

## Star singer

**Music is good for the whole brain.**

Early last year, Frank, who was born with hydrocephalus and is visually impaired, suffered a serious illness resulting in brain damage, and for six months showed little sign of recovery. However, it seems, that music, as ever, has been Frank's saving grace, helping him to regain his mental wellbeing and his innate determination.

So much so that in August Frank was well enough to perform at the BBC proms at the Albert Hall singing Beethoven's 9th under Daniel Barenboim as a member of the National Youth Choir. He has also been offered a place in the London Youth Chamber Choir, an elite group of 16 singers, which led him to become one of the backing singers for Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones at the O2 Arena.



“ Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent ”

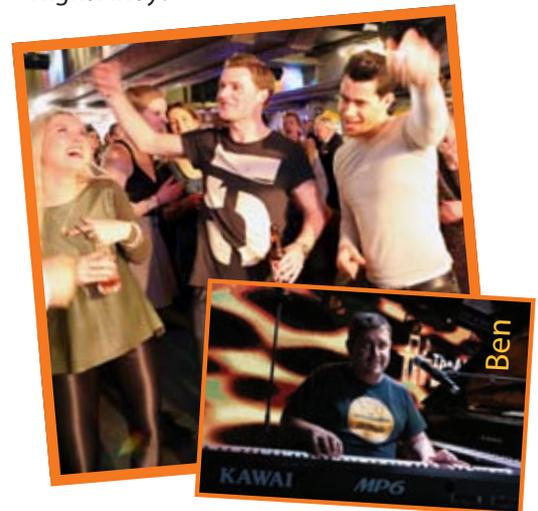
*Victor Hugo*

## Boogie Under the Bridge

**Over 350 people boogied the night away at an uplifting and successful fundraising evening hosted by AMBER.**

Described by one partygoer as “the best charity event I have ever been to”, it took place at the fashionable new club ‘Under the Bridge’ in Chelsea.

The uniquely gifted blind jazz pianist, Derek Paravicini, joined international boogie-woogie star, Ben Waters and his Band, to play some irresistible dance music. Tommy Hare, a sensational new talent, almost stole the show with his rendition of Sam Cooke’s ‘Twistin’ the Night Away’.



**AMBER is extremely grateful to everyone who came to support the charity on the night and to all those who made such generous donations.**

## Why music helps

**Music has many different features - tunes, rhythms and harmonies - and they all engage different parts of the brain.**

When the brain is damaged through accident or illness, music can help in the rewiring process - finding a way through to memories that may otherwise be hidden or, for example, helping stroke patients to learn to walk again.

Some of these features overlap with the centres that deal with other areas, such as language, and research has

shown that music can help some children who find using words difficult. Music offers children with disabilities a way of communicating and socialising with others, and can help them learn about the world around and other cultures.

Above all, music not only gives people joy and a sense of achievement, it is the very best brain food too.

**Music reaches parts of the brain that other activities don't**



# A benevolent bequest

AMBER was touched by the thoughtful bequest of Chris, who left the charity £7,700 in his will.



Chris

Sadly, Chris died of cancer in March 2012, following a relatively short illness, aged 61. As a teenager he had taken piano lessons, which gave way to the demands of his 'A' level studies. Unfortunately, he didn't return to music

until well into his 50's when an impulse led him to purchase a piano and engage a local piano teacher, who was grateful for a mature student.

This proved a tremendous reawakening for Chris – with his only regret being that he had not taken the step much sooner. With enthusiastic practice and encouragement he came on in leaps and bounds, and his interest in music and attending recitals also grew. This became the first love of his life.

Chris was always certain that he wanted to help others experience the joy of music, which made such a huge contribution in his later life. Thank you Chris for choosing AMBER. Legacies are so important to our charity and enable us to help more children access music.

# A special school

AMBER is proud to support a remarkable West London school, Edward Wilson, where a special unit for the visually impaired (VI) has been going strong for over 8 years.



Ilya

As well as music lessons funded by AMBER, Ilya and six other vibrant young children are given Braille lessons, individual dance classes and mobility training. The school also has a dedicated VI room where the children can go to practise their Braille, listen to stories, paint and play.

The school does everything it can to include the VI students in its day-to-day activities, often organising special outings. Recently they visited the Unicorn Theatre to see a tactile/audio play '1001 Nights' and also went rock climbing, and they have just finished 4 sessions with a tactile storyteller. But their biggest adventure yet was a residential trip for a long weekend to help with self-help skills.

# Amazing Grace

Registered blind, 11-year-old, Grace has low muscle tone, a severe curvature of her lower spine, and the two halves of her brain are not joined together properly.



Grace

However, music is helping her as it always does and she has been gaining top marks in her percussion, drum and piano playing. Grace is remarkable at picking up rhythms, writes and composes her own piano pieces in Braille and can play two tunes at the same time on her keyboard– one with her left hand, the other with her right.

Using her amazing voice, Grace sings in perfect pitch and has won junior musician of the year at her school. She is also the youngest member of the chamber choir. As she believes, "Music comes from inside and is a story that should be shared and breaks down the barriers." It is no wonder that this exceptionally talented, bright and joyful young girl inspires everyone she meets.



# Resolute Rachel

Rachel has been playing the piano since she was 5 years old.

At 14 she gained a distinction in her Grade 8 piano and at 15 an 'A' in A level Music. To fulfil her ambition of studying at a Music Conservatoire and a career in music, she is now working hard on her repertoire and technique.

Rachel is also learning Braille as well as how to present herself as a blind musician in a sighted world.

Recently, Rachel performed in Birmingham at the Annual Conference for the Association of Colleges in front of 1800 people.

Rachel



## The causes of blindness

Many of AMBER's children like Jamie are blind due to being born so prematurely.



Jamie

The causes and nature of visual impairment in children have changed a great deal in recent years. Although the number of blind and partially sighted children in the UK remains constant at around 25,000, the make-up of that population is very different now from what it was 30 or 40 years ago.

Many of what were the commonest causes, such as measles, are far less

widespread than they used to be, while other medical conditions, such as extreme prematurity, are more prevalent. This means that fewer children in the UK today are solely blind or partially sighted. Many have additional disabilities – learning difficulties, autism or physical impairment.

There has been a good deal of social change too. Children with a wide range of special needs are included in mainstream schools today who, in previous years, would have gone to special schools; while those with profound and complex needs, who might not have been educated at all, are now in special schools.

But one thing remains constant - the importance of music in all these children's lives - Jamie is blind, has cerebral palsy and is autistic, but despite his profound disabilities, he's extremely bright and has an exceptional talent for music.

## The AMBER Angels cricket match

The AMBER Angels  
v  
Haileybury Hermits

The first AMBER Trust cricket day took place at Haileybury College in July.



Although the match itself became a casualty of the great British summer, the players and spectators remained undeterred and decided to hold a fundraising lunch instead.

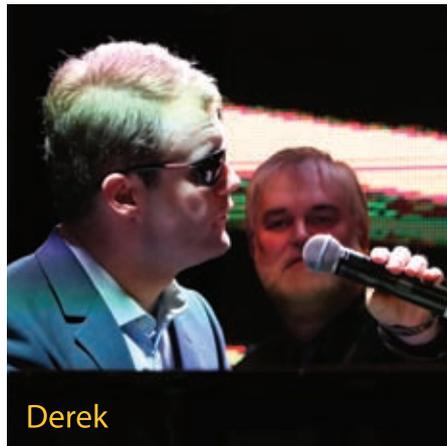
Around 75 loyal supporters of all ages turned up and were treated to a delicious barbeque, plenty of drinks, face painting and games. In the afternoon, the weather cleared up enough for a riotous rounders competition. Thanks to the generosity of AMBER's friends and a fruitful raffle, we managed to raise over £3,500 without a cricket ball even being bowled!



# Non-stop Derek

Derek has been very busy in recent months, with a visit to Amsterdam just before Christmas, and a further trip to Los Angeles planned for April 2013.

He has given a number of concerts in the UK too, from Chelsea to Cardiff. Plans for the future include an evening at the Hilton Park Lane and later another piano concerto with the Orchestra of St John's in London.



Derek

# Harmony for Hazel at Snoezelen

For the past two years, five-year-old Hazel, who is blind and has had neurosurgery nine times, has been having weekly music sessions, funded by AMBER, at the Worcester Snoezelen Centre.



Hazel

Here she has developed her musical knowledge and understanding more than her parents could ever have imagined possible. She is now able to clap and count different beats, can identify different styles of music and has vastly expanded her repertoire of songs. She is also able to describe how

music makes her feel and loves to add sound effects to everyday life.

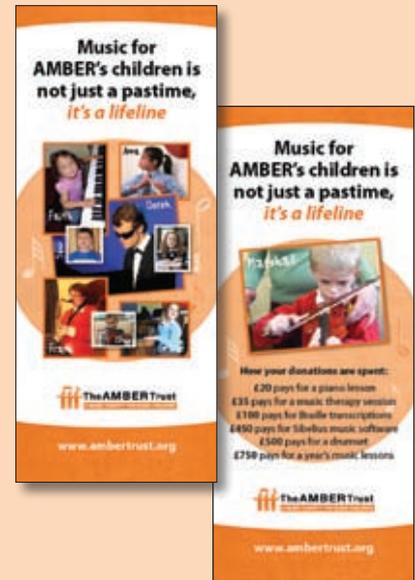
Hazel's teacher feels that all aspects of Hazel's life have flourished at Snoezelen and that she is a happy, vibrant little girl with a magically musical nature and an exciting future.

Snoezelen is a multisensory therapy for children and adults with autism or development disabilities, like Hazel. At her sessions, Hazel visits a 'Snoezelen room', which is specially designed to stimulate her senses, using music, lighting-effects, colour, sounds and scents, and where she can relax.

The therapy, derived from the Dutch words 'snuffelen' (to seek out, to explore) and 'doezelen' (to doze, snooze) has helped build Hazel's confidence, physical coordination and strength, and has had a huge impact on her mental wellbeing and making sense of her world.

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

# Raising the Banners



Thanks to the generosity and kind support of Miller Philanthropy, who helped sponsor our 'Boogie Under the Bridge' evening, we now have two vibrant new AMBER banners. These will undoubtedly help to raise the charity's profile at any future events.

**Last year, AMBER gave out 134 Music Awards to the many talented musicians we support.**



Zoe

As well as music therapy, singing and Braille, we are funding lessons for all kinds of exciting instruments, such as drums, harp, guitar, clavinova, trumpet, accordion, flute, tuba, violin, saxophone, clarinet and piano.

# Grace the composer

Grace's first and foremost love is music.

She has started composing her own pieces and writing her own songs and recently recorded and performed a song at her school, which has boosted her confidence immensely.

Visually impaired due to a rare brain condition, 13-year-old Grace and her band gave "an awesome performance" at the Hertford Corn Exchange where she again sang one of her own songs.



Grace

One of Grace's main ambitions is to write songs for other people - a real composer in the making.

# Ray of sunshine

AMBER supports children with many different forms of visual impairment, from partially sighted to totally blind, but for all of them music plays an important part in their lives.



Ray

13-year-old Ray has Stargardts, a disease that affects his central vision, which is deteriorating rapidly.

Although he finds crowded and unfamiliar places frightening and challenging and was becoming withdrawn, Ray loves playing and practising the piano, which has helped him to focus on things other than his eyesight problems.

It relaxes and makes him happy, gives him confidence and unquestionably enriches his childhood.

# Thank you from Katie

11-year-old Katie's piano lessons give her a real sense of achievement and success.

Although she is shy and sensitive due to her visual problems, she pestered the hotel piano player to let her play on holiday in Cyprus, which he did and she stole the show!

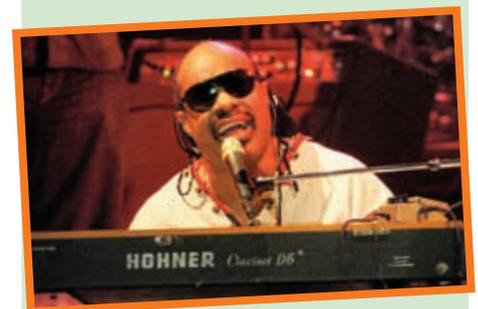


# A musical splash

AMBER was delighted to be invited to a truly innovative evening at the London Aquarium, where the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra joined forces with 12 visually impaired children to perform an original piece of music inspired by the sounds and images of the sea.



With a backdrop of turtles, hammerhead sharks and stingrays, the delight on the children's faces was clear to see and the music certainly lived up to its aim - to bring the ocean world to life for them.



“ Music is a world within itself, with a language we all understand. With an equal opportunity for all to sing, dance and clap their hands ”

Stevie Wonder

# AMBER's trustees

AMBER is pleased to announce the appointment of four additional trustees.



President of Hilton Worldwide (Europe, Asia and Africa), **Simon Vincent** is also Chairman of the Hilton in the Community Foundation. He was introduced to AMBER's work by Adam Ockelford, who has been teaching music to his autistic son for the past four years.



**Fi Costa** studied violin and piano at the Royal College of Music. As a result of her great interest in music, she organises regular and hugely successful concerts for older people in central London. Fi is also researching the effect of music in care homes. She lives in London and has four children.



For three years **Julia Walport** was Chair of the Trustees of the Ealing Youth Orchestra and was responsible for its day-to-day running. Professionally, she practiced clinical medicine for ten years and has since worked for the Medical Defence Union.

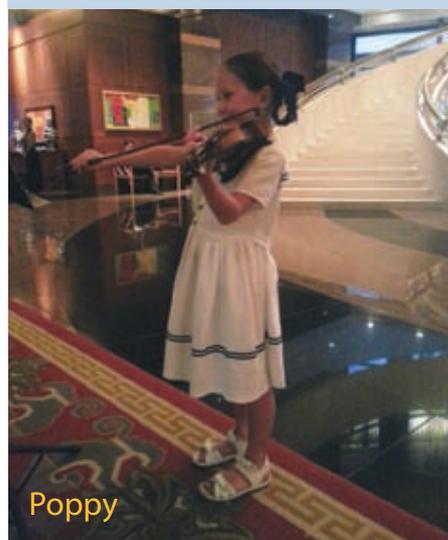


**Will Walker-Arnott** works at Charles Stanley as an Investment Manager where he advises private clients, charities and trusts on financial investments. A trustee of the Haileybury Society, he was the force behind AMBER's cricket match at his old school.

## Future events

### Poppy's pleasure

Ever since eight-year-old Poppy heard Derek Paravicini play at Chichester Cathedral, she has wanted to hear him again and to raise money for The AMBER Trust.



Poppy

Derek is delighted that he is able to join Poppy, herself a talented musician who plays the violin (Grade 8!), piano, oboe and recorder, at a concert at St. Richard's Church, Chichester on Sunday June 9th.

As her mother Angie says, "Poppy lives and breathes music and wants other young people to have a chance to benefit from the wonderful world of music."

To find out more about any of the children we have featured in this Newsletter, please look at the 'Children's Stories' section of our website [www.ambertrust.org](http://www.ambertrust.org)

## Showtime at the Hilton

On 7th June the London Hilton on Park Lane will generously host an exclusive event for The AMBER Trust, and the Hilton in the Community Foundation, which supports disadvantaged children all over the world.



Derek Paravicini and Friends will provide a magical evening's entertainment, followed by dinner. AMBER is delighted to be working with Hilton on this unique and inspiring event.

For further information please look at the News and Events section of our website [www.ambertrust.org](http://www.ambertrust.org)

Come and join us. Book now at [hilton-foundation.org.uk/derek](http://hilton-foundation.org.uk/derek) Or call 0207 605 7733 or visit [events@hilton-foundation.org.uk](mailto:events@hilton-foundation.org.uk)

Tickets include entrance to the concert, a champagne reception as well as a two-course dinner and wine after the concert.

**Silver Concert & Dinner**  
table for 10 people: £1,500

**Gold Concert & Dinner**  
table for 10 people: £2,000



### The AMBER Trust

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