



Help Musicians UK announces innovative three-year partnership with the Association of British Orchestras

Supporting the future of careers in the classical music sector: HMUK will be charity partner of three annual ABO conferences, collaborate on new research and a leadership programme aiming to improve the progression of diverse talent

(Friday 25 January 28) **Help Musicians UK** (HMUK)'s chairman Graham Sheffield announced a three-year partnership with the **Association of British Orchestras** (ABO) at the organisation's annual conference in Belfast today, where HMUK was the official charity partner.

The new strategic pairing will see HMUK become the inaugural charity partner of the ABO by continuing its support at future ABO events in Manchester next year and London in 2021. HMUK will also support the ABOs' professional development programmes, created for ambitious managers and musicians in the sector to drive their own knowledge, skills and profile. Help Musicians UK is investing in the programme to improve accessibility, cultivate greater diversity and inspire a new generation of diverse leaders. The leadership development programmes offer emerging figureheads the opportunity to discover their long-term potential with mentoring from orchestra CEOs and senior managers in the sector.

As part of an ongoing commitment to ensure musicians are supported throughout their careers and lives, HMUK will also undertake research into the future of classical music careers in the 21st Century as part of an evaluation of its historic Postgraduate Awards. The Awards, for which previous winners include trumpeter Alison Balsom OBE, percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason, violinist Clio Gould, cellist Guy Johnston, violinist Tasmin Little OBE and guitarist Miloš Karadaglić, offer support to students who wish to complete their studies at the leading UK conservatoires and performing arts colleges. The ABOs' members will be crucial in shaping this research which will explore how the charity can best support future generations of emerging professionals to have a sustainable career in classical music.

A HMUK-conducted workshop at the ABO conference today started this exploration into **'The Future of Classical Music Careers'**, and participants discussed what opportunities and challenges there will be for musicians starting and maintaining careers in the future. The charity will use learnings and developments from the workshop to look at what can be done to future-proof HMUK's funding offer and help mitigate potential sector specific career challenges.

Help Musicians UK chairman Graham Sheffield presented the long-term partnership at the ABO Annual Conference today, where he also chaired an illuminating discussion about what progress has been made in helping musicians thrive into older age. The panel, which celebrated career longevity, included Liam Hennessy, Health and Welfare Senior Regional Officer at Help Musicians UK, Paul Kane, Music and Older People's Manager at The Oh Yeah Centre and Helen Habershon, musician and composer.

Graham Sheffield, chairman of Help Musicians UK said: “As a passionate music lover and lifelong musician, I am excited to be partnering with the ABO, an organisation committed to direct action to improving access and diversity in our sector for the 21st Century. Our support will enable ABO to evaluate and invest further in broadening the pool of diverse talent for this professional development programme. Working collaboratively on the conferences in 2020 and 2021, we look forward to using them to advance these essential causes as we reach our centenary in 2021.”

Claire Gevaux, Help Musicians UK Director of Programme, said: “Through our funding programmes and positive interventions we offer a lifetime of support empowering musicians at all stages of their lives and careers when it is needed the most. As a funder and enabler, our knowledge about the challenges faced by classical musicians sustaining a career in the 21st Century will be strengthened from having a strong partnership with ABO. I hope that the positive impact of this partnership will be felt by all ABO members and that we’re able to represent accurately the needs of the sector through our programming decisions.”

Mark Pemberton, Director of Association of British Orchestras said: “We are delighted to enter into a new three-year partnership with Help Musicians UK. There has always been huge synergy between HMUK’s mission to help musicians and nurture skills, and the commitment of the ABO and its members in ensuring the health and well-being of their musicians and providing a training pathway for the next generation of leaders. HMUK’s support will be invaluable in taking the ABO Conference and our professional development programmes to the next level.”

Ends.

Notes to editors:

Help Musicians UK is the leading independent music charity. Since 1921, HMUK has provided help, support and opportunities to empower musicians and those working in the industry at all stages of their lives. The charity’s ambition is to make a meaningful difference to the lives of musicians across the UK through a holistic, integrated programme combining Creative and Health & Welfare services, targeted campaigning and initiatives around issues that affect musicians such as mental health, hearing health and even parenting. The charity has a deep knowledge base and strong, trusted relationships within the music industry, the wellbeing sector and beyond. HMUK’s research-led approach creates a strong evidence base from which to educate and advocate for musicians, influencing and improving working conditions across the sector. Over 14,000 people in the music industry were impacted by the work of HMUK in 2017 through direct grants and funding to creative professionals and musicians in need, or indirectly through funded organisations and initiatives.

The **Association of British Orchestras** represents the interests of professional orchestras and youth ensembles across the UK. Its members range from the symphony orchestras to chamber, opera and ballet orchestras, as well as music conservatoires, national and local youth orchestras, venues, festivals, broadcasters, funding agencies, agents and publishers. Its mission is to enable and support an innovative, collaborative and sustainable orchestral sector by providing advice, support, intelligence and information to the people who make British orchestras a global success.

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