

NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGO: Not for publication before 9am, Wed 25th January

Britain's top orchestras reach more people despite 5% cut in income, survey shows

Orchestras warn of 'double funding whammy' as they perform more but earn less

Britain's leading orchestras are reaching more people through concerts and youth engagement but are losing income on all fronts, a report warns today.

The State of Britain's Orchestras in 2016 report reveals the phenomenal achievements of the nation's leading orchestras as they delivered more than 4,000 concerts and reached almost 5 million attendees and 900,000 children and young people amidst a 5% drop in total income.

The report, commissioned by Association of British Orchestras (ABO), compares their performance since a similar survey three years ago and shows how they last year:

- delivered 7% more concerts and performances compared to 2013
- visited 42 foreign countries, compared to 35 in 2013
- reached almost 900,000 children and young people, a 35% increase on the previous survey

The latest survey also shows how, despite these achievements, orchestras actually earned less money. This, combined with public funding cuts of up to 11% had left them with a 5% drop in their total income.

ABO director Mark Pemberton said: "Orchestras have innovated to achieve bigger audiences and engage more young people and they should be proud of these successes.

"However, the survey masks a greater reality. These larger audiences do not bring in more money and, if anything, actually increase losses. Many of the achievements have been fuelled by audience development initiatives such as discounted ticketing, free concerts and fixed fee performances at open air events.

"These have left orchestras suffering a double whammy – a decline in earned income alongside significant cuts in public funding. The message is simple. Orchestras cannot continue doing 'more for less'.

“The government has this year implemented Orchestra Tax Relief and this will offset some of the cuts in public funding imposed since 2010 – but it is far from enough. We need national and, most crucially, local government to restore funding closer to pre-austerity levels to enable our members to continue delivering great music to the widest possible audience.”

The State of Britain’s Orchestras in 2016 survey covered 84% of the Association of British Orchestra’s (ABO’s) 61 members and was last carried out in 2013.

It shows how British orchestras last year:

- increased attendance at UK concerts and performances by 3% to 4.83m compared to 2013
- employed a total of 2,411 permanent, long-term or member status musicians, of which almost 20% are EU nationals
- had a total income of £124.6m, a fall of 5% on equivalent figure for 2013. The reduction reflected a 5% drop in earned income, a 7% fall in Arts Council funding and an 11% drop in local authority funding.

ends

Note to editors

1. Please see attached State of Britain’s Orchestras in 2016
2. The ABO is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras, youth ensembles and the wider classical music industry throughout the UK. The ABO’s mission is to enable and support an innovative, collaborative and sustainable orchestral sector by providing advice, support, intelligence and information to the people who make British orchestras a global success. Recent initiatives include *Resonate* in association with PRS for Music Foundation and BBC Radio 3, which supports the best orchestral music of the last 25 years, and *Find Your Way* which identifies and offers training to future sector leaders. The ABO campaigned successfully for Orchestra Tax Relief and continues to champion the sector at the highest levels.
3. The following note and statistics used in this release should be read in conjunction with the attached survey findings: The ABO survey asked Britain’s professional orchestras about their activities, audiences, income and staffing, between August and October 2016.

Responses were received from 51 orchestras: 84% of those from whom responses were requested. Respondents provided data for the season/financial year 2015-2016 or the closest equivalent 12-month period.

Comparisons are made in this report with the 2013 ‘key facts’ survey (covering 2012-2013) for a core sample of 38 orchestras for non-finance data, and 31 orchestras for finance data¹, that completed the survey in both years.

As some of the orchestras that provided data in 2016 differ from those that responded in 2013, the total numbers in this report should be viewed as representative rather than firm numbers. The percentages shown *in brackets* for live performances and sources of income

¹ Comparative financial data has not been adjusted for inflation.

reflect changes in the comparison groups over the three-year period, and are not percentage changes in the total numbers between 2013 and 2016.

Media enquiries to Jon Flinn on 0151 709 0505