

Ready for the big time

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From left: Ben Davidson, 10, Alexandra Dorey, 11, and George Walker, 11. (Picture by Steve Sarre, 20622626)



Shaun Shackleton meets the three talented youngsters selected to play in the National Children's Orchestra

THREE young local musicians have been selected to play in the National Children's Orchestra. Alexandra Dorey, 11, double bass, George Walker, 11, viola, and Ben Davidson, 10, viola, were chosen after each doing a video audition. 'They were asked to play two prepared pieces of music of contrasting styles and speeds, each up to five minutes long. 'You can have up to five minutes beforehand to prepare for the first two,' explained Alexandra. 'Then you had to do an unprepared piece where you open a sealed envelope,' said George. 'You only have 30 seconds to see what it is,' said Ben. 'Mine took ages to open because it was sealed with gaffa tape,' said George laughing. 'I played Bach Prelude Suite No1,' said Ben. 'Oh, I played Prelude No2,' said George.

'I played The Bull Steps Out by Norman Hester,' said Alexandra. 'I've been playing viola for about three years,' said Ben. 'It's fun to play.' 'Same as what Ben, says,' added George. 'The viola's not too squeaky and not too deep. Not too many people play them.' The National Children's Orchestra was founded in 1978 to give young musicians the opportunity to develop their talents in a national symphonic orchestra. It is the only organisation that operates on a national scale in the UK for children in the seven to 14 years age group who show early musical talent and potential. Alexandra, George and Ben have already been to their first rehearsals in the UK. They all enjoyed the experience and made friends with other musicians. 'I loved the rehearsals,' said Alexandra. 'I got to play with people my own age. I usually have to play with 18-year-olds.' Ben loved playing with a

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Alexandra Dorey, 11, double bassist

professional conductor. 'If you're struggling or you have got lost, the conductor will always shout out "F, G, B" or "16" for the bar numbers.' 'If you've got lost then everyone is lost,' said George. Week-long courses during the summer in London and Blackpool are coming up, culminating in a concert at Birmingham Town Hall. 'We can't wait to play,' said Alexandra.