

May 2025

TO BOLDLY GO!

“A sense of the unknown has always lured mankind and the greatest of the unknowns of today is outer space. The terrors, the joys and the sense of accomplishment are epitomised in the space program”. William Shatner, actor and space traveler.

RAH UKS2 CHORAL PROJECT

We are delighted to announce that MMF will be delivering a new RAH performance project for schools during 2025-26. Titled **‘To Boldly Go’**, the project will use NASA’s Artemis programme as a stimulus for children to undertake a dynamic, reflective & inspirational journey exploring the pathways, challenges & consequences of high achievement, it’s impact on those who lead the way & the determination, skills & support from those behind the scenes, who may never be fully recognised.

Autumn 2025 – Spring 2026

- The choral performance project will consist of a **series of choral rehearsals** (in school and at other local venues) between September 2025 and March 2026, culminating in an evening performance at the **Royal Albert Hall on Tuesday 10 March 2026**.
- The project is being provided as part of MMF’s **‘With One Voice’ Singing Strategy** (a core strand of the National Plan for Music) and aims to provide children in Years 5 or 6 with access to high quality and inspiring choral opportunities. This intensive project will provide challenging opportunities for pupils (and staff!) to develop their vocal, choral and general musicianship skills. The experience will give pupils an exciting foundation for future learning and help broaden the range of opportunities and skills within each participating school.
- Once again, MMF has teamed up with **Pete Churchill** who will write the piece (8 songs). The children will also sing the opening and closing massed items and at least one other song in the 1st half.
- **Teachers** involved in the project will receive professional development closely related to the educational objectives of the project, with video and online resources to support the vocal and choral development work - we will deliver a **staff CPD session** in early October 2025. Class teachers (and appropriate support staff) will sing with their pupils at the concert, so will need to attend rehearsals and know the material well.
- **Pupils** will receive a series of **5 half day choral workshops + a final dress rehearsal and performance at the RAH**. These rehearsals will take place largely in Merton schools, so some schools will need to travel to a host school for their rehearsals. We try to ensure that partner schools are walkable or a short bus ride away.

Merton Music Foundation is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee
• Registered Charity Number 1004122 • Company Number 2590621 •
Registered in England and Wales. Registered Office – Merton Abbey Primary School, High Path, South Wimbledon, London, SW19 2JY
www.mmf.org.uk / 020 8640 5446 / admin@mmf.org.uk



- **The cost of participation is:**

- ❖ MMF SLA members in 2025-26: **£375** per class (up to 30 children).
- ❖ Non-SLA members: **£600** per class (up to 30 children)

We appreciate that budgets are tight, however the costs associated with hire of the RAH have inevitably increased since our last concert there in 2024. However, for a class of 30, we believe this remains excellent value for money.

- **Booking will open on Fri 9 May and close on Friday 23 May.** Schools will be informed by Monday 2 June re the success of their application. Places are always oversubscribed, so please don't leave it too late to apply.

What Schools Should Consider (FAQs)

1. Who to include

In the past, most schools have involved **one year group**, either Y5 or Y6, to ensure access and inclusion for all children across that year group. However, you may wish to put forward a smaller or selected UKS2 group e.g. your choir. Please note, **we cannot include massed choir children younger than 9**, due to complex rules about child performers and the licenses we have to obtain in advance. Please ensure that you are **confident** about **filling every place applied for**; the seating plan is very complicated (!) and once finalised in July, it will be difficult to change (though I always aim to leave some wriggle-room for minor adjustments).

2. School Support

Participating staff (teachers, TAs) will take on responsibility for rehearsing and embedding the songs in-between school sessions and **they will perform at the concert** with the children, so positive engagement is a must! We do all we can to support less experienced staff and feedback from previous events has always been excellent, with staff gaining new skills and confidence to deliver vocal and other musical activities in the classroom. Participating teachers must be able to attend all / the majority of the rehearsals.

3. SLT Support

The project requires considerable rehearsal time, therefore the **full support of your SLT** will be necessary, to enable the children to be fully prepared for the performance. We know the success of these massed performances over many years is due to the trust and rapport built up over the rehearsal period between the singers and choral leaders and believe this to be the best way to achieve excellence.

4. Parental Support

We hope parents will be 'on board' with the project, especially now there is so much more evidence about **music engagement** and the wider benefits to young people's academic, social and personal growth. If needed, we can meet with parents to explain more, so they are confident that their child is learning and developing by actively participating. We will also provide a letter for schools to send to parents, once participation has been confirmed.

Merton Music Foundation is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee
 • Registered Charity Number 1004122 • Company Number 2590621 •
 Registered in England and Wales. Registered Office – Merton Abbey Primary School, High Path, South Wimbledon, London, SW19 2JY
www.mmf.org.uk / 020 8640 5446 / admin@mmf.org.uk

5. Applying

As with previous performance projects, we are expecting a considerable amount of interest from schools and these projects are always **over-subscribed**, so an early response is highly recommended. We ask for a **brief supporting statement** which outlines the musical and wider educational benefits of participation for your pupils and explains how the project will support and develop your School Music Development Plan. Applications will be accepted on a **'first come, first served' basis**, with priority for **SLA members** and schools which have not participated in an RAH project before, or for a significant period before our last RAH concert in 2024.

The application form link is here: <https://forms.office.com/e/VmqhKB70ud>

Soo Bishop. MMF Schools and Projects Leader 06//05/2025

Merton Music Foundation is a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee
• Registered Charity Number 1004122 • Company Number 2590621 •
Registered in England and Wales. Registered Office – Merton Abbey Primary School, High Path, South Wimbledon, London, SW19 2JY
www.mmf.org.uk / 020 8640 5446 / admin@mmf.org.uk



Supported using public funding by



**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



**Artsmark
Partner**

Supporting cultural education, endorsed by Arts Council England