

RPO resound

Winter 2009

In this issue

Round Up! 1 | Northampton Residency Projects 2 | Ismaili Project and Concert 2 | Making Connections! 3
Elsley Primary School tackles literacy through music 3 | Dates for your Diary 3 | Player Profile 4 | Last Words! 4

Round Up!

What we've been up to over the last few months

We've had a fantastically varied time at **RPO resound** over the past few winter months. The beginning of November saw **RPO resound** embark on a relationship with Orchestra Europa, continuing success with our Ismaili ensemble project and the conclusion to our music and dance extravaganza in Brentwood, *Alchemy II*. The performance of *Alchemy II* proved itself to be a wonderful evening, with hundreds of young people dancing and performing at the Brentwood Centre to a capacity audience. All the performers involved should be incredibly proud of what they have achieved. The relationship with Brentwood continues to grow, working with different groups of young people each time – we are really looking forward to seeing what the next incarnation of the project will be!



Alchemy II - the final performance

After a very busy November, December on the other hand, was slightly calmer for **RPO resound**, with the Orchestra operating flat out, performing concerts both at home and abroad. But it wouldn't be Christmas without our annual project for the homeless at The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields (profiled on page 3).

The New Year started off with a wonderfully busy programme of events in both London and Northampton. In London, we continued to develop our Orchestra Europa programme, our ambitious project with the Ismaili community (which reaches its climax on Saturday 31st January at Cadogan Hall) and held our annual music and literacy project at Elsley Primary School in Wembley (profiled on page 3).

Our programme of work alongside the Orchestra's concert residency in Northampton saw the launch of our series of Family Days at Royal & Derngate (profiled on page 2). **RPO resound** also continued to support Royal & Derngate's *Music Shots* programme, coaching young musicians from the Northamptonshire Music Service, and held a teacher training day, following on from our incredibly successful curriculum-led project in Kettering ('Teachers



Alchemy II - the final performance

are doing it for themselves' in the Spring/Summer 2008 edition of **RPO resound**).

Finally, we would like to welcome Ruth Currie, our new Community and Education Co-ordinator, who joined us at the beginning of January. It is fantastic to have her on the team and we hope that she continues to settle in well!

In the past 3 months **RPO resound** has:

- Travelled over **1180** miles
- Run over **140** hours of workshops
- Worked with more than **350** participants

Northampton Residency Projects

Coaching Sessions, Family Days and Teacher Training Courses



String group coaching session

As part of the Orchestra's residency in Northampton, **RPO resound** runs a programme of events each year, in collaboration with Royal & Derngate, Northamptonshire County Council and Orchestras Live. Community and education events have been happening in Northampton over the past few years but last season we launched a new programme of events at Royal & Derngate, which will continue to take place right across the *Orchestral 08/09 Season*.

This new programme was launched in October 2008 with the first of our coaching sessions in support of Royal & Derngate's *Music Shots* programme. *Music Shots* gives young performers from Northamptonshire Music Service the opportunity to perform in the foyer performance space at Royal & Derngate prior to the RPO's evening concerts. Earlier in the day, the groups performing

in the evening take part in coaching sessions with two RPO musicians, looking both at their performance technique and the works they will be performing. This time around two young string quartets were involved, and this is what their tutor had to say about their experience:

"Our two student string quartets were excited to be working with professional musicians from the RPO and expected to learn a lot from the experience. In the end their expectations were exceeded as the two players worked with them at a very detailed level and widened their understanding of ensemble playing. They'd love to do it again."

*Corin Malietski
Northampton Music Service*

At the other end of the spectrum, this January we launched the first of our Family Days at Royal & Derngate. These are open events for children aged 4 upwards and their families. This was a fantastically fun afternoon based on the theme of creepy crawlies (linking in with the concert repertoire, which contained Ralph Vaughan Williams' *The Wasps Overture*). Much singing, dancing and playing of instruments occurred – even the RPO musicians found themselves becoming creepy

crawlies from the Dingly Dell! The afternoon finished off with a tour of Royal & Derngate and a chance to watch the RPO rehearse in the main auditorium. We have another Family Day coming up in February – see the Dates for your Diary section to find out how to get involved.

As well as all the fun at Royal & Derngate, we held a teacher training day in Kettering, just north of Northampton, at the Montsaye Community College for Primary School teachers. This training day was aimed primarily at non-music specialists and explained how to tackle the creative composition element of the national curriculum through taking existing pieces of classical music, de-composing them and then re-composing them using different techniques. In total 25 teachers from across Northampton took part and they have all been invited to bring their schools to see the RPO perform the repertoire covered in the accompanying information packs. All the teachers found this training day invaluable and it is a fitting legacy to the curriculum project run all the way back in last April.

"The teachers inset day was absolutely brilliant – I gained such an insight into the music and feel able to take this back to my class and run my own project."

Year 6 Teacher

Ismaili Project and Concert

Nurturing young talent across the community

RPO resound has been working closely with the London Ismaili Community for the past two years and the programme that has developed out of this collaborative relationship is one that continues to thrive in every sense. Since 2007 members of the RPO have been working closely alongside Paul Griffiths (who is both Workshop Leader and Artistic Director) and a 30-strong Ismaili community ensemble to create an amazing suite of original pieces to be premiered on Saturday 31st January.

The ensemble has been a great vehicle for nurturing talent and musicality and engages with musicians from different

musical traditions and with differing levels of musical expertise. By bringing together such a range of musicians, young and old, it has been possible to develop a project that supports both emerging talent and those already studying music at University level. It also provides a wider opportunity to develop all participants compositional and improvisational skills.

The structure of the workshops means that each ensemble member has an equally significant role, shaping and moulding the pieces under the expert guidance of Paul and the **RPO resound**.

The project has been supported throughout by RPO percussionist Martin Owens who will be joined this January by further members of the RPO to rehearse the group in the lead up to the end of the month concert.

The première will take place at the RPO's London home, Cadogan Hall, with tickets available to the general public. Tickets are £7 and can be obtained from the Cadogan Hall Box Office on 020 7730 4500 or online at www.cadoganhall.com.

Making Connections!

Working with the homeless at St Martin-in-the-Fields



Participants at The Connection

The RPO Connections project, which takes place twice a year, is **RPO resound**'s longest-standing project, having run for more than 10 years. During this time, members of the Orchestra have worked with hundreds of homeless people who attend the centre, through a wide range of music projects.

Work with homeless people has been ongoing at St Martin-in-the-Fields since

1948, when the first formal organisation was set up by the nearby church. The Social Care Unit, based on the site, helps homeless people over the age of 26, by providing practical support, advice and daily activities to 200 people in central London every day. The centre has recently undergone a multi-million-pound refurbishment and now includes a new music and art suite.

The project in December was built around a strong festive theme which not only gave those dropping into the centre a chance to take part in some fun, informal music-making, but it was also a great opportunity to spread a little bit of seasonal cheer by giving a performance for everyone at the centre to enjoy.

This is the third successive year that **RPO resound** has run a Christmas project, with this year including a blend of original yuletide songs and existing

Christmas carols, given their own unique musical interpretation. Anyone who hasn't heard *Away in a Manger* in a reggae style is seriously missing out!

The project, led by Guy 'The Wizard' Wood, finished on a high, with a 30-minute concert given in the main hall to more than 70 people, some of whom began as audience members but soon got into the spirit of the performance by joining in on sleigh bells and other percussion. The **RPO resound** team will be returning to The Connection again in late spring to continue this great partnership programme.

"Thanks so much, it was great to have the RPO team back again and really ended our year on a high."

*Chris Lampard
The Connection*

Elsley Primary School

Tackling literacy through music

The relationship with Elsley Primary School has been running for a long time and between us we have explored many areas of the English curriculum. This year saw another special project. Led by James Redmond, the **RPO resound** team helped the pupils to create songs based on the idea of habitats.

In preparation for the workshops the children were asked to create pieces of

poetry and prose using alliteration and simile as a theme. This was partly so that there were some ready-made song lyrics to start the workshops with, but also so that the children were used to using this literary technique ahead of being asked to create more lyrics during the project. It was also exceptionally important that they had this skill ready to teach the **RPO resound** team!

Over the course of 3 days, we worked with two classes in order to create music ready for a performance in front of the whole school, parents and teachers. By an interesting coincidence, the project coincided with a parent/teacher evening, and therefore, the performance was given ahead of this event – what a great way to showcase what the children had been learning at school and to start the evening meetings!

Dates for your Diary

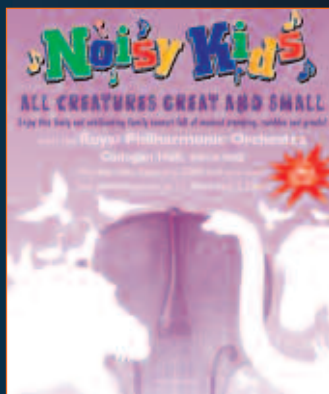
To find out more about the RPO's concerts and events, join our free mailing list online at www.rpo.co.uk

Noisy Kids: All Creatures Great and Small

Monday 16th February (Half Term),
11.30am and 2.30pm
Cadogan Hall

A fun and accessible family concert full of musical stomping, rumbles and growls!

Family Ticket £20 (up to 4 people)
Children: £5, Adults: £8
Box Office: 020 7730 4500
www.cadoganhall.com



Noisy Kids

RPO Vocalised Family Day

Sunday 22nd February,
12.00pm to 3.00pm
Royal & Derngate

Hands on music-making for all the family! No experience necessary. This is a first come, first served event – for more information contact Rebecca on 020 7608 8829 or email willowsr@rpo.co.uk.

Player Profile: Brian Thomson

RPO Principal Trumpet and a member of the RPO resound team



Brian working with young children at Tiny Tate

When did you start working in the field of education and what inspired you to start?

I began working with the RPO's education department soon after I joined the Orchestra 10 years ago. I had previously enjoyed teaching children, young and old, the trumpet and on hearing how much fun some of my colleagues were having with the education projects, the big kid in me just wanted to get involved. The chance to broaden my horizons and get involved in playing opportunities away from the formality of the Orchestra appealed greatly and gave me an outlet to perform outside the constraints of classical music. It seemed like it would be fun, and I wasn't wrong!

How have you found the experience of working in this field? Has it brought any benefits to your playing?

Working in education has exposed me to many contrasting situations, and learning to deal with these has meant developing new skills, educational,

social and instrumental. Every project is different in terms of the social atmosphere and demands placed on you, which keeps it interesting and challenging. Most of the time it's fun and sometimes it takes a lot out of you but the rewards usually reflect the energy you put into a project. Seeing a child's face light up with joy at a performance is priceless!

Learning to improvise and generally exposing myself to new musical ideas has broadened my pallet and perhaps allows me to enjoy performing with a better understanding of these varied musical styles. Socialising in this way with contrasting groups means you have to be sensitive and dynamic where appropriate and this too is reflected in my playing.

Taking that into consideration, what advice would you give to any musicians interested in taking part in education work?

Education work is extremely stimulating for the participants and for the team involved. To feel part of an experience where something original is produced and performed to a high standard by people who wouldn't normally have such an experience is extremely rewarding. Education work takes you into a wide variety of situations, be that privileged or otherwise, and you meet all sorts of people, young and old. It's a lot of fun, extremely rewarding and promotes the development of new skills, musical and

social. Get involved! Take advantage of any such opportunity that comes your way and inject your own charisma into the experience.

Is there a particular project that you have done with the RPO and/or memory that you would like to share?

The first one that always springs to mind was a project in a Nottingham prison a few years ago. Having spent most of the week there we seemed to get quite close to the inmates which resulted in an exceptional performance that was very personal to them and which became a very emotional experience for us, especially when it came time to say goodbye. Marching through London as part of the Thames Festival was crazy! And one of the latest, a collaborative project in Great Yarmouth where I worked on some choreography with a Portuguese dancer, performed Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* for the first time and witnessed some crazy antics on instruments built from garbage, was also one of the best. So far!



Brian working with a group in Hertfordshire

Last Words!

Something light-hearted to end the newsletter

What's the difference between alto clef and Greek? Some conductors actually read Greek.

How many clarinetists does it take to change a light bulb? Only one, but he'll go through a whole box of bulbs before

he finds just the right one.

Useful Information

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RPO resound Original Design:
White Label Productions

In the next issue...

Northampton Family Days | Urban Orchestra | Thurrock Gifted and Talented | And much more...!