

Event on Autism and Music on Monday 26th June 2017

On **Monday 26th June 2017**, we are organising a Centre for Autism special event on Autism and Music, at **10.30am – 2pm**, at the University of Reading London Road campus.

This free event aims to bring together families/individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) with practitioners and researchers to celebrate the talent and explore fundamental research questions in autism and music.

The programme features

- a lunchtime concert by an extraordinarily talented pianist with ASD, Derek Paravicini, with introduction by Professor Adam Ockelford
- a talk on music and language processing in ASD by Fang Liu
- and a panel discussion with seven renowned researchers working on ASD at the Centre for Autism at the University of Reading where audience members can ask questions

The event will take place in the Great Hall, at the University of Reading London Road campus. If you would like to attend, please book your place on our website

at: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/15/about/newsandevents/Events/autism-and-music.aspx>. Further details will be emailed to you once registered.

This event is funded by the University of Reading Endowment Fund and the School of Psychology & Clinical Language Sciences. Please feel free to forward this invitation to anyone who might be interested.

Please see below for **our programme** and an introduction to **DEREK PARAVICINI**.

Programme:

Time	Event
10:30-11	Registration and coffee
11-11:05	Welcome by HoS, Laurie Butler: Introducing ASD research in the School
11:05-11:30	Bhismadev Chakrabarti & Fiona Knott: Information about the Centre for Autism
11:30-12	Concert by Derek Paravicini (http://www.sonustech.com/paravicini/), with introduction by Professor Adam Ockelford (University of Roehampton)
12-1	Lunch break. Light lunch will be provided.
1-1:30	Talk by Fang Liu: Music and language processing in ASD
1:30-2	Panel discussion and Q&A: Bhismadev Chakrabarti, Fiona Knott, Fang Liu, Trevor Powell, Teresa Tavassoli, Cathy Tissot, & Tim Williams

DEREK PARAVICINI

Derek is 36 years old – and he has spent the last 34 years of his life making music! He first shot to fame when he was just nine years old, playing jazz with the Royal Philharmonic Pops Orchestra at the Barbican Centre in London. Numerous national and regional television appearances followed, in the UK and overseas. In the last few years, Derek featured in the series *Extraordinary People* (Channel 5, UK), and on BBC1, BBC2 and ITV. He has appeared in documentaries in Japan, Germany, Australia and the USA – including three times on CBS's prestigious '60 Minutes' programme. Derek has given concerts in venues across England, in Europe and the USA; among

them, Ronnie Scott's renowned jazz club, the Mandalay Bay Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada and in Phoenix, Arizona, for Mohammad Ali.

In 2012, Derek played 'Rhapsody in Blue' and a new piano concerto written specially for him with the Orchestra of St John's in London's Queen Elizabeth Hall. In 2014 he performed in Los Angeles with players from the Count Basie Orchestra for the prestigious Young Presidents Organisation. Derek was also asked that same year to play for The World Psychiatrist Convention in Spain. He has performed twice at Buckingham Palace and in 2016 he played for the Amber Trust at Clarence House attended by The Duchess of Cornwall. Later in the year he played for The Chief Executives Organisation in Florence.

There is no doubt that Derek is one of the most extraordinary pianists and musical entertainers of his generation. Yet he is blind, autistic and has severe learning difficulties. Dubbed 'The Human iPod' in the USA, Derek has a repertoire of tens of thousands of pieces – all learnt very rapidly, simply by listening to them. There is so much more to Derek than an iPod, though; beneath the quiet charm and thoughtful smile lies a fiery, creative musician, whose astonishing improvisations and dazzling technique have wowed audiences both sides of the Atlantic and, through his numerous media appearances, across the world.

Today, Derek is fast turning into a world-wide phenomenon. He has had several million hits on his many Youtube videos, and his revered TED talk https://www.ted.com/talks/derek_paravicini_and_adam_ockelford_in_the_key_of_genius?language=en has been translated into 26 languages. His biography – *In the Key of Genius: The Extraordinary Life of Derek Paravicini* – was published by Random House in 2008, and serialised in the *Mail on Sunday*. Derek's latest CD, "ELATION" is released on the 9th of June, and Derek will perform "live" material from the album on BBC Radio 3's In Tune on the day of release. https://www.amazon.co.uk/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_2?url=search-alias%3Dpopular&field-keywords=Derek+Paravicini

For a glimpse into the life of Derek Paravicini go to the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPium9GWVNo>

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It's hard to believe it now, but Derek was born premature, at 25 weeks, and weighing just over half a kilogram. As a result of the oxygen therapy required to save his life, Derek lost his sight, and his development was affected too. It later became apparent that he had severe learning difficulties and exhibited many of the traits of autism. However, he soon acquired a fascination for music and sound, and, by the age of four, he had already taught himself to play a large number of pieces on the piano, of some melodic and harmonic complexity (such as 'Smoke Gets in your Eyes'). Almost inevitably, with no visual models to guide him, his technique was chaotic, and even his elbows would frequently be pressed into service, as he strove to reach intervals beyond the span of his tiny hands!

At this time, his enormous potential was recognised by Professor Adam Ockelford, then music teacher at Linden Lodge School for the Blind in London. In due course, weekly and then daily lessons were arranged, in an extensive programme of one-to-one tuition that was to last for a decade. Painstakingly (through physical demonstration and imitation) Derek acquired the foundations of technique that were necessary for him to move forward. His natural affinity for jazz, pop and light music soon became evident; together with his improvisatory talents, ability to play in any key, and love of performing in public!

There is no doubt that Derek has a truly unique musical mind and is increasingly performing with his own musical voice. It's not just that he can learn just about any piece by ear with great rapidity, or that he now knows literally thousands of compositions, just by having listened to them over the years. When Derek sits down at the piano, he throws himself wholeheartedly into the music – constantly creative, constantly innovating, constantly seeking to communicate in fresh ways with the audience.

Hope to see you there!

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