

# Your Geordie Symphony School

## In Harmony Newcastle Gateshead



Dear friends,

After the business of December, the New Year can often feel quiet. But at In Harmony Newcastle Gateshead, the last few months have flown by. Reflecting on this time, it's apparent just how much has taken place, and how much the young people have achieved.

December was jam-packed full of performances at both Hawthorn and Bridgewater schools, and in the wider community. It's always inspiring to see so many young people perform, and for those who performed for the first time ever, bravo! Many performances were left with standing room only, indicative of the incredible support of the programme, and a testament to the determination, efforts, and aspirations of the young people. I've always loved how music has the power to bring people together, to bring joy, and make people smile, and nowhere was that more obvious than in the West End of Newcastle last December.

We're incredibly proud of the four WNSO musicians who travelled to the Midlands last October to represent our programme at the national Nucleo Young Leaders Residential course. Over three days, they played in an orchestra alongside children from other In Harmony and Sistema-based programmes.

This term, many children have been taking part in Arts Award, a national initiative which encourages creativity, confidence, and leadership skills in young people, as well as promoting a lifelong relationship with music. On completion of the award, each young person receives a qualification - congratulations to all the young people who have achieved their award during this time.

This newsletter only scratches the surface of what happens within In Harmony Newcastle Gateshead. We remain incredibly grateful to all supporters, staff, colleagues, and friends – which enables what I've shared above, and so much more, to happen.

Matt Wigley

Head of Young People's Programme

## In Harmony in the Community

The string quintet from the West Newcastle Symphony Orchestra were delighted to return to St. Matthew's Church in February to perform at their Shrove Tuesday Community Dinner. Whilst around 40 members of our community enjoyed a feast of pancakes, the quintet entertained the group with pop song arrangements, classical quintets and some upbeat folk songs, the firm favourite almost certainly being 'Blaydon Races' to which the diners enjoyed singing along to! The young musicians were then of course treated to their own pancakes and chatted with members of the community in a very fulfilling evening for all.



*"In Harmony and WNSO have a very positive impact on the community. It brings us joy!" – WNSO Audience Member*

## Nucleo Residential

In October 2022, four musicians from West Newcastle Symphony Orchestra attended the Nucleo Young Leaders Residential. The residential was a music and action packed four days of rehearsals, creative music making sessions with professional musicians, networking and hang outs with young musicians from across the country and even a bonus high ropes adventure activity! Here are some accounts of what our young musicians thought of the residential:



**ALFIE:** *We travelled to the Pioneer Centre near Birmingham to take part in a variety of activities to both learn about and develop existing leadership skills in order to make everyone who attended more confident leaders. There were various sessions all helping to learn and develop these skills while still being fun. There were sectionals with either individual instruments, as was the case with the cello section, or small multi-instrumental groups to learn the repertoire of new music which included lots of contemporary forms of music making allowing the exploration of instruments. The teachers and staff were always helpful and interested in what the students had to say and would give appropriate and helpful guidance when teaching a specific phrase or piece. The improvisation aspect of the residential was also important with the group composing our own song based on improvisations making a comfortable atmosphere for people who wouldn't typically be comfortable in doing so. I found this very enjoyable although I'm not usually a person who enjoys improvisation as this was a group experience and I knew there were people in the same situation as me, it also helped that I really liked the music that we were playing.*

**JESSICA:** *Attending the Nucleo residential was an experience that allowed me to explore music and my musical ability outside my comfort zone. The trip was full of inspiring young people who were full of great ideas. I made many new friends who I will try to keep in contact with through my life and the opportunity allowed me to create and interpret music beyond just reading of a page on a stand. The guidance from all the teachers and young leaders encouraged and inspired me to be better. My favourite part of the trip was the improvisation and singing we did. The atmosphere we created with our instruments and our voices was so radiant and I had never felt such a great atmosphere in my life. I also enjoyed the social aspect and the adventure courses. I hope that Nucleo make something like this again and I will definitely attend an opportunity like this.*

## Royal Northern Sinfonia Visits



In February, 10 players from Royal Northern Sinfonia visited both Hawthorn and Bridgewater schools and gave a performance. The children in Years 3 and 4 at Bridgewater enjoyed asking the players questions about their music making and gaining some top tips! The group, split into 2 quintets, one string and one wind, played a range of music which sounded like pirates! The children were praised by the RNS players for listening and concentrating so well.

At Hawthorn, the players played the same programme this time to several children of a whole range of ages across the school and their families after school. It's always so nice to see families enjoying music together, a wonderful way to end the half term!

*"I really liked how they played. They are the best, I now want to become a professional cellist."* – Y4 student, Bridgewater

## Winter Concerts

Almost 700 children as part of the In Harmony programme did a performance or sharing to their families and friends at the end of the Winter term. It was a particular delight to see Year 5 children from Bridgewater School performing as Bridgewater Sinfonia for the first time, the sell-out crowd of Bridgewater Symphony Orchestra (Year 6) and the wonderful solos/small groups heard throughout Key Stage 2.

Children from the Beethoven String Ensemble and Armstrong Brass ensemble at Hawthorn Primary School performed at the Grainger Market for the general public – complete with sleigh bells and Santa hats!

Hawthorn Primary Wind Orchestra performed for our friends at The Home Group – representing our programme so wonderfully for the staff and teams there.

A huge thank you to all the staff and tutors who make these performances possible, it's so impressive to see and hear the children's progress at the end of the term.



*Music has a vital impact on our lives, In Harmony affects the mental state of the children and boosts the positive energy in the school's atmosphere.” – Parent, Hawthorn*

## Arts Award

Children from Hawthorn Primary School have been very busy in Arts Award Club since the start of the school year, with visits to Arts venues across the North East and workshops led by professional Artists in school. In November the group went along to The Lit & Phil for a lunchtime concert by Pianist Kate Halsall & Flautist Alessandra Amorino, followed by an inspiring Q&A afterwards. The children came away with lots of souvenirs and leaflets about the venue and answers to their questions about the performance and being a professional musician. This wasn't the only exciting trip for our Arts Award group though! At the start of the Spring term, the group headed down to The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, where they had the opportunity to interact with exhibitions, immersing themselves in sounds, touch, and visual elements on display in the space. They chatted to the Baltic Crew, asking fantastic questions, and finding out some great feedback to report in their log when they returned to school. Back at school, The Arts Award group welcomed Toby Heaps, a local graffiti artist who led a fun and interactive graffiti workshop where, using paint pens, sharpies, canvases, and lots of graffiti books for inspiration, the children were able to create their very own graffiti canvases to take home with them!

Arts Award is an arts-based qualification that encourages young people to explore new arts activities and arts venues, taking them on their own creative journeys to discover their potential as artists. We have lots of fun lined up still for the rest of this term, including a pottery workshop and presenting our art and work to the rest of the Arts Award group, not to mention the ongoing work the children to do in their In Harmony Orchestras!



# About In Harmony Newcastle Gateshead

In Harmony is a national programme that aims to inspire and transform the lives of children in deprived communities in the UK, using the power and discipline of community music making. In our region, Sage Gateshead works in partnership with Hawthorn Primary and Bridgewater Schools to run In Harmony Newcastle Gateshead. Now in its tenth year, the programme continues to enhance the lives of children through community-based orchestral music-making.

*"He loves his cello! It's his favourite part of school." - Year 1 Parent, Bridgewater School*

From their very first day in Year 1, children at Hawthorn Primary School and Bridgewater School in Newcastle's West End begin learning an instrument – and the benefits extend far beyond the classroom into the wider community.

*"For those who are not confident during school lessons, they shine during music and it has helped them in group situations." – Teacher, Hawthorn Primary School*

The music-making skills, confidence, self-esteem, health, wellbeing and resilience of the children improve through the power and discipline of engaging in ensemble music-making and having music as part of daily their life. In Harmony helps to build a sense of community and supports parental engagement with the schools - some have been so motivated by their children's development that they are now learning instruments alongside their children.

*"In Harmony improves self-esteem, confidence, life chances and future health. I see the effect on children when I see them at my work – pride, confidence, self-worth and I see the effect on parents when I see them too" – Dr Guy Pilkington, Local GP*

## PLEASE SUPPORT IN HARMONY

Every year, we rely on essential support from generous donors to sustain this inspiring programme. Whether you choose to make a regular donation or a single gift to In Harmony, your support will make a real impact on the lives of young people today.

Ways to give:

- **Regular Direct Debit** – on a monthly or quarterly basis. These gifts are particularly helpful as they enable us to better plan for future needs.  
To set up a Direct Debit, or make a card payment, please contact Natalie Heath, at Sage Gateshead on 0191 443 5038. Cheques can be posted to In Harmony, Sage Gateshead, St Mary's Square, Gateshead. NE8 2JR
- **Regular and Single gifts by Text message**, where your donation is added to your phone bill.
  - To donate a £5 single gift, text INHARMONY to 70085. You will be charged £5 + your standard message rate
  - To set up a £5 monthly text donation, text IHMONTHLY to 70085
- **Single gifts can be made by cheque** (payable to North Music Trust), and posted to In Harmony, Sage Gateshead, St Mary's Square, Gateshead. NE8 2JR