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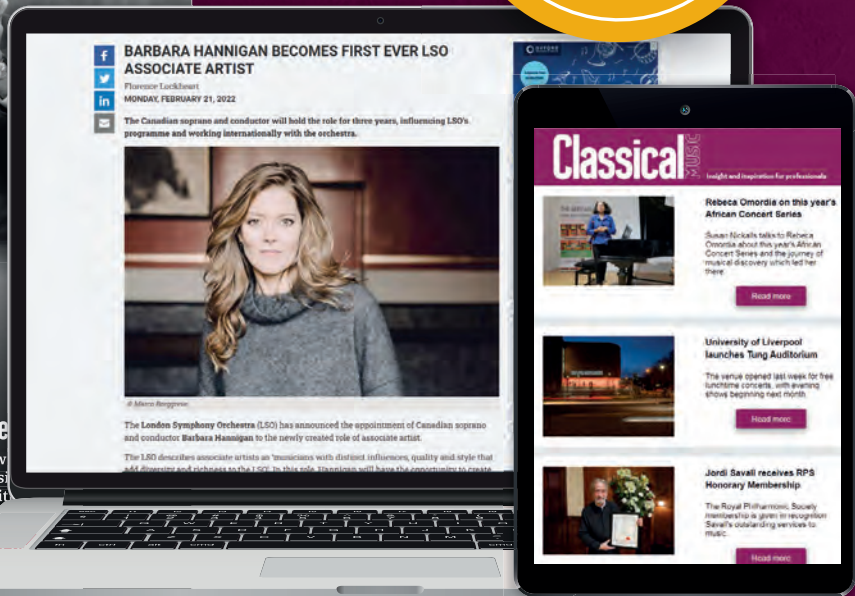
A behind-the-scenes look at Bradley Cooper's Bernstein biopic

Guiding light
Accessible, sustainable, beautiful – the Bristol Beacon is finally open for business

Back to school
Why ensembles are finding new opportunities in education settings

PLUS: Mortgages for musicians • Sweden's Konserthuset

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BACK IN
PRINT



BARBARA HANNIGAN BECOMES FIRST EVER LSO ASSOCIATE ARTIST
Florence Lockheart
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2022

The Canadian soprano and conductor will hold the role for three years, influencing LSO's programme and working internationally with the orchestra.

Rebecca Ormrod on this year's African Concert Series
Susan Hignalls talks to Rebecca Ormrod about this year's African Concert Series and the journey of musical discovery which led her there.

University of Liverpool launches Tung Auditorium
The venue opened last week for five lunchtime concerts, with evening shows beginning next month.

Jordi Savall receives RPS Honorary Membership
The Royal Philharmonic Society membership is given in recognition of Savall's outstanding services to music.

Classical Music offers insight and inspiration for all industry professionals and lovers of classical music. Our daily subscriber newsletter brings breaking news and developments direct to your inbox each weekday morning, while our quarterly magazine and website are packed with in-depth features and opinion – from interviews with leading musicians and senior arts figures; coverage of festivals, competitions, courses and concerts; to expert guidance on funding, touring, venues and more.

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ABO CONFERENCE WELCOME

As new Chair of the Association of British Orchestras, and on behalf of the ABO Board, I am delighted to welcome you all to our annual conference.

I may be biased, but I hope you are as gob-smacked as I am at the transformation of Bristol Beacon, our incredible host venue for the next three days. Thank you to the whole Beacon team for working alongside us to deliver this year's conference.

Welcome also to Bristol, a city with an extraordinarily diverse cultural offer that will manifest through this building for future generations. A city I am proud to call my professional home.

Whilst it would be wrong not to reference the confluence of sector specific and global challenges, I believe it is only right that we spend the next few days focusing on the future through positive exchange and mutual learning. Our future depends on us getting it right, now, through unity of purpose, diversity of people, influence and ideas alongside powerful and collective advocacy. That way our brilliant orchestras will be better understood, valued and celebrated by everyone.

I'd like to thank ABO Chief Executive Judith Webster and the ABO team for working so hard to design and deliver this year's conference and not being afraid to try out new ideas and formats to support more talk into action. Something we can all agree is needed right now.

Further thanks to our conference supporters - Principal Media Partner, Classic FM; Media Partner, Classical Music Magazine; Charity Partner, Help Musicians; and International Partner, the British Council. We are also grateful to the Musicians' Union for supporting musicians to attend this conference.

Finally, I'd like to thank you, our membership and delegates for being here, ready to contribute towards the future of our industry. I hope you enjoy the next few days meeting old and new friends, learning from our speakers and each other and come away feeling inspired and motivated.

Sophie Lewis

Chair, Association of British Orchestras
Chief Executive, National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain



© SOPHIE LEWIS

REFLECTIONS FROM THE CEO

I can hardly believe it's a year since the last ABO Conference. This being the first conference I have curated on behalf of the ABO, I am looking forward to delivering an event which incorporates some significant changes whilst retaining a sense of the familiar – a parallel perhaps to our approach to our audiences and indeed our business development, which often seeks to explore new avenues and opportunities whilst preserving the reassurance of what we're accustomed to. Your feedback will determine whether we need to go further next year, but regardless, we have given ourselves permission to change, permission to get things wrong and permission to take risks.

This conference is an invitation to seek out and share creative solutions to some of the challenges we grapple with every day, as well as the more existential issues which cause us greater concern.

During the year, we have all witnessed the less positive narrative in the media around classical music as a result of a perceived downward trend in public investment in the arts. Changing that narrative and winning the hearts and minds of the general public has become a priority along with the ABO's leadership role in that advocacy work. In our first ever 'Deep Dive' sessions, you will have an in-depth opportunity over a double length session to together help craft the messaging and narrative that the sector needs.

Another major concern is that of the pathways into our industry, both for performers and the wider workforce. What do young people look for from the world of work, what are their concerns and how can we incentivise careers in our sector, sufficiently adapting our working practices to both attract and retain the talent and people we need? The second Deep Dive is an opportunity to think creatively about this topic.

On that note, we will kick off with the voices of young people as a reminder that if we are to be relevant, we need to listen to a range of voices and challenge ourselves to respond in a meaningful way in both what we do, and how we do it.



The ABO Annual Conference is the largest gathering of the classical music workforce in the UK and this year’s event places an emphasis on providing more opportunities for debate and discussion that will inform our future work and thinking. It is more than a talking shop, and more than a networking opportunity. It is a chance for us to learn from each other and move forward together. Over my first year in post, I have realised that the beauty of a membership organisation is that the members are the experts and that the solutions we seek are to be found within that membership. The ABO’s task is to facilitate a development process by offering inspiration, challenge and holding the sector to account in the interests of developing our work, our audiences and our resilience. It is through this that orchestras will thrive and I look forward to taking the next step in that journey with you.

Judith Webster
Chief Executive, Association of British Orchestras

A MESSAGE FROM OUR HOST

I am really delighted to be able to welcome you all to Bristol for the ABO 2024 Conference, Creative Solutions.

Our new concert hall complex opened at the end of last year, after 5 years of building and over 20 years of planning and dedicated fundraising from a myriad of different sources. The aim was to deliver excellent and inclusive spaces for music where musicians and audiences would feel at home and inspired. The Beacon has declared an intention to become the UK’s first carbon neutral concert hall by 2030 in line with Bristol’s 2015 status as European Green Capital.

It feels so right to us to be hosting our friends and colleagues of the ABO at the first major conference in our beautiful new building.

Please do take the time to explore all the different spaces across the building, learn about the architectural, social and musical history of this site, be inspired by the artworks and take heart in the physical proof that, just sometimes, dreams really can come to life!

Team Beacon is here to help you get the most out of your visit to Bristol, I hope you manage to find plenty of Creative Solutions in these difficult times.

Louise Mitchell
Chief Executive, Bristol Beacon



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SPECIAL FEATURES IN THE 2024 CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY EVENING	Conference ‘First Night’ - with live music and guest speaker, Mihir Bose
	ABO Classical Music Awards - new awards celebrating teams and championing our values
THURSDAY MORNING	Deep Dives - double sessions for in depth debate
THURSDAY EVENING	Thangam Debbonaire/Jonathan Dimpleby Fireside Chat and Paraorchestra performance
FRIDAY AFTERNOON	Keynote speaker, Ewan Hilton on system change
THROUGHOUT	ABO Marketplace - for collaboration and sharing creative solutions
	Enhanced participation - technology enabled audience engagement
	Facilitated networking breaks - making connections
	Decompression zone in Simons’ Bar - for time out

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Help Musicians

“

The charity supported me during my Masters and their help was absolutely invaluable. Now is an especially challenging time for musicians, both financially and emotionally, and charities like Help Musicians are vital during these difficult periods.

- *Isata Kanneh-Mason*
Pianist & Help Musicians Ambassador

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helpmusicians.org.uk/giftinwill



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AT A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY - BRISTOL BEACON	
12:30	Registration Opens and Welcome Lunch
14:00	OFFICIAL OPENING; YOUNG VOICES SPEAK OUT - BEACON HALL
15:30	Networking Break
16:00-17:15	BBC: A VISION FOR THE FUTURE - BEACON HALL
19:00	RECEPTION - LANTERN HALL
20:00	CONFERENCE FIRST NIGHT - LANTERN HALL AND THE BRIDGEHOUSE

THURSDAY 25 JANUARY - BRISTOL BEACON & ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL			
08:30	Registration Opens		
09:30-10:15	OPENING SESSION - BEACON HALL		
10:30	BRISTOL BEACON - LANTERN HALL	ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL	
	DEEP DIVE: Building the narrative for classical music	DEEP DIVE: Shaping the future musical workforce	
11:30	Networking Break		
12:00	DEEP DIVE: Part 2	DEEP DIVE: Part 2	
13:00	Lunch Break		
	BRISTOL BEACON - LANTERN HALL	BRISTOL BEACON - STALLS BAR	BRISTOL BEACON - TERRACE BAR
14:00	AI and collaborating in the digital space	Place making and collaboration beyond the musical silo	A collaborative approach to EDI development in Scotland
15:15	Networking Break		
15:45	Governance - Multiple voices make good decisions: making it meaningful	Creating conditions for performers to thrive	Organisational change for inclusion
18:00	PRE-PERFORMANCE FIRESIDE CHAT - LANTERN HALL		
19:30	PERFORMANCE: THE ANATOMY OF THE ORCHESTRA: DRONE REFRACTIONS - Paraorchestra, BEACON HALL		
20:30	POST-PERFORMANCE RECEPTION - WESTON STAGE		

FRIDAY 26 JANUARY - BRISTOL BEACON			
09:00	Registration Opens	Breakfast Briefing: Orchestras in Healthcare - TERRACE BAR	
	BRISTOL BEACON - BEACON HALL	BRISTOL BEACON - LANTERN HALL	BRISTOL BEACON - STALLS BAR
10:00	Hiring and recruitment practice in UK orchestras	Audiences - strategy, brand and reaching to the future	Sustainability in the orchestral sector and beyond
11:15	Networking Break		
11:45-13:00	ABO AND MUSICIANS' UNION: Navigating Change Together - BRISTOL BEACON		
13:00	LUNCH BREAK		
14:00	CLOSING SESSION: Keynote Speaker - BRISTOL BEACON		
15:30	Conference ends		

2024 CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY

12:30

REGISTRATION

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND FLOOR), BRISTOL BEACON

LUNCH & ABO MARKETPLACE

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON

14:00

OFFICIAL OPENING

BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

Welcome speeches

Sophie Lewis, Chair, Association of British Orchestras & Chief Executive, National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain; **Louise Mitchell**, Chief Executive, Bristol Beacon; **Phil Noyce**, Managing Director, Classic FM.

14:15

YOUNG VOICES SPEAK OUT

BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

What are we hoping for from the arts world and what do we care about?

To open the 2024 conference, we hear from young musicians within ABO member organisations about the issues they care about most and their thoughts on how the arts world might respond, introduced by **Judith Webster**, Chief Executive, Association of British Orchestras.

The following panel discussion, hosted by BBC Journalist and Presenter **Adam Fleming**, will kick off with Minister for the Arts, **Lord Parkinson's** response to the challenges posed by the young musicians and audiences of tomorrow, with industry perspectives on how the arts sector might address the issues raised – from climate change, to mental health. What role can orchestras play...?

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Arts and Heritage and Department for Culture, Media and Sport Lords Minister **Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay** will be joined by **Dougie Scarfe**, Chief Executive, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; **Louise Mitchell**, Chief Executive, Bristol Beacon; **Sophie Lewis**, Chair, Association of British Orchestras & Chief Executive, National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain; **Barry Farrimond-Chuong**, Chief Executive, Open Up Music and **Linton Stephens**, musician and broadcaster.

15:30



NETWORKING BREAK & ABO MARKETPLACE sponsored by the British Association of Concert Halls

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON

16:00

THE BBC SESSION – A vision for the future

BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

What does the sector want from the BBC? How can the BBC support the UK orchestral ecology?

BBC Radio 3 holds a unique place as the only UK radio network to regularly broadcast live classical music, with the BBC's Orchestras and Choirs providing the backbone of its live performance offer. It is the beating heart of the station – from every BBC Prom, to orchestral symphonic masterworks, through to intimate chamber music and the latest contemporary works from across the UK. So how can orchestras and ensembles collaborate even more effectively with Radio 3 and the BBC's own performing groups in 2023 and beyond?

There has been much coverage of the fact that traditional classical music radio in the UK faces some challenges – with audiences down, attention spans shorter and, across the board, organisational budgets being tighter. But as the latest listener figures for Radio 3 demonstrate, it is also clearly possible to draw in new audiences for live classical music on the radio. As **Sam Jackson** approaches one year in post as Controller at BBC Radio 3, he discusses live and recorded music output, his vision for the station, and how the BBC is responding to changing listener habits. He is joined by **Jennifer Redmond**, Learning and Digital Producer, BBC Philharmonic, and **Simon Webb**, Head of Orchestras and Choirs at the BBC. The session will be hosted by **Jo Buckley**, Chief Executive, Impact Scotland who will facilitate questions from conference delegates.

17:15

SESSIONS END

19:00

RECEPTION sponsored by the British Council and Independent Society of Musicians
LANTERN HALL, BRISTOL BEACON



20:00

CONFERENCE 'FIRST NIGHT'

LANTERN HALL & THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND, GROUND FLOOR & STALLS BAR), BRISTOL BEACON

The 'First Night' of the conference will see a different approach than in previous years. We invite delegates to join us for an evening which will include an inspirational guest speaker, guided tours of the Bristol Beacon and live music throughout the evening. We'll be announcing the winners of the prestigious **ABO Award**, and the new **ABO Classical Music Awards** in partnership with Media Partner **Classical Music Magazine**, presented by **Classic FM's Aled Jones**.

Guest speaker – Mihir Bose

Award-winning journalist and author, **Mihir Bose** writes and broadcasts on social and historical issues and sport. Mihir will offer his unique insights into the challenges and opportunities of making the celebrated game of cricket, truly diverse. This parallel perspective will explore how cultural issues engrained within what is perceived to be an elite sport, are impacting on its relevance and appeal, and the learnings that we can draw for the classical music sector.

Mihir Bose was the BBC's first sports editor and first non-white editor, having previously worked at the Daily Telegraph and the Sunday Times. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Loughborough University for his outstanding contribution to journalism and the promotion of equality.



Paraorchestra with Charles Hazelwood, Surgeons Girl and Limbic Cinema performing in Beacon Hall

© ELAY BRISS

THURSDAY 25 JANUARY

08:30

REGISTRATION

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND FLOOR), BRISTOL BEACON

ABO MARKETPLACE

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON

09:30

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF THE SECTOR AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

Headlines from the ABO's Key Facts survey, presented by **Chris Carey**, Music data expert and Founder, FastForward & Chief Economist, LIVE; **Jonathan Deakin**, Partner, McKinsey & Company, shares their recent report on the impact of the UK arts sector; and **Barbara Keeley MP**, Shadow Minister for Music and Tourism and Co-Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Classical Music, looks to the future.

10:30

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS: DEEP DIVES

We invite delegates to choose between two 'Deep Dive' sessions which will run concurrently and will delve into key issues the sector is currently grappling with. These bumper sessions will include presentations and provocations from a range of contrasting speakers and facilitated discussions, resulting in tangible actions and recommendations for impactful change. The table discussions will be led by representative teams of colleagues from across the region and sector (see the Conference App for details).



DEEP DIVE

LANTERN HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

How can we build the narrative we need for classical music to thrive?

In association with the Royal Philharmonic Society

It's time to speak out like never before. Classical music is experiencing existential cutbacks that others feel are justified. How do we turn the tide? Advocacy isn't just about lobbying. It's how we all talk about and account for classical music in everything we do. As the ABO embarks on its new advocacy campaign, this deep dive invites you to discuss what's working in the current classical narrative and what's not. Several guest speakers will pose initial provocations, laying bare the complexities and pitfalls of advocating for classical music today. Then it's over to you: together we will reflect on our current collective approach, define the values of music we need to emphasise better, and devise essential next steps to build the best possible case for the music we love.

Hosted by **James Murphy**, Chief Executive, Royal Philharmonic Society with provocations from **Dr Hannah French**, Academic and BBC Radio 3 presenter; **Amina Hussain**, Principal Flute, Manchester Camerata, and **Jonathan Deakin**, Partner, McKinsey & Company.



DEEP DIVE

ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL

How can creativity help shape the future musical workforce?

In association with the Royal Northern College of Music

'Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself' – Leo Tolstoy.

Collaboration across Conservatoires and the music profession has great potential for further development. Join this deep dive discussion that will propose a deeper collaboration and mutual understanding between higher education and the music profession, to explore creative collaborative solutions to some of the knottiest challenges the music world faces, and really empower the next generation of musicians and music leaders.

Hosted by **Manus Carey**, Deputy Principal, Royal Northern College of Music with provocations from **Samantha McShane**, Creative Director, Manchester Camerata and **Linton Stephens**, musician and broadcaster.

11:30

NETWORKING BREAKS

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON
AND

ST GEORGE'S BRISTOL

Samir Savant, Chief Executive, St George's Bristol, shares his personal journey with delegates during the networking break.

12:00 **DEEP DIVES** - continued
 Discussions continue after the break, coming together to produce actions, recommendations or statements for further dissemination.

13:00 **LUNCH & ABO MARKETPLACE**
 THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON

14:00 **BREAKOUT 1**
 STALLS BAR, BRISTOL BEACON

Place-making and collaboration beyond the music silo

It's often easier to work in a silo. To produce projects in your own bubble that you control. But this tends to have limited impact. Are music organisations reaching out to help create and sustain a vibrant cultural ecology in their area? Are they included in city- or district-wide discussions about increasing the diversity of people who engage with the arts? Are they in touch with their rural communities? If not, why not? We all need to work together to make a step-change in inclusive engagement with arts and culture; to be relevant to 21st-century Britain. By working collaboratively with other arts organisations, it's possible to make a long-term, significant change in the cultural life of a city or rural area. This is a goal common to the city of Sheffield and the rural East Riding of Yorkshire. With a Yorkshire-based panel, chaired by Orchestras Live, this is an opportunity to question and discuss the benefits and challenges of place-making in collaboration.

Chaired by **Sarah Derbyshire**, Chief Executive, Orchestras Live; with panellists **Jo Towler**, Chief Executive, Music in the Round; **Rebecca Maddox**, Head of Business Development (culture), Sheffield City Council; **Sarah Unwin**, Head of Cultural Engagement, University of Sheffield and **Nicola Dixon**, Arts Development Officer, East Riding of Yorkshire Council.

BREAKOUT 2
 LANTERN HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

AI and collaborating in the digital space

AI-driven technologies have been steadily enhancing artistic projects and processes, from tracking sound in real time in popular and video productions with live music, to using synthesized digital rendition of vocal and instrumental parts, to creating visual accompaniment for live performances, and to re-examining compositional techniques. This session will explore AI's potential to influence classical musical practices as well as the ethical, social and economic connotations related to the usage of these technologies.

Moderated by London Philharmonic Orchestra's Artistic Director **Elena Dubinets**, this panel discussion will also feature **Ewa Bogusz-Moore**, General and Programme Director, Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, who is working, together with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, on an upcoming premiere of Wayne McGregor's AI-driven digitized ballet *Harnassie*; composer and researcher **Rob Laidlow** who has utilized AI in his practices in multiple ways; **Florence Ware**, Head of Change, Global and **Tom Kiehl**, Interim Chief Executive, UK Music.

BREAKOUT 3
 TERRACE BAR, BRISTOL BEACON

A collaborative approach to EDI development in Scotland

Delivered in partnership with Creative Scotland (CS), the Chamber Music Scotland (CMS) Classical EDI Development Fund aims to support a cohort of artists and representatives of arts organisations to undertake research and development activities that will inform and progress EDI practices within Scotland's classical music sector. The cohort is supported by specialist industry advisers who, alongside CMS and CS, support their progress and facilitate new connections and create platforms to share findings.

This session will be chaired by **Paul Tracey**, Chief Executive for national arts organisation Chamber Music Scotland who will be joined by **Catherine Ferrell**, General Manager, Scottish Ensemble who is working with colleagues from Dunedin Consort, Hebrides Ensemble, and Red Note Ensemble to develop new approaches to recruitment within the classical music sector; also by **Neil Fox**, Director of Engagement, National Youth Orchestras of Scotland. Neil is working closely with organisations across the sector to identify and share learning on engaging young people from underrepresented groups. The final panellist is **Katrina Lee** – a freelance violinist based in Glasgow whose project aims to raise awareness of the gender inequality in classical music through research into the lesser heard repertoire of female composers.

15:15 **NETWORKING BREAK & ABO MARKETPLACE**
 THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON

15:45

BREAKOUT 1

STALLS BAR, BRISTOL BEACON

Multiple voices make good decisions: making it meaningful

Orchestras continue to grapple with the challenge - are we relevant? Relevance is crucial to fulfilling our organisational missions and ensuring our future sustainability. But how are we deciding on what is relevant, who are we trying to be relevant for? So often decision-making power sits with senior leads and the Board - but do they really represent the stakeholders we want to engage?

For many orchestras, young people (including young adults) are involved in a significant amount of their work, both in and outside of the concert hall. Despite this, how often do we consider them as key stakeholders with whom we can collaborate and be challenged by, and who can meaningfully contribute to decision making within our organisations?

This session will explore models of engaging and empowering young people to be collaborative decision makers. We will examine the challenges and successes of these approaches from the perspective of orchestral leadership and directly from young people. Delegates will leave with practical steps you could take to ensure that your stakeholders play a crucial role in securing your organisation's long-term success and relevance.

Chaired by **Lucy Galliard**, Chief Executive, Sinfonia Viva with panellists **Gavin Reid**, Chief Executive Scottish Chamber Orchestra; **Rachel Sunter**, Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Scottish Chamber Orchestra Youth Assembly; **Elen Derrett**, Youth Leadership Co-ordinator Orchestras for All; **Beth White**, Co-Chair of Trustees Orchestras for All; **Katie Lucas**, Head of Learning & Engagement, CBSO and **Maisy Neal**, CBSO Youth Ambassador.


BREAKOUT 2

LANTERN HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

Creating conditions for performers to thrive

In association with Help Musicians

Physical and mental wellbeing are foundational enablers for musicians to perform at their best, but musicians face unique risks to both through the very nature of their work which can contribute to health challenges, including musculoskeletal problems, hearing loss and more. When these occur, the impact on musicians' performance and career can be significant. What are the approaches that can best prevent and address such issues early and how can we embed them with performers? This session will explore orchestral musicians' perspectives on their wellbeing using data from the first ever Musicians Census and the practical approaches that can be taken to help performers thrive. Participants will also hear about a new global learning network to generate insights and practice in this area and find out how to get involved.

Chaired by **Kate Lidbetter**, Chief Executive, Symphony Services Australia; with **Laurie Oliva**, Director of Musicians Services, Help Musicians; **Peter Garden**, Executive Director, Performance and Learning, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; **Claire Cordeaux**, Chief Executive, British Association of Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) and **Dr Sara Ascenso**, Lecturer in Musicians' Health and Wellbeing, Royal Northern College of Music

BREAKOUT 3

TERRACE BAR, BRISTOL BEACON

Organisational change for inclusion

This panel-led, group discussion will examine two organisations, who are pushing to become more systemically diverse. Opening with a 'state of the nation' on music education, **Nathan Holder**, Professor of Music, Royal Northern College of Music will offer context for the 'pipeline' which is so often held accountable for the failure to diversify. **Bill Chandler**, Director, BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus and **Rowan Rutter**, Chief Executive, City of London Sinfonia will offer their experiences on how developing more strategic, embedded approaches to inclusivity and resilience within their organisations can and has broadened the conversation beyond individuals, to the culture of companies - shifting away from demographic 'tick-box' exercises to fundamental and seismic change for the better.

Elise Brown, Director, Revere Arts will offer added provocation on how organisations and the sector can go further, faster and with more impact. By being open and transparent and using these two companies as models-in-progress for change, we will invite a wider discussion and debate with colleagues in the room.

17:00

SESSIONS END

18:00

PRE-PERFORMANCE FIRESIDE CHAT
LANTERN HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

We are delighted to present a fireside chat between the Chair of Bristol Beacon and celebrated presenter, **Jonathan Dimbleby** and Shadow Culture Secretary **Thangam Debbonaire MP**.

19:30

IMMERSIVE PERFORMANCE BY THE PARAORCHESTRA
The Anatomy of the Orchestra: Drone Refractions
BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

The audience will be invited to walk amongst a 34-piece orchestra as they chart an immersive odyssey through drone.

In *The Anatomy of the Orchestra: Drone Refractions*, **Charles Hazlewood** and **Paraorchestra** turn the orchestra inside-out, charting an immersive drone odyssey via some of Minimalism's forebears and its greatest composers.

20:30



POST PERFORMANCE CONFERENCE RECEPTION sponsored by Classic FM
WESTON STAGE, BRISTOL BEACON



Paraorchestra with Charles Hazlewood, Surgeons Girl and Limbic Cinema performing in Beacon Hall

© CHRIS COOPER, SHOTAWAY

FRIDAY 26 JANUARY

09:00

REGISTRATION

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (GROUND FLOOR), BRISTOL BEACON

ABO MARKETPLACE

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON


 ORCHESTRAS Live

BREAKFAST BRIEFING - ORCHESTRAS IN HEALTHCARE 2023 SURVEY REPORT

TERRACE BAR, BRISTOL BEACON

In association with Orchestras Live

Sarah Derbyshire, Chief Executive, Orchestras Live launches the Orchestras in Healthcare 2023 Survey Report, presenting the latest information about the work of UK orchestras in and with the health, wellbeing and care sectors. As the business case for this work strengthens, the report highlights key developments required to maximise the opportunities for our sector.

10:00

BREAKOUT 1

BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

Hiring and recruitment practice in UK orchestras

Join us for a panel discussion on inclusive recruitment in orchestras. The session will cover the challenges faced by orchestras in the sector, as well as the opportunities and benefits of reviewing current processes of recruitment. The ABO, Black Lives in Music and the Musicians' Union have collaborated to facilitate discussions with UK orchestras on the inclusive recruitment agenda. The session will include a presentation of a 10 point action plan, specifically designed to support orchestras in best practice for inclusive recruitment of musicians.

Roger Wilson, Director of Operations, Black Lives in Music will moderate the session, with **Judith Webster**, Chief Executive, Association of British Orchestras, **Jo Lavery**, National Organiser, Orchestras, Musicians' Union; **Ruth Millar**, Orchestra Manager, Ulster Orchestra, **David Burke**, Chief Executive, London Philharmonic Orchestra, **Tom Eisner**, Violinist, London Philharmonic Orchestra and **Steve Doman**, Violist, London Symphony Orchestra.

BREAKOUT 2

LANTERN HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

Audiences: Strategy, brand and reaching to the future

How can brand catapult an organisation forward to wider and broader audiences? Using different case studies, this session will explore brand at the core of strategy. Chaired by **Abigail Pogson**, Managing Director of recently renamed The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, with **Sarah Robertson**, Communications and Special Projects Director, Bristol Beacon; **Jonathan Harper**, Chief Executive, Paraorchestra; **Jocelyn Lightfoot**, Chief Executive, London Chamber Orchestra and **Camilla Scarlett**, General Manager & Violinist, La Serenissima.

BREAKOUT 3

STALLS BAR, BRISTOL BEACON

In the Round: Sustainability in the Orchestral Sector and Beyond

This session is a deep dive into the sustainability issues at play in the classical and wider music industries. To set the scene, we will hear what classical audiences think about how arts organisations should respond to the climate emergency before consideration of the factors at play in sustainability today. How do we make progress on this key agenda? What learnings can we share and what partnerships do we need to forge for greatest impact? The session will consider touring, contracts, sponsorship, audience safety, venue responsibilities and more from the different perspectives of the panellists. Chaired by **Jon Collins**, Chief Executive, LIVE; with **Claire O'Neill**, Co-Founder and CEO, A Greener Future; **Flo Carr**, Associate Director, Indigo; **Rosa Corbishley**, Development Director, Bristol Beacon; **Sorcha Collier**, Senior Project Manager, Askonas Holt; **Adrian Bending**, Timpanist, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

11:15

NETWORKING BREAK & ABO MARKETPLACE

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON

11:45



ABO AND THE MUSICIANS' UNION

BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

Navigating change, working together

In challenging times, it is essential that we seek out creative solutions that benefit us all, tackling culture change and the infamous player/manager divide as a route to better outcomes.

Naomi Pohl, General Secretary, Musicians' Union and **Judith Webster**, Chief Executive, Association of British Orchestras outline the joint work the two organisations are currently engaged in, highlighting the need for players and management to collaborate to bring about development, innovation and lasting change. This will be followed by three examples of orchestras working collaboratively and effectively together, chaired by **Flynn Le Brocq**, Chief Executive, London Mozart Players. They are: from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra **Emma Stenning**, Chief Executive and **Mark Phillips** Player Chair; from Sinfonia Cymru **Caroline Pesse**, Chief Executive and **Simmy Singh**, Violinist; and from Liverpool Philharmonic, **Michael Eakin**, Chief Executive and **David Rimbault**, Violinist & Musicians' Union steward.

13:00

LUNCH & ABO MARKETPLACE

THE BRIDGEHOUSE (LOWER GROUND & GROUND FLOORS), BRISTOL BEACON

14:00

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

Relevance, purpose and tackling system change - perspectives from another world

Ewan Hilton, Chief Executive, Platform

Drawing on parallels from the arts and mental health sectors Ewan will talk about his experience of internal and external challenge in relation to equality and inclusion, his own personal learning, challenges to his own values and a realisation that he was part of the problem and hopefully part of the solution. He will talk about the twists and turns of challenging and shifting the institutions he is involved with towards system change and a more purposeful inclusive future with an honest appraisal of successes and failures along the way and most importantly what has been achieved and what feels different now.

Ewan Hilton is Chief Executive of Platform for Change, a mental health and social change charity that works across Wales and England, and a Trustee of Chapter Arts, an international centre for contemporary arts and culture, rooted in the heart of Cardiff, Wales.

15:15

CLOSING SESSION

BEACON HALL, BRISTOL BEACON

Conference closing remarks and looking ahead to next year

ABO Chair, **Sophie Lewis** and ABO Chief Executive, **Judith Webster** and an invitation to the 2025 Conference.

15:30

CONFERENCE ENDS



Bristol Beacon

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ABO

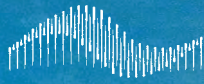
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A beacon of hope

Newly opened arts venue the Bristol Beacon is set to make its mark – not least as host of this year’s ABO conference. Andrew Green heads to the former Colston Hall site and discovers a shining example

I’m hopelessly lost in the maze-like city centre on my way to an appointment at the University of Bristol – then, suddenly, I know *exactly* where I am. In front of me is the brand-new Bristol Beacon frontage, beaming out its open-for-

business notice, after a root-and-branch refurbishment costing £130m.

That anchoring is exactly what the Beacon’s chief executive, Louise Mitchell, intended – that all Bristolians and the wider world will know *exactly* where they

are with this fabulous replacement for the Colston Hall, very little of which has survived the gutting and comprehensive re-invention of the building. When we speak, Mitchell passionately conveys her faith that the essentially new structure will



be seen both as a welcoming community resource for anyone and everyone in Bristol and a must-perform destination for musicians of multiple genres arriving from anywhere and everywhere.

‘There’ll be no hierarchy in musical terms,’ she insists. ‘Just a wide range of great music.’ So a quick scan across the upcoming events reveals visits from the likes of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Hallé, the LSO and the Dresden Philharmonic, but also lavish helpings of jazz, folk, rock and pop. Plus, plenty of big-name comedy – and much more besides.

Mitchell is delighted that the first conference to be held at Bristol Beacon is that of the Association of British Orchestras (ABO), in late January. ‘When

I was on the ABO board,’ she recalls, ‘I regularly championed the Beacon as an ideal conference venue in the making; it’s not difficult to talk up how wonderful it is.’

The refurbishment project dates back to 2011. The long, drawn-out process (and the inevitable swelling of costs) owes much to the fragile condition of the old Colston Hall. ‘In fact, it would have been easier to knock the whole thing down and start again,’ Mitchell observes, ‘but it’s a Grade II listed building. The pandemic and Brexit have had the effect of making things more expensive. Supply chains have been disrupted, customs regulations have been much more complicated. Inflation has meant that things like steel prices are much higher. A doubling of the budget was very intimidating.

‘In the event, we received money from a whole variety of sources – the Arts Council and the Heritage Lottery, various trusts and foundations, and also from around five hundred private individuals – in one case, to the tune of £1m. Our trustees and the team at the Beacon have done an amazing job – I’m so proud of them and very proud of the building. Of course what really matters is what we deliver inside it.’

The previous structure was essentially a concert hall. Now, the Beacon offers a range of multi-functional spaces beyond the gleaming main auditorium seating around 1,900. Ideal for conferences, then, not least as those various spaces can be hermetically sealed in acoustical terms, allowing for a variety of activities to run simultaneously. ‘This was fundamental to how we thought the hall should be developed,’ says Mitchell. ‘It will be great to see the whole building being used, but with any one area able to feel insulated.’

It’s clear that the Beacon models many of the principles that underpin the ABO’s stated outlook on the developing role of orchestras. For example, the conference promises an examination of ways to develop ‘better pathways from higher education to the music profession’. Mitchell comments that while Bristol does not have a conservatoire, ‘the close-by University of Bristol has an excellent music department and we’ll certainly be looking to build stronger ties with it. Then, for example, there’s the local Pre-Conservatoire run by Jonathan James, with

which we already work a great deal. Like St George’s in Bristol, we have a history of granting opportunities to individual young musicians, and also to those keen to work in areas such as sound design. The fundamental principle is that we wish to be useful whenever and wherever we can as far as the people of Bristol are concerned.’

Then there’s the whole business of diversity and inclusion, where the issues and opportunities are a matter of common concern for both the Beacon and the ABO. Mitchell says her venue’s task is to offer musical opportunities and experiences in all manner of musical fields, for all manner of people. ‘We ensure that people with disabilities or special educational needs are accommodated. Bristol is such a magical centre when it comes to access to music.’

I’ll say. For example, it’s home to Charles Hazlewood’s Paraorchestra of professional disabled and non-disabled musicians, whose ‘Trip the Light Fantastic’ presentation (a ‘sensual and spatial work’) filled the Beacon’s opening night. Then there’s the National Open Youth Orchestra (again featuring disabled and non-disabled musicians, aged 11-25), for which the Bristol Beacon is the regional centre, and the ongoing relationship the venue has with the National Children’s Orchestras organisation, whose HQ is at Arnos Vale in Bristol.

As far as accessibility for audiences are concerned, the Beacon’s provisions also exemplify the ABO’s emphasis on the need to promote innovation and digital. One example: through the building, Mitchell explains, ‘there are displays of QR codes for use by the visually impaired, providing spoken guides to the immediate environment around them – perhaps indicating that a staircase is nearby with eight steps up, or pointing out that a lift is available just to the right.

‘And of course, we’re using technology to make it as easy as possible for people to plan their visits. All the information they could need is available on their phones, with links to ticketing, information on how to order food and drink, the published programme for their event, and so on. The fundamental principle is never to take anyone in the audience for granted.’

Bristol Beacon also provides a compelling case for engagement with planet-saving green measures, another on-going ABO concern. The Beacon, says Mitchell, is on track to become the



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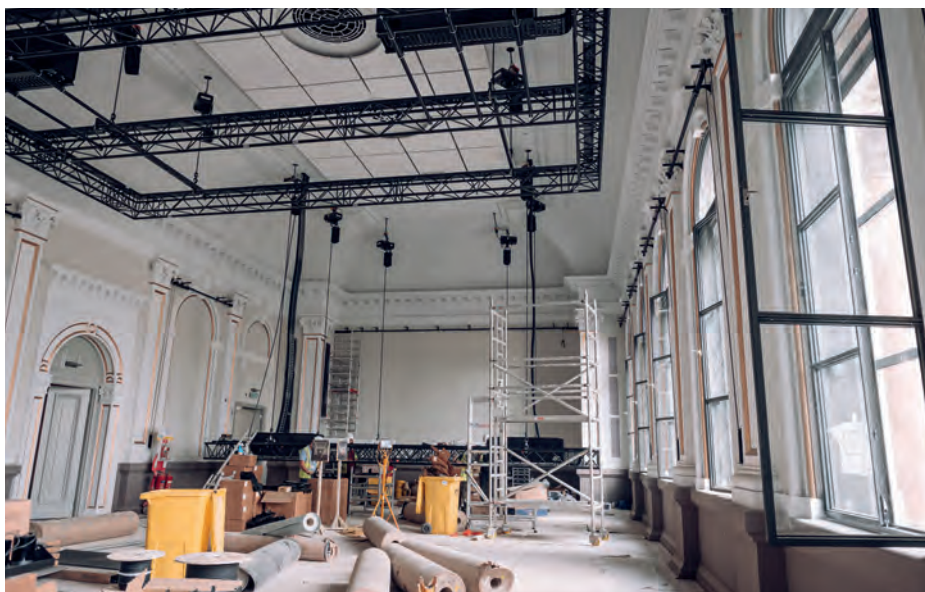
A welcome change: The renovated venue’s main auditorium will seat around 1,900

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All change: The old Colston Hall has been undergoing renovation since 2011

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first carbon-neutral concert hall in the UK by 2030. ‘Then there’s the question of how audience members travel to the venue,’ Mitchell continues. ‘We have an arrangement with the First Bus company, by which it offers discounted fares to those who can provide evidence that they’re coming to the Beacon. Inside the hall there’s a screen on which upcoming bus departures are displayed. There’s lots of accommodation for bikes outside and electric charging points for cars are close by. In the performing spaces we’ve aimed to provide lighting and sound facilities that are so good that presenters won’t have to bring in additional equipment, thereby minimising the carbon footprint for transportation.’

One ABO conference item announced well in advance was an on-stage conversation between veteran broadcaster Jonathan Dimbleby and Shadow Culture Minister Thangam Debbonaire (prior to a performance from the above-mentioned Paraorchestra). Dimbleby is the incoming chair of Bristol Beacon, his appointment the result of coaxing on Mitchell’s part. ‘We’ve been talking to Jonathan for quite some time. This is a moment when the organisation needs to step up its profile and we’re so grateful to Jonathan for agreeing to be our leader. He’s a passionate consumer of music – and lives half a mile from the Beacon.’

Mitchell’s excitement at the prospect of Bristol Beacon’s opening is – naturally – palpable. ‘It’s an incredible thing to have a world-class hall in a city like this and I can’t wait for the ABO conference attendees to see it. These are difficult times for classical music in the UK. We’ve seen that with the fuss about the intended disbandment of the BBC Singers, the problems at English National Opera and Northern Ballet. We have to assume that the threats will not stop there. There’s a huge need for the orchestral sector to work together, to provide a coherent voice and vision for the future. It’s easy to just wring your hands about the loss of cash and jobs, but we have to get out there and explain *why* classical music matters – not just bleat about the situation.

‘It’s marvelous that our first conference is a music industry event. I predict it will be an absolutely glorious occasion... but of course we’ll have to prove ourselves!’ **CM**



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Power to the people

As government funding diminishes – and ethical complications arise over sponsorship from certain multinationals – musicians are seeking financial independence through crowdfunding, as Freya Parr discovers

When Arts Council England (ACE) announced its new round of National Portfolio Organisation funding in November last year, some of its decisions rocked the classical music world. Organisations that had previously received long-term, large-scale ACE funding suddenly found themselves with significant gaps in their budget. Psappha Ensemble recently announced its closure as a result of the insurmountable challenge

of having 100 per cent of its regular funding cut, while Glyndebourne was unable to run its usual national tour this year because of the withdrawal of ACE funding.

But it's not just the Arts Council that has had to tighten its belt. The industry has been facing dwindling budgets for some time, with funding pulled from companies, sponsors, foundations and individual givers – particularly in the wake of the pandemic, and, more recently,

with the cost-of-living crisis. This has been against the backdrop of many timely conversations around the ethics of accepting donations and sponsorship from certain organisations or individuals. The Ukraine invasion put pressure on orchestras and opera houses to cut ties with certain Russian donors, while questions around corporate sponsorship by companies with links to fossil fuels or the tobacco industry continue to be raised. The Royal Opera House announced in



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(Clockwise) Abel Selaocoe; Alexandra Whittingham and Eloise MacDonald; Fatma Said and Harry Baker |

January that it would be severing ties with BP following a 33-year sponsorship from the oil and gas multinational. This came after the organisation had already received a nine per cent cut in its core grant funding from ACE.

With funding pots growing smaller and smaller, arts organisations are having to turn to their audiences for help. When Leeds Lieder had 100 per cent of its ACE funding cut, it was immediately forced to rely on its reserves, which posed a threat to future festivals and outreach projects. In June this year, it launched the 'Leeds Lieder Angels Appeal', with some of its famous regulars – Roderick Williams, Imogen Cooper, Carolyn Sampson, Alice Coote and Sarah Connolly among them – asking audiences for support. With a target of £60,000 to bring Leeds Lieder into the next season, by the beginning of August it had ticked over to £25,000.

Britten Sinfonia was another organisation impacted by the withdrawal of ACE funding. In March 2023, it launched

a £1m appeal to enable it to 'play on'. The campaign was supported by composers including Steve Reich, Judith Weir, James MacMillan, Thomas Adès and Nico Muhly, as well as many associated artists. 'Whether you are able to contribute £20 or £20,000, please help us replace the £1m we are losing, so that Britten Sinfonia can continue to light up the East of England and beyond,' the 'Play On' appeal asked. In addition, the ensemble launched a major gift appeal for those able to give a larger donation of over £5,000. The campaign laid out exactly what the donations could be used for: '£10 pays for the hire of one musical instrument for a day in one of our participation projects,' while '£1,000 pays for Britten Sinfonia musicians to work with patients for a week-long residency at CUH Addenbrooke's Hospital.' Two months after it launched, Britten Sinfonia announced that its urgent fundraising appeal had passed the £250,000 milestone.

The crowdfunding model might have gathered pace recently, but it has long been a staple of the arts industry. Opportunities to meet artists or have unique experiences in exchange for donations had previously been restricted to higher-level giving. In recent years, organisations have tested different fundraising models and appeals to engage new givers. In 2017, the Dutch National Ballet launched its first crowdfunding drive for new

work. In exchange for a €75 donation, individuals were offered access to a Q&A session with the choreographer of a new production. For €350, you could sit in on a brainstorming session with the creative team, and for €750 you could enter the rehearsal studio and share your opinions with the choreographer. This range of support provides a bedrock for creating new work, and can be used to substitute or support existing funding from government grants or organisations or bodies like ACE. Plus, you can access younger funders, who may continue to offer their support throughout their lifetimes.

The crowdfunding model is clearly effective, and is now even being used to launch entire new programmes and seasons. 'Through the noise' is the first crowdfunding platform designed specifically for live classical music. What started out as a way of connecting audiences with live musicians during the first Covid lockdown has fast become a sustainable long-term business model, highlighting classical music events around London through its guide and hosting its own noisenights series. In 2021, it announced its first concert, which was made possible through the pledges of hundreds of backers. By supporting the concert in advance, these backers were guaranteed tickets to the event if it reached its funding target – but if it didn't, the

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| *Playing on: Britten Sinfonia is using crowd-funding as a way to cope with the sudden removal of ACE support*

event would be cancelled and all backers refunded, so there was no element of risk. Concert listings on its website now show the user how close the event is to being fully funded – and those that have been fully funded may have a few additional seats remaining.

They are all informal events featuring top soloists and ensembles, taking place in bars, converted warehouses and nightclubs around the UK. In its third season this autumn, venues include Camden's KOKO club, a Tyneside warehouse and a wind turbine factory in Liverpool's dockside. Usually, there will be an early and a late set; an opening classical recital followed by live music – including jazz, latin, afrobeat, swing and funk acts – for the rest of the night. Through the noise recently launched a new partnership with Warner Classics, which will see artists from the label perform at 25 new noisenights across nine cities this autumn.

While most concerts take place in traditional halls or venues, there's perhaps something about a concert in a wind turbine factory that appeals to individuals wanting to 'back' a concert series and have a stake in its success. That model has also seemed to work for Yolanda Brown, whose new restaurant and music venue in Islington broke global fundraising records on Kickstarter earlier this year. The campaign drew funds of £248,000 in eight weeks from supporters,

the largest sum for any restaurant anywhere in the world on the crowdfunding platform. Soul Mama is set to open this autumn, with food from the Caribbean, Africa and South America accompanied by jazz, soul, reggae and gospel music.

Crowdfunding offers an innovative new model to the existing fundraising and development ecosystem. Not only does it open up more opportunities for younger or lower-level supporters, it gives audience members a stake in the project. They are able to tangibly see the results of their donation, rather than their money just entering a large, nebulous pot. By running concerts or recording albums only when a fundraising goal has been reached, it means that organisations are having to put the musical interests of the audiences at the centre of their programming, which is no small thing. Away from the financial wins, a crowdfunding campaign also provides additional marketing and a more structured process through which to develop audiences, promote events and share behind-the-scenes stories about how a project is shaping up. If there's one thing the financial challenges of the last few years have brought us, it's a new-found openness in the discussions around how arts organisations are run – and why audiences can't simply rely on their ticket fees to support their long-term success. We need to do more. **CM**

TOP TIPS FOR CROWDFUNDING

Set a campaign goal

Decide how much money you will need to undertake your project. Carefully consider all the different elements that will go into it. Do you have the skills to manage the crowdfunding project itself and organise all the related marketing – or do you need to budget for support?

Talk, talk, talk

Research the various crowdfunding options to decide what might be best for you and your music. Talk to other artists who have undertaken similar projects with crowdfunding to find out what could help your campaign be successful. Members of the Musicians' Union can seek the advice of their Regional Office to find out more about crowdfunding agreements.

Choose a crowdfunding platform that suits you

Some platforms require the target to be met before you can withdraw money, so decide what process is best for your project and how to communicate it to your funders. Some platforms offer more support than others, and the rates of commission vary greatly, as do timescales of payments. Weigh these up against one another, and against the service provided.

Work out a timeline

Create deadlines for different parts of the project to ensure the process never becomes unwieldy, and update your backers regularly.

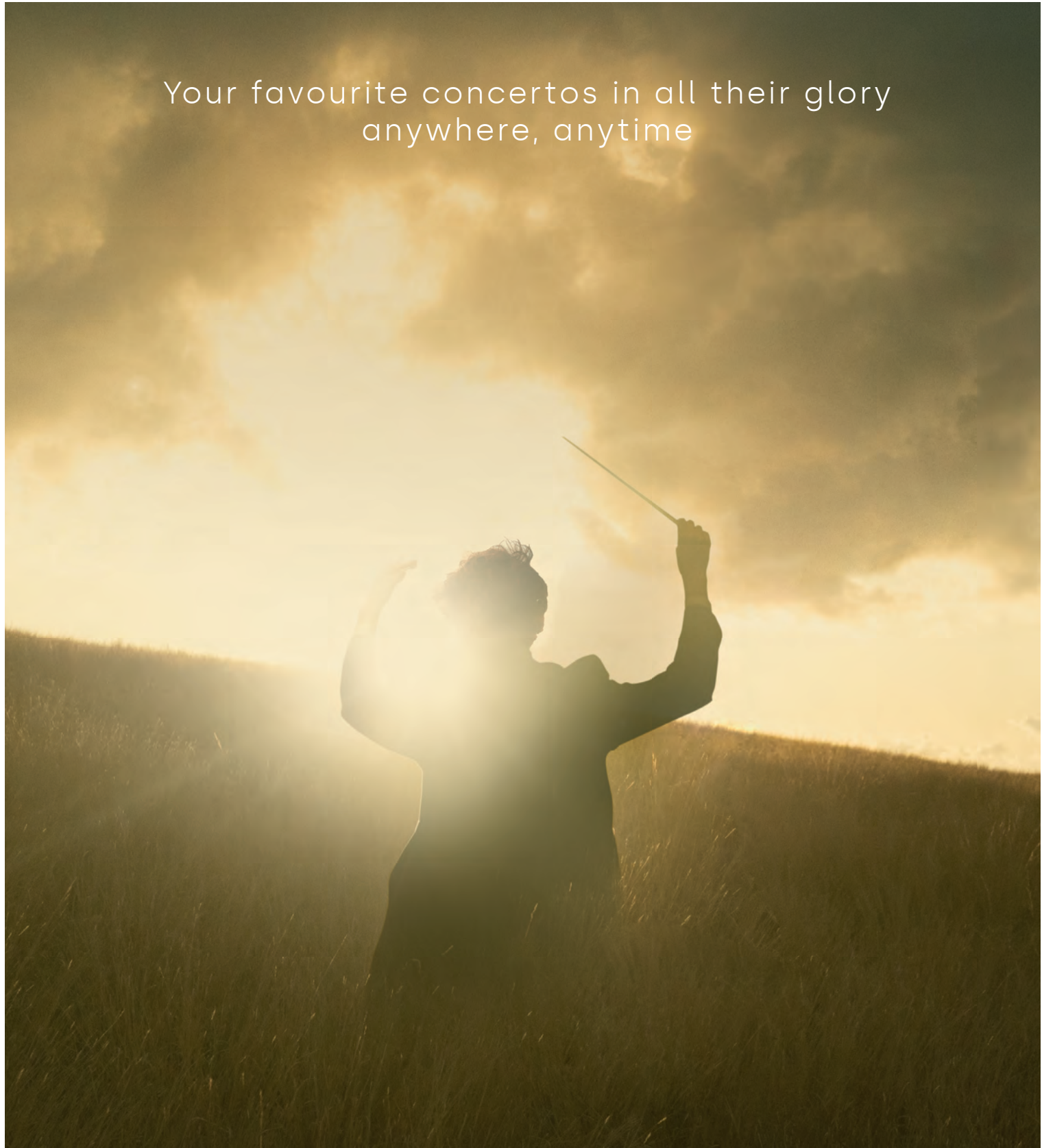
Spread the word!

Encourage fans to get involved. Crowdfunding involves a lot of communication, so you'll need to get used to asking people for money. You'll need to generate lots of traffic to your campaign page. A lot of crowdfunding platforms encourage you to sync your social media platforms so automatic updates can be posted across various channels. Think about how you can keep in touch with your pledgers, such as via a supporting newsletter.

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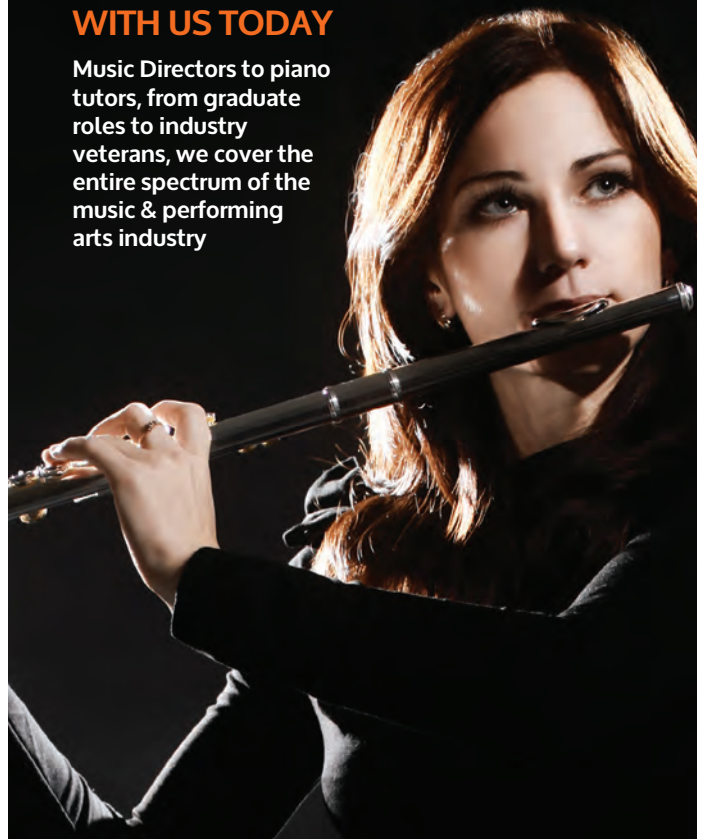
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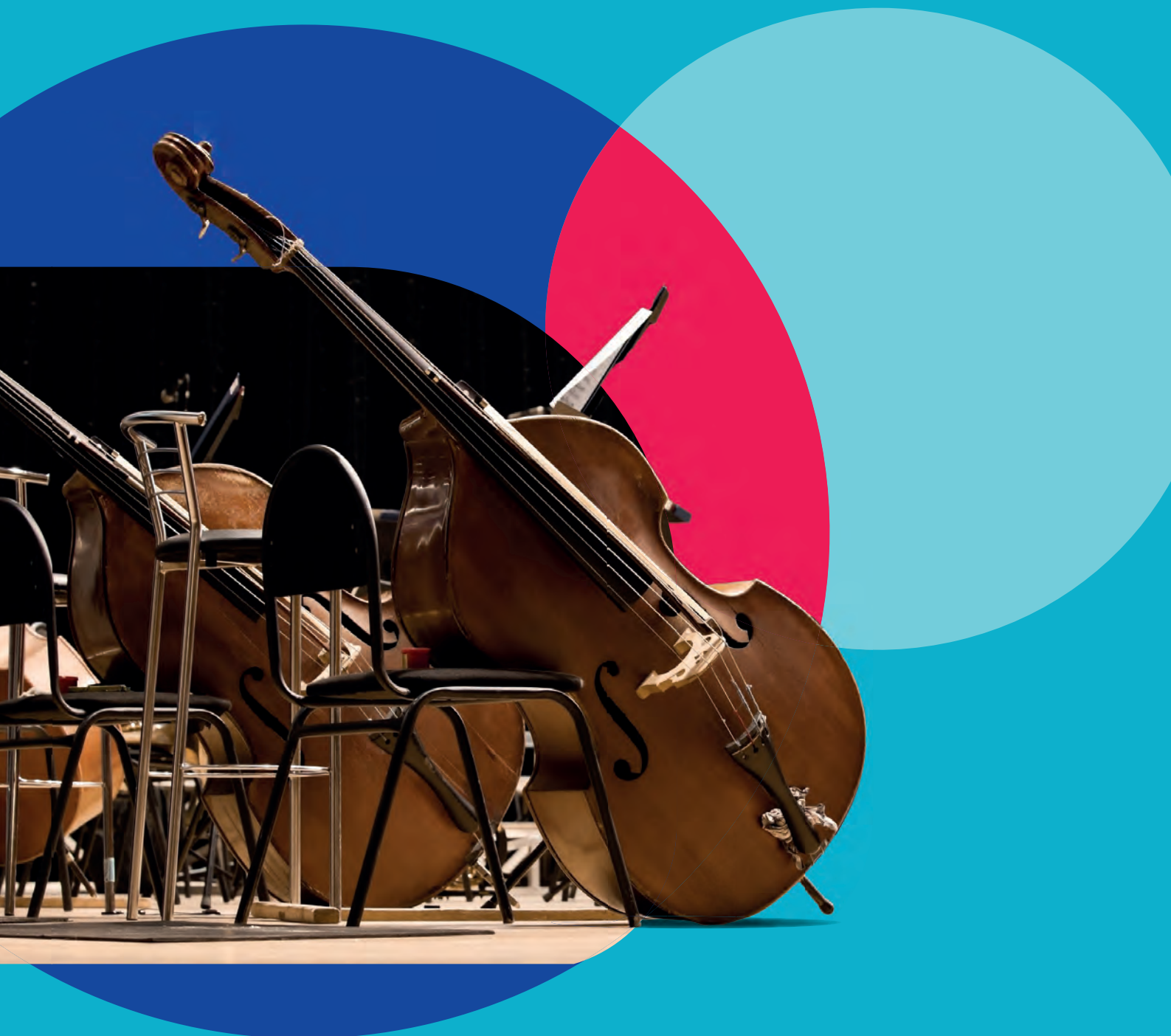
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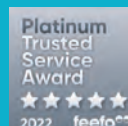
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