

David's musical success is inspired by Plymouth charity

David Howard Baker, a former student at Lipson Co-operative Academy, was last September accepted on to a foundation scheme to study Musical Composition at Oxford University's Lady Margaret Hall.

David, who was quickly identified as a keen musician by the Academy, says that he benefited greatly from 'a rich and varied extra curriculum programme' that allowed him to participate in various ensembles such as a jazz band, folk group, woodwind group and big band.

David added: "Everything changed in Year 9 when the charity Plymouth Music Accord attended a concert at my school. My music teacher was a member of the charity and it all developed from there."

PMA's primary aim is to nurture and provide musical platforms to enhance and develop young aspiring musicians. It is made up of very passionate members looking to fundraise to create a plethora of musical experiences from tuition to concert-going to internships.

Alongside supporting music and musicians in the Plymouth area, Plymouth Music Accord work with young people and children. They believe that all children should have the opportunity to enjoy music and learn a musical instrument and to sing. This is because of evidence which suggests that involvement in music is extremely beneficial to a child's development.

In addition to boosting self-esteem, there is ample evidence that learning an instrument and playing in an ensemble greatly develop children's learning and social skills.

Back in 2011, Plymouth Music Accord, having talked to Lipson Community College, decided the best way to help students in secondary schools was to help them learn a musical instrument. Tuition is not free in secondary schools

and could not always be afforded. PMA decided to pay a tutor to go into schools for one hour per week and give tuition to a group of 9 students, one of which was David.

With the help of PMA, David began writing for strings and piano with focused teaching from music teacher Peter Twyman. His passion for composing expanded further at A level as he attended summer schools for composers at the Purcell School of Music in 2015 and 2016.

There he was introduced to graphic scores, extended instrumental techniques and became immersed in the timbral colours of the instruments. With the guidance of his music teacher, David composed a Clarinet Sonata that was premiered during his first year at Oxford by the winner of the BBC Young Musician of the Year.

David's acceptance into Oxford is a great success for PMA, but support is still vital for them to continue the work that they do and to hopefully see more local school students following a career in music.

PMA needs to raise funds to develop the scheme further - possibly including

a similar project in primary schools. The way music is funded in schools does not help children with an aptitude for music nor our music industry - inaction could result in future musical giants left sleeping!

There will be a concert at the Sherwell Centre on January 31 at 6.30pm for all the Ensembles funded by PMA to 'strut their stuff' - from beginning Ensembles to the seniors. The concert is important for the beginners to hear what they can do and also helps the seniors to remember what they were like starting out and how far they have come.

For more information on Plymouth Music Accord contact the charity secretary Roger Viles on 01752 262668 or via email roger.viles@ic24.net.

