



News Release

31 May 2022: Mark Pemberton OBE to Step Down as Chief Executive of ABO

Today (31 May 2022), Mark Pemberton OBE, Chief Executive of the Association of British Orchestras (ABO) has announced that he will be stepping down from his role at the end of September 2022.

Leading the ABO since 2007, Pemberton has successfully championed the interests of the UK's professional orchestras and the wider classical music industry during some of the most turbulent times the sector has faced.

Commenting on his decision, Pemberton said:

'It is with much regret that I have decided to step down from my role as Chief Executive of the ABO at the end of September. I will have been in post for 15 years at the end of July, and these last two years, dominated by Covid and Brexit, have taken their toll in terms of increased workload in helping the sector survive. It is therefore time to pass the baton to someone with the energy and drive that I was able to bring to the role 15 years ago, who will work with the board on a refreshed vision for the association, and who will tackle the challenges ahead.

I have hugely enjoyed my time at the ABO, and can look back at some significant triumphs, from seeing off the Class 1 National Insurance threat to persuading the Treasury to implement Orchestra Tax Relief. I have expanded services and our political influence, introduced our suite of management awards, and enhanced our training offer including the Find Your Way programme. And the effort I and the team have put in these past two years has helped members build a recovery from the pandemic. It was a fitting culmination to my time at the ABO to have received an OBE in the New Year Honours and the ABO Special Award at the conference dinner in February.

I will be working with the board on a strategy for recruiting my successor, and wish them well in finding someone to take the ABO to even greater heights.'

Pemberton has enhanced the ABO's reputation at home and abroad. He has played a critical role in advocating for the public value of orchestras, growing the ABO's membership and has developed the ABO's annual conference into Europe's largest orchestral gathering, attracting delegates from across the globe.

Looking ahead, Pemberton's successor will take on the mantle of driving forward ambitions for a more diverse, inclusive and sustainable classical music sector.

ABO Chair, Simon Webb said:

'Mark has been the strongest advocate for British orchestras during his time with the ABO, championing our work and ensuring the voice of the sector is heard loudly and clearly across the UK's governments and assemblies. The UK's orchestras have adapted, evolved and thrived in the last fifteen years, always benefitting from Mark's commitment and energy and his deep understanding of our work. The ABO itself continues to evolve under Mark's leadership, he has developed an international profile and a leadership role for the organisation in response to the needs and



ambitions of our members. I am personally saddened by his departure and will now work with the ABO board to identify a worthy successor to Mark, to continue his work on behalf of the UK's orchestral sector.

The Association of British Orchestras is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras, youth ensembles and the wider classical music industry throughout the UK. Its 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 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 campaign for the sector at the highest levels, to help re-build resilience out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Current priorities include the impact of Brexit, and creating a platform for a more diverse and inclusive orchestral sector.

For further information about the ABO visit www.abo.org.uk.

Follow us on Twitter [@aborchestras](https://twitter.com/aborchestras)

For press enquiries contact ABO Head of Policy and Communications, Hanna Madalska-Gayer
hann@abo.org.uk / 07392 456 850

ENDS