Peta Levi listens to music made by a double quartet of students at a school for the deaf

Breaking through the silence

ON MARCH 6 eight 15-year-old deaf pupils at the Mary Bourne School, Newbury, Britain's only grammar school for the deaf, will perform before Prince Charles at the Royal Festival Hall, as part of a following concert given by Mamie's Effort music course.

Mamie decided to celebrate his birthday with an open day on behalf of deaf children after receiving a letter from Anna Zachlin asking if he would sponsor a 15-year-old deaf pupil who could not be in the Beethoven 120 of Vyse-drawn. Two years ago the pupils were started. The Mary Bourne Fund for Deaf Pupils.

I listened to the eight pupils, who form a double quartet of recorder players. The group plays four different pieces, including a sixteenth-century piece by Bach, a seventeenth-century piece by Handel, in time, and expressively.

Missing year-old Susan Wijayas, who is totally deaf, says: "Because I am deaf doesn't mean I can make music - playing is no use for me." Although she cannot hear the music, she enjoys playing with a group and giving pleasure to others. Most deaf children are very sensitive to something with the help of modern hearing aids, but may not be able to hear high or low notes.

There are many spinners, such as 13-year-old Barbara Brown, who says: "There is no other way I can express myself as well as I can on the recorder." It helps me to get rid of my frustrations," she says.

The ensemble, which is called "Bamboo," was formed by Mary Bourne. The group practices four times a week at the school. The Mary Bourne Fund for Deaf Pupils.

The pupils at the Mary Bourne School are among those preparing to perform at the Festival Hall. They are taught by Miss Rosemary, who entered the British Deaf Association competition. The best works are being exhibited at the Festival Hall on March 6. Sadly some of the pupils cannot see their friends talking and cannot hear their music - we have no idea of their work.

Music teaches deaf children to listen and to communicate on any sound they are hearing. As the Beethoven 120 draw near, the school is in charge of the rhythm.