

ABO

A Platform for Success:

A Five Year Vision for Orchestras

Foreword

Britain's orchestras are in exceptionally good shape. We boast world class ensembles in major cities and towns across the United Kingdom. Some of the world's finest conductors live and work here and ambitious new works are unveiled every week alongside spectacular renditions of well loved favourites.

And this is not just a metropolitan phenomenon. Our orchestras, led by the vast array of diverse chamber orchestras, performed in every county in England last year, and almost every county in Scotland and Wales - giving the opportunity to those in the most isolated areas to hear and be moved by exceptional music.

Routinely, many of our children now have the chance to experience a professional British orchestra playing live for them as part of their education. British orchestras lead the world in their education and community programmes - particularly in the creative music-making participatory experiences they offer to children and adults alike.

Orchestras, performing alone or in collaboration with other arts forms, are a truly inspirational part of our national fabric. We are immensely proud of our contribution to national and local prestige, to education, health, regeneration, the social fabric of our communities and of course, to the simple life-enhancing enjoyment that the experience of beautiful music brings.

As the United Kingdom prepares for a new parliament, we say to all of our politicians, in Westminster, in the devolved administrations and in town and county halls: let us build on this success and use it as a platform to achieve even more.

In this document we set out our vision for the future: how we plan to shape centres of musical excellence up and down the country in partnership with the best of higher education; our belief that orchestras should play a part in primary and secondary education, including supporting every school child who receives music tuition; and our commitment to environmentally sustainable touring and to investing in new technology to give even more people access to our music.

Governments across the UK are essential partners in this endeavour. Our politicians can ensure we maintain a public and commercial broadcasting infrastructure that gives a platform to British orchestras. Our parliaments and local government can make it possible for every child to experience an orchestral concert, have the chance to learn a musical instrument and work creatively alongside orchestral musicians.

And our elected leaders can ensure that our funding base is sustained. This doesn't mean we want or need the taxpayer to bail us out. British orchestras are modern, effective businesses – many orchestras get no public subsidy at all. Even the most prestigious orchestras – national institutions in their own right - still earn a substantial amount of their own income to supplement the support they are rightly given from the national purse.

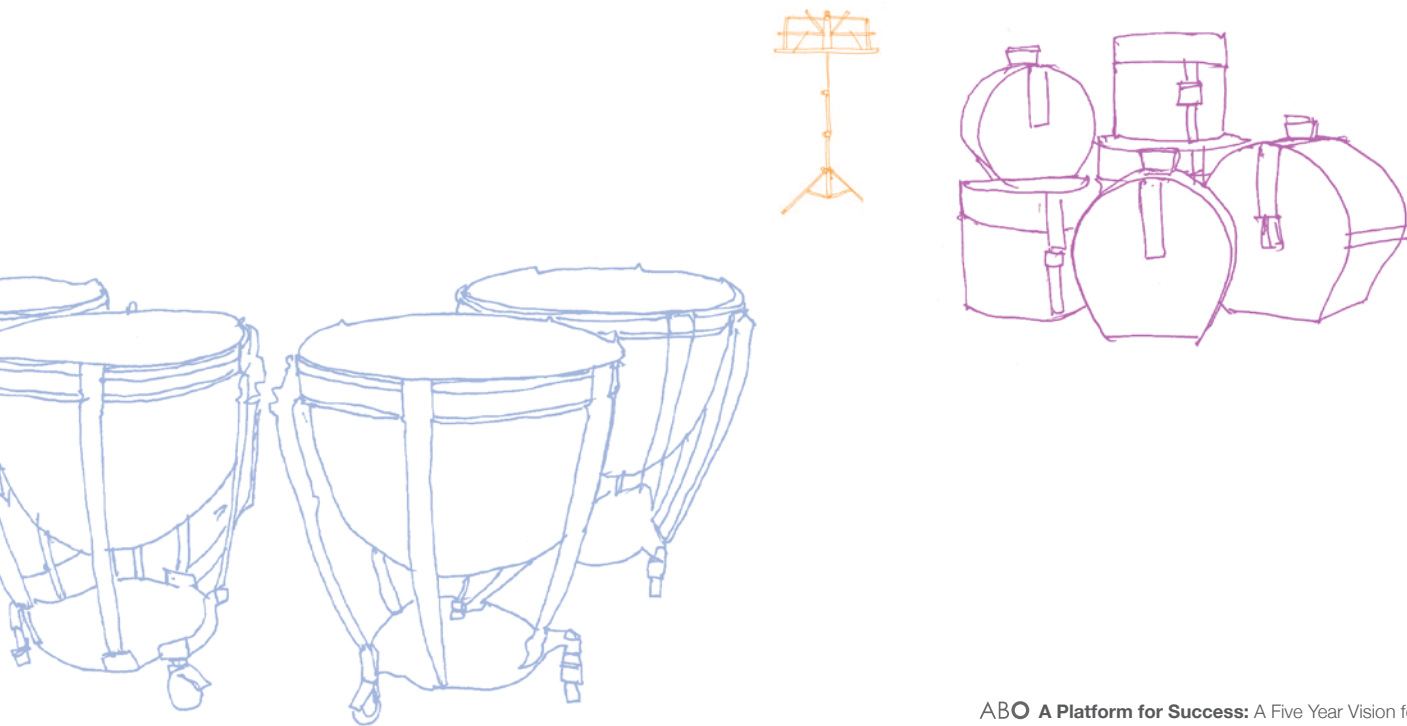


We believe that the millions of people in Britain who already experience the value of their orchestras want to see the public subsidy we receive maintained and we urge our parliamentary and local authority representatives to keep backing us.

Orchestras have always captured the imagination of the generations. In 1998 my orchestra, the London Philharmonic, gave a workshop at a primary school in South East London. Having been entranced by the double bass Rachel Meerloo persuaded her parents to allow her to learn the instrument. Thirteen years' later we have welcomed her back to play in the LPO sitting beside the very player who inspired her.

Orchestras believe in inspiring learning; inspiring participation; and most importantly, inspiring performance. If you believe in these things too, we hope that you will continue to give us your support. We can assure you, it will be worth it.

Timothy Walker AM
ABO Chair and Chief Executive and Artistic Director
of the London Philharmonic Orchestra




Inspirational Performances



Britain's orchestras are performing to more people and in more places and at a higher standard than ever before. Our concerts are a central part of the lives of hundreds of thousands of people every week. We employ thousands of highly skilled professional musicians and other staff and make an essential contribution to the local economies of the towns, cities and regions in which we are based. Our orchestras and homegrown musicians are ambassadors for British music – and for Britain – across the world. In turn, we attract the best international composers, performers and conductors to the UK.

This will become all the more important as the Olympic year approaches and the whole nation celebrates the best of British culture, identity and achievement. Orchestras are well placed to play a key part in that year both locally and nationally. We are a central part of British culture and at the heart of communities up and down the country.

Overseas we are one of Britain's best exports. Last year we played almost 500 overseas concerts in 39 different countries across all continents and, as we take our music abroad, we are committed to doing so sustainably.



We aspire to:

- Maintain our programme of great performances at home and abroad, challenging audiences with a wide repertoire and diverse approach
- Place orchestras within the national celebrations towards the London 2012 Olympic Games and Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games
- Nurture home grown talent and attract the world's best composers, performers and conductors to the UK. All these artists have at their disposal a hugely talented and highly skilled pool of musicians, with a rich orchestral heritage
- Ensure every orchestra in the ABO commits to an environmental 'touring charter' by 2015



Stimulating learning

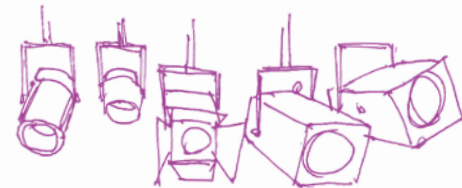
A child's first live concert experience, or learning to play a musical instrument, can lead to a lifetime of enjoyment, engagement or even to a professional career.

We want to ensure every child is given the opportunity to be inspired by the very best musicians and develop their musical skill by working with professional orchestral players. And we want to nurture talent. The future of the orchestral sector is in the hands of the young.

A new generation of orchestral musicians is emerging that is equipped not only with the skills to play excellent music but also able to communicate their skill, enthusiasm and passion to new and existing audiences. These dynamic young musicians must be supported in their role as ambassadors for music-making and their profession.

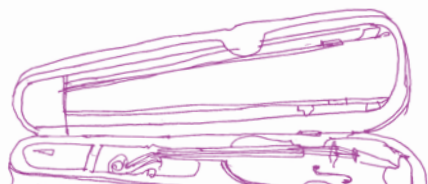
Building on existing relationships, we envisage that more orchestras will forge partnerships with specialist schools, conservatoires and performance venues to create centres of excellence. These will enhance the life-long education benefits of a highly developed orchestral community, whilst equipping the musicians of the future with the diverse skills needed to be a professional orchestral player.





We believe:

- There should be a network of ‘Centres for Orchestras’ across the UK by 2020, building on the success of the pioneering Centre for Orchestra, developed by the LSO, Guildhall School and Barbican
- Every child should have the opportunity to participate in creative music making – regardless of where they live or which school they attend
- Every child should have the chance to experience a live orchestral concert during their time at school



Driving participation

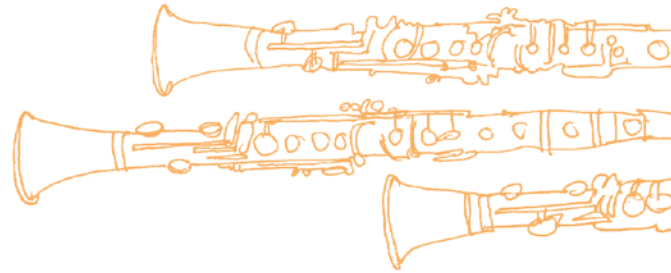
From schools to community centres, in small villages and major cities, with the old and the young – orchestras are reaching more people than ever before. UK orchestras are world leaders in creative music making and participatory programmes. We want to give everyone the opportunity to work with leading musicians – orchestral players and composers - and experience the thrill that music offers.

Innovative partnerships are allowing orchestras to explore new areas and reach new audiences impacting on the well-being, education and health of communities and inspiring people to take part. New technology gives orchestras the chance to reach a whole new audience through complementary means. Orchestras are using new techniques and pioneering approaches to transform access to orchestral music; from digital downloads to orchestral installations, 'virtual' concerts to vibrant social networks.



We will:

- Work in partnership with local authorities, promoters, venues and businesses to deliver high quality musical performances and workshops - to a range of people – including those in the most hard-to-reach communities within the UK
- Experiment with and push the boundaries of technological and digital innovation to introduce new audiences to orchestral music



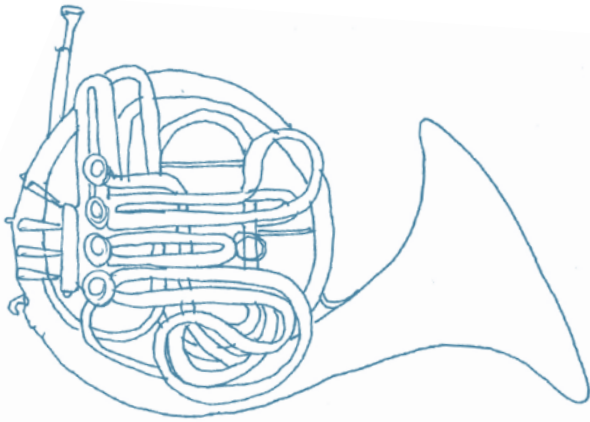
In order to meet our ambitions, we are calling on government to:

Value orchestras

- Recognise the economic impact orchestras have on their towns, cities and regions and acknowledge the extent of the return on public investment in the orchestral sector
- Recognise and support the orchestras' vital role in culture and trade abroad – and their importance for tourism in the UK
- Ensure orchestras nationally and locally are given the opportunity to be an integral part of the UK's Cultural Olympiad celebrations
- Create a framework where local authorities can champion music for its own sake, as well as for the innovation and value orchestras add within schools and the wider community
- Promote the ABO's 'sustainable touring' guidance as a model for other sectors
- Continue to support commercial and public service broadcasters to enable them to provide a platform for and access to orchestral music

Fund wisely

- Ensure financial support for the arts is consistent and reliable, allowing orchestras to plan long-term and be more efficient
- Sustain public investment in local authorities, to enable them to continue supporting orchestras, especially a regular concert presence and associated education and community work, local promoters, concert halls and smaller music venues
- Improve the tax system to enhance private giving from corporations and individuals
- Work with its European partners to reduce bureaucracy and implement a fairer withholding tax system across all countries of the EU, to enable more touring opportunities by British orchestras



Legislate supportively

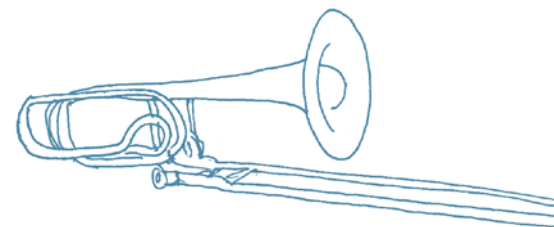
- Take the necessary steps to deal with illegal file-sharing through passing and implementing the Digital Economy Bill
- Improve the tax system to enhance private giving from corporations and individuals

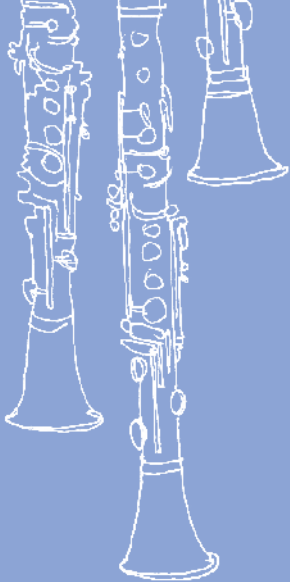
Support music education

- Guarantee that music education continues to be delivered in schools as part of the formal curriculum including providing the opportunity for children to learn a musical instrument
- Support the ABO's ambition to provide a live concert experience for every child during their time at school

For more detailed information on the work ABO orchestras are doing in hard to reach areas, in formal and informal education and with new technology, please refer to the ABO's series of policy briefs:

- Beyond the Concert Hall
- Orchestras into the Future
- Unlocking Potential (tbc)





ABO

The ABO is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras throughout the UK. We currently have 66 member orchestras and work alongside a variety of organisations that work within and support the orchestral sector. The ABO exists to support, promote and advance the interests and activities of professional orchestras in the UK in order to fulfil our vision for a society where orchestral music is valued as a core component of contemporary culture.

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