Musicians look after the music - we look after musicians
Service ~ Westminster Abbey ~ 11am
Celebrating the centenary of Benjamin Britten in collaboration with the Britten-Pears Foundation
The service will include the premiere of Robin Holloway’s new anthem, *On a Drop of Dew*, sung by the combined choirs of Westminster Abbey, St Paul’s Cathedral and Westminster Cathedral
Preacher: Revd Lucy Winkett
Readers: Dame Janet Baker and Ian Bostridge

Lunch ~ Banqueting House ~ 1pm
Join us for lunch with a champagne reception
Guest speaker: Sir Nicholas Hytner, Director of the National Theatre

Service tickets - free
Lunch tickets - £90
Booking opens mid-September
Visit helpmusicians.org.uk for more information
A message from our Chief Executive

Over the last few years we have been updating how we work, aiming to be more responsive to musicians and acting as quickly as possible when help is needed. We’ve been thinking about those professional musicians who don’t know about us. We have also been thinking about how we might actively link with a profession and industry that is unrecognisable to how it was even ten years ago. To this end we have developed an ambitious plan, Time to Evolve. The first task highlighted in the plan is to change our name to Help Musicians UK in a bid to be more direct about what we do and who we aim to help. This decision was included in the plan after lots of soul-searching and consultation. Our beloved name, Musicians Benevolent Fund, won’t be jettisoned completely. Like many other charities we’ll maintain it in the background. Help Musicians UK will be developed and ready for use in the autumn. Other key developments in Time to Evolve include building new services for musicians around the themes of health, well-being, help and advice. Much more news on this as we go into 2014.

Trustees and supporters

At the beginning of 2013 our chairman, the Hon Richard Lyttelton, told us that he had decided to retire at the AGM in 2014, after six outstanding, visionary years. It is he who has led us with confidence to be a new kind of charity with a new name. So we’re delighted to be able to tell you that Richard’s work will be continued and developed by Graham Sheffield CBE who will join the board this coming September and stand for election as chairman at the 2014 AGM. Graham has a long and outstanding career in music starting as a percussionist at university. He is currently Director Arts at the British Council.

We’re also pleased to welcome two new trustees, Felicity Osmond, Head of Individual Giving at Scottish Opera, and 'cellist, Adrian Bradbury. Their skills and knowledge will help us enormously. On a sadder note we are sorry to have lost three eminent musicians who have been friends and active supporters of our work for many years. Sir Colin Davis, Thomas Hemsley CBE and Michael Gough Matthews all died in the first part of 2013. They will be greatly missed. Throughout our 93-year history we have been privileged to be supported by many eminent people in the music profession.
Susan is one of the world’s most sought-after singers. She’s much loved and admired by those who have heard her in roles as contrasting as Madame Butterfly and Elektra. Our evening came hot on the heels of Susan’s latest triumph as Elizabeth I in Britten’s Gloriana at the Royal Opera House. She says: ‘I loved playing Elizabeth. The whole experience, from the first rehearsal to the last performance, was a joy.’

Edward Seckerson, the writer and broadcaster, chatted to Susan with the audience listening in. This most un-diva-ish of opera stars talked about the immense task of learning new roles and the scrupulous and analytical care she takes. ‘…it took me a year to learn Janáček’s Makropulos Case in Czech. I examine the full score so I can see what’s happening in the orchestra to give me clues about both the emotional condition of my character and the vocal challenges…’

Edward: Before we explore your professional approach to your work, tell me more about starting out. Did you have an instinct for acting as a child?

Susan: ‘My parents were both police officers so no great theatrical traits there. We lived in Cheadle Hulme in Cheshire. I was always singing. When I was four I could impersonate Frank Ifield – yodelling and all. My mother thought it was hilarious to make me stand on the counter at the butchers or in the newsagents and sing ‘I Remember You’-oo’. My brother started piano lessons and I insisted that I had lessons too. I was in the school choir and around the age of nine I was in a short musical called Paradise Island. I was the Queen – not much change there then! I had a gold curtain draped across my shoulders and felt grand. I enjoyed performing but I didn’t set out to do it as my job or work. After I had finished studying at London University, the Royal Academy of Music and at the National Opera Studio in 1985, I was offered a junior principal’s contract at English National Opera. ENO had a pecking order for young singers and we all had to wait our turn and understudy the more senior artists. ENO nurtured me slowly and with the help and advice of Phillip Thomas, Mark Elder, David Pountney and others, especially fellow singers, I began to learn what my voice could do. I sang lots of small ‘Here’s your hat. Here’s your coat’ roles… it was the best way to begin – to learn.

Then suddenly it all changed. I was covering the role of Pamina in the Magic Flute. I got my big chance because the main singer had to withdraw. It was a huge challenge but they timed it perfectly for me. Then came Yum Yum in the Mikado, Gilda in Rigoletto, Jenůfa, Tatyana in Onegin and Madame Butterfly. Lots of wonderful roles…’

One thing that strikes me about you is the way you tackle the drama, the emotion and the way you live the part.

’S I believe anybody who gets up to sing words – cabaret, opera or musical theatre – has to tell a story. These days I’m often called a Wagnerian soprano but I’m a soprano who sings Wagner, Britten, Schumann or whatever else it may be. Early on people could hear potential in my sound. They could see what I was like on stage and see the appetite that I had for the way I wanted to work but they didn’t quite know which box to put me in.’

So with this diversity in your repertoire, what do you look for in conductors?

‘Simple. Somebody who really knows the music. Some conductors learn a score as they go along and that’s terrible for singers. I have seen a conductor sit and read a magazine while you’re dealing with the production. I have been told…’
'Now you’ve got the acting together, let’s put the music on top’. I need someone who feels the music and wants to make drama. Tony Pappano at Covent Garden is fantastic. He was at every rehearsal for The Ring Cycle. There wasn’t a mood, a thought or a single tiny decision made without him being a part of it. He would say, ‘You know, I think we can get a bit more out of it here’.

What kind of atmosphere do you like in rehearsals then? Is it a place where you should be able to take risks?

‘Rehearsal rooms are private places, like going to the doctors. You learn all the music well in advance and in the rehearsal room there are all these new ideas suggested by directors, choreographers, designers and music staff. A rehearsal has to be a safe place where you can try something out no matter how experimental, where you can crack a note, and where no one is going to judge you.’

There’s a lot of travelling, you’re married to a singer, so sometimes you are working together, but it isn’t glamorous all the time. How do you deal with that?

‘I always joke that when I retire I want to go to all the places where I’ve sung and see something other than the airport, the apartment and the theatre! Yet, I’m a girl from Cheshire. Who’d have thought I’d be working in Tokyo, Sydney, Milan, New York, Buenos Aires and other great cities. I’ve had amazing opportunities.’

So we’ve also recently seen the lighter side of Susan Bullock at the Last Night of the Proms in 2011 and also at the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games.

‘Yes…I met Eric Idle when he played Koko in The Mikado in 1986. He was asked to do a tribute to Monty Python at the Olympics. He agreed but wanted a Britannia – an opera singer, so I got the call. It was scary. We hung about all day for a rehearsal that didn’t happen. On I came with a giant trident in front of the entire world with a guy yelling at me through an ear-piece ‘Walk. Walk…slow down. Walk, turn and…sing’… and there I was’.

Finally, away from your career, what are your loves outside of music?

‘I love the sea. I love being able to smell it, to be near it. I find it very calming when you come out of a big job to go somewhere where you can hear the noise of the sea and relax. It has drama and it’s never the same…’

Hearing about Susan’s work and how, behind the artistry and her wonderful voice, she grafts for perfection, was not a surprise. She described the passion she has for her work tempered with the realism about the intense preparation necessary to reach her own high standards.

Then the treats. ‘If love were all’ from Bitter Sweet by Noel Coward and ‘Losing my mind’ from Follies by Stephen Sondheim which Susan sang with style and – true to form – giving every ounce of value to every word. Then came the tricky parody of an opera singer by Flanders and Swann ‘A word in my ear.’ Christopher Glynn was at the piano. Christopher’s musical connection with Susan, working as a duo, was clear as she sang. The accompanist has to have extra musical sensitivity. Someone said that another time we should ask Chris to talk about the role of the accompanist.

The three songs were all too short but, generous to a fault, Susan wanted to introduce her friend, ENO’s principal percussionist, Michael Doran. Mick spoke about the working for 25 years in orchestras and also about his recent illness that had threatened not only his career, but his life. The Fund was able to give Mick a helping hand and he wanted to say thanks.

…and our thanks go to Susan, Edward, Christopher and Mick for a memorable evening.

If you would like to know more about our love music : help musicians circle or to be added to our special events mailing list, call Hannah White on 020 7239 9109. We’d love to hear from you.
Daniel Mullin’s story

For working musicians, an injury, accident or unexpected illness can be career-threatening. In 2013 we have already seen a big increase in requests for help. Mayuko Tanno talks to Daniel Mullin.

Daniel is a violinist in the BBC Concert Orchestra and had a busy freelance career. In October 2012, he was injured in a cycling accident. After undergoing surgery with a top surgeon and, later, intensive hand therapy, he was able to return to work.

Currently, you’re in the BBC Concert Orchestra. How did you get there?

‘I suppose the path to full-time employment was a typically turbulent freelance career. When I left the Royal College of Music I was lucky to continue studying with Natalia Boyarskaya, a world-class teacher. She prepared me for auditions to face the wider world. So I had to work very hard, and auditioned for the Hallé, the BBC Philharmonic and got trials with Opera North and the Northern Sinfonia. I then started working for Manchester Camerata and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and built up a pool of work.

In 2002 I moved back to London. I was very lucky to have a three-month stint on a Matthew Bourne ballet, and get solid chunks with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra and other London orchestras. But eventually I thought ‘I need a full-time job’, and at the time the BBC Concert Orchestra was advertising vacancies in the violin section. I was offered the job in 2006 and I’m now the longest serving rank-and-file member of the second violins. It’s a very varied job and given the current climate, I feel blessed to have a full-time salary. It’s security, and when you’ve got a family that’s quite important.’

Last October, you had an accident while cycling. Can you tell us about what happened?

‘It was a bit of a shock when it happened. For one, it happened over 100 miles away from home. I turned up to a rehearsal with my finger displaced and very swollen. So I went to the local hospital and found out it was fractured, and was advised to see someone more specialised. The next day I went to the Royal Free Hospital in London and was told it was a very serious spiral fracture, which would require an immediate operation and months of aftercare.

Then I started to make phone calls. Cynthia Fleming, the leader of the BBC Concert Orchestra, said to me ‘whatever you do, make sure you get the best treatment possible. You need a specialist and you probably need private treatment.’ So I was recommended Mr Raj Ragoowansi, a Consultant Hand Surgeon in Harley Street who runs a weekly, bespoke Hand Clinic focusing on treating musicians with hand/wrist problems – both from an emergency trauma (soft tissue and bony trauma) and a chronic (swellings, nerve compression, cramps and dystonias) point of view.’

So you went to see the surgeon. What was this experience like, and how important was it?

‘The following afternoon, I went to the Wellington Hospital. The equipment was incredibly high-tech and showed the injury in much greater depth and clarity. Mr Ragoowansi told me that he was glad that I’d had this more detailed photograph taken, as the original photographs didn’t reveal the full extent of the injury. As a result, he could operate in a less invasive way and set my finger in a way that would enable me to continue to play the violin. It was a level of care and attention that really reassured me in a moment of extreme adversity. I said to him ‘there’s 25 years of blood, sweat and tears gone into this. How bad is it?’ He just said ‘You’ll be fine, I’m confident. You’ll play again.’ He was incredibly reassuring.’
At what point was it that you contacted us?

‘I was so relieved that you were able to help me financially. Had I had the operation at the first hospital I went to without the level of expertise necessary for a musician, it could very well have been career-ending. I think I first made contact with you on the Tuesday to say that there was a problem. By Wednesday I knew it was very serious and what the costs of the operation would be. It was staggeringly urgent; the Musicians Benevolent Fund had to make a decision in about 36 hours.’

How did you manage after the operation?

‘In the early stages, it was extremely difficult because I was in a sling. At the time, my daughter was 18 months and my son was three. I had big problems changing nappies, dressing, bathing, and breakfasting them, getting them to the nursery and childminder. Even when the cast had come off, I couldn’t afford for my baby daughter to knock my finger; I didn’t want it being damaged after all the good work that had been done. Thankfully, the BBC was brilliant and was very supportive practically and emotionally.

Psychologically, it was quite difficult; it was frustrating because everything took longer than expected. But in a funny way it forced me to take life at a slower pace. Suddenly I was on buses finding that I knew I’d be taking an hour longer and for the first time I was looking into the fields, observing the Chiltern Hills. Through life’s circumstances, I started to appreciate it a bit more. I guess it forced me to re-evaluate what is important.’

And you’re receiving physiotherapy at the moment?

‘I’ve been seeing a specialist hand therapist with help from the Musicians Benevolent Fund. Everything is going well, but it’s a long process. I’m just so grateful to be able to continue to earn my living through playing.’
Lauretta Boston’s Story

Lauretta Boston, jazz vocalist, has performed for 80 years, beginning her musical activity at the age of five and still going strong today at over 90. Here is Lauretta’s Story.

The Musicians Benevolent Fund supports artists from the start of their careers through into retirement. A large part of this aid includes regular visits to our older beneficiaries and last year alone over 200 musicians were visited. These trips are made by our Musicians Supporters across the UK and provide a network of support for musicians during later life. As an organisation, we are lucky to have this archive of musical history at our finger tips, full of beneficiaries with interesting tales to tell. One such beneficiary is Lauretta Boston, jazz vocalist, who has performed for 80 years, beginning her musical activity at the age of five and still going strong today at over 90. Here is Lauretta’s Story.

Jazz vocalist, Lauretta, was born in London in 1912 and grew up in Paddington Green. She learnt to play piano from the age of five with her grandmother and with sheet music bought from the local market. Her grandmother was a source of inspiration and encouragement for Lauretta when she started to learn how to play the piano and sing. At the age of seven she played at her first concert in Tottenham Court Road for the Lord Mayor of London.

Following this concert she went on to take part regularly in Children’s Hour on BBC radio, which was a programme aimed at children aged between five and 15 and continued to be involved in broadcasts throughout WWII. She enjoyed these wartime broadcasts so much, that she even participated in one from the Criterion in Piccadilly on her wedding day. During the war she also worked for the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA), singing in shows around the country from Edinburgh to Plymouth, whilst narrowly escaping the bombing.

At the end of the war Lauretta went to Ireland and stayed there for nearly three years working in theatres and ballrooms. She returned to England briefly when her father arrived from Africa for heart surgery and fortunately she was able to spend a few months with him before his death. Lauretta then travelled to Germany where she entertained American troops before moving onto Norway and finally back to London in the early 1950s. When she got back Lauretta heard that the Churchill Club needed a singer in their band and she got the job.

Churchill’s was in Soho and Lauretta sang Latin American music with one of the regular bands. The club was a place to be seen at in the 50s with legends like Louis Armstrong and Frank Sinatra visiting the venue whilst Lauretta was performing there.

Unfortunately, Lauretta developed some health difficulties which affected her throat, forcing her into a situation where she struggled to perform. That’s when we got to know Lauretta and were able to offer her some support. Luckily, Lauretta’s health improved and she continues to perform today for the Open Age Project and still loves the opportunity to sing in front of an audience.

Lauretta recently turned 90 and celebrated her birthday with a surprise visit to the Savoy for lunch and Latin American music with her two children.
Tim Priestley’s legacy – a new website for songwriters and tunesmiths

Early in 2011, lyricist Tim Priestley was diagnosed with cancer. Since then, he has worked tirelessly to set up a website for budding tunesmiths.

Tim began as an academic, and worked for a PhD in chemical engineering. He soon switched to a successful career in advertising, spending many years managing iconic brands for one of the world’s leading advertising agencies. This creative and commercial energy led him into songwriting and over 20 years he amassed a vast canon of over 6,500 lyrics.

In 2007 Tim began developing a website that would enable his words and ideas to be shared with tunesmiths and co-writers. Before this project could be completed, Tim was diagnosed with bowel cancer and moved into sheltered housing. With the help of the daughter of one of the members of staff there, Tim’s website has now been completed and launched as a new forum where tunesmiths and songwriters can collaborate to progress and develop their ideas.

The centrepiece of Tim’s website will be an online library of some of his lyrics. In the past nine months alone, he has written a further 800 new lyrics. Tim believes that if this large, untapped resource can be made available to young writers, it will encourage them to develop their musical ideas. The site, through sponsorship, will also offer wider support in practical marketing, specifically in the areas of advertising and publicity. Tim likens the site to the Brill Building of New York’s 60s which became the hub of song writing for artists in the American music industry. He sees his website as an electronic 21st century equivalent – a platform for online connections, energy and creativity.

Two years on from his original diagnosis, Tim regards ‘a12a1234’ as his legacy to the next generation of musicians. This edition of Notes marks the launch of the website and from this week, an eclectic mix of 200 lyrics can be accessed online. Tim, as determined as ever, is currently working to secure sponsorship and funds for the project while recuperating from a liver operation, and we keep in touch and support him through our Care and Welfare Team.

Visit a12a1234.com to access the site
The night before the Coronation, ten excited boys had a pillow-fight. Then they jumped into sleeping bags laid on the floor. The choir of the Chapel Royal had had to report to St. James’s Palace the evening before the Coronation as, not being a choir that lived-in, it was likely that the crowds, the thousands of soldiers on parade, police, and State officials would make it difficult to reach Westminster Abbey at 7.30 for the Coronation service which began at 10.30.

One of those boys was our trustee, Martin Neary, whose life has been coloured by the experience of being a chorister at the Chapel Royal. He said that ‘the Chapel Royal Choir was, for me, a gateway to everything else... When my voice broke, Harry Gabb gave me organ lessons and that led to a scholarship at Cambridge’.

Among his later teachers were Sir Adrian Boult and Erich Leinsdorf. Between 1972 and 1987 Martin was organist and choirmaster at Winchester Cathedral and then took the same role at Westminster Abbey between 1988 and 1999. He is well-known as a champion of British Music, especially the work of John Tavener and Jonathan Harvey. He was director of music for the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997. Linked to his exceptional musical skills, Martin is impossible to categorise. He is impish, inspiring and creative; always happy to take on new challenges and ideas.

On Coronation Day, not only did three million people line the streets of London but there were thousands of street parties across the UK. Less than ten years after WWII, fruit jelly in fancy waxed-paper saucers, ice-cream in cones, Victoria sponges with real cream and the then new and now ubiquitous dish, Coronation Chicken, were all a luxury. The Coronation, just like the Festival of Britain in 1951, was another ‘tonic to the nation’.

Martin was 11 when, on 6 February 1952, King George VI died. ‘We were handed black armbands that we had to wear for six months. Then we sang at the King’s lying-in-state in Westminster Hall. I knew that day there would be a Coronation. In October 1952 we were measured for new coats. I think I had been wearing a hand-me-down that had been made for the Coronation of 1937. We were told that the coats would be too big to allow for us growing boys. Each coat had thirty-nine yards of gold braid stitched onto thick, bright-red serge. Beneath we wore black breeches and stockings with garters and smartly polished shoes’.

Queen Elizabeth’s Coronation was the first to be televised and there had been long debates about the wisdom of the proposal. In the end 20 million people in the UK were transfixed by the six-hour, black and white broadcast...
presented by Richard Dimbleby. TV had been suspended in the War and when the Royal broadcast was confirmed, wooden-cased, cathode-ray TVs were snapped up with whole streets crammed round one flickering set. The outside broadcast was the largest and most complex challenge known in broadcasting up to that point. Later, the BBC published a review of the details and triumphs – The Year that Made the Day.

‘The thing that really sticks in my mind about the Coronation is that we were part of a 1,000-year ceremony laden with ritual and ceremony’

The centrepiece of the Coronation was Westminster Abbey. Today it accommodates 2,000 people. For the Coronation temporary banks, balconies, boxes and bandstands were built to cram in nearly 7,000 nobles, politicians, heads of state and dignitaries. A symphony orchestra was recruited from the best London players and conducted by Sir Adrian Boult and Sir William McKie. The State Trumpeters were there along with a choir of more than 400. Singers were stuffed into the choir on different levels and had a great view of the ceremonial. The boys of the Chapel Royal joined the choristers of Westminster Abbey, Hampton Court, St. Paul’s and other cathedrals from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Twenty singers were recruited from the Dominions, the leftover colonies of the Empire. Martin says that the overseas singers were a nod towards equality, since they were all women. The music was circulated around the world five months in advance. There were twenty-one pieces to learn by sixteen composers. Martin says that of all the exciting, inspiring well-known works, Vaughan Williams’ new O taste and see... a simple, delicate, exquisite work with words set from Psalm 34, was, for him, the most memorable music of all. This was sung as the Queen-to-be prepared to take communion.

Martin remembers that some singers were issued with sandwiches wrapped in grease-proof paper to keep them going through the slow-paced pageant, ‘...although the Chapel Royal boys only had glucose sweets. Those with sandwiches were allowed to take a nibble now and again as long as the paper didn’t rustle and as long as there was time before the next piece of music’.

Martin says of Coronation Day that the boys were all delighted and excited to be included, but they were all aware of a sense of doing a job and doing it well. ‘I joined the choir when I was eight and finished when my voice broke at fifteen. I was always aware of the musical responsibilities as well as how we were expected to behave. I sang at the christenings of both Prince Charles and Princess Anne. These were small, family gatherings in the Music Room at Buckingham Palace. You had to be on your best singing form and best behaviour. ‘Oh’, Martin remembers ‘...when the boys went from St. James’s Palace to Buckingham Palace for Prince Charles’ christening, two horse drawn coaches arrived to take us there. A distance of about 500 yards. That made us feel really special.’

‘The thing that really sticks in my mind about the Coronation’ says Martin ‘...is that we were part of a 1,000-year-old ceremony laden with ritual and ceremony. It has four distinct parts: the Recognition, the Homage, the Anointing and the Thanksgiving. After the Queen had been handed the four symbols of authority; the Orb, the Sceptre, the Rod of Mercy and the Royal ring of sapphire and rubies, the Archbishop of Canterbury placed St. Edward’s crown on her head. Then everyone in the Abbey had to shout together ‘God Save the Queen! God Save the Queen!! God Save the Queen!!!’ We had been encouraged to shout as loud as we could and to lead the way. We were boys so we didn’t disappoint’.

‘After it was all over I walked across Green Park on my own and went by tube to my uncle’s house in Mill Hill to join my family and watch highlights on the television...’

Martin Neary (left) and Peter Lough (right) with their coronation medals
Emerging Excellence Awards

For a young musician, making the transition into the professional world can be daunting. With cuts in the arts and work tough to find, starting out as a young artist can seem an uphill struggle.

With these challenges in mind the Musicians Benevolent Fund started the Emerging Excellence Awards, with the aim of providing talented musicians with vital financial assistance at the start of their careers. The awards also aim to help ensure that emerging artists have the necessary opportunities they need to progress in an industry which is notoriously difficult to crack.

Launched in 2012 these awards provide funding for musicians of all genres aged between 18-30 for special projects, which can range from money needed to produce an EP or to fund a tour. Examples of recent uses of the funding include quirky brass ensemble Perhaps Contraption’s creation of an interactive music video, the collective Sounding Motion’s development of a new music and dance production and composer Neil Luck’s latest endeavour Herakles, premiered in May in Covent Garden.

Award holders from the latest round in 2013 include Conrad Kira, lyricist and music producer, Sadie Fields, violinist, and Scottish electronic musician Rudi Zyjadlo. Rudi said of the awards, ‘At such a crucial point in my career, the Emerging Excellence Awards are going to provide me with the essential support to create material and embark on new endeavours.’

But success relies on much more than financial aid and this year our Emerging Excellence Award holders were given the opportunity to perform their work in London and to network with industry professionals when we teamed up with Platform33 to create a unique event. Platform33 is an enterprise which supports emerging artists through events where they can perform their work and with these similar goals in mind we decided to hold the event at Proud, Camden. This top venue provided the perfect opportunity to showcase up-and-coming talent in the UK that we have supported through these awards.

The event also included an afternoon workshop for the award holders with talks from established musicians such as singer-songwriter Gwyneth Herbert, beatboxer Jason Singh, and opera singer Andrew Staples, as

Fact: With our Emerging Excellence scheme, we support projects across a range of genres including Classical, contemporary, folk and jazz
well as experts in PR, marketing and crowdfunding. In the evening, seven acts performed to an audience of invited guests. The night proved to be a varied mix of music, magic and animation.

Acts which performed on the night ranged from the dynamic Syzygy Saxophone Quartet to the classically trained trio Music Off Canvas who collaborated with physical theatre specialist Emma Miller, and body percussionist Adam Clifford. South London band United Vibrations rounded off the evening with their rousing afro-punk sound. Circus performer Dani and magician Adam Axford were also on hand to entertain the crowd and added another element to the evening.

Singer-songwriter Juliyaa, who describes her music as ‘rhythmic soul’, performed at the showcase and has used her award to create her debut EP, Stars & Dragons which has already been broadcast on BBC Radio 1 Xtra. She said of the evening, ‘It’s been great to hear all the other award winners and to see the diversity amongst them. I think there’s so much talent around the UK and it’s great that you are able to support British music and artistry’.

Following the success of these awards, a third round of Emerging Excellence opened earlier this year and over 100 applicants have applied for these funding opportunities. Watch this space to hear about the exciting new talent we will be supporting this year.

‘At such a crucial point in my career, the Emerging Excellence Awards are going to provide me with the essential support to create material and embark on new endeavours’

For more information about current award holders and the scheme, please visit: helpmusicians.org.uk/eea
Supporting young musicians through their studies

In the competitive world of music, it is important for many aspiring musicians to continue their studies at an advanced level. A recent survey by the Musicians’ Union\(^1\) shows that 61\% of professional musicians studied at a dedicated music college, university or conservatoire, and nearly two thirds (65\%) had undertaken four years or more of formal education and training. Advanced training enables young musicians to work with distinguished teachers and experience performance opportunities that will prepare them for the profession. Yet the high cost of tuition fees and living expenses means that it is a challenge for many.

The Musicians Benevolent Fund offers help to students on advanced courses across the spectrum of instrumental and vocal performance, opera and musical theatre. We work closely with the UK’s major performing colleges to support young performers through a range of schemes. Last year, we worked with 12 major institutions across the UK and students were auditioned by panels of distinguished musicians such as Ronald Corp OBE, soprano Dame Felicity Lott and pianist Simon Lepper.

In 2012, baritone Gavan Ring received the prestigious Richard Van Allan Award for advanced opera students. Gavan was raised in the village of Caherviseen in Ireland. He began to have singing lessons aged 17 and went on to a degree in Education. Gavan continued to have private singing lessons and says, ‘I always wanted to sing full-time and try my hand at it. Ever since I started having lessons, I’d thought ‘I really want to give this a go.’ Having decided to pursue singing, Gavan looked to the National Opera Studio in London and was accepted on their trainee scheme. He told us ‘The year I’ve had here at the Studio has opened my eyes in many different ways, and really pushed my artistic boundaries. I feel that what I’ve learnt here in London will serve me throughout my career. It’s because of the Studio that I became involved with the Musicians Benevolent Fund, and the assistance I received has been absolutely invaluable. It has enabled me to focus on my art and professional development.’ Gavan’s career has gone from strength to strength and since then he has received the Peter Hulsen Award for Orchestral Song. Launched in collaboration with the Southbank Sinfonia, the award is available to singers who have recently received a major vocal scholarship from the Musicians Benevolent Fund. Gavan was then given the opportunity to perform a recital at the Royal Opera House. On May 14 Gavan was accompanied by the Southbank Sinfonia, conducted by Simon Over, in a recital of songs by Ravel, Adams and Schubert. The evening was warmly received and Gavan describes it as his ‘most memorable performance to date’.

Another young artist, cellist Rebecca Herman, studied for a Masters at the Royal Academy of Music, supported by our Eleanor Warren Award for outstanding cellists. Now pursuing a busy freelance career, Rebecca was eager to give back and in March she took part in the 5K Regent’s Park Run in aid of the Musicians Benevolent Fund. She raised £1,806. We are very grateful to her for fundraising, which will help us to support more young artists in the future.

To find out more about the range of awards available, go to our website helpmusicians.org.uk. Or if you are interested in setting up an award or scholarship in your name, get in touch at info@helpmusicians.org.uk

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\(^1\) ‘The Working Musician’, a research project by DHA Communications, commissioned by the Musicians’ Union 2012
How the generosity of music lovers changes the lives of musicians – Arthur and Gwyneth Harrison

In 2004, following the death of her husband Arthur, Gwyneth Harrison decided to donate to a number of charities. One of her aims was to promote the enjoyment of music and help young people to develop their musical abilities and careers.

Having listened to Gwyneth talking about Arthur and his life, we were able to marry her husband Arthur’s love of Kathleen Ferrier through the Accompanist’s Prize at the annual Kathleen Ferrier Awards. In 2005, this award was to be given in Arthur and Gwyneth’s name. This brought Gwyneth great pleasure as she felt accompanists have a difficult job to do and don’t always get the recognition they deserve. She came down to London every year to be at the final of the Ferrier Competition at Wigmore Hall so that she could meet the winners of her award – many of them are now doing extremely well in the profession, including Joseph Middleton who received the award in 2007. He says ‘It was a real privilege to meet Gwyneth after the Ferrier competition. Her generosity in providing support for the prize gave my early career a real boost.’

Arthur served in the Army in India during the Second World War whilst Gwyneth trained to be a teacher. They married in 1947, following Arthur’s demobilisation, and he resumed his career as a Civil Servant being awarded the Imperial Service Order in his fifties in recognition of his outstanding contribution to public service. Gwyneth was Deputy Head at the Gwynedd School in Flint. They both had a lifelong devotion to music, Arthur as a listener but Gwyneth much more ‘hands on’. She organised and conducted a number of local choirs for many years, often connected to their local United Reform Church.

Following her death, we were absolutely delighted to hear that the Musicians Benevolent Fund had benefited from a substantial gift in Gwyneth’s estate. This will enable us to continue to help young musicians in Arthur and Gwyneth’s name for many years to come and also to support our work with professional and older musicians.

We rely heavily on the generosity of people like Gwyneth and Arthur who remember us in their wills. We are aware of the responsibility we have to use these gifts, whatever the size, as wisely as possible to make musicians’ lives better. Whilst we know that competition for legacies is increasing, we hope that donors continue to realise the special nature and importance of our work and to think of us when writing their wills.

If you would like to help musicians and contribute to any area of our work or would like to talk about helping musicians through leaving a gift to us in your will, please contact Hannah White on 020 7239 9109 or hannah.white@helpmusicians.org.uk

‘It was a real privilege to meet Gwyneth after the Ferrier competition. Her generosity in providing support for the prize gave my early career a real boost’
Over the last few months we have been working closely with Age UK, the charity formed by the merger of Age Concern and Help the Aged. Nigel Hamilton summarises what we have been discussing.

Age UK aims to improve later life for everyone through information and advice, services, campaigns, products, training and research. Working with them is proving valuable to us because, as a large national charity with 170 local branches, which specialises in issues relevant to later life, Age UK has access to resources and information which can be really helpful both to individual musicians we are in touch with, and to us as a charity.

Age UK has been pleased to work with us because we can spread the word about their services but also because we are in contact with so many wonderful older musicians, whose lives and stories illustrate vividly the contribution that older people make to society.

We hope that by working as partners with Age UK, we will be able to offer a wider range of help to the 700 older musicians we help at the moment and to the many more older and retired musicians who rely on us.

Getting Advice
Growing older doesn’t come with a manual, so sometimes a bit of expert advice can be helpful. Age UK provides many kinds of advice services to older people, their family and carers and professionals working with them, ranging from face-to-face advice and advocacy, through to simply signposting to other services. Help can be reached by telephone, online, in print, or by visiting a local Age UK centre.

The telephone helpline has a Freephone number – **0800 169 65 65** – which deals with over 300,000 calls a year. Advisers can provide quick information through to detailed advice on a more complicated subject, for example getting the right amount of welfare benefit. They can also put people in touch with their local Age UK group. They are able to deal with questions on:

- Money
- Housing
- Legal issues
- Health
- Consumer matters
- End of life planning
- Social Care
- Employment

Age UK also produces a range of free information guides, which provide advice and up-to-date information to help people get to grips with the challenges in later life. There are more than 40 booklets covering:

- Money matters
- Health and well-being
- Home and care
- Work and learning
- Travel and lifestyle

Age UK’s visitors help with information about the booklets available and leave people with a copy of a leaflet and order-form summarising them. Information booklets can also be ordered from the telephone helpline, or online at **ageuk.org.uk/publications**
The Age UK website also has a wealth of information on the same range of subjects as the leaflets, but with lots of additional information ranging from recipes to help with weight loss to gardening tips.

Age UK near you

As well as the national services there are 170 local Age UKs (England) and Age Cymrus (Wales). Age Scotland operates extensively north of the border, but does not have local groups.

The groups vary in size and the range of services offered but local services can include:

- General information
- Advice and advocacy services
- Signposting to day centres and lunch clubs
- Home help and ‘handyperson’ schemes
- Computer courses and other training

Local groups are important to us here at the Fund because, with a small visiting team covering the whole country, we can only get to see most of our older beneficiaries occasionally and we cannot hope to know about local provision everywhere.

This is particularly the case as more and more public services – from Discretionary Housing Payments to access to social care or paying for residential care – are subject to local variations.

Many of the local Age UKs can also offer personal face-to-face help with things which some older people may find difficult – form filling, for example.

Details of local groups can be found by phoning the help line or from the Age UK website. You can also get the details from our London office or your visitor. Details are also likely to be found in your local paper or local council directories of services.

Loving later life and our musicians

We all want to live well as well as living longer and we have been talking to Age UK about how we can help musicians do this and how musicians can help everyone else.

Age UK has its own radio station. Described as ‘radio for grown-ups’, The Wireless from Age UK is a brand new online and DAB radio station designed with over-50s in mind, broadcasting 24 hours a day. Tune in for features, celebrity interviews, expert advice and, of course, plenty of music! From folk to jazz, swing-time to classical, pop to rock – there’s a little something for everyone. We have already put forward a few of our older beneficiaries to put in an appearance on the station. More information at ageuk.org.uk/the-wireless/

Musicians might also be interested in Fit as a Fiddle! ‘Fit as a Fiddle’ is a nationwide programme, supporting people aged over 50 with physical activity, healthy eating and mental well-being. Again, more details on the Age UK website.

We are very pleased indeed to be working with Age UK and are looking to form other partnerships which help us to provide the best possible services to musicians at all stages of their lives.

Age UK’s vision

A world in which older people flourish is a world in which older people will:

- Be equal citizens with equal rights
- Have enough money for a secure and decent life, and have access as consumers to the products and services they need at a price they can afford
- Have access to the healthcare and social care they need
- Have the opportunity to live healthier longer lives and to enjoy a sense of well-being
- Live in homes and neighbourhoods that are safe and comfortable and which enable them to lead fulfilling lives
- Have opportunities to participate and contribute as volunteers, active citizens, good neighbours, family members, and workers
- Enjoy the benefits of longer life, wherever they are in the world.
We know that there are many professional musicians in the UK who do not know what we do and so our ambition in the next few years is to reach these musicians so that they know to come to us when they need us. We believe that this will inevitably result in more demand both on our services and financial resources. To meet this need and to continue to give individual musicians the specialist help we pride ourselves on, we will be relying even more on those who love music and appreciate the fantastic talent of UK musicians, to continue to support us in whatever way they can. Here are some of this year’s highlights.

April Fool’s Day Concert

The April Fool’s Day Concert hosted by comedian Rainer Hersch took place at the Royal Festival Hall on London’s South Bank. We were thrilled to be the benefitting charity for this year’s comedy and classical music extravaganza which raised more than £8,300. With pieces including Glinka’s *Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila*, Britten’s *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra* and J Strauss II’s *Laughing Song*, the audience were treated to what seemed a traditional programme, but with many twists and turns carried out with perfect timing. The star-studded event included the London Firebird Orchestra, Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, impressionist Alistair McGowan, soprano Lindsay Sutherland Boal and pianist Marc-André Hamelin. Thank you so much to Rainer Hersch and everyone involved.

Adrian Brown’s Farewell Concert

On Sunday 24 March the Stoneleigh Youth Orchestra performed a special concert at Cadogan Hall in London, in honour of Adrian Brown’s retirement as the orchestra’s Musical Director. The performance celebrated Adrian’s outstanding work over 40 years with the Orchestra during which time they performed over 150 concerts both in the UK and abroad.

The evening saw 200 past and present players delight a packed hall with a popular programme which included Elgar’s *Enigma Variations* and Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*.

A retiring collection at the concert on our behalf raised more than £3,000. Thank you Adrian and congratulations on an amazing 40 years.

Fact: With your help last year, we were able to support 2,208 musicians directly or through our partnerships.
The Beethoven Piano Concert Project  
beethovenpianoconcertos.co.uk

On 5 October at 5pm, concert pianist Martin Roscoe returns to the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in Manchester to give a rare performance of all five Beethoven piano concertos in a single evening. Hosted by Classic FM presenter John Suchet, Roscoe will join forces with conductor Daniel Parkinson and an orchestra of past and present RNCM students for the three-part concert.

Martin Roscoe says: ‘It has been my ambition to perform all five Beethoven Concertos in one evening for a long time, and it is great to be able to do this in aid of the Musicians Benevolent Fund.’

The Beethoven Piano Concerto Project is supported by Pianist Magazine and Dawsons Music. Tickets are available from the RNCM Box Office, 0161 907 555 or online at rncm.ac.uk.

Other Fundraisers

We would also like to say a big thank you to the following fundraisers who have either undertaken a challenge such as a half marathon, or organised recitals and concerts, quizzes, birthday donations, and memorial concerts for loved ones, all in support of our work. Your enthusiasm and generosity means so much:

- Helen Yorke and Joan Rodgers
- Rosemary Wheeler
- Rebecca Herman
- Simon Willoughby
- John Arnesen
- The Elizabeth Connell Memorial Concert
- Ilkley Concert Club
- Bournemouth Chamber Music Society
- Jacob Nathan
- Three Towers Festival
- Robin Self
- Benefit gig for Psychedelic Sid Kavanagh
- Belair Ensemble
- Matthew Lowe
- Sospiro Records
- Patricia Lee
- Vera Plumridge
- Andrew Greenwood

Have you ever wanted to organise a fundraising activity?  
Now is your chance.

There are so many different ways you can raise money for us, whatever your interest or motivation.

Why not rise to the challenge?

If you would like to know more, contact Carina, on 020 7239 9115 or by email at carina.persson@helpmusicians.org.uk

We will help you as much as we can with your arrangements.

Last year we were pleased to announce our new partnership with pharmacists John Bell and Croyden which, thanks to their generosity, enables Musicians Benevolent Fund supporters to enjoy 10% off products in-store (50-54 Wigmore Street, London, W1U 2AU) or online using the voucher provided below.
HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO MUSIC NOW YOU CAN GIVE SOMETHING BACK

For more information visit helpmusicians.org.uk
email legacy@helpmusicians.org.uk
or call 020 7239 9114

Musicians Benevolent Fund

Make a difference to musicians’ lives by leaving a gift in your will

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
Chairman: The Hon Richard Lyttelton
Chief Executive: David Sulkin
Registered Charity No. 228089