

## **Multi School Singing and Songwriting Projects From Wren Music**

Wren Music has developed a highly successful way of delivering multi school singing projects involving up to 20 schools on each project, linking primary and secondary learners. Torbay, Plymouth and Devon Music Hubs have all hosted projects. The next one is scheduled for Torbay to start in September 2016.

**“Getting Wren Music into the City has been one of the best investments we ever made”**  
*Head Of Music Hub*

**Transition At The Heart** - These projects have transition at the core of their thinking and delivery. A secondary school will be asked to work with a ‘cluster’ of primaries in a targeted way. We ask secondaries to identify a cohort of students - either a choir, a class or a GCSE group. First we ask all the secondary students to attend a launch event where they learn about releasing their voices and sing some great songs together. Together with teachers, they are encouraged to think of their younger peers, to create an overall theme and begin a ‘theme’ song which features at the finale and acts as a musical centre.

**“I don’t think I’ve seen her so enthusiastic about anything . . it has done her confidence an abundance of favours!”** *Secondary Head Of Expressive Arts*

**Young Songwriters** - The secondary students write a song FOR their younger peers using tried and tested group songwriting techniques developed by Wren Music. They learn about lyric structure as well as building tunes, accompaniments and vocal parts, and are encouraged to think closely about themes and lyric content which would appeal to younger children. Wren Music team make complete learning packs. Many songs outlive the project.

**“My favourite bit was preparing and practicing a brand new song”** *Yousif, Primary school participant*

**“The song that the secondary students had written for us was fantastic. It suited our children's voices well, allowed them to sing in 2 parts and immediately captured their imaginations. The children loved it so much that the Y6s decided to use it as part of their leavers' assembly. It will become a firm favourite in our portfolio.”** *Primary Music Co-ordinator*

**Young Singing Leaders** – During the extended contact over the project, the secondary students get to experience becoming young singing leaders and also to think about other aspects of presenting a performance. We create and motivate a team to visit their primary schools and run singing workshops. Members of Wren Music’s older Devon-wide teenage choir Roots A Capella (13 – 18 years) may be brought in as inspiration on training events. Some students have used the project to help progress successful Young People’s Arts Awards. Young leaders are now equipped with a ‘tool kit’ for working with and teaching other groups of students. These gains will now be built on and become embedded in the culture of the Music Education Hub.

**“The enthusiasm that the project brought forth to my students and the confidence they gave them was terrific”** *Secondary School Head Of Music*

**“The project is good at building confidence in the children, especially those who are normally quiet and shy. It teaches good practice for singing both in terms of warming up the body before singing and the discipline of group singing”**  
*Primary School Singing Teacher*

**Teachers and Singing Leaders CPD** - In discussion with the full staff team, Wren Music plans and delivers a CPD strand on an agreed theme. For example one CPD event focussed on boys singing, changing voices, appropriate repertoire and attracted 120 people. National singing leader Lin Marsh joined the Wren Team for this event.

**"Doing sea shanties, he absolutely loves the control of it, absolutely different boy"**  
*Primary school Music Co-ordinator*

**The Finale** – An integral part of each project is a 'life memorable' finale, where the new songs are 'premiered', a small repertoire of previously rehearsed songs is sung with all the young people and the 'theme' song is sung to finish the show. Choice of a really special venue is important. The finale event was cited by nearly all the young people as being hugely significant. The young people themselves were the stars in a venue where they are used to seeing their pop, rock and comedy idols.

**"My favourite thing was that we had thousands of people watching us"**  
*Murtadha, Primary school participant*

**"I loved when I heard my mum cheering"**  
*Helena, Primary school participant*

**"The organisation and support we have received this year from Wren has been astounding and we would love to work with you all again. Thank you once again for being such an inspiration and making something that could potentially be hard work so much fun!"** *Secondary Teacher*

#### **Outcomes of Wren Music Transition Singing Projects**

- Primary and secondary music leaders have closer contacts and continue to work together and exchange ideas – the links between the phases has been strengthened
- The growth in musical confidence in some of the students has been outstanding – through the song writing process, there has been heightened awareness amongst secondary students of the challenges that some younger pupils are facing when they transfer to 'the big school'. A number of subjects not previously openly talked about have been made more explicit – discussion of sexual orientation, religious tolerance, and respecting the person (anti-bullying) for example.
- Some of these projects have become regular events (Sing Around The Bay in Torbay for example) and through finale door takings and financial contributions from schools it is possible that they can achieve a degree of sustainability.
- Through the songwriting process, there has been a heightened awareness amongst the secondary pupils of the challenges younger pupils are facing – many remember how they felt and wish to communicate this to help the others.

The Wren Music Team  
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