



**75 YEARS OF SUPPORTING  
AND CHAMPIONING  
VOLUNTARY MUSIC**

# Case Study

No. 59

## Bedford Sinfonia

One of Making Music's five areas of activity is working with and for young people. Through Making Music's Young People's Programme a substantial library of youth project case studies has been developed. These case studies are designed to highlight and share best practice from the experiences of Making Music member societies undertaking youth projects. Many of the case studies arise from Making Music's two national youth programmes *tuned in* (2001-2002) funded by Youth Music and The Carnegie UK Trust and RESOUND (2003-2005) funded by Youth Music, Scottish Arts Council, The Carnegie UK Trust and Headley Trust.

### 1. Project Description

#### Project Aims

To provide the opportunity for many children with their parents (and many grandparents) to experience a live orchestral concert and to accomplish this in an informal and inviting atmosphere.

To encourage teachers in the schools to introduce some of this music in advance of the concert so that greater benefit and enjoyment would be obtained.

To introduce the orchestra to a wider section of the public, and to encourage future attendance at live concerts by a younger audience.

#### Project Description

Children's Concert: Peter and the Wolf/Pulcinella

The Bedford Sinfonia is one of the two orchestras which comprise the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society. Membership is by invitation, and many of the players are peripatetic teachers in the county. Of the others, several are still at school. The teachers regularly consider which of their pupils, usually members of the County Youth Orchestra, would be useful to the Sinfonia and would benefit from playing with the orchestra. On this occasion seven of the violinists and two of the viola players were school students in the county.

There were three week-night rehearsals and a rehearsal on the day of the concert. Kevin Whately came just to this last rehearsal and struck exactly the right note of professionalism and informality as the story-teller. He was positioned in a high organ loft, easily visible, and chose to sit on the ledge of this loft, feet dangling over the edge.

Children from a village Sunday School close to Bedford provided illustrations for the programme. Children from a county middle school painted pictures illustrating some of the events and instruments used in Peter and the Wolf, and these were displayed in the foyer of the concert hall. There was also an exhibition of the art work of Bedford School pupils on display.

The orchestra chose to dress more informally than usual, in plain brightly coloured shirts. This may seem a minor point, but it made an important contribution to the atmosphere of the event.

Michael Rose broke up the performance of the Pulcinella suite at suitable intervals to introduce the instruments and their players to the audience and to show how one or two parts of the music were made up. He asked the children to look and listen for certain important contributing factors at strategic points.

Many children talked to members of the orchestra during the interval and after the concert had finished. They were shown how the instruments worked, and were able to feel how it felt, for example, to hold a bow, to hit some of the percussion instruments, or to blow into a trombone.

All the schools in Bedford and within quite a wide area round Bedford were contacted by the County Music Service. The instrumental teachers encouraged their pupils to attend the concert. Other publicity was by the usual means of posters, the town's Box Office, the season's brochure of the Bedfordshire Orchestral Society, publicity from the venue itself, and the local BBC radio station, Three Counties Radio. Well over 700 people attended the concert – a capacity audience – of whom probably more than half were children. There were one or two school parties, but most children came with their parents and/or grandparents.

Peter and the Wolf was chosen as one of the works to be performed because of the excellence of Prokofiev's score, its popularity, its immediate impact, and the enjoyment it would undoubtedly engender. Pulcinella was chosen as a contrast to Peter and the Wolf and again for the quality of the music. Its many short movements would make it easier for the children to cope with unknown music and give opportunities for the conductor to explain and sometimes demonstrate the next sections.

The plans also involved dance: a local ballet school was asked whether some pupils would dance to parts of Pulcinella. This was agreed and arrangements were well advanced when the dance project had to be abandoned because the head of the school had a family bereavement shortly before the concert date.

The concert was funded by ticket sales and by the generosity of some performers in donating fees. The tickets were priced very inexpensively at £5 for adults, £2 for children, £10 for a family ticket (2 adults, 2 children). A small profit was made.

## **Legacy**

Feedback has been very positive. An announcement was made about another children's concert to be held in October, and many members of the audience were seen to note the date in diaries. The conductor suggested various activities during the performance, such as counting the number of times a certain tune occurred, and the children were keen to take up these challenges and also to answer questions.

It is certainly hoped that the dance element will be included on another occasion. Another children's concert is planned for October. The Sinfonia hopes to instigate a series of

individual rehearsal dates when children who are becoming competent instrumentalists will be invited to share a desk with, or sit alongside, a regular member of the orchestra and join in the rehearsal. The targeted ages are likely to be roughly middle school ages (9-13).

## Improvements

The posters were not appropriate for a children's concert. They need to be redesigned. More thought needs to be given to the availability of tickets - many more tickets were requested than had been expected and therefore authorised to be printed by the Box Office, and more had to be printed. The stewarding needs must be more carefully assessed. Enough stewards in the right places were present at the concert, but some had to be found within the last few days. The orchestra cannot rely on the finances necessarily being as sound as they were on this occasion. Sponsorship should undoubtedly be sought. Perhaps some small free souvenir could be given to each child at the end of the concert

## 2. Project Details

### General Details

Nature of Youth Project	
Number of Young People involved	<b>0</b>
Age Range of Young People	
Type of Young People involvement	
Recruitment of Young People	
Level of LEA involvement	
Project budget	<b>0</b>
Sources of funding	<b>Ticket sales</b>
Video available	<b>False</b>
Audio available	<b>False</b>
Photographs available	<b>False</b>
Programme available	<b>True</b>
Publicity leaflets/posters	<b>False</b>

### Society Details

Name of society	<b>Bedford Sinfonia</b>
Type of Society	<b>Classical orchestral</b>
Size of Society	<b>0</b>
Age profile	
Under 19s in society	<b>0</b>
Under 19s from project	<b>0</b>
Repertoire	
Typical concert budget	
Typical performance	
Number of performances	
Willing to be contacted	<b>True</b>
Contact name	<b>Malcolm Green</b>
Contact phone	<b>01234 712330</b>

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We hope you find this Making Music document useful - it is intended to give a reasonable summary of the position at the time of writing. If you are aware of any changes to the situation described or have suggestions for further information to be included please contact the Membership Services Team at Making Music 020 7422 8280 or [info@makingmusic.org.uk](mailto:info@makingmusic.org.uk). Please note that no responsibility for loss occasioned to any person or group acting or refraining from action as a result of any of the contents of this information sheet can be accepted by any of the authors or by Making Music, the National Federation of Music Societies.

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