



The Amber Trust
Music for Blind Children

The Amber Trust brings music and fulfilment into the lives of blind and partially sighted children - a lifeline in a confusing world

AmberNotes 2018

Global's Make Some Noise Day 2018

Amber's profile raised by Global's fundraising initiative

Global's Make Some Noise Day on 5 October was an unbelievable success and raised a staggering £4,198,678 for small charities throughout the UK. Amber is extremely lucky to have been chosen as one of their beneficiary charities for 2018.



As part of the fundraising activities, Jamie Theakston (pictured, centre), walked seven marathons in seven days travelling from Cardiff to London. A team from Amber, including Cathie James from St Michael All Angels Church in Chiswick (second from right), were up before dawn to accompany him on the last leg of the journey from Putney to Leicester Square.

Amber beneficiaries were also invited to Global's radio stations to meet their presenters. Our Patron, Derek Paravicini, and beneficiary Ashleigh spent an amazing afternoon with Toby Anstis of Heart Radio at the University of Roehampton, and Lilly spent a wonderful afternoon with presenter Anna-Marie Minhall in the Classic FM studio. Amber received some valuable exposure via Global's radio network on Make Some Noise Day. That morning, we received a Little Amber application from a parent who had just heard about the scheme on Heart. Within days we had also been contacted by two marathon runners who have been inspired to do their next run in aid of The Amber Trust.

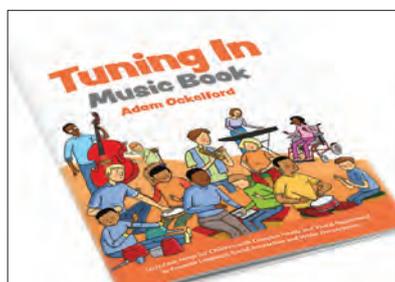


Derek and Ashleigh with Toby Anstis

We are so very grateful for all Global's enthusiastic help and support - the funds raised will make a huge difference to the lives of many blind and partially sighted children in the UK.

AmberPlus is launched!

Amber's new music service for families is up and running



On 27 September, AmberPlus was launched at Hilton London Olympia. Professor Adam Ockelford introduced the new scheme and *Tuning In* music resources: a collection

of specially composed songs freely available online, a music book and set of cards, written and composed by Adam Ockelford and published by Jessica Kingsley. Derek Paravicini wowed guests, as always, with his fabulous playing. It was a great evening. A huge thank you to the MariaMarina Foundation for supporting the development of the resources, to the Hilton and to everyone who came to support this exciting initiative.

The following day, 35 enthusiastic music practitioners attended an AmberPlus training day at Roehampton University. It included meeting a Little Amber family and seeing them in action with their music practitioner, Gary Day. We received some great feedback:

'It was lovely that a Little Amber family could visit. Interesting to see the work from an 'outer' perspective. Normally, we are at the centre of the action and from within you can't see so brilliantly what a difference this work makes. Thank you!'

Every special school in the UK that has pupils who are visually impaired and have complex needs has received a free copy of the music book and card set. One headteacher wrote, *'thanks for sending out the Tuning In cards and book - our music coordinator is VERY excited!'* Five families signed up to the scheme in the first week.

Olivier - our latest Amber Star!



'Music is my life!' says twelve-year-old Olivier with a smile. There's a serene look on his face when he talks about how much he loves playing the piano and listening to music. Olivier was born at 27 weeks gestation and as a result has Retinopathy of Prematurity (RoP) with no vision or light perception. He is also identified as having learning difficulties

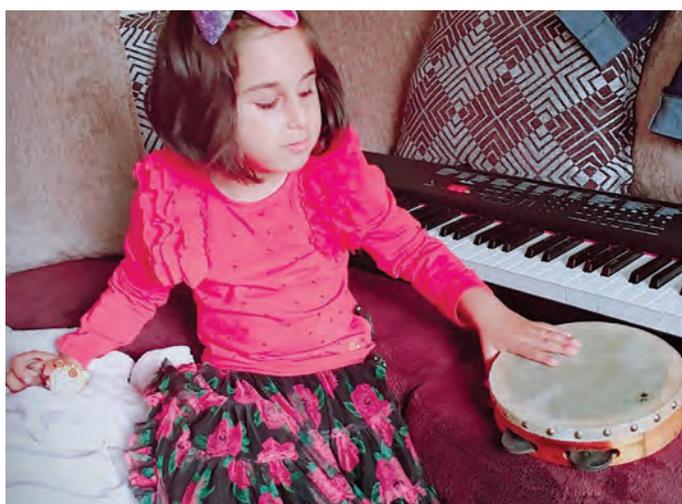
and autism spectrum disorder in the context of a profound visual impairment.

Despite this, he has been musically talented ever since he was a year old. The first time his parents noticed he had musical skills was when he copied a tune from the TV on his toy keyboard: he was copying what he had heard exactly. Olivier's talent in music was also spotted at preschool. Following this, he had his first piano lesson when he was in Year Two. He has been a recipient of an Amber Music Award for three years now and his parents say his life has '*changed completely*'. Once, he played the keyboard with his window open. His neighbours stood and listened and were surprised to find it was Olivier playing.

Olivier regularly performs at his school and this has been a real bonding experience for him with his peers and within his class. His confidence and status at school has been enhanced by students and teachers alike as he is engaging more with school themes and activities. He won first prize in his school's talent competition where he performed the theme music from James Bond and Mission Impossible. His piano teacher works closely with the school, linking many subjects to his piano playing, which helps Olivier follow and understand the curriculum better. The teaching assistant who has been working with Olivier for a long time has seen a '*tremendous change*' in him. She is so grateful to The Amber Trust for this opportunity that has transformed Olivier's life.

Little Amber early years scheme update

One year on ...



Anaya was one of our first Little Amber applications after we launched the service in September 2017. Anaya is now four years old, and registered blind with only some light perception. She absolutely loves music! Mum, Saadia, says that nothing makes Anaya happier than banging on the tambourine or dancing with her older sister, who is also blind, to their favourite song. Music often relaxes and calms

her if she's ever stressed or out of sorts. Anaya's music practitioner, Daniel, showed her family how to engage with her through music using the downloadable songs and activity cards. Daniel also assessed her aural and technical skills and found Anaya was particularly musical. So, Anaya has now moved to the main Amber Music Awards where she receives regular piano lessons, which she loves.

Anaya is a wonderful example of why the Little Amber scheme exists: to encourage and support families of visually impaired children to engage with their child through music, and, of course, to have fun, but also to provide a means of introducing the child to music at a young age so they get the very best start in terms of music education. Over the last year, 61 families have been in contact with us about the scheme. We currently have 54 'Little Amber' families, supporting 58 children, and our music practitioners have delivered over 100 two-hour sessions to families UK-wide. Two children have moved on to receive main music awards and two further families have moved on to the new AmberPlus scheme for children over 5 years with complex needs. One parent said, '*We love using the cards and website and Alfie loves the songs!*'

An Afternoon of Music with Derek Paravicini and Friends

Amber's annual concert celebrating beneficiaries' accomplishments

On 20 May 2018, Amber hosted its annual concert showcasing some of the talented young musicians that Amber supports from across the UK, as well as visually impaired children from Germany and Sweden, for an afternoon of music making.



Highlights of the concert included the effervescent young pianist Lucy, rising star Ashleigh, the beautiful flute playing of Anna, a Mozart string quartet with Lilly, Poppy, Takashi Kikuchi and Ivan, and a very special performance on the harp by deafblind Jessica. The



audience was treated to the world premiere of Zoe Dixon's wonderful *From a Railway Carriage* sung by the St Paul's Juniors Recital Choir. And, as ever, the irrepressible Derek Paravicini took requests from the audience, once again demonstrating his extraordinary repertoire to everyone's delight. We received many lovely comments: *'If last year was eye-opening, this year was truly overwhelming. So much talent, so much joy, against such odds too. Very humbling indeed.'*

Thank you so much to St Paul's School and Karenne Mills for organising and hosting what has become such an important occasion in Amber's calendar.

St Michael and All Angels, Bedford Park



Once again, St Michael's support for Amber has been boundless. In the last year, members of the parish raised more than £10,000 for Amber through a range of activities including *Green Days* during the Bedford Park Festival, a Hymnathon, Quiz Night, various concerts, its Charities Sunday and the Advent auction. At *Green Days* this summer, Amber also raised £715 directly by selling Tombola tickets and

homemade cakes – massive thanks to Kyproulla Markou and her family for their tremendous help over the weekend.

Cathie James, who, with her husband David, was instrumental in getting The Amber Trust 'adopted' by St Michael & All Angels Church, Bedford Park as one of its charities, was part of #TeamAmber meeting at 5.30 am to walk with Jamie Theakston to Leicester Square on Make Some Noise Day, having earlier in the year raised £1,400 for Amber by walking 1,000 miles. The money she raised is going to fund starter sets of percussion instruments for our Little Amber families. Thank you, Cathie, and well done!

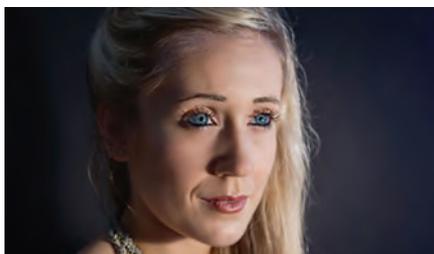
Achievements to celebrate

- Congratulations to Zoe Dixon who has taken up her place at Worcester College, Oxford to read Music. An outstanding achievement!
- Alexia Sloane has begun studying composition at the Royal Northern College of Music. She has had a number of stunning successes this year and will shortly begin working on the work commissioned by the BBC as a result of being a winner of the 2018 BBC Proms Inspire competition. Well done, Alexia!
- Amber supporter, Poppy McGhee's enthusiasm for Amber's work is monumental. In the last 12 months, events she has been involved with have raised over £1,000. She was runner up at the finals of the Rotary Club Young Musician of the Year 2018 and the week before won a Pride of Somerset Award for all the fundraising she does, principally for Amber. Thank you, Poppy!
- In the last decade, Amber has supported 702 blind and partially sighted children through individual music awards. During 2017/2018, we provided 225 awards, 74 of which were for children who were new to Amber. We reached another 90 visually impaired young people by delivering music workshops in special schools and, with the launch of Little Amber, over 50 families with blind or partially sighted babies and young children have been supported.



Supporting events

We've been so lucky to be a part of some remarkable musical activities and events this last year, all raising funds for Amber. Here is small selection that took place:



- Sing Gospels' magical single *Silent Night* featuring Alice Cadman raised over £500 for Amber last Christmas
- Wimbledon Choral Society raised over £1,000 for Amber at their Christmas Carol concert

- Derek joined Shayini Kugathas for a Tamil concert, *Down Memory Lane with Shiny* raising £500
- Derek and Poppy McGhee gave a brilliant concert at the Bognor Regis Music Club raising £858
- A series of concerts during the Three Towers Music Festival raised over £1,000

Amber is incredibly lucky to have a cohort of hard working and dedicated volunteers who have all contributed to these remarkable events.



Amber is now signed up to AmazonSmile. When you shop @AmazonSmile, Amazon will make a donation to The Amber Trust.

Please take the time to sign up and support us. Go to smile.amazon.co.uk to select Amber as your charity.

Trustees and other news

Amber is delighted that Pat Maynard and Angie McGhee have joined us as our first Ambassadors. Both Pat and Angie are already tireless supporters and fundraisers for Amber and as Ambassadors will support the trustees by representing Amber and advocating for us.

We are very sad to say goodbye to Tracy Tait who has served Amber enthusiastically for nearly a decade first as Music Awards Administrator and more recently as a trustee. Thank you Tracy for your huge contribution to Amber.

Anni Martin joined us in 2016 in a consultancy capacity and was very active in setting up the Little Amber music service. In July this year, Anni took up the full time role of Director of Amber Music Services, and now runs both Little Amber and the newly launched AmberPlus schemes.



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Northern exposure

- Derek Paravicini and Friends, including Amber beneficiary, Lucy, played a fabulous concert at The Orange Box Theatre in Halifax last November organised by Adam Medlock from Highbury School
- Calderdale Music Trust's Christmas Brass Band played in aid of Amber
- The Gleddings School, also in Halifax, raised a huge £550 having fun taking part in a Drumathon

How to support us

Our fundraising guide provides all the information and support you need to raise funds for Amber. The pack also includes plenty of fundraising ideas, so there will be no excuse for not doing something to help our important charity!



We can't do what we do without our supporters. Fundraise for The Amber Trust and your efforts will help support hundreds of blind and partially sighted children across the UK, who have a talent or love for music. Find all the ideas, inspiration and resources you need on our website www.ambertrust.org/get-involved-in-fundraising.



The Amber Trust
Music for Blind Children

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