



ABO announces new cohort of participants on ground-breaking leadership programme 'Find Your Way' with support from Help Musicians and the ABO Trust

The ABO is delighted to announce the new participants on its 'Find Your Way' professional development course for 2019-20. A new three-year partnership with Help Musicians is also announced which will support the programme to attract the most diverse range of applicants, including the residential course and the 'Essentials of Find Your Way' short course. Data collected by the ABO about the participants to date shows a range of backgrounds, state-funded secondary education, and some with parents who were not university educated.

Claire Gevaux, Director of Programme at Help Musicians, said: *"Working with The ABO and its invaluable Find Your Way programme has given us first-hand experience of the diversity challenges for the sector. Through our three-year partnership we will be supporting the ABO to improve accessibility, cultivate greater diversity within the learning and mentoring offer, and inspire and develop a new generation of diverse emerging orchestral leaders. Help Musicians is committed to creating a world where musicians thrive and reinforcing the progression of diverse talent, in all forms, continues to be a leading drive for that. We're looking forward to seeing how the six successful applicants flourish in coming years."*

This year's successful applicants are professionals representing different aspects of the orchestral sector:

- Sonali Banerjee Music Manager & Head of Music Planning, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
- Doug Bott Musical Director, OpenUp Music
- Helen Brew Associate Principal Flute, Royal Scottish National Orchestra
- Tom Philpott Planning Manager, BBC Symphony Orchestra
- Katy Wakeford Brown Artistic Planning Manager (Orchestra and Ensembles), Liverpool Philharmonic
- Sarah Whitston Finance Director, Southbank Sinfonia

Richard Wigley, visionary arts consultant and Managing Director of the Ulster Orchestra, continues to guide the programme alongside the ABO's Education consultant Fiona Harvey, and leadership trainer Andy Beaumont. The cohort will, as has become customary, present a fresh thinking session at the [ABO Conference](#) to be held in Salford and Manchester in January 2020.

Now in its fifth year, Find Your Way continues to expand on the original mission to help develop flexible thinkers, capable of managing change, for a sector facing increasingly complex challenges.

The programme is an extension of the CPD courses offered by the ABO throughout the year, details of which can be found on the new-look ABO website [here](#). Full details of the 9-month [Find Your Way](#) course can also be found there.

Feedback from recent participants gives an insight into the programme's enabling mission:

“I’ve really slowed down how I work and am more aware of how I interact with colleagues and how better to make sure we as a team can be effective by altering how I approach certain tasks.”

“I am more self-reflective at work, and try to better interrogate why I am doing things a certain way, whether they’re working, and how they can be improved.”

“That being a leader doesn’t necessarily mean being the Chief Executive (even though it’s always true – or should be – the other way around) and that true leadership can be shown by people at every level in the organisation.”

The ABO would also like to thank Arts Council England for supporting the last two years, and the ABO Trust for its invaluable contribution to future leaders for British orchestras. The Scheme relies on the unmatched experience and insight of its CEO-level mentors, and for 2019-20 these are confirmed as:

Peter Helps, CEO, Sinfonia Viva

Stephen Maddock OBE, CEO, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Kathryn McDowell CBE, Managing Director, London Symphony Orchestra

Gavin Reid, CEO, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Chair, ABO

John Summers, CEO, Halle Orchestra

Tim Walker AM, Artistic Director and CEO, London Philharmonic Orchestra

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About the ABO:

The ABO is the national body representing the collective interest of professional orchestras, youth ensembles and the wider classical music industry throughout the UK. Our 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.

About Help Musicians:

Help Musicians is an independent charity, with an extraordinary history. For nearly 100 years, it has provided a broad spectrum of help, support and opportunities to empower musicians aged 18+, at any stage of their career, from times of great need to times of opportunity, providing a lifetime of support when it is needed most.

The charity is uniquely placed to take a personalised approach with each individual supported, through its integrated programme that offers Creative Development and Health & Welfare services.

In 2018, Help Musicians saw a 67% increase in demand for its services across both creative development and health and welfare. Help Musicians aims to make a meaningful difference to the lives of even more musicians by growing reach and becoming even more national in the coming years.

The charity can do more through collaboration and builds strong relationships within the music industry, the health sector and beyond to promote and advocate for musicians’ wellbeing, mental health, hearing health, career progression and more.

With a research-led approach, Help Musicians shares insights, knowledge, resources and best practice, while developing preventative support and initiatives to sustain careers and ultimately improve working conditions for musicians across the sector. The charity is passionate about a world where musicians thrive.

To support Help Musicians click here <https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk/support-our-work/make-a-donation>, email fundraising@helpmusicians.org.uk, call 0207 239 9100 or donate **just £3 today by texting MUSIC1 to 70331**.

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