



# ABO

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ORCHESTRAS

**ABO News**  
**Spring 2025**

Welcome to the latest **ABO News**, showcasing the impactful and innovative work of **ABO** member orchestras across the country, on and off the stage.

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# News from the ABO

## Key Facts

The ABO are delighted to share the publication of [Key Facts: The State of the UK's Orchestras April 2025 Report.](#)

The report, an update on key statistics for the UK orchestral sector last delivered in 2019, illustrates how orchestras have emerged from a period of major economic strain, reaching broader audiences both nationally and internationally, expanding their digital presence, and diversifying income streams.

## Classical Music APPG

The ABO, as the Secretariat of the Classical Music APPG, convened a meeting of the APPG focusing on the issue of music education. Speakers included Bridget Whyte, Chief Executive of The UK Association for Music Education - Music Mark; Hester Cockcroft, Chief Executive Young Sounds UK; and Sophie Lewis ABO Chair and Chief Executive, National Children's Orchestras of Great Britain who gave highly informative presentations which prompted a number of potential actions in support of music education investment and reform from parliamentarians.

## Spending Review

The ABO made a submission to UK Government's forthcoming Spending Review. The submission makes 4 key recommendations to drive economic growth and break down barriers to opportunity, by safeguarding core investment in the UK's celebrated cultural sector; investing in access to high-quality music education and creative subjects and skills development for all children and young people; driving economic and regional growth through sustainable local funding for the creative arts across the country and; enhancing the effectiveness of Orchestra Tax Relief (OTR). You can see the full submission [here.](#)

LSO's Create Club



# Orchestras in Education

**Beacon Bass Boost** is a brand new campaign designed to inspire young people to take up a bass instrument! This bespoke programme offers local schools the chance to host their own double bass, bassoon, tuba, euphonium, trombone or bass guitar, loaned for free from Bristol Beacon. These Bass Boost schools will then receive a number of special assemblies and workshops, featuring live performances, interactive activities and masterclasses, led by guest organisations including **Brass Bands England**, Royal Marines Service Band, Bristol University Symphonia, and Wells Cathedral School.

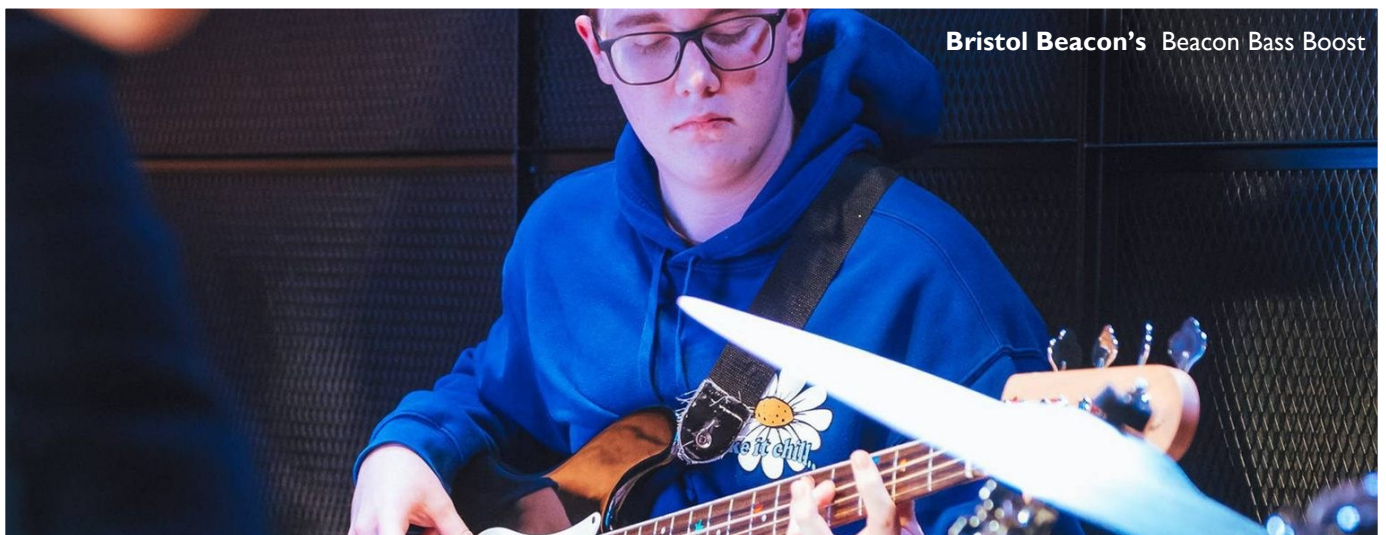
**London Mozart Players** are working with Croydon Music & Arts on their new series of CPD sessions for primary school teachers in Croydon, aimed at ECTs and any other teachers looking to develop their skills in teaching curriculum music lessons. Find out more [here](#).

**Hallé Musical Stars** is a fun and interactive music-making session for pre-school aged children and their grown ups. Join one of the experienced Hallé practitioners for a weekly music session which will include sensory play, singing, musical games and activities, and the chance to play musical instruments.

**London Sinfonietta's** Sound Out! Schools Concert goes on UK Tour. The inspiring schools concert exploring composition and featuring works composed by school children has just received an Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant to tour beyond central London. The tour will consist of 13 performances across Enfield, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Rushmoor and Bristol. Young instrumentalists will join the London Sinfonietta ensemble on stage, alongside world premieres of new music written by young composers in each area through composition workshops. Find out more [here](#).

**The Mozartists** have created the [MOZART 250 DISCOVERY PROJECT](#). This immersive, dynamic series comprises 4 music workshops, an 18th century hat making workshop, and a final showcase. It introduces children to some of Mozart's childhood music, placing it in the context of 18th century history. Students learn about the life and times of Mozart then use this as inspiration to create their own mini opera.

**Sinfonia Cymru** has collaborated with Music Theatre Wales to create [Tŷ Unnos/ The One-Night House](#), with creative input from primary schools all over Wales. Combining music, theatre, and storytelling to create an immersive experience for young audiences.





**The Mozartists** run an ambitious [outreach programme](#), which seeks to make classical music accessible to children across Ealing. To date they have worked with over 1200 children, including pupils in ARP schools through a new strand of SEND workshops. Alongside their education partner, Ealing Music Service, they engage with students and teachers across the borough, inspiring them through Mozart's music, getting them participating directly in their own music-making and fuelling their creativity.

**Aurora Orchestra's** [Meet the Instruments](#) is a fun, participatory concert for families, as Aurora Orchestra and presenters Lucy Drever and Lara Stubbs introduce you to the world of orchestral music. Put your party clothes on, it's time to sing, dance, play games and discover orchestral instruments!

**London Sinfonietta's** Composition Challenges programme was awarded **The [Rocksteady Award for Progressive and Inclusive Music Education](#)** at the Music & Drama Education Awards. Blending online resources with in-person visits, Composition Challenges provides inspiring ideas for young people to compose and gives confidence through teacher training to lead creative music making in their classrooms.

**Royal Northern Sinfonia** have created [Our Music, Our Way!](#) Students from four schools in Redcar and Cleveland are preparing to debut their original musical pieces alongside the Royal Northern Sinfonia this spring. Since last November, students have collaborated with musicians from Royal Northern Sinfonia, Tees Valley Music Service, and composer Michael Betteridge. Together, they've explored the theme of 'Journeys,' examining their sense of place, identity, dreams, and aspirations.

London Sinfonietta's [Sound Out!](#) Schools Concert



# Diverse & Inclusive Orchestras

**Music Mark** have launched a [Diverse Educators](#) training series, due to the demands of their community. Committed to moving the agenda forwards regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in our school system, the series includes two-part courses

**Scottish Ensemble's** [Music for Wellbeing](#) is a part of a multi-year research partnership with cancer charity Maggie's, and in partnership with the Central and West Integration Network. The project has developed to support the New Scots community - refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers living in Glasgow, boosting mental wellbeing.

**Chineke! Orchestra** have collaborated with George the Poet to a night of music, spoken word and poetry around the themes of Resilience, Identity, Strength and Equality, called R.I.S.E. George the Poet brings his insight and poetry to the issue of the climate emergency, exploring it not just as an ecological issue but one of justice too, with Black communities disproportionately affected. Find out more [here](#).

[Sunday Jam](#) is **Bristol Beacon's** new accessible music and movement club for disabled children and young people aged 25 and under, along with their families and/or Personal Assistants. Join them to experiment with instruments and technology, play musical games, create and sing songs, move and dance, in a welcoming and friendly environment.

**Guildhall School of Music and Drama** joined forces with The Common Press celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month with [Trans Music Takeover](#) celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month, hosted by Travis Alabanza, to showcase the incredible talents of trans voices in music and the performing arts.

Bristol Beacon's [Sunday Jam](#)





**London Symphony Orchestra** and conductor Oliver Zeffman celebrate LGBTQ+ voices in classical music with a vibrant programme. Classical Pride, now in its third year, exists to spotlight queer composers of the past, present and future, giving a voice and a platform to this community that has been instrumental in the development of the genre. Find out more [here](#).

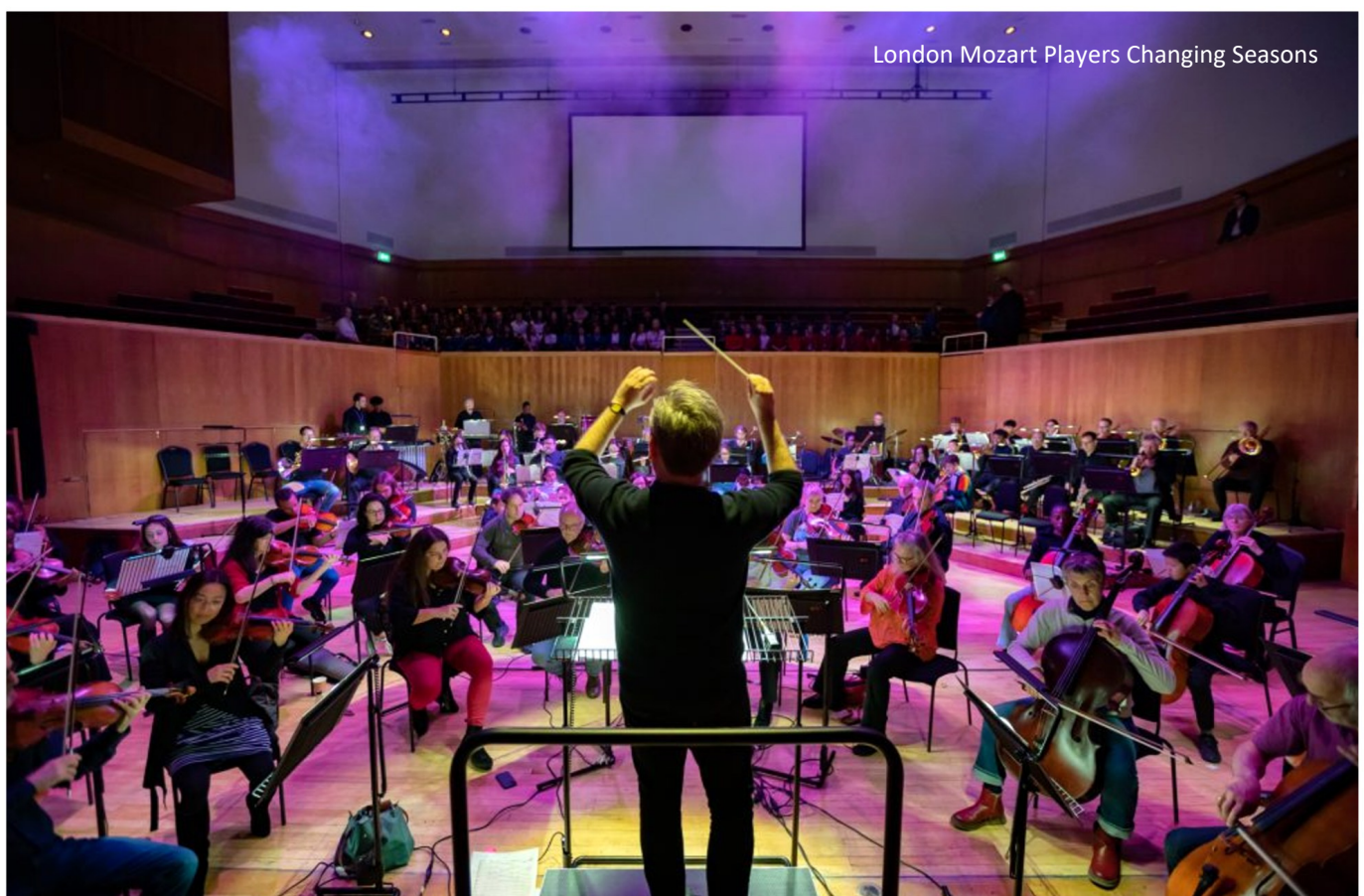
**Britten Sinfonia's** [Music On Your Doorstep](#) residencies bring **Britten Sinfonia** musicians into culturally under-served parts of the region for performances, interactive workshops and activities for all ages.

**City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** has welcomed FormidAbility, the UK's only majority disability-led opera company, in the CBSO Centre. FormidAbility are working to bring formidable disabled talent into the mainstream, leading by example and showing what is possible when barriers are removed.

**The Glasshouse International Centre for Music's** programme Music Spark is an opportunity for people with additional needs or disabilities to experiment with instruments and technology, playing musical games, writing and singing songs, with 10 sessions per term. For more information, please click [here](#).

**Manchester Camerata** are joining trumpeter Aaron Azunda Akugbo for Classical Pride: West Side Story Suite & Appalachian Spring, a concert within the annual music festival curated by conductor Oliver Zeffman to celebrate the breadth and diversity of LGBTQ+ artists across classical music. Find out more [here](#).

**London Mozart Players** presented [Changing Seasons](#) is an exhilarating, fresh take on Vivaldi's classic from Croydon's resident orchestra, LMP. Brought to life with music, dance and poetry from talented local arts groups, it is a reflection on the climate emergency and its impact on our future, in collaboration with Queer Croydon.



# Green Orchestras

**Askonas Holt** hosted their [Earth Day Summit 2025](#) at Somerset House. Celebrated annually on 22 April, World Earth Day is a global initiative dedicated to environmental protection and climate action. With speakers from **BBC Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Philharmonia Orchestra, Askonas Holt, Arts Council England, The Glasshouse International Centre for Music, LIVE, Edinburgh International Festival, and Indigo.**

**Sinfonia Viva** and **Orchestras Live** have collaborated to expand their project [ENERGY](#) where students, scientists, and musicians have joined forces to explore the story of energy and the impact of climate change through music. Schools can access ENERGY resource pack and streamed orchestral performance of ENERGY. The resource is designed for KS2 students to explore the story of energy, their responses to the climate crisis, and what they can do to make a difference in the world.



**Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** and Brighton Festival Chorus are asking has climate change reached a tipping point? A new concerto featuring poems by Nick Drake, it forms the centre-piece of Grammy Award-winning maestro Ludovic Morlot's nature-themed programme, poised between Sibelius's orchestral hymn to the Finnish forests and American eco-activist composer John Luther Adams's choral prayers to Mother Earth and her endangered species.

**Glyndebourne's** New community opera: [Uprising](#) from acclaimed composer Jonathan Dove and writer April De Angelis will be on stage at Glyndebourne in the spring and looks at the climate crisis through the eyes of the young.

**Irish Association of Youth Orchestras** hosted a Sustainability Lounge with the European Orchestra Federation, investigating youth and amateur orchestras and their approaches to sustainability, and how we can be a part of the solution to the climate crisis.





Ulster Orchestra Move to the Music



Scottish Ensemble's Music For Wellbeing

## Orchestras in Local Community & Healthcare

**Royal Liverpool Philharmonic** have launched a pioneering new toolkit designed to support the physical health and wellbeing of orchestral musicians. The toolkit includes 'A Symphony of Good Sense' designed for physiotherapists working with orchestral musicians and 'Supporting Physical Readiness in Orchestral Performance' a guide for orchestras. Created alongside **Help Musicians** and **BAPAM Performing Arts Medicine**. Access it [here](#).

**Scottish Ensemble's** Music for Wellbeing sessions in schools and Maggie's Centre's across Scotland. These sessions combined live music with guided listening and techniques to use music in participants day-to-day life to help find a moment of calm, combat stress and anxiety, and lift moods. Listen to the playlist [here](#).

**Orchestras Live's** project [Good Company](#) is a collaborative, two-year programme which aims to support people living with dementia and their family carers in the Borough of Brentwood and the South Essex locality, involving them in an inclusive creative company together with a range of professional artists including orchestral musicians.

**Scottish Chamber Orchestra's** [ReConnect programme](#) has received renewed funding, which has been running since 2013, aims to improve patients' and carers' sense of wellbeing and quality of life, bringing people together through music to connect, communicate and enjoy spending time together. The programme provides a series of weekly music sessions in which dementia patients, together with visiting family members and care staff, are invited and supported to sing, play instruments, improvise and listen.

**Welsh National Opera's** [Cradle](#), is an intergenerational project designed to enrich the lives of people affected by dementia and raise awareness of the disease within school children. With approximately 48,000 people living with dementia in Wales, Welsh National Opera are committed to working within communities across Wales, offering a place for people to come together and have fun with friends and family through community singing.

**Ulster Orchestra's** Move to the Music Concerts reaches people over 65 who may be experiencing isolation. Participants enjoy door to door transportation to Belfast and regional concerts and refreshments during intermission. This provides participants with the chance to meet up and make new friends at concerts, all while experiencing live orchestral music. Find out more [here](#).





## Orchestras making change

**Sinfonia Cymru** are expanding their Cymuned Sessions in 2025 offering free performances in community spaces across Wales, expanding to care homes, fruit and veg shops, village halls, and more! To find out where to see them next, click [here](#).

**Bath Philharmonia's** [Young Carers' Choir](#), together with Ed Davey, recorded a single to re-release at Christmas in support of the Carers Trust and Bath Philharmonia's work with young carers. Love is Enough was co-created by six young carers and former young carers with Bath Phil's Creative Learning Team as a tribute to the caring responsibilities of young carers and the bond they share with the people they care for.

**Manchester Camerata's** Music Cafes, since Greater Manchester became the UK's first Centre of Excellence for Music and Dementia, hosted by Manchester Camerata, have expanded to all ten boroughs of Greater Manchester, Read more about their work [here](#).

**The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's** [STROKESTRA](#)® is a pioneering stroke rehabilitation programme that harnesses the power of group creative music-making alongside professional musicians and clinicians to drive patient-led recovery in stroke patients and their carers.

**Bristol Beacon's** Music Club improves the quality of life of participants by making music together. Supported by professional musicians, the weekly sessions take place in Filwood Community Centre and Easton Community Centre and are open to people living with dementia, along with their carers and families. Find out more [here](#).







## Digital Orchestras

**Aurora Orchestra's** online platform for schools is now free, a award-winning creative learning programme, encompassing free digital resources for schools, training for teachers, and a world-class programme of live activity for children and young people. Find out more [here](#).

**The Royal Scottish National Orchestra's** [digital care packages](#) are concert recordings. These are available for free to anyone living or working in care homes, hospices, healthcare settings or homecare, and part of a three-part series of recorded performances.

**English National Opera's** Finish This... Primary KS2 is a free music making programme for schools nationwide; bringing a fusion of opera, film and animation into your classroom, as a creative springboard for collaborative composition work. Co-created with teachers and primary specialists, this project is aligned with the KS2 curriculum. To find out more click [here](#).

**Scottish Chamber Orchestra's** Digital Season is available free of charge, in [Seascape](#), Gipps conjures a distinctive sound that sets her music apart from more familiar portrayals of the sea by Vaughan Williams and Britten. Composed for wind dectet, it is an overlooked gem of English music.

**Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's** [Digital Concerts](#) are broadcast live on Wednesday evenings from their home at Lighthouse, Poole. Every concert is beautifully filmed in full HD with multiple cameras and superb stereo sound, which give you a real sense of engagement and involvement.





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