of each year for all Year 7 students to introduce them to the Orchestra. Presented by James Redwood, these sessions give students, many of whom we have met and worked with during their time at primary school, the chance to meet players from the OAE, hear Baroque music and make music together.



Musical Connections, Acland Burghley School

"The new Year 7s fully embraced a carefully curated session that was not only fun and inclusive, but also focused on skill-building and community. It struck a perfect balance between learning and connection, giving students the chance to bond while being introduced to the vibrant culture of Acland Burghley School through the orchestra. It was a joy to watch every single student take part so enthusiastically. The orchestra plays a vital role at this pivotal stage, offering so much to our students. This session is a fantastic introduction to secondary school life and sets the tone for the exciting years of working together ahead."

STAFF, ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL



Watch here for a snapshot of our Introduction to the Orchestra for ABS Year 7s in Sept 2025.

Musical Connections

This year we have had 30 students across Years 7 – 9 involved in our Musical Connections project at Acland Burghley. We work in four separate groups under the leadership of James Redwood who then come together to form a larger ensemble. In the Winter Concert, our Musical Connections groups joined forces with students from our Ground Base project to create a magical piece inspired by *Joy to the World*. In the Spring term they performed to over 50 family and friends in an after-school event that also featured a piece based on the brutalist architecture of the hall.

"Thank you for the wonderful concert last night. The opening with all of Musical Connections together was spectacular and then having each group perform their piece and get their moment in the spotlight as a mini ensemble was perfect. Watching just exemplifies everything about the ethos of the school and the OAE."
SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM, ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL

"I thought it was a really good experience because I got to play different instruments and play with the band and I thought it was just really amazing."
STUDENT, ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL

"It was terrific! It is such a pleasure to watch the students perform at such a high level."
HEAD TEACHER, ACLAND BURGHLEY SCHOOL



Dreamchasing Young Producers, Acland Burghley School

Ground Base

Our monthly sessions in The Base (Acland Burghley's unit for students with autism and complex needs) give students the chance to work together in cross-year groups in an informal, safe setting in which every student's voice is heard.

"Creative music sessions in the Base are huge fun and something that I look forward to several times each term. Each session involves small group work with up to six students, an ABS TA, two OAE musicians, a workshop leader and a variety of musical instruments and tech equipment."

By creating a safe and familiar space students find ways of communicating through words, musical expression on an instrument or voice, turn-taking or being silent if that is their preference that day. We all share ideas and with the skill of the leader, compose a new song or film soundscape to be used sometimes in a school concert or for a jam in that very moment in time.

OAE players always offer some of their repertoire to the sessions and, after serious listening from the group, this repertoire may find it has a new bass line on a glock, a tambourine riff with some words over the top and sometimes even some dancing is added or laughter on a loop too. I think Handel would have approved!

Over the last year I have noticed that many of the students have gained in confidence. This is visible as they often come up with more ideas in the group, try new challenges and understand that we all have good days and bad days and that is ok. It is clear that within each group there has grown support of one another too which is lovely to see.

It is a privilege to take part in these sessions and they certainly enrich my life."

KATIE HELLER (OAE VIOLA)

OAE Collective

A new initiative for 25 / 26 was to set up a group at the school for more advanced players called the OAE Collective. Working alongside OAE musicians and composer James Redwood, they helped to compose a new piece inspired by the travels of Jeanne Baret, the first woman to circumnavigate the globe, which they performed at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in June.

Life of the Sea

Our community opera, performed in June at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, gave a platform to dancers and musicians from Acland Burghley, alongside London primary school pupils, and instrumentalists and singers from Northgate School in Ipswich.

Breaking Bach

An exciting music and dance project, bringing together a group of talented young street dancers from Acland Burghley School with professional dancers. Directed by the internationally renowned choreographer Kim Brandstrup, it premiered on 20 August 2025 at the Edinburgh International Festival and toured to Bucharest in September 2025. We are delighted to have received a new Arts Council strategic touring grant so this fantastic project will tour various locations between April – October 2027.

Dreamchasing Young Producers

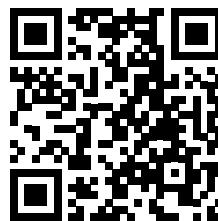
The Dreamchasing Young Producers scheme is an initiative that mentors and trains students at Acland Burghley in project management, creative design and production through weekly after-school sessions. Young Producers also get the opportunity to shadow OAE staff and assist on OAE projects as work experience trainees at our public engagements. Across the year they have been involved in running numerous events such as organising lighting, sound and props for the Acland Burghley Winter Concert, school prom, and school musical, and assisting front and back of house at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Royal Festival Hall.

"I think without the Dreamchasing Young Producers I'd have been in a completely different place to where I am now. I don't think I would have done as well as I think I've done in my GCSEs. I don't think I'd have been able to focus as much and be able to do so many other things. It's really allowed me to apply myself and use the skills I've learned to really benefit me. I think without it, I would be a bit lost and wouldn't really know what I'm doing. But now I've got such a clear picture of what I want to do in the future and the skills to do it. So I think it's transformed my life really."

DREAMCHASING YOUNG PRODUCER

Creating Excellence

A three-day creative music project for students to work together creatively as they embark on their Music GCSE. The project this year was inspired by the brutalist architecture of the school hall and was called Baroque to Brutalist.



Watch here for a snapshot of our 2026 Creating Excellence project.

"I had the great pleasure of being part of the team of workshop musicians delivering the Music and Dance project at ABS in early July 2026. The scope of this project was both ambitious and clearly-focussed, and it was amazing to see how such a brilliant performance piece could be developed over the course of three days. The inspiration for the piece was drawn from a talk we heard on Wednesday morning by Dr Ruth Lang, an eminent architect and lecturer with a special interest in Brutalism. The goal was to create a collaborative piece of between five and ten minutes featuring newly written music and choreographed dances inspired by the Brutalist architecture of Acland Burghley School. Our team of workshop musicians was headed by James Redwood, who was responsible for helping a large group of year 9 students to come up with material, and he did an incredible job getting each of them to contribute either musical ideas or excellent instrumental execution. By the end of the three days, we had created a substantial, multi-section piece showcasing grooves, unusual harmonic sequences and balancing improvisation with pre-determined and precisely rehearsed elements. The dancers were working separately to us, but we had the privilege of seeing them trial ideas at various stages of the process. Not to mention the fact that both musicians and dancers were doing demanding work during a fairly unpleasant urban heat wave! Even knowing what all the musicians and dancers were capable of, I was stunned at how moving and effective the final performance was. I've been involved in several projects similar to this with the OAE, I think the students (and workshop leaders!) did something we can all be hugely proud of. These dedicated and hard-working students are a real asset to ABS and we were privileged to be able to be part of their education and their journey to GCSE music and dance."

BRENDAN MUSK, OAE PLAYER



Sailing Away TOTS, Acland Burghley School

Community Concerts and Open Rehearsals

We continue to offer free or accessibly priced OAE rehearsal visits and informal concerts at Acland Burghley School for students and staff at the school as well as the local community.

Much of our work at Acland Burghley is beyond the classroom and our OAE TOTS, open rehearsals and community concerts at the school are a good example of how we are bringing the Orchestra's work to the wider community. During the season, we performed six TOTS concerts at ABS to delighted audiences: *Puzzle TOTS*, *Mozart Chased a Cat TOTS* and *Sailing Away TOTS*. As the assembly hall will be closed for refurbishment for much of the next academic year, we will be taking our ABS TOTS shows to our partner primary schools starting in August 2026 with *A Musical Adventure* at Gospel Oak primary school.

"A FABULOUS experience for the entire family. Can't wait for the next one. Loved it ALL!"

PARENT

"Nola and mummy had a good time"

CHILD

"Absolutely exceptional that children who are the most creative (spectrum / ADHD / autistic) get an opportunity to be inspired in a free space where they are not judged by the constraints of society. Utterly Inspiring!!!"

PARENT ABS TOTS



OAE Experience Scheme Community Concert, Acland Burghley School

FAMILIES AND TOTS



OAE TOTS

Our TOTS programme includes workshops and concerts for 2–5-year-olds in nursery and school settings, or in the community. TOTS events are always lively, with lots of interaction, lots of noise and lots of fun for children and adults alike!

AT ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

Mozart Chased A Cat TOTS

When a young Mozart visited London, he met a cat. This interactive concert took the audience on a journey through Mozart's Symphony No.40, imagining what adventures Mozart and the cat might have gone on in London.

Sailing Away TOTS

This show gave families the chance to share the stage with a cast of occasionally weird – and always wonderful – instruments, as the Orchestra played water-themed music by Lully, Handel, Haydn and more.

LPO FUNharmonics

Continuing our partnership with the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) we ran themed TOTS workshops alongside the LPO FUNharmonics concerts at the Royal Festival Hall. This season two sets of workshops took families on adventures inspired by the music of the OAE. Children and adults were encouraged to sing, dance and play alongside OAE musicians.

““Our boys have never been so enthusiastic! Thank you!”

PARENT

“First orchestra experience for our little one – she loved it!”

PARENT

“I liked it. It was fun. I liked the music.”

CHILD

“Love, love, love this. Please do it more often!”

PARENT

“Better than a 4-day music festival. All my kid's dreams came true – he LOVED the double bass!”

PARENT

“10 out of 10”

CHILD

“It's a brilliant experience. The music and story are just perfect to keep kids' attention. The 50 minutes duration are spot on. My son is 6 and still loves OAE TOTS. We plan to come to OAE TOTS concerts until he grows out of it.”

PARENT

“First time at an OAE TOTS concert and it was brilliant, really engaging. My daughter's only 19-months, but she was dancing along, we loved it.”

PARENT



LOCAL LONDON TOTS

This year, we welcomed local families to Acland Burghley for three TOTS shows: our enigma-inspired *Puzzle TOTS*, the sea-themed *Sailing Away TOTS* and *Mozart Chased a Cat TOTS* which also became our Early Years show for our London partner schools from Camden, Ealing and Brent.

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you for holding one of the Early Years concerts at Netley. At Netley, we are proud to work with lots of children who have special needs. Your flexibility and support meant that all of the children in our reception cohort were able to access and engage in the concert and workshops."

It was fantastic to be able to have a truly inclusive event, where children weren't just present, but actively engaging with and experiencing live music.

When performers visited school they were so flexible and positive about working with all of our children. They worked with staff to understand the needs of the children and how to adapt to increase participation. It has meant so much to the children, staff and families to feel included and give the children unique opportunities."

EARLY YEARS TEACHER

"I really like music now"

EARLY YEARS PUPIL

OAE TOTS ON TOUR

Lincolnshire – A Day at the Pond TOTS

Tracking the day in the life of a pond, our young audiences in Gainsborough, Nettleton, Skegness and Spilsby enjoyed Western and Asian classical music and dance in a beautifully crafted show by Hazel Gould, a collaboration between the OAE, South Asian Arts-uk, Orchestras Live, Lincolnshire Music Service and Amazing Music Projects (AMP).

"The staff and children had an amazing time. The show was fantastic and everyone loved it."

HEAD, SKEGNESS INFANT ACADEMY

Brighton Early Music Festival – Puzzle TOTS

This year's contribution to the Brighton Early Music Festival was all about puzzles. From our writer Hazel Gould: 'Puzzles are tricky! How do the pieces fit together?' A family concert inspired by puzzles featuring music from the 17th and 18th Centuries.

"Thank you so much!! The best event we have ever been to!"

PARENT AT BREMF TOTS



SCHOOLS

OUR PRIMARY PROJECTS

Each school year we offer Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 programmes to our partner schools across London. Every project involves a teacher training day, in-school workshops with our players, and a culmination concert, in which pupils become active performers: singing, playing and listening. We provide in-depth resources (both printed and digital), allowing teachers and music specialists to support the projects in the classroom and building a legacy of work for them to draw upon.

We are incredibly grateful to the John Lyon's Charity for supporting us in four of our London boroughs – Camden, Brent, Harrow and Ealing – with a three-year grant towards 'Louder! Widening Musical Communities' which includes our schools programme.

KS1 – WATERCYCLE: 1, 2, 3, WATER RISES FROM THE SEA

A project for Year 1 and 2 students exploring what it means to be a scientist and introducing the stages of the water cycle: evaporation, condensation and precipitation. The show – written by Hazel Gould and James Redwood and featuring actor-musician-magician extraordinaire, Tom Silburn – was centred around Handel's *Water Music* and featured extracts from Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre's Trio Sonata No.1 in G minor and Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*.

KS2 – WATERCYCLE: WE ARE MOVED BY THE LIGHT OF THE MOON

A project in which students in Years 3 – 6 explored music written to be performed on the water, cyclical musical structures, the seasons and rounds, presented by James Redwood.

"Thank you for playing Handel's song and thank you for letting us join in."

KS1 STUDENT

"I loved how it was a safe space for someone who lacks confidence in music (like me). Love the rainbow song! :)

Thank you for teaching so clearly"

KS1 TEACHER AFTER CPD TRAINING

"I love all of the orchestra because the music was so neat"

KS1 STUDENT



Key Stage 1 Watercycle, Acland Burghley School

"I just wanted to say HUGE thank you for yesterday's concert. I know both our classes absolutely loved it. I felt very lucky to be part of something so special. If that doesn't put a smile on your face I don't know what will! All of the parents commented on what a positive and inclusive environment you created for the different schools. We are so lucky to be able to collaborate with such a talented group."

KS1 TEACHER

"The whole team are fantastic to work with – always very friendly and fun. The workshops and CPD and concerts are always very high quality - well-planned, well-researched and brilliantly delivered. I particularly enjoyed the songs/music for this project – we will keep them in our repertoire."

KS1 TEACHER

"The big old instruments are really good"

KS2 PUPIL

"It was a truly phenomenal experience that the children will hold with them for a long time. An incredibly enriching experience, and I have only had positive feedback."

KS2 TEACHER

"I did not know that there are so many instruments big and small"

KS2 PUPIL

"The work we do with the OAE has made me appreciate how significant exposure to live music is for our children."

KS2 TEACHER

"This music is more classy, and not many people know about it."

KS2 PUPIL

"The concert was absolutely incredible. It was engaging, fun and everyone loved taking part. The amount of participation was pitched well, it was accessible for all. Thank you."

KS2 TEACHER

"Now I always like listening to orchestra music"

KS2 PUPIL



Key Stage 2 Watercycle, Cecil Sharp House



Key Stage 1 Watercycle, Acland Burghley School



Key Stage 1 Watercycle, Acland Burghley School

MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

We are constantly struck by the connections formed through music in our work with students with additional needs, whether that be in SEND settings e.g. specialist schools, or when we bring together young people with and without additional needs. To reflect this, we have renamed this strand of our work Musical Connections. This year we embarked on a three-year project in Harrow, joined the Merton Music Foundation for their borough-wide celebration at the Royal Albert Hall, ran three projects in special schools in Ealing, and brought music into care homes in Warwickshire.

HARROW MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

This three-year project, generously supported by the John Lyon's Charity, brings together two primary schools (Kenmore Park and St John's C of E), a special school (Shaftesbury High School) and the John Lyon School. At the start of the project, schools were asked what they would like from the OAE. Based on their responses, we collaboratively built a programme supporting recorder and ensemble playing in the primary schools, ensemble work in the Shaftesbury High School and instrumental performance in John Lyon School.

We launched the project at the Harrow Arts Centre in January 2026 with a day of listening, singing and playing for everyone (led by James Redwood and Raph Clarkson). Highlights included students from Shaftesbury creating a song with Raph Clarkson (which we expanded in workshops throughout the year), and instrumentalists from John Lyon School playing side-by-side with the OAE, in what was a joyous start to the project.

Following the launch, we held workshops in each of the schools – Kenmore Park and St John's created a rondo, Shaftesbury worked on their song 'We're Dreamers' and everyone took part in a piece composed by James Redwood to represent a storm. We all learned Helly Shumray, a sea shanty and, in our final sharing back at the Elliott Hall in July, we shared our music, sang and played to parents, friends and family.



Watch here to hear from
Elisa Evans, music lead at
Shaftesbury High School.



"Being part of this 3-year project meant that I was privileged to see early on that this was going to be something special, not just for us adults but a bespoke and customised project for all children regardless of their personal challenges and for most, a once in a lifetime opportunity to play with a professional orchestra. It did not disappoint. I honestly think every child felt they were a cherished part of the performance and that the orchestra wanted them to be there to play alongside them."

MUSIC LEAD, KENMORE PARK

"The Musical Connections project was a sense of joy for me last year. From the launch day when we met with everyone involved at the Arts Centre, to the 3 workshops at the school where the children thoroughly enjoyed the time spent with members of the OAE, even composing their own music, to finally taking part in the concert at the Arts Centre where it brought all the different elements together. Everyone was involved and included, either on their own instruments or using percussion instruments or sounds. The children were engaged throughout and developed as musicians in the process. I loved the way that the members of the OAE worked with different groups to compose parts of a piece that were then put all together in a beautiful piece. This is a great idea that I would use in the future. The whole project was a great success and I can't wait to see how it will develop next year."

MUSIC LEAD, ST JOHN'S C OF E

"Musical Connections is a hugely ambitious project, bringing a wide range of schools together to work and perform collaboratively. The performances so far have felt both celebratory and relaxed, with a spirit of sharing, and it has been particularly exciting to see some of the work develop over time. A great example of this is the song that Shaftesbury school wrote themselves in the workshops. We are really glad that this project is taking place in Harrow and are looking forward to seeing how it plays out over time."

DANIEL PATON, HARROW MUSIC SERVICE

"Working with the OAE to create music with young people has been such a positive and joy-filled experience. The sheer delight of taking students' ideas, running with them, seeing where they go, and ending up with a new piece that sizzles with excitement is so emblematic of the power of Musical Connections. The enthusiasm of the young people and players alike is so inspiring and moving, and just goes to show how powerful these sessions are!"

JARED BENNETT, ANIMATEUR



To Boldly Go rehearsals, Royal Albert Hall



To Boldly Go rehearsals, Royal Albert Hall



Ealing Musical Connections, Mandeville



Ealing Musical Connections, Mandeville

EALING MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

MANDEVILLE

Led by Jessie Grimes, our work at Mandeville this year was once again very well received by staff, students and families who joined us for the sharing on the final day. Workshops in Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) classes at the end of the project were a beautiful end to this year's work.

BELVUE

Our projects are always bespoke to the setting and our work this year at Belvue came from a request by the music lead at the school that we support a concert given by the students. Alice Poppleton created arrangements of Baroque pieces that the students learned in school and a small ensemble from the OAE joined them for the final sharing.

The students from Belvue were assured musicians with fantastic ensemble skills and they, alongside a team from the OAE, put on a slick performance at the end of the summer term. A highlight for Alice Poppleton, who led the project, was hearing a solo keyboard player perform accompanied by pizzicato cello. She also commented that it was an interesting learning opportunity for the team who saw how music teacher Chris Chambers codified the music and drew it onto the keyboard with coloured patterns, using stars, diamonds and numbers to enable students to learn the music.

JOHN CHILTON

Led by Alice Poppleton and Oliver John Ruthven, the project began with an introduction to opera, the OAE's instruments and Purcell's music for *Dido and Aeneas*. Inspired by Purcell's opera, the group then decided on a theme for their opera which became about Medusa and a group of explorers who travel to Ealing Broadwayshire, Actonshire and other locally inspired locations! The whole company, OAE musicians, teachers, TAs and students were totally invested in the opera through sourcing costumes, distributing and rehearsing lines, composing music and practising choreography. The end result featured Purcell's music, music written by the students performed on classroom percussion, and their own ground basses performed by OAE players whilst they rapped over the top. The whole school watched the performance and loved it, joining in for a final sing-along.

MUSICAL CONNECTIONS IN WARWICKSHIRE

Katherine Spencer (Waffy), Katie Heller and Chris Rawlings visited care homes in Warwickshire ahead of Waffy's performance of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto at the Warwick Arts Centre and the Anvil in Basingstoke with the OAE.

"It was an absolutely wonderful experience for the students. Both classes really grew in the workshop days and it was an absolute delight for all the teachers to see them explore their creativity and collaboration. The final presentation was so thoughtfully and cleverly presented and I have had other students in the school expressing that they want to be a part of the next one. The parental feedback was wonderful too. Everyone who took part or watched it really enjoyed every part of it!"

MUSIC LEAD, JOHN CHILTON

"The team demonstrated excellent understanding of our pupils' diverse needs. They used visual prompts, gentle encouragement, and flexible pacing, which enabled even our more hesitant pupils to take part. Many pupils showed improved focus and enjoyment across the sessions".

MUSIC LEAD, MANDEVILLE

"I wanted to pass our thanks on again for helping us produce a really lovely concert last week. It was a thoroughly worthwhile experience for our students and you helped us tremendously to create exactly what we were after."

MUSIC LEAD, BELVUE

"I just wanted to extend a huge thank you to you, Waffy and Chris for yesterday's visit to Basingfield Court. We had a brilliant group of 24 residents who joined us, all engaged in their own way (including someone who made an excellent contribution to song structure and several who sat with their eyes closed but nodding their heads or tapping out a rhythm on their legs) and we were also able to visit one person who is on palliative care. It also happened to be that person's birthday, so it was really touching to stand in the hallway and listen to their interactions for a moment".

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, ANVIL BASINGSTOKE

"Playing in care homes is really a highlight for me. This year I was lucky to bring Mozart's music to residents whilst touring his concerto with the orchestra. The music visibly moved the residents and brought about conversation and sharing of emotions and stories. Not only did this bring meaningful connection to the residents and staff which left them uplifted and chatting at the end of the session but it also feeds into how one can connect to a larger perhaps more distant audience in the evening. Intimate community settings are where musicians learn the true effect of their music and how to share that."

KATHERINE SPENCER (WAFFY), PRINCIPAL CLARINET



Ealing Musical Connections, Mandeville

NURTURING TALENT

Through our Nurturing Talent programme we aim to share our passion for the music we play and to inspire the next generation of players to reach their full potential.

The Ann and Peter Law OAE Experience Scheme supported by the Henocq Law Trust

After the final concert in September where Charlotte Spruit performed Beethoven's violin concerto with our Experience ensemble, we said goodbye to the 24 – 25 Experience cohort and a new group of musicians joined us in January 2026. They have now completed their first two Academy courses and a number of players have taken up opportunities to work on our education programme. We will continue working together until late 2027 and are looking forward to the next Experience Academy in October 2026, exploring Haydn 99, Beethoven 2 and some lesser-known Sinfonia Concertantes.

Brent Strings

Our string projects continued this year with opportunities for young musicians across Brent to learn from and play alongside OAE players. Across two days in April, we brought together string players from 13 schools (both primary and secondary) for 'String Inspiration' days in Brent.

Harrow Recorder Extravaganza

During the Summer term we worked with 120 recorder players from seven Harrow primary schools, collaborating with music service staff and teachers. At the recorder festival in June a team of nine players from the OAE – oboes, recorders, bassoons, da caccia, double bass and spoons (with no fewer than 30 instruments between us!) joined the 120-strong recorder ensemble as we told the story of Don Quixote, directed by Robert de Bree.



OAE Experience Academy, Acland Burghley School

"This year's OAE Academy has got off to a roaring start. In the January course we met the new cohort, getting to know each other through the music of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven and sharing our work with an audience of tots and their parents who were as enthusiastic as we were about the music making. We followed this in April with a Baroque course featuring repertoire by leading lights, Handel, Telemann, and Rameau, alongside some extraordinary music by Venturini, Muffat, and Fasch. Participants were challenged not only with some tough repertoire but also with original C18th seating plans which, I am delighted to say, brought out the best from everyone!"

LEO DUARTE, OBOE

"The enthusiasm, energy, commitment, consummate musicianship and enjoyment that the Experience Scheme players bring to the OAE is an inspiration. The current cohort demonstrate all these attributes. We are looking forward to future courses and activities and I am certain that we will see and hear many of these exceptional young players in the OAE over the coming years."

MARGARET FAULTLESS, LEADER

"Over my two years on the OAE Experience scheme, the most impactful lesson I've learned is the importance of truly becoming part of an ensemble - not just playing alongside others but actively listening, responding and contributing to a shared musical goal."

24 / 25 EXPERIENCE STUDENT

"I can report that the children described it as 'the best trip ever' and were hugely enthusiastic about playing their violins. In their next lesson, the 8 who went on the trip had noticeably increased confidence and were showing other children their new skills of rocket bows! From my point of view, I was very impressed at the way the leaders made the workshop accessible to beginner players with clever arrangements using open strings. The piece with the solo violin and group accompaniment in particular was a great way of giving them an experience of playing in Baroque style without them realising it. The bow explanation was also really interesting and accessible."

TEACHER, BRENT STRINGS

The Year 1 OAE workshop was amazing! The pacing of the session, the way the children were involved actively throughout and able to build on their playing techniques was great. I also liked the fact that there was a creative element and children were able to add their own ideas and improvise based on the pieces that were introduced. They had a great time and it clearly inspired them as some of them have since been asking about starting lessons in Year 2!"

TEACHER, BRENT STRINGS

"Being part of the OAE Experience Scheme has been inspiring and affirming. The baroque and classical courses have helped us contextualise so many of the conventions we take at face value, and encouraged us to experiment with everything ranging from instrumental and ensemble playing techniques to historical orchestral seating plans.

I was lucky to join the OAE for two community opera projects, *Life of the Sea* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* at the Wiltshire Music Centre. As someone interested in participatory work in youth and community settings, these experiences were eye-opening. The scale of these projects, with so many different layers and moving parts, was unlike anything I had seen, yet each component felt thoughtfully designed, innovatively put together, and held to the highest standards.

Another highlight has been meeting and learning from the OAE players, who have all been so kind, supportive, and welcoming. It has been inspiring to see the sense of curiosity and responsibility shared by the players, their vast range and depth of knowledge, and above all, how much fun everyone is having!

I applied for the scheme wanting to explore how music from hundreds of years ago can be presented to today's audiences in ways that are relevant, engaging, and accessible. The scheme so far has already shown me what that can look like in practice and given me a much clearer sense of the kind of musician I want to be".

SAGNICK MUKHERJEE, OAE EXPERIENCE VIOLA AND STANLEY PICKER TRUST SCHOLAR



OAE Experience Academy, Acland Burghley School



Life of the Sea, Acland Burghley School



OAE Experience Academy, Acland Burghley School

A NOTE FROM...



CRISPIN WOODHEAD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

"These pages remind us what can happen when artistic ambition and education are treated as the same endeavour. Triumphant and inspirational projects such as *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* and *Life of the Sea* have drawn young people into the heart of our creative work, not merely as participants, but as artists in their own right. This review is a proud story of education bursting with imagination, confidence and possibility."



OUR INCOMING CHAIR, LORD CHRIS SMITH,

"Nothing is more important than introducing young people to the brilliance and heartfelt joy of classical music. And OAE – whether it's embedding the orchestra so successfully in Acland Burghley School, or taking music to thousands of young people across the country, is at the forefront of doing so. I'm really proud to be becoming part of all of this."



A THANK YOU TO OUR OUTGOING CHAIR, IMOGEN CHARLTON-EDWARDS from Cherry Forbes

"I would personally like to record my sincere thanks to Imogen for her unstinting support of our Education programme. From joining us on projects and events around the country to workshops at our home at Acland Burghley, I have loved her enthusiasm and passion for all things education!"



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026/27

We're getting ready for another wonderful season of music-making inspired by the OAE's 40th-anniversary season. To give you a taster of what we're preparing...

TOTS & FAMILY

- Royal Festival Hall TOTS *A Musical Adventure with Don Quixote* and *Full of Surprises*
- OAE TOTS at LPO FUNharmonics *Puzzle TOTS*, *Storytime TOTS* and *TOTS with no rules!*
- Brighton Early Music Festival *A Musical Adventure with Don Quixote*
- Community TOTS concerts at local schools – *A Musical Adventure with Don Quixote*, *Full of Surprises* and a new show for Summer 2027 with Abimaro Gunnell

SCHOOLS

- KS1 'The Magic of Mozart'
- KS2 'Symphonies, Swords and Surprises'
- Acland Burghley – Musical Connections, Ground Base, GCSE composition work, Introduction to the Orchestra, Creating Excellence music and dance event, Dreamchasing Young Producers, Community Open Rehearsals and the OAE Collective
- GCSE Composition work in Harrow

MUSICAL CONNECTIONS

- Musical Connections projects in Camden, Harrow, Ealing and Ipswich
- Camden Music Royal Albert Hall Celebration

NURTURING TALENT

- The Ann and Peter Law OAE Experience Scheme
- Brent, Camden and Harrow string and recorder projects

RESIDENCIES / FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

- Residencies in York and County Durham
- *The Fairy Queen: Three Wishes* in Lincolnshire

EDUCATION TEAM 2025 / 26

"The Education team is brilliant – friendly, fun and the sessions are always high quality and add value. Thank you!"
EARLY YEARS TEACHER

Laura Alexander
Ruth Alford
 John-Henry Baker
 Nicola Barbagli
 Richard Bayliss
 Sarah Bealby-Wright
Adrian Bending
Lisa Beznosiuk
 Katy Bircher
David Blackadder
 Rosie Bowker
 Abigail Brown
 Georgia Browne
Cecelia Bruggemeyer
 Christopher Bucknall
 Ellen Bundy
 Tara Bungard
 Alison Bury
 Geoff Coates
 Carina Cosgrave
John Crockatt
Huw Daniel
Iona Davies
 Melissa Davies
Kati Debretzeni
Steven Devine
 Kaviraj Dhadyalla
Deborah Diamond

Carina Drury
 Anna Drysdale
Leo Duarte
Daniel Edgar
Alice Evans
 Huw Evans
Margaret Faultless
Dominika Fehér
 Flora Fontanelli
 Cherry Forbes
 Elizabeth Foxley
 Hannah Gardiner
 Jacob Garside
 Russell Gilmour
 Kate Goldsmith
 Emma Halnan
 Rebecca Hammond
 Rebecca Harris
Katie Heller
 Charlie Hodge
Claire Holden
 Robert Howarth
 Josie Jobbins
 Osian Jones
 Nivanthi Karunaratne
 Dorota Kolinek
 Joanna Lawrence
Martin Lawrence

Nia Lewis
Rebecca Livermore
 Katie Lodge
Max Mandel
Jonathan Manson
 Sarah McMahon
 Ann Monnington
 Peter Moutoussis
 Sophia Mücke
 Brendan Musk
 Eriko Nagayama
 Miriam Nohl
 Ursula Paludan Monberg
 Jean Paterson
 Sidharth Prabhu-Naik
 Christopher Rawley
 Luke Reddin-Williams
Catherine Rimer
 Jack Ross
 William Russell
 Oliver-John Ruthven
 Joshua Salter
 Grace Scott Deuchar
 Hannah Shaw
 Zoe Shevlin
Katherine Spencer
 Angelika Stangl
Kinga Ujszászi

Henrietta Wayne
 Benedict Williams
 Stuart Young

ANIMATEURS, COMPOSERS, PRODUCERS, SOLOISTS:

Natalie Ayton
 Anna Batson
 Jared Bennett
 Liliana Butler
 Raphael Clarkson
 Tom Cohen*
 Adam Courting
 Timothy Dickinson
 Lynne Forbes
 Hazel Gould
 Jessie Grimes
 Kirsty Hopkins
 Simone Ibbett-Brown
 Brett Kasza
 Jyoti Manral
 Ruth Paton Jopling
 James Redwood
 Tom Silburn

Names in **bold** are OAE
 Player members

DREAMCHASING YOUNG PRODUCERS 25/26

Adam
 Albi
 Anastasia
 Armin
 Boris
 Dimitris
 Eliot
 Flynn
 Freida
 Harvey
 Henry
 Ines
 Jaeden
 James
 Jesse
 Jessica
 Nadia
 Rafi
 Sophia
 Tam
 Tommy
 Ursula
 Victoria

*Dreamchasing Young Producers
 scheme graduate

2025 / 26 OAE EXPERIENCE SCHEME

Moeko Aiba
Luis Bicalho
Anna Brown
Joan Casabona i Amat
Jude Chandler
Serena Fantini

Sarah Harrigan
Madison Marshall
Mercè Mateau Verdera
Edward Mead
Sagnick Mukherjee*
Camille Poirier-Lachance

Jenna Raggett
Molly Sellors
Lidia Sierra
Sofi Stambolieva
Andrew Taheny
Mattia Tallarini

Hadewych de Vos
Georgia Williams

*Stanley Picker Trust Scholar



OAE Experience Scheme Community Concert, Acland Burghley School

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We would like to thank the following supporters whose generosity and enthusiasm enables us to continue our ambitious education programme. We are also very grateful to our anonymous supporters and to the individuals who supported our Arts for Impact campaign.

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National Centre for Early Music (NCEM)
South Asian Arts – UK (SAA-uk)
AMP – Youth Music Development charity,
North Yorkshire

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The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

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"What a performance! At the end, I clapped until my hands ached and later I cried when describing it"

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *THE FAIRY QUEEN: THREE WISHES*