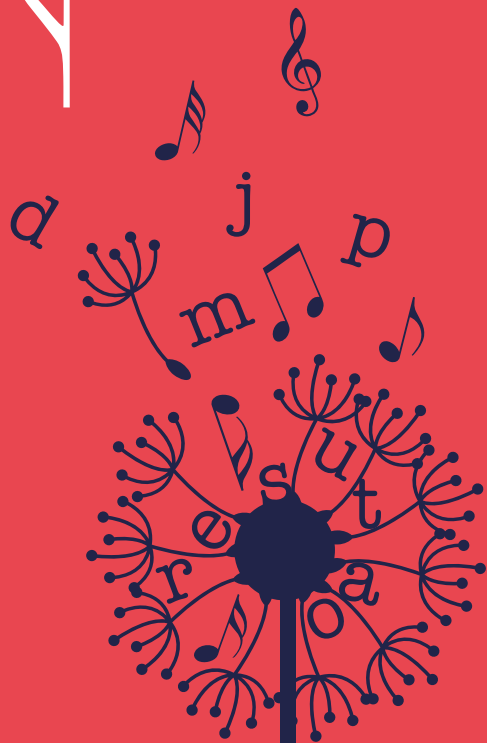


Proms at St Jude's



SPEAK IT!

WINNING POEMS 2017/18

[www.promsatstjudes.org.uk](http://www.promsatstjudes.org.uk)

# Introduction

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Toynbee Hall's youth projects have been a major beneficiary of Proms at St Jude's fundraising for 19 years. For the last four years, Proms has been the largest funder of the Make It! project which works with students in East London secondary schools who are in Year 8 (aged 12-13) to support their progress. The students are involved throughout the school year in a project that encourages the development of self-confidence and social awareness, which, in turn, enhances emotional well-being. The activities also build skills such as critical thinking and team-working, which are vital to success in school and eventually in the workplace. Above all, students are empowered to engage more fully with school and their communities, thereby raising their aspirations and life chances. As well as benefitting themselves, the young people often go on to mentor younger students, as well as making a practical contribution to a project within the local community.

Speak It! has emerged from Make It! and is now in its second year. Directly funded by Investec, Speak It! works with students who have graduated from the Make It! project to enhance

and consolidate skill development and expose participants to classical music and opera. The workshops make a direct link between the work in schools and the music at Proms at St Jude's, as well as involving Investec volunteers. The schools programme has been led by award winning poet and educator Anthony Anaxagorou, using music and musicality to help create spoken word poetry. At the initial workshop, students worked with Anthony, Nicholas Chalmers (Artistic Director of Nevill Holt Opera and an experienced music educator) and soprano Sky Ingram to explore Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* (performed by Nevill Holt earlier this week and sponsored by Investec). In this and later workshops, the Speak It! students have drawn on the music and themes of the opera to create spoken word pieces in which they are also able to write and speak about their own identities.

Representatives of Investec, Toynbee and Proms at St Jude's have all been involved in judging the final pieces. The winner from each school will read their poems after the interval at tonight's Prom. The positive impacts are many, but self-confidence, public speaking

I was hugely impressed with the quality and variety of the pupils' poems. A fantastic example of the power of poetry to communicate to its audience in multiple levels.

*Eddy Hargreaves, Investec judge*

It was great to see the poets pushing the boundaries with their authentic language.

*Jim Minton, CEO of Toynbee Hall*



Teeny Prom 2017

skills, pride in their communities and cultural heritage, and the opportunity to discuss and challenge stereotypes are all important.

Whilst the Make It! and Speak It! projects are the biggest Proms-related education projects, involvement with children and young people has always been important. As Proms has grown, the size and ambition of its educational projects have grown too. A Schools' Prom is a long-standing feature, involving thousands of local children over the years. The Schools' Prom embraces primary and secondary groups and is preceded by a workshop in each school. We hope to expand this further; whilst the benefits of music education are well known, funding and curriculum time pressures are squeezing provision.

Proms at St Jude's music programme starts with our youngest audience members. Earlier this week our Teeny Proms, sponsored and led by DaCapo Music Foundation, involved under fives (and their cuddly toys!) in songs, percussion and musical games. Still to come are the family events with Beaten Track Percussion and a performance of *Carnival of the Animals*. Free for children, these offer the opportunity for the whole family to engage



Local children performing in the 2017 schools concert

with classical music, hopefully contributing to a life-long relationship.

New this year is the Fanfare project; an opportunity for talented teenage musicians to compose a piece for orchestral performance. We are delighted that Theo Gill's fanfare will be performed at the Last Night of Proms at St Jude's and hope this project will become an established feature of future programming.

None of these projects could happen without the support of sponsors, Friends who have donated to our Music Education Appeal, volunteers and our loyal audiences - they say 'it takes a village' - in this case, the Proms at St Jude's village!

For further information on Proms educational initiatives, please contact Michelle Groves at [michelle.groves@promsatstjudes.org.uk](mailto:michelle.groves@promsatstjudes.org.uk)

# Poetry and Opera



Nicholas Chalmers and Anthony Anaxagorou

**S**peak It! is an incredibly important programme in that it endeavours to engage young people in not only poetry and wordplay, but also critical thinking. By breaking down various stigmas associated with poetry by introducing relevant and contemporary styles, students are able to use the medium to navigate not only how they see the world, but their place in it.

The added bonus was incorporating the operatic element into the format as it demonstrated how story-telling, poetry, music and culture all are highly accessible. The students found the fusion to be of great interest and wrote some great poems responding to the protagonists in the opera.

*Anthony Anaxagorou, poet and Speak It! facilitator*

**T**he Speak It! project is a fantastic opportunity for kids to explore the musical influence on poetry. The beautiful musical lines of *Le nozze di Figaro* have inspired generations of artists. Music can create impressions of colour, atmosphere and structure of language. It was wonderful to watch and hear the way in which the kids reacted to Mozart's music.

*Nicholas Chalmers, Artistic Director,  
Nevill Holt Opera Company*



Sky Ingram

**I**t was a joy to be involved in the Speak It! School Workshops with poet Anthony Anaxagorou. There were two standout points I noticed to each school workshop... Firstly, there was the glorious breakdown in stereotypes and preconceptions of what an opera singer, a conductor, and a poet look and sound like. Then, after learning to think outside the box, describing operatic sounds in terms of colour, and challenge what 'identity' truly means, we witnessed some incredible moments where students embraced their new way of thinking to write their very own poem. We certainly learnt as much as the students and felt so privileged to bond artistically with them all.

*Sky Ingram, Nevill Holt Opera Company*

Young people love to mix songs and stories. In the Speak It! project a Mozart opera met poetry, and brought to life the magic of marrying words and music as well the musicality of our words.

*Michelle Groves, Chair, Education  
Committee, Proms at St Jude's*

# Pranksters

By Volkan O'Grady

The sky was cold grey, the angry thunder  
striking and the happy birds scared.  
There he lay dead on the floor. Eagles  
surrounding him like mice to cheese.  
How did this happen? Murder or suicide?  
If it was murder where would they hide?  
What should I do, confused and puzzled,  
should I go or stay?  
No one around  
The eagles are hungry  
He opens his eyes, birds fly formula one fast  
He grabbed me and gripped on me  
That's when I smelt the ketchup  
Moon running away from the day, laughing.



Volkan O'Grady of George Green's School

It's about raising confidence in public speaking and self-expression. It helps the students' improve their ability to interpret their own feelings in a controlled way. The messages I heard today were really powerful.

*Carl Kemp, Community Manager at George Green's talking about hosting the Speak It! project at the school*

I was impressed with the diverse sense of identities presented today which is a testament that the young people have an understanding of who they are. It was good to see how they linked their identity to things they do day to day or that they own.

*Ed Martoni, Investec judge*



# A Shark's Secret Make-up

By Nicole Barrios

I am a fuse that swims  
    The sun's skin colour  
I am a chip on a board  
    The wrong religion  
I am paper kissing the wall  
    Background noise  
I am a praying fly  
    Food in a dungeon  
I am a piano on a glass of water  
    Swag  
I am a shoe on a sock  
    Faith  
I am a paper on a screw  
    Stereotyping twin

I am a dirty shoe  
    Family prisoner  
I am a tattoo on a pen  
    Past dreaming  
I am a nail on an eye  
    School/ job  
I am a scratch on a dress  
    Secret lock and key  
I am a bread on hair  
    Shopping  
I am a tight shirt on a fat person  
    Godly hair  
I am a pencil that writes history



Nicole Barrios of Kingsford Community School

# Class

By Henoc Lingomba

I am struggling money  
 Crawling towards a trustworthy  
 Family.  
 I am interesting culture  
 Slipping finance into my  
 Back pocket.  
 I am a greedy & book keeping  
 All the words for myself  
 I am caring religion  
 Laying myself beside the homeless  
 The underclass dreaming of jewellery  
 Diamonds to Eat.

The students had such interesting ideas which they were able to convey in a powerful and vivid way. I felt privileged to have been able to hear their poems, some of which clearly took them out of their comfort zones and made them reflect on some very personal issues. I hope they enjoyed the project, I certainly enjoyed meeting them and hearing their poems.

*Judy Knox, Proms at St Jude's judge*



Michelle Main, Anthony Anaxagorou, Henoc Lingomba of Lister Community School, Vanessa Scolding, Jim Minton and Tina Isaacs

# Silver Mirror

By Saarah Rahman, Langdon Park School

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Gorgeous  
Stunning  
Beautiful

I look at myself in the silver mirror  
Staring so lovingly at my beautiful slim figure  
I blinked a million times to look at myself in  
the mirror clearer  
To stare so lovingly at my ombre curls as  
well as my sharp cheekbones

Why couldn't I love myself before this?  
Crystal clear tears will drip down my  
chubby cheeks  
When I look at those gorgeous beautiful  
stunning girls on my phone

Crystal clear tears will drip down my  
chubby cheeks  
When those gorgeous beautiful stunning girls  
Stand there posing all stick thin while I stay  
elephant-big

I want to be, NO, I needed to be  
Those gorgeous, beautiful, stunning girls  
All fake they would say at my bruised face,  
Red and aching yet gorgeous beautiful and  
now stunning.

Harsh chemicals in bleach murdered my  
black long hair like an onslaught of spears.  
I would make myself sick, face down in  
the toilet  
After every meal but no one would care.

In an ear-splitting ambulance rushed off  
to hospital  
Diagnosed with anorexia.  
No flowers, no get well soon cards  
Just crystal clear tears ruining my mascara  
like a wild forest fire burning.

Society and the media sell us these ideas  
of beauty.  
Cheekbones, full lips, caked face. And I was  
weak enough to believe it  
I wanted to be those  
Gorgeous  
Beautiful  
Stunning  
Girls you see on your phone

But it turns out I was always one already  
Before this whole mess.  
I was already beautiful, now I look at myself in  
the silver mirror  
And see crystal clear tears running down  
my cheeks  
Over my smile and into my happiness.



# Eerie Emotions

By Charlotte Sonnex, Central Foundation School

Riding on the skeleton of race  
 Baking memories of life  
 Wearing death's shining outfit.  
 Sharing with hostile, lost, broken people  
 Changing its lonely colours,  
 And its dying thoughts.  
 Trotting in the shoes of hate  
 And piecing together time and tales  
 Like a puzzle in the sea  
 Sweeping deadly thought, onto the shore  
 of life  
 Then hiding in the shell of skin  
 Away, away from reality!  
 Lost emotions  
 Galloping down the isle of personality  
 The rotting clothes that cover all,  
 The broken chains of war's heart  
 The mixture of innocent people



Very enjoyable experience. The students' commitment shone through as they presented and took in feedback on their poems. They have obviously taken this very seriously.

*Kate Webster, Proms at St Jude's judge*

The hairstyles that hide the death of memories  
 All those cuffs that won't free people  
 Lost,  
 Lost, lonely hidden eyes,  
 Bullets, bullets that take shots in the eyes of  
 the innocent  
 Bullets, bullets that smash the minds of  
 the hurt  
 The hurt, the lost, the broken, the normal ones  
 The ones that don't care, all these people  
 But no one wants to walk down those steps  
 Those steps that make hearts ache  
 Those steps, the ones, the ones that  
 break hearts,  
 The ones that save lives... the crimes that are  
 lost behind the falling walls.... Time.

They say actions speak louder than words, but it is often overlooked that actions happen because inspiring words have been uttered in the first place!

*Investec volunteer 2017*

... very insightful. The energy in the room was amazing!

*Investec volunteer 2017*

# What I Call Change

By Shabiha Saleh, Morpeth School

You decided to change  
I accepted that,  
I call you an honest thief  
You took things from me,  
Mine, and your memories,  
As I let you take them from me,  
I call you vengeful,  
You mock the blank space in my heart

No, my soul,  
You were a part of me once,  
I call you ungrateful,  
As I was just an insignificant pawn,  
I call you a user,  
I was always the one to clean up  
After your mess,  
The maid to all your dynamic emotions,

I call you a liar,  
You told me that we were always equal,  
Never less,  
I call you a heated oppressor,  
It was always me, whose secrets  
were confessed  
I call myself an afraid betrayer,  
Because I knew you had always cared for me,  
I'm all these things and more,  
After I let you leave.



2017 Speak It! winners with the judges (from left): Susie Steyn, Shabiha Saleh, Judy Knox, Charlotte Sonnex, Saarah Rahman and Ed Martoni

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I was impressed by the openness and courage of the students and the things they were willing to write about. You have to remind yourself how young they are... and then get impressed all over again.

*Michelle Main, Investec judge*

It's so brave of the students to share all kinds of feelings in front of strangers and peers. You could just feel their honesty. I feel very lucky to have been able to take part in judging.

*Vanessa Scolding, Investec judge*

Interesting to see the experiences that have gone into their poems by the choice of their words. It is a difficult theme for the teenagers and they managed to express themselves very clearly.

*Ben Cohen, Investec judge*



# Thanks



Proms at St Jude's thanks everyone who helped make Speak It! happen:

**Toynbee Hall**

**Anthony Anaxagorou**

**Nicholas Chalmers and Sky Ingram, Nevill Holt Opera**

**George Green's School**

**Kingsford Community School**

**Lister Community School**

And a special thank you to Speak It! sponsor:

**Investec**

Music enhances the education of our children by helping them to make connections and broadening the depth with which they think and feel. If we are to hope for a society of culturally literate people, music must be a vital part of our children's education.

*Yo-Yo Ma*

