



Gabrieli Roar: An English Coronation

Inspiring young people with extraordinary experiences



**Wymondham College, Norfolk
Ely Cathedral
21-24 July 2018**

"I have learnt how much I'm capable of"

"I have loved Gabrieli Roar 2018!"

The Project

Gabrieli Roar is a choral training programme for UK teenagers operated in partnership with youth choirs from across England. We deliver excellent choral training and performance opportunities to young singers in diverse locations. We have a positive impact on young people's musical, personal and social skills, supporting the excellent work of our thriving partner youth choirs and their directors. Our ethos is that participatory musical projects can be both artistically excellent and socially inclusive.

Gabrieli Roar's July 2018 programme consisted of a four day residential course, culminating in a performance and recording of a new programme, conducted by Gabrieli Artistic Director Paul McCreesh. The musical focus of the project was *An English Coronation*, a new reconstruction programme devised by Paul McCreesh, drawing on the music performed at the four coronations of the last century. This exuberant programme celebrated five centuries of British choral music, including Parry *I was Glad*, Handel *Zadok the Priest*, Stanford *Gloria in B Flat* and Walton's spectacular 1953 *Coronation Te Deum* as well as the world premiere of a new setting of the National Anthem by David Matthews.

The project involved 249 young singers performing alongside a professional choir and orchestra of 130 Gabrieli musicians and a fanfare brass band of teachers and students from Chetham's School of Music. The recording will be available for international, commercial release in May 2019.

Project Aims

The ultimate goal of Gabrieli Roar is to enhance young people's lives through access to high quality musical experiences. We are determined to increase and democratise access to the arts for young people. Using a rigorous evaluation framework, we assess Gabrieli Roar against five clearly defined outcomes:

- Young people (musical) Young people have improved vocal facility and better knowledge of choral music.
- Young people (personal) Young people have increased confidence and agency.
- Young people (social) Young people have increased team work skills.
- Young people (social) Young people have increased communication skills.
- Organisation Partner choir directors benefit from practice sharing opportunities and CPD.



"This has been my highlight of the year"



Gabrieli Roar Participants

Participants aged 11 to 19 were drawn from ten partner choirs:

Bradford Catholic Youth Choir, director Thomas Leech • Cantate (Essex), director Nicholas Shaw
Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School (London), director Scott Price

David Ross Education Trust Youth Choir (Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire), director Simon Toyne
Eggescliffe School Choir (Stockton-on-Tees), director John Forsyth

Hertfordshire County Youth Choir, director Victoria Longdon

Taplow Youth Choir (Berkshire), director Gillian Dibden • Tiffin Girls' Choir, director Dominic Neville

Tiffin Boys' Choir (London), director James Day • Tiffin Children's Chorus, director Sian Cadogan

Gabrieli Roar activities are focused away from traditional areas of choral excellence, nurturing collaborations with choirs from across the UK. We work from inner London to coastal Lincolnshire and Bradford. Many of our partner choirs work in very challenging circumstances:

- 79% of one choir's catchment schools are in the top 20% of the most deprived areas of the country (Indices for Multiple Deprivation).
- 40% of one choir's members speak English as a second language; English is often not spoken at home and literacy levels are low throughout the local community.
- One choir has two singers with statements of special needs, six being educated outside mainstream education following exclusions, and two members currently in care.
- One choir is the only group in its Local Education Authority to perform classical repertoire.
- Our choirs work in eight distinct areas of Lowest Cultural Engagement and four distinct areas of Low Cultural Engagement (Arts Council England Active People Survey).
- 12% of participants were in receipt of Pupil Premium Grant.
- 22% of participants were from non-British backgrounds.

Paul McCreesh, Artistic Director

Gabrieli Roar is the brainchild of Gabrieli's Artistic Director, Paul McCreesh. Determined to widen and democratise access to the arts for people from all walks of life, it is his social imperative that guides our work with participants, ensuring that we keep participation fees to an absolute minimum, engage with people from all parts of the country and all walks of life, and provide choral training and musical performances of the highest calibre.

For this project, McCreesh painstakingly created a coronation programme of some of the finest British choral music, including a newly commissioned setting of the National Anthem by David Matthews. He personally prepared and edited a music book containing all of the concert and recording repertoire with clear performance instructions for choir directors and singers, and discussed repertoire and choral standards with each choir director to inform effective advance rehearsals. He visited each choir for rehearsals before the main project, as well as working with our Chorus Directors to lead training during the residential course, before finally conducting the performance and recording sessions. He inspired participants to give their all, and then challenged them to give just that little bit more, enabling each and every one of them to excel and thrive.

Gabrieli Roar 2018 was delivered by:

John McMunn – General Manager

Peter Reynolds – Concerts & Tours Manager

Cathy Al-Ghabra – Project Manager

Susie York Skinner – Director of Development

Ellie Slorach – Assistant Conductor

Simon Russell Beale – Narrator

Charles MacDougall, Emily Dickens – Chorus Directors

David Clegg, Rob Evans, Jimmy Holliday, Tom Kelly, Hannah King, Martha McLorinan – Voice Leaders



An English Coronation

Our residential course took place at Wymondham College, Norfolk, involving 249 young singers. The course was preceded by rigorous individual preparation by each choir, focusing on a new Music Book provided by Gabrieli, containing specially prepared copies of all project repertoire, edited with Paul McCreesh's performance marking and rehearsal instructions. Each choir received a training workshop from Gabrieli Roar Chorus Directors, introducing the programme and setting expectations of Gabrieli Roar's musical standards and the demanding schedule ahead.

During the residential course, the Chorus Directors were supported by a team of Voice Leaders, experienced Gabrieli singers who specialise in teaching young voices. **The intensive schedule included daily warm-ups, musicianship and technique lessons, sectionals and tutti repertoire rehearsals.** Whilst preparing this challenging new programme, **participants also worked on sight-reading, vocal technique, musical confidence, new learning methods, performance psychology and part-singing.**

The course culminated in a large-scale, public performance, followed by a day of recording sessions, at Ely Cathedral. Performing alongside the full professional forces of Gabrieli to an almost-sold out cathedral audience, participants revelled in the magnificent choral sound that they created. As part of our commitment to accessibility, tickets were priced at just £10, with all children aged under 16 admitted free of charge and participants' families offered half-price tickets.

The impact of this activity far exceeds the four day project. The music booklets became the focus of a term's worth of preparation for each choir and are retained by choirs as a resource for future use. The recording sessions in which the project culminated were an unusual experience for participants as recording is so rarely an affordable component of an education project: **for many this will have been their first experience of the demands and rigours of recording. They recognised and rose to the challenge,** despite vocal, physical and mental tiredness, and we have heard repeatedly of their excitement about the release of this recording in 2019, which will be a memento and very public record of their achievement with Gabrieli Roar.

The sense of community and enthusiasm that Gabrieli Roar fosters amongst its participants was remarkable. The level of engagement grew steadily from the early scepticism of some teenagers, throughout the rehearsal and training process, to the excitement of arriving at and performing in Ely Cathedral. The level of committed engagement and the sense of pride and ownership felt over the project is reflected by both the content and sheer volume of post-project feedback collected, in the form of completed questionnaires and participation in focus groups, as well as in unprompted thank you letters and social media activity. There was a palpable sense of excitement and hunger amongst these young people who were hugely challenged by the project, but who thrived and responded to the challenge with resilience and goodwill: **they recognised that the bar had been set high, and were determined to succeed.**

Our participants are not the only beneficiaries of Gabrieli Roar. **Our professional musicians relate that they are refreshed and energised by these projects.** One very long-standing consort singer commented that he couldn't remember the last time he'd woken on the morning of a concert day feeling so excited about the day ahead. For our younger professionals their involvement contributes significantly to career and skill development, honing teaching practice, developing communication skills and offering opportunities to begin to coach and mentor the next generation.



Concert Programme

THE ENTRANCE INTO THE ABBEY

Fanfare
Parry I was Glad

THE RECOGNITION

Acclamation & Fanfares

THE ANOINTING

Accompanied Plainsong: *Come Holy Ghost*
Handel *Zadok The Priest*

THE CROWNING

Acclamation & Fanfare
Parratt *Be strong and play the man*

HOMAGE ANTHEMS

Anon *Rejoice in the Lord Always*
Byrd *I will not leave you comfortless*
Wesley *Thou wilt keep him*

COMMUNION

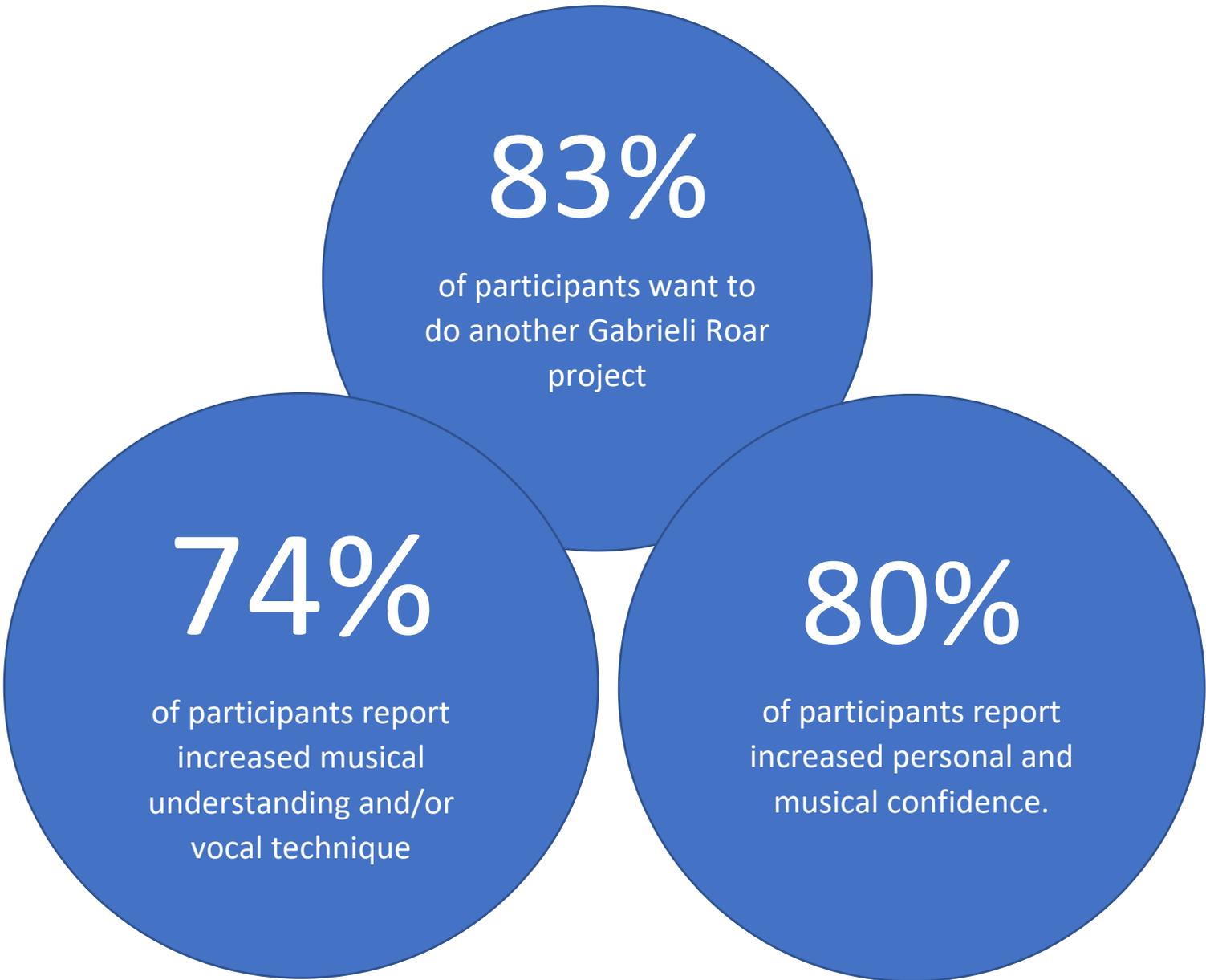
Offertory: Vaughan Williams *All people that on earth do dwell*
Communion: Vaughan Williams *O Taste and see*
The Lord's Prayer: arr. Merbecke
The Gloria: Stanford *Gloria in B Flat*
The Blessing: Gibbons *Three-fold Amen*

TE DEUM

Walton *Coronation Te Deum*

RECESSIONAL

David Matthews *Recessional & National Anthem* (World Premiere)

Participant feedback

83%

of participants want to
do another Gabrieli Roar
project

74%

of participants report
increased musical
understanding and/or
vocal technique

80%

of participants report
increased personal and
musical confidence.

"I found it incredibly enjoyable! Singing in a massive group was a new experience and the repertoire was really great!"



Outcome 1: Gabrieli Roar aims to improve young people's vocal facility and knowledge of choral music

The quality of the sound, their focus and commitment was unforgettable and gives me hope not just for the future of music, but for the future in general with this generation at the helm. Gabrieli Player

I learnt a lot about rehearsal etiquette and warm-up technique.

I learnt the meanings of musical terms.

I have discovered that I am quite a confident singer and this helped me lead others in at entries I had previously waited for others to lead me into.

I have discovered that I can sing in a higher range with a better tone.

I discovered that I can sing lower and I have a larger range than I thought.

I learned how to connect my breathing with my singing and my support.

I learned how to warm up properly.

It was incredible! My voice has developed so much ... my passion for choral music [is] even bigger.

I learned to look up and sing.

It made my singing better – tons better.

The music wasn't as difficult as I thought; my sight-reading skills have improved.

I can sing for longer without breathing, with good breathing technique.

I have sung in four-part harmony for the first time.

I learnt that you unlock your knees so core muscles aren't used to balance, and instead they can support me and my voice to sing higher.

My favourite thing was the warm ups, which were really good and useful, really made sure that we were prepared to sing. Interesting new exercises.

My sight reading and vocal technique have improved.

I learnt much more in-depth vocal technique by listening to the Gabrieli pros.

I learnt how little details can make the biggest difference.

The project has had a huge impact on me. It has strengthened my passion for choral music and has made me want to have a career in choral music ... inspired me to want to become a choral conductor.

It was like doing five years of singing lessons in four days.

Gabrieli Roar has provided a safe space to really push himself and see what he can do ... He really enjoyed meeting new friends and he says he has learnt so much, such as new techniques and can really hear a difference in the quality of his voice. His voice is beginning to change but he has been given the confidence to work with the voice he has and is developing. Parent

“This is an amazing experience”



Outcome 2: Gabrieli Roar aims to increase young people's confidence and agency

He was so proud of what he'd achieved ... showing us the music and demonstrating his range. He will be starting his new adventure into further education with a belief that he can... Parent

I feel more confident about myself because I made friends easily; also more confident about my singing.

I think I have improved as a person and improved my independence.

B has never been particularly outgoing, preferring to keep very much to himself. Our staff were quite taken aback when, on the second day of the course, he spoke in detail about his plans for the future. This 'spark' of enthusiasm is not something we have seen before ... it is thrilling to see this young man developing his social skills and making the most of this opportunity. Choir Director

I learned to go for it and be confident.

I want to join my school choir now.

It made me more confident about myself, because I am normally very shy but I managed to make new friends in my school choir and other choirs.

It has made me feel a lot more confident about myself and my singing as I feel I can sing with professionals.

It made me feel more confident about my voice: I want to sing even more choral music and conduct something! And have a career in choral music!

This made me feel more confident as the Gabrielis were inspirational.

It made me more confident in my voice and vocal range.

It has been an incredible experience that has challenged me positively and raised my confidence.

H has learnt so much, technique, confidence and new friends, to name a few, which he can share and build upon when he returns to school. The organisation, teachers, students and whole curriculum are a credit. Thank you for helping our son grow in technique, talent, and character. He cannot wait for the next chapter... Parent





Outcome 3: Gabrieli Roar aims to improve young people's teamwork

I learnt how to work better with other people.

I learned how to work as a team in a big choir.

I have learned how to sing with so many other musicians.

[The best thing about singing in a choir is] working with other people.

I've improved my sight reading skills and learnt to work as part of a wider team.

[The best thing about singing in a choir is] the feeling after a concert, when you have shown your hard work and feel proud of yourself and others.

Knowing that there were so many of us working together gave me so much more confidence.

I have learned how to work well with others.

[The best thing about singing in a choir is] teamwork: the sound is made together.

The best thing about singing in a choir is bringing different voices together to sing as one.

G approached one of the Vocal Leaders to ask for help with a tricky passage. To her delight G was clearly able to sing it and she asked why he needed help, to which he replied "I can sing it, but now I need to lead it". A wonderful example of a child transforming into a thinking musician with pride in his performance. Choir Director

Outcome 4: Gabrieli Roar aims to improve young people's communication skills

The best thing about singing in a choir is that there are many people you can relate to.

It was really nice to talk to people from all over the country who also love music.

I have asked all the children who attended to catalogue the warm-ups and activities done with a view to them delivering this to our junior choir members next term: a true example of peer leadership and musical development. Choir Director

I have seen C become the group leader, taking responsibility for ensuring the young members on her landing have been where they need to be when they need to be – all without her being asked to do so. ... It is wonderful to see her become a leader and role model for younger choir members ... an amazing transformation for her to become a young role model within the choir. Choir Director

Outcome 5: Gabrieli Roar aims for choir directors to benefit from practice-sharing.

It was a particular thrill for me to see some of our boys singing with your choir in the Parry etc. And the overall effect of the massed choir and orchestras was overwhelming. What an experience. Choir Director

- ❖ Directors are repeating rehearsal/warm up formats with their choirs, and other choirs in their network.
- ❖ Directors have requested piano reductions of repertoire in order to include the music in their own programming.
- ❖ Directors are discussing new collaborations amongst Roar choirs, both with and without Gabrieli.
- ❖ Choir Directors collaborated over different safeguarding protocol, shaping future practice for Gabrieli Roar and individual choirs.



Choir Directors' Feedback

The overall effect of the massed choir and orchestras was overwhelming. What ... a remarkable achievement ... to bring it all together and then to lead it so patiently and with such generosity.

I've no doubt those kids will always remember those few days and when the recording is released they will be so proud.

In comparison with much outreach I have seen, the children were very much at the heart of this project, and expected to make a proper contribution.

At a time when quality vocal performance and repertoire is ... being eroded, resulting in the demise of singing in our schools ... such projects are of such significance that it is difficult to put into words.

The inspiration of these projects has a significant bearing on many of my students...

I was full of admiration ... Great job done!

Audience feedback

Oh wow! It is a great pleasure to know that high standard singing and musicianship will be in the hands of such committed young people. Thank you for a wonderful evening.

Children respond to challenges and enjoy the experience of being intellectually challenged, because that process runs parallel to that of stimulation. Learning is not a passive process but active; most children are active, given the chance and you give them that chance... Lucky children and congratulations to you!



Areas for improvement

The success of this project is evident in the musical standards heard at the concert, from the warm reception from the audience and concert promoter, the appreciation of parents and choir directors and, most overwhelmingly, from the young participants themselves. However, this was a complex project and there are areas where we know that we need to adjust our practices.

The most significant of these is with regard to the outreach work that runs around the project. We had intended to offer workshops to 150 children of primary school age on the concert day, in the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral. Unfortunately, recruiting enough children for this proved difficult and therefore the event has been replaced with a short series of workshops in local primary schools, for children in years 4 and 5, to take place during autumn 2018.

Other areas where we intend to make changes, following on from feedback from staff, choir directors, participants and musicians, include:

- ❖ Extending the residential course to include at least one additional rehearsal day, allowing for more thorough musical preparation and capacity to focus on general musical development;
- ❖ Increasing the number of sectional rehearsals, as overwhelmingly requested by participants;
- ❖ Instigating different systems to encourage socialising amongst participants;
- ❖ Engaging a project manager further in advance, to make best use of specialist knowledge;
- ❖ Scheduling face-to-face meetings with choir directors prior to the project to enable safeguarding, scheduling and system issues to be addressed more efficiently;
- ❖ Scheduling training workshops further in advance of the project, to maximise effectiveness;
- ❖ Omitting vox pops from the evaluation: they did not capture significant additional feedback.



“Thank you so much for this opportunity: they have been the most incredible four days and I have taken so much from the experience. The vocal leaders were SUPER encouraging and made a real difference to my confidence.”

Project Outcome Evaluation

Outcome	Achieved?	Evidence / notes
Young people have increased confidence and agency.	✓	Evidence from participants, choir directors and parents alike overwhelmingly testifies to the impact of the project on participants' personal and musical confidence. Even where participants' feedback does not explicitly recognise impact in this area, the willingness with which they express opinions and changes in body language pointed to positive developments.
Young people have improved vocal facility and better knowledge of choral music.	✓	The development of the choral sound and the accuracy of performance demonstrate the collective improvement in this area. In feedback, participants demonstrated an understanding of the programme and clear musical preferences for different works. Many acknowledged specific areas of vocal development (particularly with regard to vocal range and projection, stamina, warm-up technique, breath control, support and sight reading skills) and there was a collective desire for an increased number of technique and intensive learning sessions, in the form of sectional rehearsals.
Young people have increased team work skills.	✓	Participant feedback points to a growing sense collective responsibility and pride in the achievements of the group. Choir Director case studies record several cases of students, unprompted, taking increased responsibility for their section or choir.
Young people have increased communication skills.	✓	Participants demonstrate willingness to contribute to rehearsals, to ask questions and to give feedback on the project. All sing with excellent posture, body language and eye contact and are largely keen to engage with the professional musicians and staff working alongside them. Case studies record several instances of participants becoming more forthcoming about future plans and ambitions, higher education opportunities and musical tastes. The level of socialising between different partner choirs indicates good confidence and communication.
Partner choir directors benefit from practice sharing opportunities and CPD.	Developing	Partner choir directors worked together effectively and we are already aware of developing plans for future collaboration, both with and without Gabrieli Roar. It will take some time for these discussions to result in activity, often because the choirs and their directors are already so busy that significant lead-time is required for ideas to come to fruition. However, there is a clear willingness to share ideas and create new relationships amongst the choir directors and we will continue to work with them to help facilitate this where possible or necessary.

“An unforgettable experience. We made friends with people we would never otherwise have met and were coached by incredible musicians.”

Acknowledgements

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We are indebted to all those who have supported us and showed faith in this project, and in the musical and social imperatives that propel us forward to new projects in the future.



“I have learnt to be more self-reliant ... The project has made me more confident when I’ve made mistakes because the leaders have been so encouraging. I have learnt to work well in a large group.”

