



PRESS RELEASE

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## Sing Up Foundation launches *Inspiring Voices*, a new podcast exploring the role of singing in improving mental health and wellbeing

This week, the first two episodes of the Sing Up Foundation's new podcast, *Inspiring Voices* have been released. *Inspiring Voices* is a new podcast from the Sing Up Foundation dedicated to exploring the role of singing, songwriting, voice exploration and creative music-making in improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The podcast is hosted by the Sing Up Foundation's Joint Head of Foundation Baz Chapman and features inspiring conversations with singers, leaders, researchers and other music specialists.

The first series will feature nine conversations that will be released fortnightly from September to December 2023 on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music and Google Podcasts. Each episode of *Inspiring Voices* will also be available to view as videos on the Sing Up Foundation's YouTube channel. This first series has been funded through support received by Sing Up and the Sing Up Foundation from Round 3 of Arts Council England's Cultural Recovery Fund and the podcast will be of particular interest to teachers, school leaders, teaching students, community workers, music leaders, singing leaders, choir leaders, charity workers and mental health workers.

The first episode of the *Inspiring Voices* podcast, released this week, features a conversation with wellbeing music specialist, educator, author and speaker Sophie Garner. In this episode, Sophie shares her advice with Baz on how to get started with singing with any group and through poignant stories from across her career, she demonstrates how she gets young people involved in songwriting. She also introduces her books on singing to support children & young people's mental health & wellbeing.

The second episode, also released this week, will feature a conversation with vocalist, clarinettist, composer and workshop leader Aga Serugo-Lugo. In this inspirational conversation, Aga shares his experiences and views on the value of group singing, the power of performance and tips for leading singing successfully taken from his years of working with groups as wide ranging as Streetwise Opera to local community choirs to children's groups and Music in Detention to name a few.

The first season of *Inspiring Voices* will also feature conversations with community musician and Yorkshire Youth and Music's lead practitioner Chris Morris, singing leader and director of Living Song Jane Wheeler, community musician and vice chair of Sound Sense Mark Bick, Chair of Music Education at University College London Professor Graham Welch, international non-binary beatbox star SK Shlomo, Creative Manager, Community Leader, Award-winning Educator Ben Turner and vocal animateur and Principal Conductor of Young Voices David Lawrence. A video trailer for the first season featuring all the guests can be found at <https://bit.ly/IVPodTrailer>

Baz Chapman, Joint Head of Foundation and *Inspiring Voices* podcast host says: 'At a time when children and young people's mental health and wellbeing is of increasing concern, we want *Inspiring Voices* to shine a light on the outstanding work being done by all sorts of people to transform young lives through singing. The podcast guests have been an absolute privilege to speak with, and we hope they will inspire others to explore how singing and vocal creativity can achieve amazing things'.

The first two episodes of *Inspiring Voices* can be heard now on the following platforms at:

Spotify: <https://bit.ly/IVPodSpotify>

Apple: <https://apple.co/45ZCVTx>

Amazon Music: <https://amzn.to/3raZXrF>

Google: <https://bit.ly/IVPodGoogle>

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@SingUpFoundation>

#### Images:



**Caption:** *Inspiring Voices* podcast cover art.



**Caption:** *Inspiring Voices* podcast guest, Sophie Garner, working with children as part of a songwriting workshop.



**Caption:** In his element, *Inspiring Voices* guest Aga Serugo-Lugo conducting a performance at a festival.

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## Notes to Editors

1. Inspiring Voices is a new podcast created by the Sing Up Foundation, hosted by Baz Chapman Joint Head of Foundation. Through conversations with singers, leaders, researchers and other specialists, the podcast considers the unique role of singing, songwriting, voice exploration and creative music-making in improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The first series will feature nine episodes that will be released fortnightly from September to December 2023. This series has been funded through support received by Sing Up and the Sing Up Foundation from Round 3 of Arts Council England's Cultural Recovery Fund.
2. The video trailer for the first season of *Inspiring Voices* can be viewed on the Sing Up Foundation's YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/IVPodTrailer>
3. *Inspiring Voices* can be found on the following platforms:
  - a. Spotify: <https://bit.ly/IVPodSpotify>
  - b. Apple: <https://apple.co/45ZCVTx>
  - c. Amazon Music: <https://amzn.to/3raZXrF>
  - d. Google: <https://bit.ly/IVPodGoogle>
4. The Sing Up Foundation ([www.singupfoundation.org](http://www.singupfoundation.org)) produces, promotes and creates opportunities for children and young people to improve their mental health and wellbeing through singing. Through partnerships, resource development and innovation the Sing Up Foundation – explores and highlight effective practice, connects practice with research, creates research-based pilot projects to build and share knowledge and understanding and increase impact, and supports and develops the workforce and settings surrounding children and young people.
5. The Sing Up Foundation is Sing Up's charitable arm focused on producing charitable activities through fundraising, partnerships and innovation. The Foundation shares in Sing Up's goal to ensure that children and young people have opportunities to sing and make music regularly and well for all the benefits that research shows that brings, with a particular focus on mental health and wellbeing. Foundation staff work for Sing Up and sit on Sing Up's Senior Management Team. Likewise, two members of Sing Up's staff, including CEO Michelle James, sit on the Foundation's Board of Trustees.
6. Sing Up ([www.singup.org](http://www.singup.org)) is an award-winning organisation that provides resources, training and guidance to support singing and music in schools. Sing Up believes that all children and young people have a right to good quality singing provision, to deepen their understanding of music and singing, raise attainment and develop lasting tools to express themselves with confidence and creativity. With over 15 years of experience at the forefront of music education, Sing Up's specially arranged songs, teaching tools and support put singing and music at the heart of learning.
7. The full first season of Inspiring Voices will feature conversations with:
  - a. Sophie Garner - Sophie Garner is a singer described by the Times as 'one of the most stylish British vocalists', as well as being a music specialist, educator, speaker, and author of two books: *The Creative Songwriting Journal* and *If You Can't Say It, Sing It!* Sophie seeks to change lives through singing and songwriting.
  - b. Aga Serugo-Lugo - Aga Serugo-Lugo is a vocalist, clarinettist, composer and workshop leader whose interests lie particularly in narrative-based community music-making, focussing on accessibility and inclusivity. He has worked with, amongst many others, Music in Detention, Trinity Laban, MENCAP, Wigmore Hall, Sing Up and numerous opera companies around the UK. He also co-runs

Camberwell Community Choir and is Ambassador for Britten Pears Arts' 'Group A' in Lowestoft and Ipswich.

- c. Chris Morris - Chris Morris is a community musician working in and around Sheffield. He has helped to set up recording studios for community use, organises music events and Festivals and is a guide and mentor to many young musicians in the city. He is lead practitioner with Yorkshire Youth & Music working with young people in Youth Justice Settings and secure children's homes, whom they describe as one of their exceptional music leaders, working as he does with some of the nation's most vulnerable young people, so that they can discover, explore and develop their musical and creative potential.
- d. Jane Wheeler - Jane Wheeler is a freelance music education consultant and Director of Living Song, who works with a passion for raising the quality of music-making, developing young leaders and fostering community cohesion. Her many roles have included Music Advisor for the London Borough of Newham, Director of the music programme for ARK Schools, and Director of several choirs including Solid Harmony Youth Community Choir, Forest Voices adult community choir and New Young Voice Collective. Since 2014, Jane has been a leader for British Council's World Voice programme.
- e. Mark Bick - Mark is a renowned and highly experienced community musician and trainer. Most of his working life based in Gloucestershire, particularly starting up what has now become The Music Works. He also worked in the West Midlands developing and leading training courses, including the Quench Arts New Horizons course, which has been running for nearly 20 years. The core of Mark's work has been with young people who struggle with various barriers, including those excluded from school, who are looked after, or have disabilities. Mark is Vice Chair of Sound Sense, the UK professional association for community musicians.
- f. Professor Graham Welch - Professor Graham Welch is Chair of Music Education at University College London, Chair of the Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research and is heavily involved in the International Society for Music Education. He is a former member of the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council Review College for Music and has published numerous research papers into music and particularly singing, not least 'Researching the Impact of the National Singing Programme 'Sing Up' in England' in 2011.
- g. SK Shlomo - SK Shlomo is an international non-binary beatbox star, former world looping champion, 3-times TEDx speaker and disability & mental health ambassador. They are also founder of the Beatbox Academy and long-time friend of Sing Up, being as they are, particularly gifted at, and committed to, working with children and young people.
- h. Ben Turner – Ben Turner is a Creative Manager, Community Leader, Award-winning Educator and Youth Arts Leader with experience in education, youth activism and creative arts/entertainment. Founding Director of Rap Club Productions C.I.C (home of The Spit Game, SpokenLDN, KingdomLDN), working against serious youth violence and promoting positive youth communities and cultures. He supports schools to embrace young Black cultures and creativity within the curriculum. He is a regular conference speaker and endorsed by the Home Office, TeachFirst, BBC and others for approach to youth work/education.

- i. David Lawrence - David Lawrence is one of the UK's most versatile conductors, who works with symphony orchestras and bands, and with choirs and choruses of all types. But David may be best known as Principal Conductor of the Young Voices arena concerts with thousands of school children.

For further information and photos, please contact Celi Barberia or Baz Chapman ([info@singupfoundation.org](mailto:info@singupfoundation.org)), 0204 566 9666