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Every Primary School To Become A Musical School

Wednesday 21st November 2007

Launch of new singing campaign backed up by record funding for music in schools

Ed Balls today launched a national campaign to make our primary schools come alive with the sound of music, involving a £332 million investment in choirs, orchestras, new instruments, performance and free music lessons.

The Government has already gained backing from musical heavyweights Andrew Lloyd Webber and Julian Lloyd Webber and top pop star Jamelia in its bid to renew the country's musical traditions, creating a musical culture in schools for all to embrace, not just the few.

Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families Ed Balls said:

"Every child from all backgrounds should have the chance to perform, play an instrument or sing and I want every school to become a musical school.

"I'm delighted that people like Andrew Lloyd Webber, who have put English music on the map, are supporting the Music Manifesto. Everyone should get behind our efforts to make music a key part of the school day - for the educational and personal benefits for children and the cultural enrichment and enjoyment it brings people of all ages.

"Every parent knows how much it means to their child to be involved in a school performance and the pride and inspiration it offers the whole family."

Over the next three years £332 million funding will be made available to raise the standard of music education for children. This includes:

- £82million a year for the next three years of continued

funding for Local Authorities to spend on music education. This will pay for free music tuition for every primary school child for a year in the early years of primary school and the Government wants to see at least half of primary school pupils continuing with further tuition thereafter. It will also fund choirs, orchestras and other ensembles;

- £40million to buy brand new musical instruments. This comes on top of last year's £1million funding which paid for 11,000 new instruments, ranging from traditional violins, flutes and clarinets to ocarinas, African drumming sets and bassoons;
- £40million to the Sing Up programme to provide a national song bank and training to put singing back into the classroom;
- Pilots based on the highly successful Venezuelan project, El Sistema, featured in this year's Proms. Targeted at deprived areas, the project aims to encourage young children to explore the benefits of music by playing in groups; and
- Building on the partnership work that has made the Music Manifesto a success, the Government will continue to work with a wide range of musicians to make sure that all children get the chance to listen to, and take part in, live music. England's 8 Symphony Orchestras today confirmed that their ambitious plan to provide children with a free orchestral performance is firmly on target.

Andrew Lloyd Webber and Julian Lloyd Webber today signed up to the Music Manifesto which the DCMS and then DfES established in partnership with the music sector in 2004.

Andrew Lloyd Webber said:

"Whether you want to take up music professionally or just to make music for fun, never has it been more important to learn to play a musical instrument than now.

"The music business as we know it is virtually dead. The day of lip-sync manufactured pop is dying. Now everything is about live performance. That is one of the reasons that I am thrilled by the Government's initiative."

Julian Lloyd Webber, the cellist and long time champion of music education, said:

"I have always been one hundred per cent behind the aims and aspirations of the Music Manifesto. The reason I did not sign up to it before now was because there seemed to be too much wishful thinking without the wherewithal to deliver its promises. Today the government has proved that it really does mean business with this massive extra commitment towards music education.

"Today is a red letter day for music in the United Kingdom and I urge everyone involved in music to welcome this extraordinary opportunity and to seize it with both hands."

The £40million 'Sing-Up' programme, launched today by singer

Jamelia and Singing Ambassador Howard Goodall, is led by Youth Music and aims to get all primary school children singing regularly as part of their learning. It includes:

- a web based 'songbook' and termly singing magazine for schools. This easy to use resource is aimed at teachers and will suggest innovative ideas as well as backing tracks and lessons plans to help them bring singing to their schools;
- a programme of training for teachers and others involved in leading singing; and
- a media campaign aimed at teachers and parents to generate awareness and support for the programme.

Launching the campaign Jamelia said:

"I'm so excited to be involved with the Sing Up campaign and can't wait to get kids singing again. Singing in a class is something I got a great deal from as a child - it really helped to build up my confidence and taught me how to better express myself. I want all children to have the same opportunities to sing in school. It's crucial that kids today learn how to find their voice and realise how much fun they can have through singing."

Singing ambassador and composer Howard Goodall said:

"We already know that young people who are lucky enough to learn music and sing from an early age develop better social skills, memory, ability to listen and have more confidence. There are proven links between productive music lessons and a better all-round development of young children. Singing, in particular, is brilliant. It's a positive, life-affirming activity that builds a child's self-esteem, promotes team-work irrespective of age, gender, and background, celebrates diversity, facilitates self-expression, and is just plain fun.

"We want to show that with Sing Up, teachers, parents and children can have fun and learn together; using a trusted and easy-to-use resource which delivers positive developmental benefits and helps kids sing well."

Today's programme of funding and action builds on the record levels of investment the Government has put into music education in the last seven years and the priorities for improvement in music education that were identified in the Music Manifesto report "Making Every Child's Music Matter."

Culture secretary James Purnell said:

"Learning about the arts is part of a good education. We want all children to have the chance to develop their creativity and today's announcement on music marks a step change in our ability to do so."

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