



## NEWS RELEASE

### **HELP US MAKE OUR MUSICAL DREAMS COME TRUE**

A group of talented primary school children are preparing to follow in the footsteps of Florence and the Machine and Emilie Sande by performing at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, even though most of them have never been to London and many have never even left Teesside.

More than 300 Teesside primary schoolchildren – many of them from disadvantaged backgrounds – are set to be part of a ground-breaking two-hour concert at the famed Royal Festival Hall.

Their teaching staff are asking local charities and businesses to help fund the “life-changing” trip to ensure none of the children miss out on a “once-in-a-lifetime” opportunity due to a lack of family finances.

A total of 107 boys and girls, aged 7-11, from Tees Valley Education – an academy trust covering Middlesbrough's Pennyman and Brambles primaries and Dormanstown Primary near Redcar - have spent much of the past 12 months rehearsing for the big occasion.

On Monday June 11, they will join forces with over 200 children from Teesside's Galileo Trust and other local primary academies plus more than 80 children from London schools to perform.

Performing songs specially written for the performance together with Labi Sifre's famous hit song 'Something Inside So Strong', the children will be backed by a 25-piece band featuring musicians from the TV's Strictly Come Dancing band and the Dalesmen Choir.

To give them encouragement as they countdown to their big day, Teesside singer Alistair Griffin, who has enjoyed several top 40 hits, called in on rehearsals.

Tees Valley Education is determined that none of the children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds will miss out on the experience including a trip that will also take in visits to the Houses of Parliament, British History Museum, a performance of Aladdin and a cruise along the River Thames and a ride on the London Eye.

Louise Stogdale, the trust's deputy head teacher, said: “Along with a long-term commitment to the arts, this trip is all about giving the trust's children life-changing experiences and opportunities that will raise their aspirations and self-belief.

“We're absolutely certain the children taking part will be inspired, so we're calling on local businesses and charities to help us ensure they will realise their dream of performing at the Royal Festival Hall.

“The areas of Middlesbrough and Dormanstown in which our pupils live are recognised as some of the most deprived in the entire country, so it is no exaggeration to suggest some of the parents are having to make big sacrifices to make this dream possible for their children.

“They have worked so hard to get to this point so we’re absolutely determined that none of them will miss out.

“In all honesty, this is beyond the wildest dreams of some of our children, which is what makes it so very special. I don’t think they have any real comprehension of just how incredible it will be to perform at such a venue.

“We can’t wait to see their faces. I’m sure it’s going to be emotional.”

The children have rehearsed with musicians who have written some of the songs for the performance include world famous educator Pete Churchill, who has taught at the Guild Hall School of Music and is currently a professor of jazz composition at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Another artist behind the project is Teessider Adam Dennis, a professor at the Guild Hall School of Music and Drama, who is an accomplished jazz pianist and musical director who has worked on projects including The X Factor and West End shows.

Adam Saunders, a composer, pianist and educator, works with many of the UK’s leading music organisations, and Katie Teage, a specialist leader in education, vocal coach and choir leader, have also helped lead the project.

- Charities or businesses who may be able to fund the costs of the most disadvantaged children can contact Emma Waites at Tees Valley Education Trust on 01642 304406 or email [info@tved.org.uk](mailto:info@tved.org.uk)

**Ends**

### **Caption**

Hit singer Alistair Griffin paid a visit to rehearsals as pupils from schools within Tees Valley Education Trust prepare for to perform at the Royal Festival Hall in London.

### **Note to media:**

For further information please contact DNA PR & Publicity on 07711 025009 or email [dave@dnapr.co.uk](mailto:dave@dnapr.co.uk).