

sing up

Help kids find their voice

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Key speeches 2008-2011



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Singposium – Birmingham, 8 July 2008

Well it's seven and a half months since Sing Up launched. If I'd had hair when we started, it would have fallen out by now, but I mean that in a good way – what an extraordinary opportunity, and privilege, to be able to invest so much into getting all our children singing, and I would like to start by thanking all of you who have been so supportive of Sing Up, and who have helped us to get off the ground. This programme is not owned by me, or the Sing Up Consortium, or the Government. It is owned by you, by the classroom teachers, the children and anyone who wants to change the culture of singing in this country for the better.

So how are we doing? Certainly there's more singing activity going on across the country, and Sing Up has already provided training for around 14,000 singing leaders, from classroom and other school staff, to vocal tutors, to parents, even a lollipop lady! And we've got 15,000 registrations so far at www.singup.org, 10,000 of which are schools. Not bad going, but if you consider that there are 28,000 schools with primary-age children¹, we've still some way to go to achieve our goal of all primary-age schools becoming singing schools by 2011.

And whilst there is clear evidence to show that Sing Up is hitting the mark, and that there is a change across the country, we should not fool ourselves that we've made it yet. A lot of our active schools are the low-hanging fruit, and we need to reach all of the tree. We also need to make sure that we're signposting children to all of the singing opportunities in their area, to community choirs as well as to their own choirs, and we need organisations like ABCD and Music for Youth to help us do that.

Okay, that's where we've got to - what are we up to at the moment, and what's coming up? We've been taking a bit of time to consolidate, collect feedback, and decide how to move forward. After all, if this programme is owned by everyone, we need to be democratic, and listen to what is needed. So here's a taster of some of our next developments:-

Part of the outward-facing side of Sing Up is a campaign to raise awareness of the value of singing and draw as many people as possible into the programme. The *Big Schools Sing Up* earlier in the year was an example of this, with nearly a thousand schools sending recordings to their local radio station – a scheme, which, incidentally, won the *Innovation Award for Creative Use of Radio* at the Radio Advertising Awards.

Over the summer we're putting Sing Up out there, through interactive cinema activity and screenings, by finding out what the nation's Top 100 Favourite Children's Songs are, we'll be producing a special singalong CD for parents and children, which will find its way into, amongst others, holiday camps and hire cars, and we've been active around the summer festival circuit, including a tent, workshops and performances at Glastonbury. We constructed a singing garden, where children could sing at fake flowers which then danced at them.

And then in the Autumn we'll launch the *5 Minutes* campaign. It was clear to us from our initial research that there are many potential singing leaders out there who would be initially daunted by leading a whole lesson's-worth of singing, but would be okay doing a few minutes every day. We're going to help kick-start that by providing guidance and repertoire, by showing how easy the Song Bank is to use, including for non-specialists, and through Issue 4 of the Sing Up Magazine.

Issue 5 of the Magazine will look at musicals for schools to perform in the summer term, tying in with the infamous *High School Musical*, and perhaps coming up with a musical of our own, with content submitted by singing schools. And Issue 6 will look at embedding singing across the curriculum.

The Song Bank has now reached over 130 songs, and by April 2009 will be over 300. We continually aim to present as broad a spread of repertoire as possible, and have just launched an advanced search engine, enabling you to search by Style, Year Group, Key Stage and Curriculum Links. If you haven't visited the Song Bank, may I please recommend you do so – it's one of the jewels in our crown, and something that singing leaders are responding really well to.

Sing Up is not an open funding programme – that's not our purpose. However, we are investing in some specific areas of activity, to develop and disseminate best practice and to generate singing activity within areas showing significant potential for growth.

¹ Later corrected to 21,000 schools, owing to an administrative error by a schools database company

- So there are now a total of 12 *Sing Up Communities*, with 3 more on the way.
- *Sing Up Clusters* are being developed across the country, supporting singing activity between specialist music, performing arts or media colleges and their cluster primaries, around the medium of Extended Schools.
- *Sing Up Events* will provide high-profile showcasing opportunities for Sing Up groups, with involvement in Music for Youth, Choir of the Year, and the use of the Royal Opera House for a singing day in March.
- We're in the process of appointing some *Sing Up Flagships* – organisations with a significant track record for excellence in singing and with potential for spreading their work across the country. Birmingham's own Ex Cathedra were a flagship organisation for our first phase of activity, and there's no doubt that their *Singing Playgrounds* model has taken the country by storm.
- We're also aware of the significant numbers of primary-aged children outside of mainstream education, and will be investing in projects to enhance singing activity with children in care, under supervision, from travelling communities, refugee and asylum seekers, supplementary schools and of course special schools.

Finally, we've recently launched the *Sing Up Awards* scheme. This isn't a scheme about prizes, but one which recognises and celebrates the commitment of schools to singing, and which provides a framework of self-assessment, so that schools can map out the journey they want to take to develop their singing. It's an online tool, where schools to enter evidence of their singing activity against their own pre-defined goals. The main purpose of the Awards Scheme from our point-of-view is to signpost schools to the most relevant and useful support for them, rather than to test them against performance standards – we think schools have enough of that to contend with already, and we're confident in the ability of vocal specialists to help schools maintain standards in singing.

If you'd like to find out more about the Awards, or any other part of Sing Up, do visit our stand in the Foyer and we'd be happy to help.

[Ed Milner on Sing Up Workforce Development]

To conclude, I'd like to address the issue of quality. Are we genuinely improving the quality of singing provision in schools, or are we diluting it? I'd like to leave that thought with you to take away and make your own judgments, but personally I think we *are* improving quality, and the best model I've come across for illustrating this is a delivery model which Birmingham has created across the city – the 'singing pyramid'.

This takes the simple notion of a pyramid, where at the top is the high-achieving vocal activity – the Music for Youth, Choir of the Year, Last Choir Standing winners – the beacons of excellence with excellent leadership behind them. In the middle is all the other fantastic work which goes on – choirs, vocal groups, solo singing, with high quality support, and across the bottom is everyday informal singing activity for everyone. The great thing about this model is that the excellence higher up comes from the foundations below. It's a simple equation that the more children who sing naturally every day, in and outside the classroom, the more who are likely to want to take their music a stage further, and join choirs and other musical groups to develop and improve, and move up the pyramid. Imagine, therefore, what the tip of the pyramid is going to be like in a few years' time.

Sing Up's place in this is to provide support and resources for all parts of that pyramid, and we hope that we're doing so. However, it is clear to us that we need to do more to make sure that the bottom is robust and fully supported: that classroom teachers and other staff in every school are confident enough to get children singing, and to fill in the gaps between when the vocal expert is present. We've already a lot of evidence from, particularly specialist choir conductors, that this model works.

I hope that Sing Up can continue to provide you with some of what you need to improve singing in your area, and that you are all able to join us in seizing this unique opportunity in our lifetimes radically to improve the culture of singing for our young people, and we look forward to continuing that journey with you.

Sing Up Workforce Development Summit – Gateshead, 3 November 2008

Good morning everyone, and welcome to the first ever Sing Up Workforce Development summit. Sing Up, for those of you unaware, is the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, produced by Youth Music, with AMV-BBDO, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, funded by Government. We operate through the 4 strands of a Campaign, highlighting the benefits of Sing Up and driving engagement, Resources, including a magazine, website and Song Bank, Workforce Development, which Ed has outlined in his preamble, and Funded Programmes, supporting and disseminating best practice. Details of the Consortium partners and their roles are provided in your packs, but I'm based in London with the Youth Music team, and, along with my colleagues, have got very used to the inside of National Express trains on the way to and from here.

It's almost a year since Sing Up launched, as part of the Government's unprecedented 332-million-pound investment into music education up to 2011. A golden era in our present and immediate future, which we are working furiously to capitalise upon and do justice to.

Certainly Sing Up has helped to ensure that there's already vastly more and better singing activity going on across the country. We've channelled our funding into providing training for over 15,000 singing leaders, which will become at least 35,000 by 2011. Our funded programmes have engaged well over 100,000 children so far, and over the next few months we'll be presenting our first Silver and Gold Awards for singing schools.

We've over 20,000 registrations so far at singup.org, 13,000 of which are schools. Not bad going, but if you consider that there are 27,000 schools with primary-aged children in England, we've still some way to go to achieve our goal of all primary schools becoming singing schools by 2011.

I visited a Sing Up Platinum school the other week to present their award, and tried to describe to the children why Sing Up is here. I asked them how many primary school children they thought there were in England. The first boy to put his hand up reckoned there were a thousand. I thought to myself wow! Wouldn't that be fantastic – 4 primary schools with 10-million pounds each to spend on singing! We eventually established that there are around 5 million – enough to fill 100 football stadiums. So I asked them to picture 100 football stadiums alive with the sound of millions of children singing. I then shattered that vision, by saying that, at the moment, half of those stadiums are standing silent – no singing going on. They looked genuinely saddened, but incredibly proud when I told them that the simple solution to this was to make all schools as good as theirs.

And that is the goal that we are driven by. Our every working minute is fixed upon the vision that *all* primary-aged children, in any school or setting across the country, *will* have access to singing every day by 2011, and that they will continue to do so into the future. And we are as one with the Government in our belief that nothing short of this will do. It's an extraordinary opportunity, and challenge.

But what's also really exciting about this programme is that you can't so radically affect children's lives, and not influence, and become involved in, wider agendas. For example, there are known to be at least half a million primary-aged children not attending mainstream schools, by nature of exclusion, being in care, home schooled, with special educational needs, from travelling communities and refugee and asylum-seekers. We know that provision of any musical activities for these children is sporadic, and yet it would be absurd for them to lose out on the benefits of singing simply by nature of their circumstances. So we're launching a new strand of work called *Sing Up Beyond the Mainstream*, to demonstrate ours and the Government's commitment to providing singing opportunities as a right to all children. And this fits in very neatly of course with local authority commitments to all children, which impacts for them on the provision of music as much as it does wider educational, health, social and other services.

Iain Duncan-Smith, at the Conservative Party Conference, spoke passionately about our 'broken society', and the need to be targetting children in challenging circumstances much earlier in life with positive and engaging activities. Well hello Iain, welcome to our world! This is what singing does.

Conversely, a chief executive of a major orchestra once said "we're musicians, not bloody social workers!". Admittedly, this was some years ago, and times and attitudes have generally changed, but I think it's unwise for us to ignore our wider social impact, as well as keeping our eye on the huge importance of musical learning and progression in its own right.

Inside school, of course, singing impacts not only on the whole school curriculum and the whole school day, but is known to have immense power to improve children's educational, behavioural, emotional, cognitive, social, and of course, musical, development. *We* know that, but with that knowledge, and that power, comes responsibility, and we look forward to exploring our wider responsibilities with you today.

Sing Up is, to a large degree, a workforce development programme, in that the gatekeepers to bringing about this change in singing culture are the teachers, headteachers, school staff, vocal experts, community musicians, and parents, who can empower children to sing, and to enjoy singing. It is they who can spark the enthusiasm and provide guidance so that children who want to take their singing and musicianship forward can do so. And it is also they who have the ability, through positive activities like singing, totally to change the direction of a child's life, whether that be, as in my case, a tutor framing aspirations towards a career in music, or simply a teacher giving a disadvantaged child without aspiration a reason to come to school and engage with learning.

If we are successful with Sing Up, and with the wider aims of our godparent the Music Manifesto, we will have a singing workforce unlike any other on the planet, and so the potential we have to change future generations is amazing, and wonderful...and slightly scary.

I've been absolutely delighted with the partnerships that have been galvanised through Sing Up, and I pay particular tribute to my colleagues across the Sing Up Consortium who are making this immense initiative work. But it's important also to recognise that Sing Up isn't owned the Sing Up Consortium, or the Government. It can't be, because to change a culture requires that change to have a legacy, and that legacy lies primarily in the workforce. So Sing Up needs to be owned by all of us, and the best that we can do now, in this little window of opportunity with a big brand and a decent budget, is make it as easy as possible for singing – this most natural of activities - to happen, for schools to want to become singing schools and to see the way to do so, and for the wider music and education workforce to make the best use of everything that Sing Up is offering.

This is our challenge over the coming year, and thus we welcome you to be a part of the singing revolution with us, to use today to help guide us and share in our experiences, so that the singing workforce of the future remains strong, and so that our children receive the best, and most enjoyable, start in life.

Transforming Children Through Singing Conference – Croydon, 12 November 2008

Good morning everyone. My name is Baz Chapman, I am Programme Director for Sing Up, and this is David Sulkin, Director of Programmes for Youth Music, Sing Up's lead partner. And joining us later in the presentation are representatives from two singing schools in the London area.

[Introduction as per Workforce Development summit above]

Sing Up aims to enable all primary-age schools to become Singing Schools. So what is a Singing School? We bandy the term about as though it's something you can achieve by waving a wand, but in many cases it requires a fundamental shift in attitude and culture.

According to the definition we agreed with the DCSF, a Singing School is one in which:-

- All pupils sing for at least 5 minutes every day.
- The whole school sings together at least once a week.
- Singing regularly takes place in and outside the classroom, and in and outside the school day.
- At least 2 people in every primary school are confident to lead singing throughout the school.
- Pupils sing in performances periodically (internal or external audiences and recordings), and at least once a year.
- The school recognises the value of singing as a teaching and learning tool across the curriculum.
- The headteacher, governors and staff are supportive of singing.

Now, hopefully there's nothing too surprising in that, and I very much hope that you all know of, or work in, schools who fit this description. So how do we help those schools who aren't Singing Schools to become so? The answer is no single approach. For some, it may be simply identifying a suitable vocal expert to provide guidance and raise standards, whilst for others it requires, before anything, convincing a headteacher and governors that singing is important to school life.

One of the main solutions Sing Up offers to the aspiring Singing School is the recently launched Sing Up Awards. The Awards aim to recognise and celebrate schools that place singing at the heart of school life, but also, crucially, to support those who strive to achieve this.

The Awards provide a framework for schools to develop their singing as a whole-school philosophy, and as such are non-competitive. They are also flexible and accessible, being open to any schools with primary-age children, who can tailor their objectives to reflect their circumstances. So for example we have on board Special Schools and Middle Schools, who have consulted with us on how best to set their objectives.

There are 3 Awards - Silver, Gold and Platinum – and for Silver and Gold, the school sets its own objectives (with guidance) using our online Awards Tool, then uploads evidence to demonstrate when it has achieved each objective.

The Silver Award is aimed at schools starting on the journey, and asks them to:-

- Assess their current singing activity,
- Begin to explore improving it,
- (and) Set realistic & achievable goals.
- *We anticipate that, with these criteria, the Silver Award can be achieved within a term.*

The Gold Award is our aspirational standard for a Singing School, and focuses on the 4 main areas of:-

- PEOPLE: encouraging everyone in the school to find their voice
- SKILLS: developing confidence & competence in singing skills
- CHOICE: providing opportunities for children to enjoy a diverse range of repertoire
- CONTEXT: supporting the wider curriculum and school development aims.
- *We anticipate that the criteria for the Gold Award can be achieved within an academic year.*

And the Platinum Award is by nomination only, and is for:-

- Schools whose achievements are exceptional, and who are willing to assist other schools, as well as championing the Sing Up Awards and the wider Sing Up Programme.
- These schools will sustain their efforts and practice across the 4 areas of the Gold Award, so that their pupils can experience being in a Singing School throughout a whole key stage.

- To be nominated for Platinum, a school must have completed at least the Sing Up Gold Award first, and external endorsement confirms that the quality and range of the singing in school are excellent.

If you're interested in the Sing Up Awards, you can find out more at our website, singup.org, or visit the Sing Up stand here at the conference.

Now, I'm delighted to say that we have representatives from two schools at different points in the Sing Up Awards scheme, so we're going to have a chat with them now about their views on the Singing School.

Sing Up National Gathering – Birmingham, 12 February 2009

I wonder if you can remember where you were when you first heard about the Music Manifesto. I was working as Chorus & Projects Manager at the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and I remember feeling quite excited, but a little bemused about it. Why was the music education sector writing a manifesto for the Government? Could this strange entity with hardly any budget actually deliver anything? I wasn't alone in being a little sceptical at first.

Looking back, I find my own progression to becoming Programme Director for one of the Manifesto's flagship projects being as nothing compared to the meteoric rise of the Music Manifesto itself. The landscape of music education has changed massively, and will continue to do so, and I think that *this* gathering of people from across the music and educational spheres is testament to the progress the Manifesto's made in instilling a greater sense of partnership within this new landscape.

What's particularly heartening to see is that, not only has the Manifesto secured large amounts of funding, it's enabled us to align our approaches, and I was reminded of this as I looked earlier in the week at Youth Music's progress on its new policy frames, which are supported by the following 5 strategic aims:-

1. To support children and young people who experience poverty of opportunity
2. To invest in workforce development, and specifically music leadership, so as to ensure high quality music experiences for children and young people
3. To explore the creative use of technology both in communicating with young people and in the music-making itself
4. To support young people's development, respect and listen to their voice
5. To advocate for and facilitate/enable progression

These aims, whether intentionally or not, reflect incredibly closely the themes and recommendations of Music Manifesto Report No.2, and you can see them echoing right across the landscape, in the business plans of community music organisations, in the career aspirations of emerging music leaders, in school improvement plans, and (hopefully) in Local Authority Music Plans. This places us in an extremely strong position for the future, because when we need to, we can speak to governments and policy makers with one voice. We owe this, to a large degree, to the Music Manifesto.

So, what next? This question, as you'd expect, is becoming asked more and more frequently. After all, March 2011 is only 6½ terms away. Will Sing Up pack up and disappear? Well, I can't actually answer that question at this stage. We have no indication of funding beyond March 2011.

Of course, Sing Up was designed with sustainability in mind, and not to create a dependency culture. Theoretically, Sing Up the brand *will* be able to make a tactical withdrawal and the foundations of primary-age singing will not give way. But I know you will tell me that, to remove the Song Bank, to remove all our Workforce Development and our investment in singing activities and walk away, would be potentially catastrophic.

So what we're trying to understand is which parts of the programme can be naturally absorbed into the fabric of the music education landscape, and what areas need to be supported nationally, who can take them forward and how they can be financed. In some cases they will be self-financing (hence us *already* starting to build in charging for our training & CPD), and organisations like MusicLeader might be well placed to take forward some of the training and CPD elements.

What is clear to us is that it will take a combined approach from across the music and education worlds to keep this good work going. We are thinking about this, but you will need to be as well, as it is local and regional networks that are the key to the future of primary-aged singing. I estimate that at this gathering there is about 2,000 years of experience, knowledge and expertise, and that will have immense value in the marketplace in the future. So whilst we grapple with future funding, I would ask all of you, if you're not already doing so, to think about how you or your organisation might take this forward.

I'm certain that the musical landscape in 2011 will be very different, even from how it is now, and that is very challenging, but of course extremely exciting. Bring it on!

ContinYou Conference – Stratford-upon-Avon, 23 March 2009

- The date: November 2007
 - The announcement: £40 million to put everyday singing back into our primary schools
 - The project: Sing Up, the Music Manifesto National Singing Programme, produced by Youth Music, with Abbott Mead Vickers, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead, funded by Government, and fronted by national singing ambassador Howard Goodall, who spoke at last year's conference.
 - And the mission: for all our schools to become Singing Schools by 2011. This means:-
 - All pupils sing for at least 5 minutes every day.
 - The whole school sings together at least once a week.
 - Singing regularly takes place in and outside the classroom, and in and outside the school day.
 - At least 2 people in every primary school are confident to lead singing throughout the school.
 - Pupils sing in performances periodically, and at least once a year.
 - The school recognises the value of singing as a teaching and learning tool across the curriculum.
- and
- The headteacher, governors and staff are supportive of singing.

Why? Why should schools become singing schools? A question we regularly attempt to define for those who don't recognise the value of singing, and which I will attempt to squeeze into a list of merely 25 from the almost limitless range of crucial benefits that singing brings:-

- Singing helps us communicate, bond, share, create, learn, memorise, improve and enjoy.
- It builds self-confidence and self-esteem, stimulates endorphins, improves breathing, posture and vocal health, and creates and develops neural pathways.
- It's free, it's easy, it's inclusive, it's fun, it's spontaneous, and it can be led by any adult or child with any age group, in and outside the classroom and the school.
- And, most importantly for us, singing activity can underpin everything we do with children – it supports and enriches the curriculum, it improves schools, and it can link directly to virtually every one of the minefield of national initiatives, from healthy schools, to Every Child Matters to Extended Services.
- And to quote the theme of the conference, singing can change lives through learning, and it addresses inequality.

Now that's a big heap of rhetoric, but it's backed up by considerable evidence, and does begin to beg the question, why on earth *aren't* all schools doing it? The benefits versus the effort required are huge! And singing is a fundamental part of who we are as humans – we've been singing together since the dawn of time.

So the answer to why some schools don't engage is a complex one, but the main reasons are, firstly, a lack of knowledge about the full benefits, and thus a lack of priority for singing across the school, and secondly, these wider benefits are only achieved if the workforce is confident to lead singing – not just the experts, but the generalist teachers too.

And there's a big issue around confidence for the non-expert workforce in leading singing. Many teachers aren't comfortable singers themselves - certainly not to sing in front of a class - and many of those will have been persuaded at some point in their young lives (often, I'm afraid, by their teachers) that they "can't sing" – I'm sure some of you here today will be among the vast numbers of adults who believe that they can't sing because of scars carried from earlier in life: tone-deaf – grumbler – don't join in this one please.

And more often than not, "can't sing" leads to "won't sing". This dreadful fear of our natural voice is entirely brought about by cultural factors, and is alien to many cultures around the world, for whom singing is a natural part of life and identity. Fear of singing is something we are committed to eliminating from all our schools – if you can make a noise with your voice, you can sing, and you can get better at it and enjoy it.

So Sing Up aims to change the culture of singing by embedding within the workforce the confidence and skills to lead high-quality singing activities. And this investment in resources and support for primary-age singing will have a legacy well beyond the four years of the programme.

It's 16 months since Sing Up launched, as part of the Government's unprecedented 332-million-pound funding of music education up to 2011. A golden era in our present and immediate future, which we are

working furiously to capitalise upon. And we are ahead of schedule. Nearly 70% of all primary-age schools in England have registered with Sing Up, and many of those are working towards and achieving Sing Up Awards for Singing Schools; over 20,000 people have participated in our training & CPD activity; our website, including the acclaimed interactive online Song Bank is encouraging around 20,000 visits per week, and our specially funded programmes have brought high-quality singing activities to children across the country, all with sustainability at their core.

Our 30 Area Leaders now cover the entire country, providing direct workforce support to schools and linking them to wider networks. We have positive working relationships with most local authority Music Services, Youth Music Action Zones and other music providers, to connect professional music leaders with schools. And finally, our partnership with ContinYou is not only informing us better about the wider education sector, but ContinYou's Development Manager for Sing Up, Matthew Freeman, is supporting the growth of Sing Up Clusters across the country, developing Secondary school partnerships with feeder primaries around singing activities as part of the Extended Services Core Offer.

I'm not saying all this to show off, but to demonstrate that, despite the challenges, there is a huge need and demand for what we're doing, and that, in order to embrace singing *fully*, many schools need our help, and they need it over time in order to embed and sustain their provision.

So what next? Over the next phase of the programme we'll be targeting those schools that have yet to engage with Sing Up. We're reaching out directly and in person to Head Teachers and staff to help them, through practical activities, understand the value of singing as a cross-curricular teaching tool that isn't something to be scared of, but rather something that all the staff and pupils can enjoy and easily adopt into their day. For those schools who have already engaged with Sing Up, we are helping to embed singing more deeply, and in many cases to free it up from being something that just the Music Coordinator does.

And we're ensuring that the future workforce is skilled and confident, by developing young singing leaders in every school, linked to the Arts Award. We're also exploring and disseminating best practice in singing provision for children outside of mainstream education, including excluded children, those in care, home educated, and special educational needs.

I'm confident that Sing Up will succeed, because singing is so valuable, and the programme is receiving so much support. And like to take this opportunity to thank all those of you who have given your support to help Sing Up's work.

Now, you'll be familiar with the commonly-held view that boys don't like singing, and hopefully, like me, you'll dismiss this as a load of old rot. It's not that they don't like singing – stand in a sports stadium and tell me that – it's that they're not always comfortable doing so, maybe because of the repertoire choice, or the pitch of the song, peer pressure or other circumstances. Get these right, and you can hear boys from any background singing well.

And with us today is a great example: Boyz Noyz is a singing group in Staffordshire for boys at Key Stage 2 from Churchfields Primary School in Chesterton and Knutton St Mary's in Newcastle under Lyme. The boys meet weekly, and take part in a variety of vocal activities, including warm-ups, singing games and songs, with an emphasis on having fun and enjoyment of singing. Before we hear them sing, let's hear what they've got to say....

Sing Up Beyond the Mainstream Gathering – Birmingham, 3 July 2009

Welcome to the Sing Up Beyond the Mainstream Gathering, whether you are new to the National Singing Programme, or connected with one of our Beyond the Mainstream Funded Programmes. My name is Baz Chapman, Programme Director for Sing Up.

Before I worked at Sing Up I was Director of MusicLeader West Midlands (MusicLeader is Youth Music's workforce development arm). We identified quite a lot of good practice in terms of music activities in Youth Justice settings around the West Midlands, and saw an opportunity to grow and up-skill the workforce working in this area. So we devised a training and work placement programme for music leaders called *Doing Music Justice*, funded by Youth Music and Arts Council England, and very successfully produced by my successor Erika and her team, who are with us today.

In order to research and construct the training programme, I immersed myself for a short while in the world of Youth Justice: read countless reports, talked to professionals, observed workshops in Young Offender Institutions and Pupil Referral Units, and even attended the Youth Justice Board's Effective Practice Module training course - more acronyms I have never witnessed!

This process really opened my eyes to the immense challenges faced by those looking to embed high-quality sustainable music projects in non-mainstream education and care settings. From the settings' point-of-view, they are dealing with tight budgets, changing authority and governance and strict rules and regulations, so that approaching music leaders will not only need to know how to deal with challenging behaviours, but will need to have negotiated a minefield of bureaucracy before you'll even allow them through the door. From the music leader or music organisations' point-of-view, there seem to be so many barriers, that it feels like the sector is trying to repel the very activities which are most likely to have a beneficial impact upon the children and young people within.

Now I know I'm preaching to the converted when I say that it's challenging working in this field. What some of you may not have been aware of before connecting with Sing Up is that provision of singing - and indeed any music making opportunities - for *primary-aged* children outside of mainstream education, is alarmingly small.

PAUSE – 'Beyond the Mainstream'. We're aware that this phrase has shortcomings – it perhaps implies separatism, that mainstream is good, and non-mainstream has to be pushed somewhere else. We've tried to come up with a better phrase, but there is so diverse an array of children not regularly attending mainstream schools – around half a million children, with special educational needs, excluded, in care, privately or home educated, from travelling communities, refugee and asylum seekers, children in hospital – that we have to find some way as a programme to categorise it in one. We hope you understand that we use this phrase as an internal and stakeholder title, not one we use with the children themselves.

PLAY – Why? Why is Sing Up getting involved in this area? Our mandate from the Government is for all primary schools to become 'singing schools' by 2011. Well soon after we were awarded the contract to run the National Singing Programme, the Sing Up Consortium (Youth Music, Abbott Mead Vickers, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead) made it clear to Government that we didn't feel we could exclude *any* primary-aged children (and their leaders and carers) from the benefits and support of the programme, simply by nature of their educational circumstances. Indeed, many of these children stood to gain the most from a national singing programme. To their immense credit, the DCSF agreed, and have been hugely supportive of our work in this area.

But in order to take things forward, we needed a better idea of the picture of singing Beyond the Mainstream, and so recruited the consultancy services of Rob Hunter and Phil Mullen, who produced the short report you will have received in advance of this conference. Rob and Phil's report added to our own findings in this area, demonstrating that there was some excellent work in the field of Special Educational Needs that we could support and disseminate (our superb relationship with Music & The Deaf being a great example), but that the overall structure of singing provision, particularly in Primary PRUs and care settings, was at best patchy, but mainly non-existent.

Although we were expecting this, we were still shocked. So many children in these circumstances live transient lives, moved from place to place and lacking structure, so music-making provides a perfect opportunity to give those children a constant, a common language with others, and something to look

forward to and enjoy. And we hear so much rhetoric about our 'broken society', and the need for positive, stimulating and creative activities for young people to stop them going astray (or as one Tory politician put it 'stop them stabbing each other'). So why, when there is so much good music practice with disadvantaged 11-18-year-olds, is there so little with primary age? Surely much of the work with teenagers – worthy as it is – is simply a sticking plaster for experiences which could have changed those young people's lives much earlier.

We *must* improve our structure of music provision for primary-aged children Beyond the Mainstream, and that's partly why you're here today. Rob and Phil's consultancy identified for us a number of organisations who *are* doing great music work with primary-aged children, and whom we've supported since to develop their singing work with this age group. Yesterday they shared their findings so far, and today will be sharing them more widely, so that we together can start to build a picture of what needs to be done.

At Sing Up, we are doing our bit to embed Beyond the Mainstream into the mainstream of our work – here are a few examples:-

- Support for Sing Up Area Leaders with BTM settings.
- Encouraging and supporting more BTM settings to achieve Sing Up Awards.
- Courses on working with SEN as part of *The Sing Up Training Programme*.
- Support for *Vocal Force* activity in BTM settings.
- A Sing Up *Pyramid* Pack in partnership with ContinYou. *Pyramid* works specifically with quieter, vulnerable children to increase confidence, self esteem and emotional literacy.
- Disseminating our learning through PR and our own publicity channels, such as the Sing Up Magazine.

But we are just one cog in this immense machine, and it is only as a much wider collection of sectors that we can bring about the means for change to give primary-aged children outside of mainstream education a more structured entitlement to music. This is, after all, their right.

NMC Music Awards – London, 9 November 2009

Sing Up celebrates its second birthday in just over a week's time, and is well on the way to achieving its aim: for all primary school-aged children to be able to enjoy high-quality singing opportunities every day.

Over 80% of state primary schools have engaged with the programme, some 7,000 people visit the website and its Song Bank every day, and around 30,000 have taken part in our training and CPD to date. Not bad for 2 years work, but then it isn't 2 years work.

Sing Up's very existence is build upon the infrastructures already created by excellent music providers across the country, and we have tried to create a programme for schools which complements existing activity, and builds partnerships. Nowhere has this been more important, or more effective, than in our work with local authorities and their music services, without whom this programme couldn't exist.

So I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all local authorities for their support and investment which is helping Sing Up to succeed. Sing Up's success is your success, and with unclear political and economic times ahead, I hope that we will together have done enough to secure a sustainable future for everything we have built, to make the joy of music making available to every young person in the country.

Sing Up National Gathering – (Concorde Centre) Manchester, 21 January 2010

Good morning; this is your captain speaking. Welcome aboard this Air Sing Up flight. We'll be cruising at around zero feet today, and due to land tomorrow at around 16.30, stopping for some fairly major refuelling at some point this evening....

I sense that this will be the most important Gathering in the life of Sing Up, one in which we help each other to understand what we have achieved and explore how our work might continue. My job for this opening address is to help us take stock and look at our immediate future, but I want to start, rather unusually, by acknowledging what hasn't worked so well. 2009 has been a year for Sing Up in which we've encountered patches of mid-air turbulence, some severe, and, whilst it's right that we celebrate our achievements, I think it is also important that we acknowledge some of the times when we've been reaching for the oxygen masks.

You will have had your own personal and organisational challenges in this time, and I hope this Gathering will allow you to reflect upon them, but I want to recognise three of the major challenges which have affected us all in some way:-

Firstly, partnerships have occupied us at all levels, and in some parts of the country we are still battling to find enough synergy between potential partners to take our work forward properly. Where high-quality singing experiences for children and their leaders has been at the centre of partnerships, they've generally not gone far wrong. Where it has slipped out of the centre, and been taken over by politics, entrenched views or an un-collaborative spirit, that's been when the problems have occurred. But there's a paradox, isn't there, about partnerships? It seems that the best ones are hard work. The Sing Up Consortium is a very good example of this – we work extremely hard to keep this programme in the condition it is. I'm not quoting anyone's theories but my own here, but I believe the reason for this paradox is that, between the areas of connection *and* tension between partners, lies the electrical charge of productivity and progress. And thus the best partnerships do not shy away from tension, but use their connectivity, their shared vision and values, to make sense of the tensions and find a way forward. And I've seen brilliant examples of this in Sing Up across the country.

Secondly, income generation has sat awkwardly in the programme this year. If you're a school, you'll know how difficult it is to find the funds to support music development. Some of you providing services to schools charge them for participation, some have had to abide by the rules of your own authorities, and the Sing Up Training Programme has attempted to attach a realistic value to its training, so as to avoid undercutting the market and creating a dependency culture that can't be sustained in the future. All of this alongside our fully subsidised activities and resources. How do we make this clear and understandable to our users? Which is the right approach? Is there one single approach? If there is, we haven't found it yet, but you know we must keep trying, because, regardless of which party is next in power, the future of education is pointing towards greater autonomy and funding given to schools. So they need to get used to paying for this sort of thing.

And thirdly, I hope you will allow me to spend some time acknowledging the challenges we've faced around the Sing Up website, in order that we can prevent it dragging us down over the next two days, not least because the website is now in great shape.

We knew we had to widen the reach of the website, to become more than just a source of free songs. If we were really to embed quality singing in our schools, we had to respond to our market research, to draw our users into the wider offer of the programme: training & CPD, Awards, events, and the wealth of expert individuals and organisations available to help schools, whilst of course capitalising on one of the jewels in our crown, the Song Bank.

I'm sorry to say that, up to and beyond the launch of the new website, we have been battered by glitches and technical challenges which have threatened the very foundations of this programme. And I do not underrate the seriousness of these problems. This amazing aircraft above us [Concorde] was one of the greatest achievements in aviation history, but was permanently grounded because of tragic technical faults, from which customer confidence never recovered. We could so easily have gone the same route.

Many of you, dealing with schools on a daily basis, have taken more than your fair share of flack over the website. It's a horrible feeling to be trying to win over and support schools whilst feeling powerless and frustrated because you can't sort out their problems for them, or you can't even make it work yourself! "Why

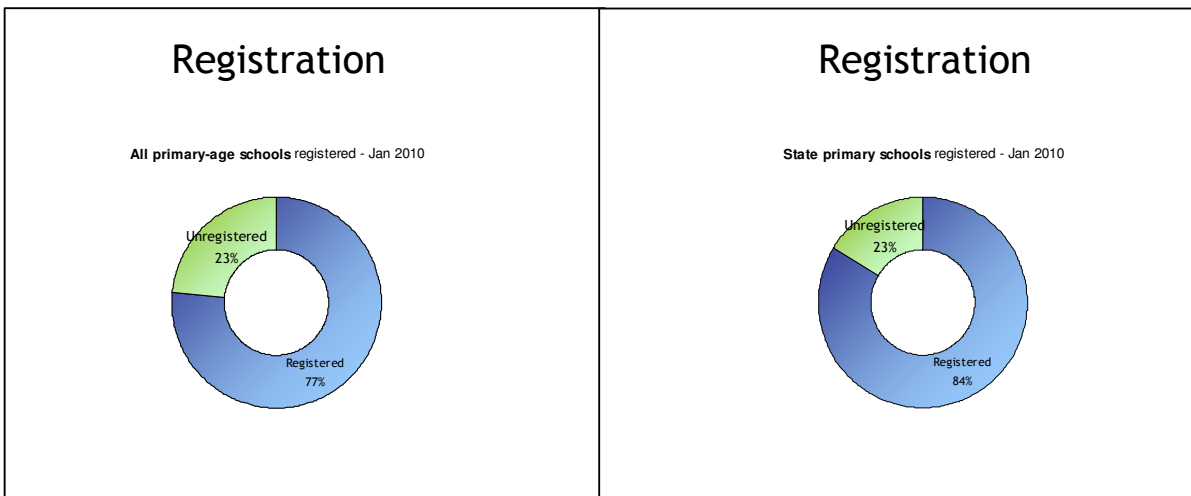
can't I just find my usual songs?" is a question we've heard more times than I care to mention. Knock-on effects have also been felt in the online Awards tool and in the Sing Up Training Programme, where issues with the online booking system meant that some courses were cancelled at late notice due to poor take-up, and trainers and hosts inconvenienced.

We absolutely acknowledge and apologise for these problems, we know it's been incredibly difficult to deal with, and I commend your steadfastness and patience in dealing with them. I'd like thank you for your support in helping Sing Up staff through an extremely difficult time, and I can certainly assure you that there could not be more determination from Sing Up to continue to improve its service to our users by the day. Hopefully you are finding that things are settling down.

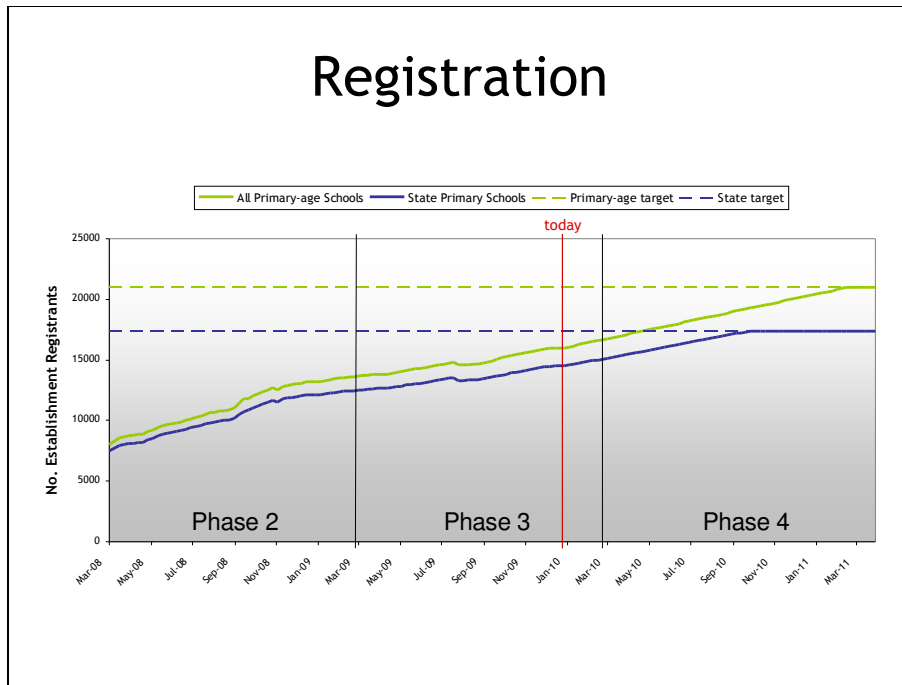
The good news is that, overall, the new website is proving a vast improvement. The evidence is both anecdotal and statistical – over the Autumn we have had on average over 7,000 visitors per day, staying for over 7 minutes per visit (that's huge in web terms), and visiting a much more diverse set of pages. Awards, Training and the Online Magazine section are more popular pages now, for example. Our firm belief is that the website rebuild was the right decision.

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So as I begin to steer us out of the Cumulonimbus and into more stable air, I have to tell you the heartening news that, despite all the issues we've faced in 2009, our collective efforts for growing the impact of singing in primary schools through Phase 3 are really starting to bear fruit. And I'd like to share some of the evidence for this with you now.



Currently just over 16,000 primary-age schools have registered – that's 77% - with under 5,000 to go. The picture is even better for state primary schools – our main target group – 14,500 registered, which is 84%, and less than 3,000 to go. Interestingly, there has been no decline in the rate of sign-up – in fact it increased slightly over the Autumn. And if we continue at the current rate of registration, we would reach 100% of state primary schools in Autumn 2010. Realistically, perhaps, by Christmas. And primary-age schools by March 2011.

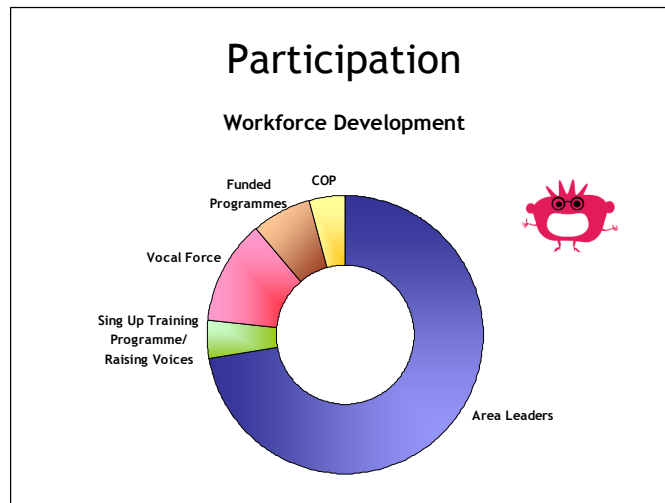


Furthermore, there are on average 2.4 registrants per school, which, along with our strategy to send 2 magazines to every school, works towards our ambition that at least 2 people in every school will be confident to lead singing. No, sign-up does not a confident singing leader or a Singing School make, but it's a significant step along the way, because it shows willingness and intent that we can build on.

This year we have also been delighted to welcome all 145 of Music Services into the fold, with an average of over 13 registrants per service, which suggests that it's not only the vocal tutors who our finding our stuff useful, but instrumental tutors too, particularly through Wider Opportunities.

Across the programme there are other impressive achievements. The Song Bank now has 345 songs and activities; in the summer term we'll launch a Healthy Schools pack, and in the next few weeks we'll be launching a new part of the Song Bank called *Sing & Share*, with software to allow instant recording and group karaoke.

Around 30,000 people have taken part in our training & CPD activity, which breaks down roughly as follows [slide below], and of course represents a huge range of approaches. I'm going to say that number again: 30,000 people - that's an incredible achievement, for which you are all to be congratulated, and we will smash our target for the programme of 35,000 receiving Sing Up Training & CPD.



Around 160,000 children have taken part directly in Funded Programmes (including Sing Up Communities, Clusters and Flagships), and the Chorister Outreach Programme, which has really taken off this year. I'm particularly delighted that around 800 of these children have been reached through our Beyond the Mainstream programme. The Beyond the Mainstream Conference last year showed how desperately needed this groundbreaking area of our work is.

We have 97 Silver Award Schools, 71 Gold Award Schools and 30 Platinum Schools, who collectively fill up more news pages than any other Sing Up activity. And we've just conferred our first Platinum Award to a school that has worked through all 3 Sing Up Awards stages – Burwell Village College near Cambridge.

Well those are just numbers, and we must be wary of statistics, but you only have to look at the News and Success Stories on the website and in the magazine, and your own conversations over the next two days will show that, behind these numbers lie countless uplifting stories about the huge impact that we're having upon primary-age singing. Sing Up is really working, and we move into our final year in a very strong position.

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So looking ahead, past the final major milestone of Phase 3, National Sing Up Day (details are in your delegate packs), Phase 4 of Sing Up runs from April 2010 to March 2011, and is as such the final year of the programme. Therefore our collective aims for Phase 4, in a broad sense, will simply be to achieve the wider objectives of Sing Up as laid out at the start of the programme. But I thought it would be helpful to lay them out for you as a set of priorities, in case they're helpful in informing your planning. It's not an exhaustive list, rather a set of themes:-

- The achievement of 100% of primary schools registered, by all means necessary!
- The embedding of regular singing across schools, with continued development of resources, networks, CPD and activities to support this.
- The increased understanding and communication about quality of singing and singing leadership.
- The consolidation and further development of our work with Young Singing Leaders.
- The development of accreditation for singing leadership, and an increased impact upon Trainee and Newly Qualified Teachers.
- The harnessing of the power of headteachers and school leadership to influence the continued culture of primary singing.
- A stable service from the technical aspects of the programme.
- Consolidation and guidance about the 'monetised' aspects of Sing Up, how they should be set, managed and communicated.
- Continued campaigning and awareness-raising at every level – a unified voice extolling the benefits of singing and the successes which Sing Up and its supporting organisations and networks have brought about.

Through the achievement of these priorities, we aim to help empower you as the expert workforce in primary singing, to take forward Sing Up's work, regardless of its future.

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And so finally to this Gathering, and its intentions. Today we will catch up on each other's progress, share practice, and hopefully regain for you that sense of being part of an extraordinary movement. But the future is, as it were, just around the corner, so tomorrow we will look at legacy and sustainability, both at a local level, and also the wider national picture. There is a sense that this particular Sing Up flight will be coming in to land in March 2011. Some passengers will disembark and make other connections. We may have to downgrade the aircraft, and at this stage we've no idea where our fuel is going to come from.

What I can tell you is that six months of careful assessment and planning has led the Sing Up Consortium and its partners to believe that there *will* be a continuing need for nationally supported resources and workforce development for primary singing (not to mention other age groups), *and* a continued affinity from schools for the Sing Up brand.

So through Howard, Christina Coker and a range of others, we are making a strong case to all political parties about the continuing need for national music programmes like Sing Up. And not just Sing Up – if we continued, but all other music programmes didn't, then we would fail. It's our unity and unified voice,

bringing the range of music experiences to young people that were clearly identified by the Music Manifesto, that gives our future the best chance.

It is very difficult at this stage to predict whether there will be *any* centralised funding for music education in the future. Which is why we're exploring other avenues of income generation. And so it is right that you should go forward with your plans for sustainability without expectation of central funding from Sing Up. But that won't stop us trying to get it, and we will obviously keep you as well informed of any progress as we can.

Right let's get on with the Gathering. Fasten your seat belts and enjoy the flight!



Sing Up Male Singing Leaders Conference – Truro, 23 February 2010

My job is to open this conference, to bring you up to date with Sing Up and to be the warm up act for the main speaker – a gentleman who I worked with for a number of years at the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, who has insisted that I be neither coherent, interesting or entertaining. So I will take any looks of abject boredom to mean you're just supporting David.

Some of you will be very familiar with the National Singing Programme, but its complexity is such that even I'm not on top of everything going on. This is not a bad thing, but I'll try to encapsulate how Sing Up works, and where it's currently got to.

So you're involved in some way in leading singing activities with primary-age children. And a result, your needs from Sing Up are probably one of the following:-

- Training and professional development
- Resources
- Contributing to the improvement of the school or schools you work in
- General support and being part of a network

So, our Workforce Development strand, run by The Sage Gateshead, looks after our 30 Sing Up Area Leaders, and Angela Renshaw is the Area Leader for Cornwall. It also covers all the training and networking activities around the country.

If you receive our termly Sing Up Magazine, or access our acclaimed Song Bank, these resources are run jointly by Faber Music and Youth Music. Our website receives around 7,000 visits per day, and the majority of those are visits to the Song Bank, so it's clearly popular!

We also run an Awards programme, which celebrates and supports schools who put singing at the centre of school life.

Our campaigning, in partnership with Abbott Meade Vickers, has helped the Sing Up message to penetrate around the country, and there have been to date nearly 1 billion opportunities to see or hear something about Sing Up in the media. And you'll be aware I hope that tomorrow is National Sing Up Day, and there are hundreds of profile-raising events going on around the country.

Finally, we do support direct delivery through Funded Programmes, and this is where things can be a little more confusing, because different parts of the country will have different types of funded activity going on. Different areas might have a Vocal Force project (which has a strong Workforce Development focus), a Sing Up Community, a Sing Up Cluster (Specialist Secondaries working with their feeder primaries), a Sing Up Flagship organisation like Ex Cathedra or the Voices Foundation, a link with the Chorister Outreach Programme run by the Choir Schools Association, or some activity for children not regularly attending mainstream education.

On top of all that, there isn't any set pattern for how singing happens in an area, because it depends what's already there and what the need is. Your Area Leader might be an individual, an organisation, a Music Service, or a consortium of organisations. And the partnerships which have come together under the banner of Sing Up are as diverse as they are groundbreaking.

None of this confusing jumble matters, provided that you are getting the support and resources that you need to lead high-quality singing activities, and you know how to get more. What matters to us is both this, and the achievement of our wider aims – to ensure that, by 2011 all primary-school-aged children are able to access high-quality singing activities every day and that all primary schools should be singing schools.

It's a massive challenge, because it means changing the culture of singing in primary schools, and reaching out to those who are not confident to lead singing. Many of those will have been persuaded at some point in their earlier lives that they can't sing, and we know how deeply those scars run. But together we are turning that around, be it through a singing event organised by an Area Leader, or a teacher trying out a maths song with their class.

There are many subtleties woven through a programme like this: how do we win over head teachers that singing is more than a bolt-on to the curriculum, how do we drive up the quality of singing in schools, and how do we diversify the workforce?

The issue of gender diversity in the workforce is not so much a music education issue – in fact we're male-heavy in a number of areas – but it is certainly a primary education issue, and I hope that your being at this conference will help us take forward the message to male primary school teachers that they can lead singing too!

And so now to our keynote speaker for the Conference. He still calls himself one of Britain's most versatile YOUNG conductors, which I assume means he can conduct gospel music without dislocating his hips. Ladies and gentlemen Mr David Lawrence.

Sing Up Beatboxing Conference – Manchester, 18 May 2010

We know that humans have sung and used the voice creatively together since we first walked on the planet. And we know that music predates agriculture. So if we'd felled a mammoth, or beaten a neighbouring tribe at rock football – or whatever we did in those days – we were going to sing about it. We also know that the reason for this is because singing is a fundamental part of who we are, how we communicate, express emotion, and learn. And it's no coincidence, therefore, that the list of benefits of singing, on health, learning, social and educational development, is almost endless. One of our Platinum Award schools recently said that singing in their school is as important as water.

So when, 5 years ago, the Government asked the Music Manifesto to recommend how it should improve music education in this country, the principal recommendation was that all children should be able to find and use their voice; that initially we should aim that all primary school-aged children should be able to access high-quality singing activities every day. And a key driver for this would be to ensure that all primary schools became singing schools.

So the Sing Up Consortium, of Abbott Mead Vickers, Faber Music, The Sage Gateshead and Youth Music, built a national singing programme to bring this about, based on the following two underlying principles or understandings:-

- Firstly, that there was a confidence issue for the workforce educating our children to sing or lead singing, many of them having being told at some point when they were younger that they couldn't sing.
- But secondly, that, despite this, there was in this country excellent, world-class practice in singing with children, which had huge potential to be nurtured and spread.

So in simple terms, we reckoned we could crack this singing programme by connecting the less confident with the expert singing workforce, and backing it up with some other useful stuff.

Against this backdrop, the structure of Sing Up hopefully makes sense:-

- A campaign strand, to highlight the value of singing as a teaching and learning tool,
- Resources, including our termly magazine and website, to make it as easy as possible to access repertoire and teaching materials,
- A workforce development programme, including national and regional programmes and workshops, knitted together by our network of 30 Area Leaders,
- Funded Programmes, to target areas of need, and develop practice,
- And an Awards scheme, to celebrate and support schools who put singing at the centre of school life.

Two and half years in, Sing Up is in good shape:-

- 87% of schools have engaged with the programme, with an average of nearly 3 registrants per school,
- Well over 30,000 people have benefited from our training and professional development activities,
- The website gets around 8,000 visitors per day,
- And our researchers the Institute of Education have found that children in schools who have engaged with Sing Up are between 18 months and 2 years further advanced in their singing competency than those in non-Sing Up schools.

Well that all sounds pretty good, doesn't it? And there's certainly some useful messages to take to a new government. But you know we've still a long way to go. If we're really going to change and embed the culture of singing in our primary schools, we need to go deeper into our understanding of how schools tick and how singing and music works in education. So weaving through our strands of work are a large number of underlying themes, and I'll share a handful of them with you now:-

- How do ensure that all primary-aged children are able to benefit from Sing Up, including those with Special Educational Needs and in those in challenging circumstances?
- How do we persuade School Leadership that singing is more than a bolt-on to the curriculum.
- How do we ensure that the quality of singing provision and leadership, and progression routes in music, are as robust as possible?
- How can we make the workforce suitably diverse?

- And how can we ensure that all Newly Qualified Teachers are already confident and equipped to lead singing?

The list goes on, but pertinent to this conference is the question, how do we ensure that the activities and repertoire we use with children are as broad and rich as possible? Can we do more, not only to teach our children to learn and sing songs, but to develop their creative skills, their listening skills, their core musical skills, and really give them a thorough musical grounding?

Well today we'll be exploring one of the most creative types of vocal activity: beat-boxing. Whether you're new to this artform, or already confident, and sure you will have an enjoyable and useful day, not least as with us today are some of the finest beatboxers in the country. Jason Singh will be speaking shortly, but first, we'll hear from the Artistic Director of Contact – please welcome Baba Isreal.

Syngforlivet Conference - Oslo, 23 October 2010

Confidence

Earlier this year I was a guest on BBC Radio 4's *Today Programme*, our leading breakfast news programme. I was on it to promote Sing Up's *School Trip Singalong*, a partnership with major national historical venues where we commissioned songs and activities for children to sing on the bus to and from the sites, to help them learn historical stories and facts.

The *Today Programme* has a very wide listenership, and the interview has been mentioned to me many times since. And what do you think people remember from it? Was it my sparkling wit and humour? Or my masterful control of the interview? No, it was the fact that I sang a song about the Vikings! A friend texted me afterwards to say he'd cut himself shaving, he was so amazed that I'd sung on radio. Even the interviewer said afterwards, "well done – you just sang to 3 million people". As it happens, I sang the song because I could see they needed to fill time until the end of the programme, and I'd prepared it in case they asked me to sing something.

My point is this: if – as we know – humans have used singing since the beginning of time to communicate, to learn and to express emotion, then why should it be such a surprise that I sang? Well, for many people, the prospect of singing to other people (particularly solo) is some kind of torture – the ultimate humiliation and embarrassment. The sad reality is that many adults are not confident singers, and many of them will have been persuaded at some point earlier in their lives that they "couldn't sing", all too often, I'm afraid, by a teacher, lacking the skills to help with pitching, and resorting instead to asking 'problem' singers to stand at the back, to mime, or not to take part at all. We are committed to eradicating the myth that some people can sing and some people can't.

So, building confidence in the education workforce was always a cornerstone of the National Singing Programme. If we were to change the culture of singing for all children, we had to have a workforce confident to sing and lead singing, and therefore our resources and support needed to make singing leadership as easy to access and deliver as possible. So for example, our online Song Bank features demonstration tracks, call and response tracks, backing tracks and a wealth of activities and teaching plans.

Our definition of a singing school is shown here:-

SLIDE

- All pupils sing for at least 5 minutes every day.
- The whole school sings together at least once a week.
- Singing regularly takes place in and outside the classroom, and in and outside the school day.
- At least 2 people in every primary school are confident to lead singing throughout the school.
- Pupils sing in performances periodically (internal or external audiences and recordings), and at least once a year.
- The school recognises the value of singing as a teaching and learning tool across the curriculum.
- The head teacher, governors and staff are supportive of singing.

I won't go through them in detail, but I'd like to pick out 3 points:-

- 'All pupils sing for at least 5 minutes every day'. This remains a contentious issue: some have said "you'll never do it; not in every school with every pupil", while others have said "it's nowhere near enough!" I let you make your own judgement.
- Note that we require at least 2 people in the school to be confident in leading singing. If it's one person, there's a danger that they will be given all the singing to do. "Oh no, I don't do the singing – they do"
- And absolutely key to a school's commitment to singing is the leadership of the school. If the head of the school doesn't value singing, it's likely that it won't happen, or at least won't happen well. If they are supportive, great things can happen.

We also know that teachers can't, and shouldn't do all this on their own.

Democracy

Sing Up came about because in 2005 the Schools Minister at the time, David Milliband (who, incidentally, is married to a violinist in the London Symphony Orchestra) recognised that music education in England was

not what it should be – that some children were able to access excellent music experiences, while others accessed none. So he created the Music Manifesto, an opportunity for the music education sector to tell Government what was needed, with the hope that it might channel funding accordingly.

From a list of 69 recommendations from the Music Manifesto, two messages rang loud and clear: in order to raise the standard of music education, ALL children should be able to access high-quality music opportunities on a regular basis, and in order to bring this about, the good practice existing in some parts of the country needed to be strengthened, connected up and made available to all.

In January 2007, the Government announced the start of its financial commitment to music education by making available £10 million to start a National Singing Programme, with the aim that all children should be able to access high-quality singing opportunities every day, and that, over time, all primary schools should become Singing Schools. This became, in 2008, a further £10 million per year for 3 years.

The winning bid for this programme came from a consortium of four organisations:-

- Leading charity Youth Music, who became lead partner
- Advertising agency Abbott Mead Vickers, Campaign partner
- Music publisher Faber Music, Resource partner, and
- Music venue The Sage Gateshead, Workforce Development partner

One of the main reasons for the funding being awarded to this consortium was because of its democratic approach. It did not propose any one particular methodology or any one particular type of organisation, but sought to support those organisations already doing good work to do it better and do it more widely. And we placed 30 Sing Up Area Leaders around the country to assess and connect up the activity that already existed.

We did it this way for two main reasons:-

Firstly, our experience is that teachers and music leaders tend to use multiple methodologies to inform their own practice. We've never felt it's our place to tell teachers how to teach, but to give them the options and the tools to work singing into their practice.

Secondly, across England there are all sorts of organisations providing music education – Local Authority Music Services, Youth Music Action Zones and Specialist Music Schools, as well as leading music organisations such as symphony orchestras. All bring different approaches, and we felt our job was to focus on the needs of children, teachers and schools, then connect them with the most appropriate organisations and partnerships in the network, NOT the other way around. In other words, a more demand-led approach than provider-led.

This approach has been highly successful, but not without its challenges. Some organisations – particularly in the early days – felt that it was their right to deliver all music education in their area, and why didn't we just give them the money? Some objected to this big-branded short-term initiative which they thought would muscle in on their work, and leave them to pick up the pieces when it had gone. And some struggled with the notion of working in partnership with other organisations or with our Area Leaders – to shift their thinking from their own needs to their customers' needs. I'm pleased to say that, over time, most of these challenges have been overcome, and there are some lovely examples of previously cynical people telling us how they'd been won over once they realised that we weren't trying to get in the way of their work, but trying to help enhance it.

The value of singing

We know that singing is a fundamental part of who we are, and while I've met countless people who aren't confident singers, I've never met anyone who wouldn't *like* to be able to sing confidently and well. And I also know that, in a rapidly changing world, it seems that one of the few constants we can hang onto is that children and young people always seem to want to experience music, whether that's listening to music, making music or learning about music.

So why do we need to prove the value of singing in education? In England, music is part of the National Curriculum right up to the age of 14. And research across the world is providing undeniable evidence of the wider benefits of singing, on learning and attainment, on social and cognitive development, on confidence

and well-being. But while our confident singing leaders probably do know all this, it's clear that many of their colleagues and their school leadership who haven't embraced singing may not, so arguments about the wider educational benefits of singing can be absolutely crucial in persuading these people to do more.

However, we feel we also mustn't shy away from the value of musical learning and music-making for its own sake. Michael Gove, our Secretary of State for Education, states the following:-

'Government priorities recognise music as an enriching and valuable academic subject with important areas of knowledge that need to be learnt, including how to play an instrument and to sing. Secondary benefits of a quality music education are those of increased self-esteem and aspirations; improved behaviour and social skills; and improved academic attainment in areas such as numeracy, literacy and language.'

In other words, music for music's sake; or perhaps from our perspective 'learning to sing' is as important, if not more important than 'singing to learn'. This allows us to have a very clear and attractive vision: all children should sing, it's their right – it's what we do. The other benefits always come in behind this.

Quality

So is it possible to broaden access to singing as this fully and still ensure an improvement in quality and progression through singing? The simple answer is yes, it is possible, although it's a complex issue.

Comprehensive research by the Institute of Education in London shows that children in schools who have engaged with Sing Up – at any level - are, on average, two years further advanced in their singing competency than those in schools who haven't engaged. So the simple act of singing regularly has a powerful effect.

As I mentioned earlier, we knew that, in order to improve the quality and value of singing in the classroom, we had to get the unconfident singers confident to lead singing. So for the least confident, this might be cueing up a song from our Song Bank and joining in with the class, or perhaps leading a warm-up exercise; more confident teachers might tackle more challenging repertoire, lead singing in parts, and really focus in on quality of sound. Skilled teachers will be conducting school choirs, and vocal experts from the local area will visit the school to work with the teacher in improving provision even further.

So we can see that the contexts in which the quality of singing can be developed are numerous and complex. Can we therefore make any meaningful statements about what the expectation should be of 'quality' singing, when we might be talking about a class singing a simple song in mathematics or an award-winning school choir singing a complex choral piece? Or can we, for example, state that, by the age of, say, seven, all children should be able to sing in tune? Partly for amusement, I turn to Sir Ken Robinson for a couple of extreme examples of judgements about quality:-

"I read that [Paul McCartney] wasn't allowed in the school choir. Paul McCartney. They said he wasn't good enough. How good was that choir? How good can choirs be honestly? Elvis Presley was not allowed in the Glee Club at school. They said he would ruin their sound. Elvis. But we all know what tremendous heights the Glee Club went on to without Elvis."

So quality is a difficult area, and one we've been tackling since day one. What we have found is that the principles behind the *leadership* of singing do relate across different contexts. You can find our ongoing discussions around this subject on our website at www.singup.org/quality, but here in brief, are what we consider to be seven attributes of good-quality vocal leadership:-

SLIDE

- Musical
- Positive
- Well-informed
- Clear
- Inclusive
- Encouraging
- Creative

The debate goes on. Feel free to take part...

A sustainable future

So what next for Sing Up? Our current round of Government funding ends in March 2011, and although the new Government has hailed Sing Up “a triumph”, at this stage we have no idea how much, if any, future funding we might receive. Although we recognise that, in this difficult economic climate, we should perhaps expect less money.

And in many ways that’s not the end of the world. There are some elements of Sing Up that people should expect to pay for. Published music is a commercial business, as is provision of training, and schools are given budgets to pay for this. So it was right that, in changing the culture of singing, we should offering resources and support free of charge, but in the future, schools must recognise the financial value of singing work as well as the educational, musical and social value.

And it will come as no surprise to you, I’m sure, to know that children moving through to secondary school are now expecting a much higher level of singing provision than currently exists in many secondary schools. It was right that we tackled primary schools first, but this is an artificial grouping, based on educational structures. In reality, singing should commence from infancy and carry through into adulthood. So our future plans recognise the need to build on Sing Up primary, and also to bring its benefits to early years and to families, to secondary education, as well as doing far more to help the trainee and newly qualified teacher.

How will we expand Sing Up on less funding? Well that’s precisely what we’re working on at the moment. A mixed-economy business model, which combines Government funding with earned income and fundraising. At local level, our work to date has set up the networks and expertise, not only to ensure that work is continued, but so that funding can be sought and delivered through partnerships. At least that’s the theory, but there are already many examples across England of new funding being found for the continuation of work, because it is now considered essential.

*

So here you have some of the building blocks of a successful national singing programme. We don’t have all the answers, and not all of this structure is replicable in other countries. And we fully recognise that the levels of Government funding Sing Up has enjoyed are unprecedented. But we are committed to working with other nations to ensure that children across the world are able to enjoy the unique and joyous benefits that singing can bringing. So it has been my great pleasure to speak with you today.

SSAT Music Conference - Bristol, 2 November 2010

A right to sing

1. Confidence is a preference

[As per Oslo speech above]

2. "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms" Winston Churchill

[As per Oslo speech above]

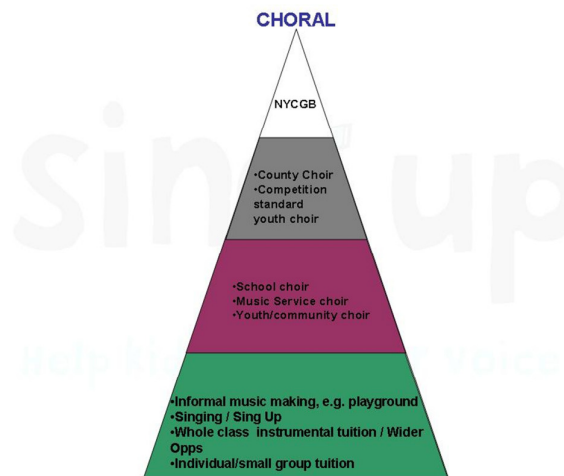
3. Quality or qualities?

[As per Oslo speech above]

4. Mountains of Musical Opportunity

How can a universal access programme like Sing Up also support progression, particularly of the individual? I'd like to try to illustrate how through a model called the Mountains of Musical Opportunity. Now brace yourselves ladies and gentlemen, as this is ultimate death-by-PowerPoint; but don't worry, you can keep yourself amused by marvelling at the pathetic quality of my graphics, which have long been the subject of ridicule.

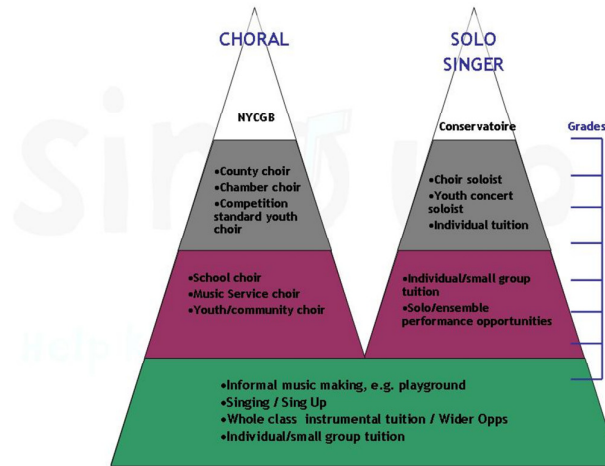
You may have come across the 'pyramid' model of progression, where a baseline is provided for all, and as the more talented or interested progress, so the pyramid narrows. Now I'm an avid hill-walker, so I'm going to turn it into a mountain. Let's have a look at look at one - the mountain of Choral Singing:-



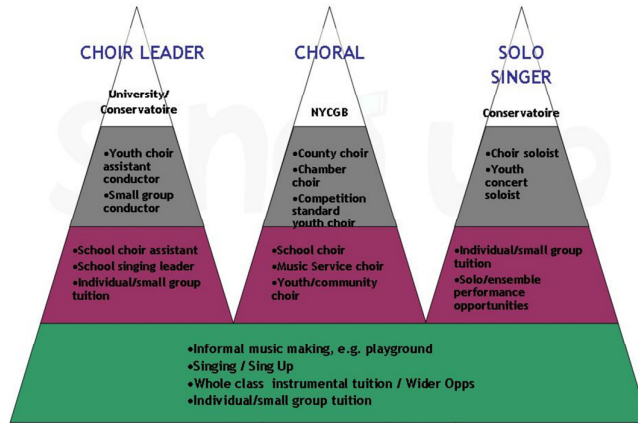
At the peak, an example of an aspirational peak for choral singing for a young person – the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. Supporting it, high quality regional and county singing; below that school and community singing. And across the bottom (in the mountain pastures), the foundations, the first access: whole-class instrumental tuition, singing and Sing Up, informal music making, and individual and small group tuition.

Before we move on, let's understand the limitations of the mountain model. This diagram represents progression, but the journey from bottom to top is not necessarily linear or chronological. For example, the National Youth Choir has a primary-aged choir, so it's entirely possible to be singing with the NYC whilst singing stuff from Sing Up's Song Bank in school every day; and there are many exceptionally high-achieving school and community choirs. Plus of course, Sing Up doesn't just cover first access – we have value across the mountain; our Platinum Award schools could be considered a peak. Also, this mountain is sitting alone,

and must fit with all the other parts of a young person's musical journey. So let's add another peak: solo singing:-

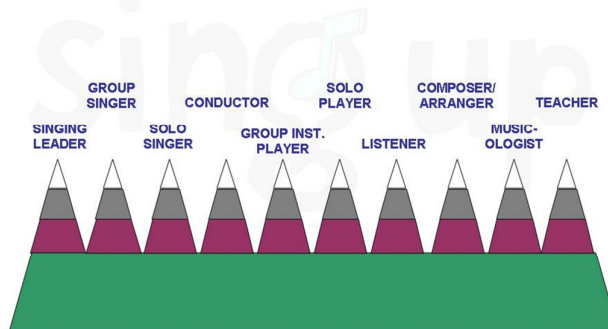


Here, we see that the baseline of provision is the same, but the progression route potentially varies as that young singer develops. We are likely to see individual tuition carry right through to the top of the peak and beyond, benchmarked, perhaps, through graded exams. We could add another mountain – let's take choir (or singing) leadership:-

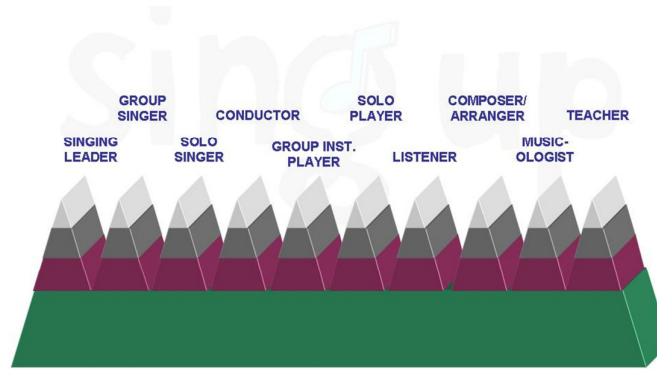


This is another area more for the individual, but which again links to the others through the same baseline of access.

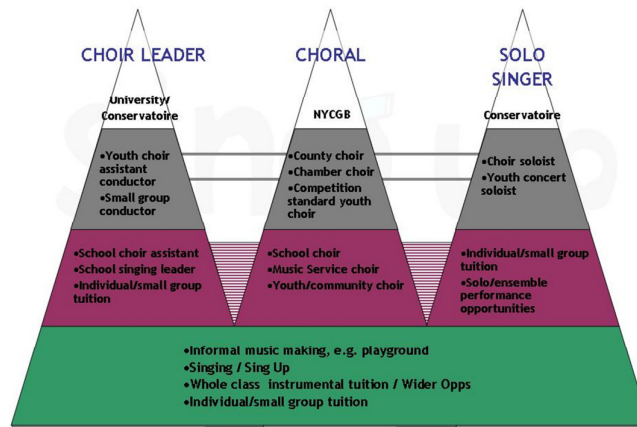
So of course, the natural continuation of all this is a whole mountain range representing the different types of music making – here are some examples:-



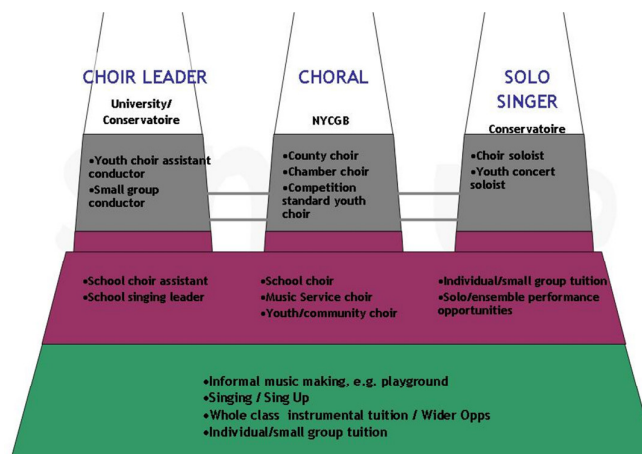
And if we consider the multitude of musical genres available to young people, these mountains become three-dimensional:-



It's starting to look like a pretty good picture, isn't it? Okay, let's go back to our three singing examples. Presumably a young singing leader and a solo singer might continue to progress through group singing too, so we shouldn't close off our links between the mountains at baseline level – let's draw in some connectors:-

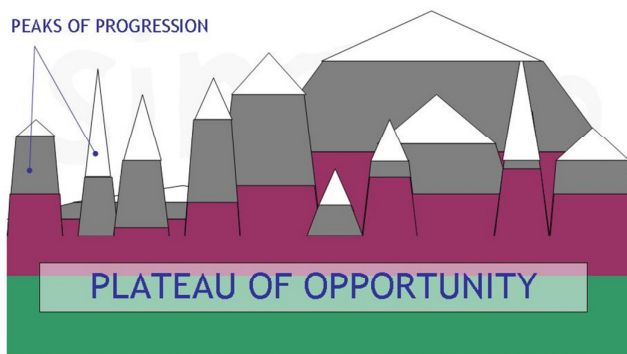


Now here's an interesting thought: couldn't we join up this second layer across the board? A universality in provision, so that, for example, school and youth choirs and individual and small group tuition is comprehensive enough that everyone can take part who wants to. Follow that right through...



...and our model starts to develop more of a plateau, from which the peaks fatten out and disappear off the top of the screen. Why? Because surely a widening of access to quality music making will encourage more young people to find their talent, and progress further in their music making.

One more tweak to make to the model. All these peaks are currently the same shape and height, and of course this is not the case in reality. Some musical progression will be very wide access, and some very narrow. So, if we accept that all the mountains are different, we start to get to a model which looks more like a real mountain range, with its plateau of sustainable opportunity, from which rise the many peaks of progression:-



“So what?!” I hear you ask. What does your picture of a mountain range actually tell us? Well, the obvious point is that it tells us that the range of musical opportunities available to our young people is vast and hugely diverse, and I believe it raises a major issue, which I’d like to share with you:-

5. Sat-Navs and Sherpas

So we have all these young people stood on this metaphorical plateau of opportunity at various stages in their lives, amongst all these peaks of progression. How are they choosing the right mountains, how far up them should they climb, and how are they navigating around? Have they a map or Sat-Nav, or is there a mountain guide with them? If there is a mountain guide, does he or she understand their aspirations, and know their limitations?

My decision to study music at university, and pursue a career in music, came about from a conversation in a car with my bassoon teacher. He said something like “you may not have the skills or desire to become a performer, but you’re intelligent and a fine musician, and you could do a multitude of other things with a music degree”. A life-defining moment, where someone I respected not only gave me confidence, advice and guidance. I wonder how all our young people are getting this kind of informal mentoring support.

I’ve auditioned graduate singers for solo roles who’ve had no hope of a career as a soloist, and I’ve worked with orchestral musicians who, after 10 years of playing similar repertoire, are, frankly, bored and unfulfilled. I’m being deliberately contentious with these examples, but they represent how often aspirations and expectations are not met, or, more to the point, the aspiration was incorrectly managed, or not managed at all.

So I believe that, as important as identifying and nurturing talent, is correctly managing aspiration and expectation. Yes, of course, it is exceptionally difficult to achieve, and I don’t think we’re anywhere near cracking it. Who is responsible? And how do we ensure that talent and potential shown at primary age is linked into choice and opportunity in secondary? This isn’t the first time I’ve presented this model, but I’ve yet to get any sense that we, the music education sector, have cracked it. However, I believe Specialist Schools are probably more expert than most, and I wonder how the sector can learn from you. Certainly from what we’ve seen around the country, other secondary schools are badly in need of guidance and support in this area.

6. Sing Up Clusters

Sing Up Clusters are Sing Up’s partnership with ContinYou, supporting Specialist Music and Performing Arts and Media Colleges around the country to lead sustainable singing projects with their feeder primaries through the Extended Schools offer. The programme helps to train and inspire singing leaders and young singing leaders, and enables schools to work positively with pupils’ transition issues.

Since 2007 we have supported 122 Sing Up Clusters, who have worked with 772 primary schools, 1,282 Young Singing Leaders, and a dizzying 35,829 pupils. We've just recently confirmed a set of international clusters as part of our connection with the Cultural Olympiad project *Youth Music Voices*, and are also in the process developing some SEN clusters as part of our Beyond the Mainstream strand.

The positive outcomes of Sing Up Clusters have been manifold, and include:-

- The development of pupils' social skills through working with children from other schools
- A huge sense of teamwork fostered by singing in a large ensemble
- Positive role models created by older children for their primary counterparts
- Positive messages for boys about singing
- The overwhelming enthusiasm of parents – even those who had a reputation for being challenging in the day-to-day life of the school
- Primary and secondary staff built good working relationships
- The sparking of new ensembles, and
- The unlocking of additional Extended Schools funding

There are some useful individual project examples:-

- One project planned its concert to take place around the time of the secondary school's new parents' open evening to maximise the impact on potential pupils and their parents
- Another used the Arts Award scheme to reward its Young Singing Leaders and give them formal accreditation
- One project built links to local amateur singing groups, and
- Another commissioned the post-16 media unit at the secondary school to make a DVD of a concert

We've also come up against some challenges, some of which will perhaps resonate with you:-

- Transport has been an issue which few have fully solved, and has threatened long-term sustainability of projects.
- The quality of involvement of local Extended Schools teams has been variable, and has been a significant factor in projects.
- And finally, the Young Singing Leaders element of the Sing Up formula has not always worked well. Now this area is, I think, crucial, because in so many ways, Young Leaders are the key to good singing work between primary and secondary. So I'd like to read you three paragraphs from our Sing Up Clusters Evaluation in 2009 by Dave Shorten, because I think he captures the issues really well:-

"While the concept of Young Singing Leaders is very attractive, the reality is that it is very difficult to organise and carry out, especially when rural primary schools are involved. Transporting secondary students to primary school is far from easy: Health & Safety and Child Protection regulations can become issues for parents, as can students missing lessons when they leave school early to get to a primary school for a lunchtime or after school rehearsals.

Some primary singing leaders got their Young Leaders seriously involved in teaching the songs or role modelling how to perform, but at other schools the Young Leaders simply joined the choir and sang along. That, plus the time issues which sometimes resulted in a Young Leader only being present for the final ten minutes of a rehearsal, led to real frustration for the young people involved, although they remained steadfastly positive.

When post 16 students were involved as Young Singing Leaders they too experienced frustration that they did not make a contribution worthy of their skills and musical expertise. This often resulted in them reducing their commitment and involvement."

Now this is not to say that it's all been a disaster with Young Singing Leaders by any means, and we've learned and implemented a huge amount since the earlier clusters. Across Sing Up, although we've worked with Young Singing Leaders in the thousands, we've still felt that we're in our infancy in this area. So we have decided to consolidate our learnings and put together a framework to help guide those working with young leaders, as well as a resource for the young leaders themselves. These should be out by the end of the year.

In the future, I can see that the role of the Young Singing Leader is going to become ever more interesting and widespread, and I'd love to think that specialist music schools will continue to lead the way as you have done so far.

I'll finish this section with a nice quote, from an AST in Derbyshire:-

"Just wanted to tell you how brilliant the Young Singing Leaders were yesterday when they led two workshops for 100 year 6 pupils at a time. They performed with confidence using the techniques they had been taught and as the day went on more and more staff kept popping into the hall to see what was happening as they had heard about something amazing going on in the school hall. They ended each session by getting everyone up doing Jump Jim Joe and I mean everyone. I was so proud of them, we have practiced hard in recent weeks and I have had several emails this morning about their outstanding performance. The Head of lower school sent a letter to parents straight after the session. Thank you so much to you ladies for making this happen and may they go from strength to strength."

7. On a Wing and a Prayer

So what next for Sing Up? Our current round of Government funding ends in March 2011, and at this stage we have no idea how much, if any, future funding we might receive. So for us, like so many other organisations, it's the cliff-edge, the guillotine, the fall of the axe! Or is it? There are some elements of Sing Up that people should expect to pay for. Music publishing is a commercial business, as is some provision of training, and schools are given budgets to pay for this. So while it was right that, in changing the culture of singing, we should offer as much fully subsidised stuff to schools as possible, in the future, schools are going to have to recognise the financial value of singing (even though the instrument is free) as well as the educational, musical and social value.

However, as I mentioned before, children moving through to secondary are now expecting a much higher level of singing provision than many secondary schools are providing. We had to tackle primary schools first, but this is an artificial grouping based on educational structures. Really, we should be talking about an entitlement – a right to sing – from infancy to adulthood.

So our future plans recognise the need to build on Sing Up primary – to help primary schools to do more singing and to do it better – but also to explore how we can bring support to early years and families, to do more for trainee and newly qualified teachers, and to expand our support for those outside mainstream education. And yes, to secondary. Now we are acutely aware of the need for caution here. Simply rebranding Sing Up for secondary with some more challenging songs in the Song Bank is not going to work. Secondary isn't primary with older children, and we're not about to insist that chemistry teachers teach chemistry via song (well, not unless they want to – I mean there's a great song for learning the Periodic Table). Anyway, if we want to do this properly, we're going to have to understand the unmet need in depth, and for that we're going to need the help of the experts. We've already consulted with representatives from Specialist Schools, but the conversation is ongoing.

How will we expand Sing Up on less funding? Well that's precisely what we're working on at the moment. A mixed-economy business model, which combines Government funding with earned income and fundraising. From the Big Society perspective, we have already brought together the networks and partnerships at a local level that can carry on the work of Sing Up in the future.

So it all sounds rather promising, doesn't it? We've submitted an exciting plan to the Henley Review, and the new Government has hailed Sing Up "a triumph", so you never know – all might be well. And as long as we're alright, it doesn't matter if the rest of music education goes down the pan.... Er, yes it does. And I'll try to demonstrate why with an anecdote which is rather tenuous, but it amuses me:-

I was on a plane last weekend, and I was reminded of a documentary I saw a few years ago that followed a bunch of people trying to overcome their fear of flying. And there was this marvellous scene where they wheeled out some nerdy old pilot, who said: "one of the common fears people have is that the wing will break off, and they'll see it falling down to earth. Whereas the law of aerodynamics dictates that if the wing were to break off it would actually be carried upwards. And no-one would see it of course, because the plane would instantaneously enter a flat spin and fall out of the sky. Hahaha!". You should have seen their faces.... The rather lame link to a point is that, if Sing Up were that wing, somehow riding the storm while

the fuselage of music education plummets to earth, it's only a matter of time before the wing follows the same fate.

Sing Up is the sum of its parts. Its heroes are both people who have worked tirelessly to make it a success, and the organisations who have pledged their time, money and support to help. Without Music Services, without music publishers, without Youth Music Action Zones, Choir Schools, Specialist Colleges and many others, Sing Up would be little more than a good idea - a twinkle in David Milliband's eye 6 years ago.

So may I thank you for the part you have played in our success, and, even in these uncertain times, I look forward to a very bright future for singing and for all music in our schools.

Sing Up South West Regional Partnership Gathering – Exeter, 14 January 2011

"There are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know."

You may recall these famous words by Donald Rumsfeld in reference to the absence of evidence linking the Iraqi government with the supply of Weapons of Mass Destruction to terrorist groups. And didn't he put us all at ease with that speech?

But this rather comical turn of phrase seems rather pertinent as we gather today to talk about the future of singing, standing as we are at a major crossroads in music education, with as yet with no clear idea where the onward routes lead to.

Darren Henley, by now, will have read every single one of over 900 responses to his Review of Music Education, and his findings presumably will be followed by some indication of the Government's commitment to, and funding for, music education in the future.

Until that happens – hopefully within the next month – let's not waste our time thinking about Donald's unknown unknowns. You need some concrete plans upon which to build from your fantastic achievements to date in lifting the culture of primary singing in the South West; and I will do my best to make sense of these uncertain times from a national, and Sing Up, perspective.

So here are some of the things we know we don't know:-

- We don't know yet what the findings of the Henley Review will be, nor the content of the Government's response to it.
- We don't know whether the Government will want to fund any centralised provision for music, such as national programmes like Sing Up, or whether they want to go straight into the Big Society concept and leave local areas to sort themselves out.
- We don't know for certain whether Standards Funding for music will continue, and whether it will be ring-fenced, although we believe it might.
- Combined with widespread local authority cuts, the future for many Music Services is uncertain.
- From a school perspective, we don't know, firstly, whether they will really all spend their money on music; secondly, how we can ensure that they are accessing the best possible expertise, rather than, say, the cheapest or most convenient; and thirdly, we don't know for sure that music will remain a mandatory National Curriculum subject from Key Stages 1-3.

Well that's a whole load of uncertainty isn't it, and it's easy to lose hope. But there are plenty of known knowns which give us cause for positivity:-

- We know that children and young people always seem to want to experience music, whether that's listening to music, making music or learning about music.
- We know that Government recognises the value of music in education. In his letter to Darren Henley, Michael Gove says this:-

'Government priorities recognise music as an enriching and valuable academic subject with important areas of knowledge that need to be learnt, including how to play an instrument and to sing. Secondary benefits of a quality music education are those of increased self-esteem and aspirations; improved behaviour and social skills; and improved academic attainment in areas such as numeracy, literacy and language.'

- We know that Sing Up has enjoyed huge success across the country, with massive take up from schools. Currently over 94% of state primary schools have registered with Sing Up, and I hope that you are all witnessing a significant growth in singing activities, and in people leading singing, in your schools.
- Certainly the Government recognises this. Culture Minister Ed Vaizey has hailed Sing Up as "a triumph".
- We also know that, through Sing Up, sustainable partnerships have formed or strengthened, providing great opportunities for the future.
- And we know that England now has the most extraordinary infrastructure of supportive networks around singing, with much better connected singing leaders and music organisations.

All of this will stand us in good stead for this uncertain future, and today's meeting will help further to solidify those partnerships and networks. But before you do so, let me tell you what I know about the future of Sing Up, and our possible relationship with the Big Society.

About 18 months ago, the partners of the Sing Up Consortium began to plan what we thought might be a future for Sing Up's work. At that stage we didn't know whether that meant a continuation of the programme in its current form, a gentle absorption of our work into the fabric of music education so that this branded Campaign gently disappeared, or something completely different.

An extremely thorough planning process brought us to the conclusion that primary schools would continue to need access to resources, workforce development and supportive networks for singing. But we also sensed that Sing Up the brand, the national programme, had gained a strong and positive foothold in schools, and that we would be daft to remove it.

And we felt there was a strong need to extend support for singing to secondary schools and early years, so a year ago we published Sing Up's *State of the Union*, a document which laid out a vision for the future in which we continued to support singing in primary but widened that support to encompass educational settings for children and young people of all ages. This formed the basis of the plan that we submitted to Government as part of the Henley Review.

But let us be clear about what that plan might look like in practice. One of our known knowns is that there is extreme pressure on Governmental budgets, and the golden years of £10 million funding a year for a national singing programme are almost certainly over. There are some elements of Sing Up which one might argue shouldn't be paid for by Government, and we can expect them to tell us that they're giving schools the budget to buy in support for things like music directly. Plus, the programme will need to change from being a Campaign to being, well, something different. What it becomes is perhaps up to you to decide.

So we're looking at a mixed economy model, expecting a significantly reduced Government stake, and the provision of some services which make sense to be run centrally – such as the website and the Awards scheme. This would allow us to maintain a branded national singing programme with a national strategy to help provide a focus for schools and music organisations. And we would be in a good position to identify and win new sources of national funding which might help to support work around the country.

If there is no Government funding in the short term, it's hard to see how this model can sustain itself, so it is right that you should plan on the basis of taking singing forward regionally yourselves. Sing Up is, after all, the people that make it happen, and the fact that so many of you are here today shows your own commitment to ensuring singing doesn't drop out of our schools. If further funding is available, we'll let you know how we plan to use it to keep Sing Up alive in some form.

Now, Sing Up is the only charitable organisation that's a member of the Big Society Learning Network, run by the Local Government Information Unit, so I'm going to close by sharing with you some of the fundamental principles and opportunities in the Big Society, because like it or not, and cynical or otherwise as we might be, it's going to happen.

The big principle is decentralisation, and you may be aware that the Coalition Government has recently drafted a Localism Bill which should pass this year. In it is a list of 'six actions of decentralisation':-

- Lifting the burden of bureaucracy
- Empowering communities to do things their way
- Increasing local control of public finance
- Diversifying the supply of public services
- Opening up Government to public scrutiny
- Strengthening accountability to local people

If you'd like more information on this, there's an essential guide to Decentralisation and the Localism Bill at communities.gov.uk. On the horizon are initiatives linked to this, such as Your Square Mile – giving people easy access to getting involved in their local area – community budgets and greater public control over public spending. There's also a significant opportunity for the voluntary sector to get more involved in the provision of public services, and conversely for existing public sector bodies, or their assets, to set up as charitable concerns. Some Music Services have already done this.

Nick Clegg says: *'the job of government is not to run people's lives. It is to help people to run their own....And we do that one way and one way only: by letting go of the purse strings, because, in politics, power without money is meaningless. Local communities must have more power over the money they spend, including what is raised locally.'*

We've already seen the impact of this through the Spending Review, which removed all centrally-imposed ring fences on local government spending except for schools and public health grants, and lit an absolute bonfire of the QUANGOs. Sing Up has been extremely fortunate to weather that storm to date, and will be even more fortunate to continue with funding in the future.

But we knew this was coming. Some of Sing Up has always been decentralised. Our network of 30 Sing Up Area Leaders around the country was set up so that those Area Leaders could respond to local need and create appropriate strategies and partnerships, rather than being told from on high exactly what they had to do. Then if central funding diminished or disappeared in the future, groups like yourselves could work together to find solutions.

Three buzz-phrases will be increasingly important in this new world order:-

The first is 'co-opetition', the concept of a co-existence between competitiveness – such as providing direct services to schools – and cooperation, a balance against competition by identifying where organisations could work together to make a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The idea being that the two approaches working together will help to drive up standards in provision. So for instance, a school wanting to buy in a tabla teacher might contact a Local Authority music service, who might either say 'we don't provide that ourselves, but we know an organisation who does', or who might sub-contract to a partner organisation to provide that service, provided that that service is of the appropriate level.

And therefore the second buzz-word is 'co-production', partnerships and networks coming together to make something better. This applies, not only to provision of services such as music, but also of course to the identification and drawing down of funding, which in so many cases is more successful if bids come from partnerships and consortia rather than from single organisations. At a national level, we've already agreed with singing programmes in other UK nations to work together if we identify potential funding that is UK-wide, rather than just England.

And the third buzz-phrase is social capital, the idea that it's not all about money any more. For example, a lot of training for education doesn't generate profit, but organisations might be prepared to run not-for-profit training for the general good, or for the spin-off benefits such as being bought in by a school for follow-up work.

In many ways, we in the music education sector can say that we're already doing much of this, that Big Society is not a new model for us at all. This, I think, can only be a good thing, because we can be head of the game and ensure that the provision of music services to our schools and communities doesn't diminish in these difficult times. But to do so we're going to have to be even more dynamic, fleet of foot and collaborative.

I hope that gives you a feel for the bigger picture. I'm going to be here all day, but may I take the opportunity now to thank you for your part in making Sing Up the extraordinary success that it is. It has been a wonderful journey so far, and let's hope we're still just at the start of it!

London Area Leader Gathering – 15 February 2011

It has truly been an extraordinary passage of time since I was here for the first Sing Up London gathering in April 2008. That was at the end of Phase 1 of the National Singing Programme, and we were still getting our heads around how best to support singing in this huge city, with so many Music Services, so much activity and so many primary schools! Here we are now, nearly at the close of Phase 4, with a successful programme behind us, a highly effective steering group, and thinking about how to take on the next chapter in the life of singing in education.

I'm sure you'll know that last Wednesday was National Sing Up Day, with over 800 events taking place around the country – a massive celebration of all that we have achieved. Our Facebook channel went berserk, and there was one post from a teacher who I think summed up everything we've aimed for:-

'Developing a singing culture within school has, at times, been a single handed battle (How do you expect us to find the time? What good will it do? etc etc) but the children and I have persevered and I think, whisper this bit, that maybe, just maybe I've heard singing coming from classrooms other than mine... the real proof however must go to the woman in the street.....we were singing our way through some feel good songs the other day with the windows open, not thinking anything of it. Later that week I was chatting with an acquaintance who said, 'My aunty was walking past your school the other day and heard the most beautiful singing. She keeps on and on about how it must have been a recording of a professional choir but then she heard a lady telling the children how fantastic they were'.....result!'

With the weight behind us of a national programme with a clear vision, significant funding and untold goodwill, we have together made a massive impact on schools, on teachers and on young people, and we can justifiably say that the culture of singing for children has been dramatically changed for the better. 95% of state primary schools are registered, and 90% of all primary-age schools. This includes an average of over 3 people per school, so it's not just the music coordinator who's leading singing now; and an average of 17 people per music service are registered, so it's also not just vocal tutors leading singing either.

We will achieve, and in many cases exceed by far, our targets for the programme up to 2011. Of course Sing Up was originally conceived potentially to have a fixed life, so that in March 2011 it might tip-toe away and leave behind such a strong legacy that singing would simply absorb itself into the music education landscape.

And in many ways it's done just that. Hopefully you feel that this is your programme, Sing Up is part of your life, of the life of your schools, your children. We often refer to the Spartacus principle – that when in years somebody says "who did that amazing programme? Who did Sing Up", tens of thousands of people – from young singing leaders to headteachers - will put up their hands and say "I did. I did Sing Up. I'm Spartacus!" (It's a flawed analogy of course – Spartacus's followers were all crucified, but let's not dwell on that....)

Well that sense of universal ownership is great, but what would happen if, at midnight on 31 March, we switched off the website, stopped the Song Bank and the Awards scheme, produced no more Sing Up magazines, and ran no more training or programmes? A steady decline? Outright Anarchy, judging by the hundreds of messages of support we've received from people, enthusiastically indignant about the very idea that the Government might stop supporting one of its most successful ever education programmes. The Henley Review of Music Education picks up on this. It says:-

'Many of the written and verbal submissions to this Review place a great value on the support materials created for teachers by the national primary school singing programme, Sing Up. Particular mention was made of the Song Bank and the Sing Up website.'

This is lovely to hear, and there's no doubt that the Song Bank and magazines have brought singing into classrooms in a way that's never happened before. But let's be clear that resources aren't the full picture – it takes more than songs to make a singing school. Well over 60,000 people have taken part in our training & CPD activities, our Beyond the Mainstream strand has broken new ground, particularly in the fields of Special Educational Needs and Looked After Children, networks and partnerships have supported and connected schools in their singing, and the list goes on of how the main pillars of the programme - resources, training & CPD, funded programmes and partnerships & networks – have together created the environment in which singing can flourish and improve. We must continue to offer this combination if we are to ensure a strong future for singing.

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In summer 2009 the Sing Up Consortium met to begin exploring what the needs of schools might be from 2011 onwards. These were our main findings:-

- To be networked (anything from local to international)
- Recognition and endorsement of schools valuing singing (especially awards)
- Resources and information (including songs, cross-curricular resources, examples of good practice)
- Training and support (including for whole-staff professional development)
- Performance platforms

From our own perspective we could see further needs; in particular, the need to help schools do singing more and do it better, which must now be our onward aim. We've always been clear that registration does not a singing school make – it's just the start of the journey, and we feel there's much more to do to help fully embed singing in primary schools, drive up the quality of singing and singing leadership, and support wider musical learning even better.

And there's one more need to add to this list – Sing Up the brand, the national programme. We commissioned some market research in 2009, and one of the most powerful messages to come back was the strength of recognition of this national programme – we were second only in brand recognition to Healthy Schools. I suspect we may now be the leading programme brand in primary schools. The pride of schools in saying 'we do Sing Up', or 'we're a Sing Up school' was clear and very powerful, and we felt it would be foolish to lose that.

So what to do to keep meeting these needs? Try to keep a £10 million a year Government-funded programme alive in a time of austerity and cuts? Charge full price to schools for our services, and run the risk that children in schools who don't invest get nothing? Give up the Sing Up brand to whoever wants it so they can take it on instead – very Big Society – and risk variable quality?

Well the answer probably lies in a combination of new approaches. It's always felt unlikely that £10 million a year would continue to be forthcoming for Sing Up; indeed, last year we were cut by 10%, and forced by the Cabinet Office to give up most of our external communications work. So we continue to work towards a mixed-economy model, matching Government funding with funds raised from other sources and with some parts of our offer attracting a charge. And there are new markets to be explored too: internationally, Sing Up is much envied and there may be opportunities there; secondary schools desperately need further support on singing; and we are all too aware of the value of singing for early years and families.

And it was always hoped that the networks of practice we built through Sing Up would carry on supporting singing, regardless of the future of the national programme.

So here we are, a week after the Henley Review is published, knowing that the Government will support music education, including Sing Up, for another year, but still no indication of how much from Sing Up's point-of-view. Given the proximity of the end of March, this is challenging to say the least, and we're in discussion with the DfE to try to ensure we have a workable budget, in time to be able to do anything with it before we lose all our staff and all our data on schools.

So I'm afraid I can't give you a firm assurance about how, if at all, Sing Up will continue beyond March, and it is right that you should plan for a strong future for singing in London without an expectation of a significant Sing Up infrastructure in the future. That way, if the news is positive, we can work with those existing singing networks to do even more.

It's a big responsibility to put to you, but you're in good and plentiful company. I've been talking to other groups around the country in a similar position, and I've been humbled by the energy and ideas, and the determination to keep singing strong. It's a wonderful reflection of how well joined up our sector now is, despite what some may say.

So let's get on with it. I'm going to be around most of the day, but may I take the opportunity now to thank you for your part in making Sing Up the extraordinary success that it is. It has been a wonderful journey so far, and let's hope we're still just at the start of it!

Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards – London, 10 May 2011

Thank you so much, RPS, for this honour [the Education Award].

I am unable to thank by name all the individuals and organisations who have contributed to the success of Sing Up, as they number in the thousands (and include many of you here this evening). This award really belongs to us all. But I would like to acknowledge that two successive governments have recognised the value of this work, and supported music as a key part of the education of every child. Long may this continue.

A wonderful challenge now awaits our sector. From these foundations of rich musical experiences and learning for all children is already springing a generation of musicians on a scale we've never known before, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that they progress musically right through their education and into adulthood – in far greater numbers – to become the participants, the audiences, the composers, the teachers and the performers of tomorrow.

With that in mind, I am delighted to introduce to you a Sing Up Platinum Award School. Recognised for placing singing at the heart of school life, and supporting other schools to do the same, please welcome the choir of St Mary's RC Primary School. And thank you again.

