

# ABO | A 2020 Vision for Chamber Orchestras



# Ensembles of possibilities: Bringing World Class Orchestral Music to the Heart of Your Community

## A 2020 vision for the UK's chamber orchestras

By 2020 we aim:

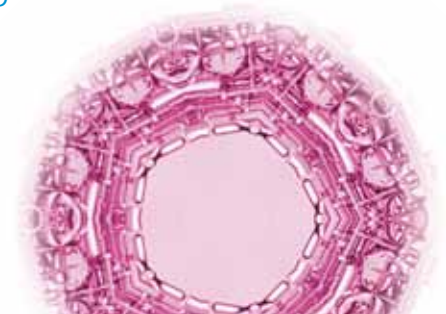
To have challenged preconceptions about orchestras and orchestral music

To have increased our role as cultural ambassadors within the UK and abroad

To have given communities in more villages, towns and counties the opportunity to experience a live performance

To have given more children the opportunity to learn, engage and participate with orchestras in education, community and outreach projects

To lead the world in commissioning and performing new music



## Our Vision – an Ensemble of Possibilities

This vision defines chamber orchestras as the primary vehicle for putting orchestral music at the heart of every community. We intend to use our unique flexibility to provide the live concert experience to more people in more places – playing a key role in building communities that are healthier, happier, safer and more confident. We intend to use our ability to deliver innovative programming and intimate experiences, to inspire and to educate in new ways and to new audiences. And we intend to draw on our creative expertise to commission and perform new works, and to present our performances so imaginatively that the 21st Century definition of a chamber orchestra can truly be an “ensemble of possibilities”<sup>1</sup>.

## What makes us different?

Built on years of tradition, chamber orchestras are among the most innovative institutions when it comes to understanding, sharing and communicating the value of music. Chamber orchestras deliver a wide variety of styles and specialisms which rivals any other artistic sector; and provide choice and diversity for audiences and communities.

### **We are lean and flexible**

and therefore more able to reach communities and play in venues that might not otherwise experience live orchestral music. Chamber orchestras across the UK are having a huge impact on individuals and communities through unique concert experiences, covering aspects as diverse as education, community cohesion and public wellbeing.

### **We deliver community-driven education programmes**

and believe strongly in **involving local people** in planning what we do. In partnership with local authorities and Orchestras Live, we work with schools, community centres and local groups, providing bespoke projects which break down barriers to orchestral music and which deliver the positive impact of music to communities.

### **We are creative in engaging** with our audiences.

We commission more new works than other orchestral sectors. And we're constantly pushing the boundaries of what orchestral music is, and the relevance of orchestras in 21st century Britain.



# Creative programming: challenging perceptions and trailblazing new music

## Our ambitions:

Chamber orchestras want to lead the world in performing more new music every year and want to challenge preconceptions of orchestras and orchestral music.

Performing and commissioning new music pushes boundaries and shapes the future of orchestral music. We want our audiences to experience the broadest possible range of orchestral music from the 16th century to the music of tomorrow, and we constantly strive to present this music in new ways.

Whether through the music we perform or the way we perform it, we challenge the common perception of the orchestra, using our creativity and ambition to expose new audiences to new music in new ways.

We regularly collaborate with other arts forms and different genres of music, attracting some of the most talented artists from other arts disciplines.

## London Sinfonietta: Sonic Exploration

Renowned for creative, bold and innovative programming in October 2009, London Sinfonietta in partnership with Sound Intermedia launched Sonic Exploration – a unique 3 day festival in London designed to promote and celebrate the genre of electro acoustic music from around the world and bring it to the London stage.

The festival featured a diverse range of concerts, workshops and talks from around the world.

Over 3 days, there were 10 music premieres – 4 world, 5 UK and 1 London premiere, including the first ever concert by KX Collective, a dynamic group of young people from the Kings Cross area of London.

The event was successful in attracting a wide range of audiences and highlights of the festival were recorded by BBC Radio 3 and later featured in a Hear and Now show dedicated to the festival. Plans are already under way for the next festival in 2011.

*“It was good to have my ideas used. When lots of different people’s ideas come together to make a new piece of music, that sounds really great.”* Participant

*“We liked the idea of creating our own show – even having a say in how the venue would look like on performance day.”* Participant



## Manchester Camerata: Unique collaboration with Ex Novo

Manchester Camerata and Venetian ensemble Ex Novo recently participated in a unique cross-Europe collaboration which saw both orchestras in 2 separate locations – the Cosmo Rodewald Concert Hall (at the University of Manchester) and Benedetto Marcello Music Conservatory in Venice – play in a synchronised performance. The concert was not only viewed by audiences in the venues but was also viewed online.

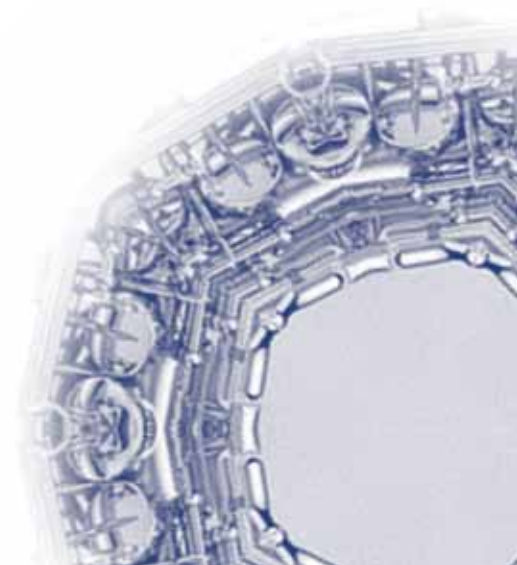
The groundbreaking digital collaboration was facilitated by Manchester Digital Development Agency and used existing internet connections and readily available conferencing software.

The 45 minute set featured the premiere of a specially written “Green Piece” by Michele dall’Ongaro and Charles Ive’s “The Unanswered Question. It also saw Oliver Knussen’s “Processionals” played live in Manchester, and broadcast to Venice, and a world premiere of Luca Mosca’s “Cinque Piccoli Scherzi” played in Venice and broadcast to the audience watching in Manchester.

The concert was successful in exemplifying how musicians, composers and organisations can work together without being in the same physical location, challenging technological and cultural boundaries through the power of performance.



Photo: Manchester Camerata and Ex Novo





# International presence: cultural ambassadors to every continent

## Our ambitions:

Chamber orchestras want to continue to take world class music to concert halls in the UK and beyond.

British Orchestras are in demand, inspiring and engaging audiences all over the globe. We are proud of the fact that we are an important part of British cultural identity and one of the UK's leading cultural/ creative exports.

Many of our orchestras regularly tour all parts of the world, playing in countries as diverse as Korea, Australia, Mexico and South Africa. And many musicians are in demand for their skills and talents off the platform as well as on; teaching and lecturing young musicians across the globe.

## **Academy of Ancient Music: Cultural Ambassadorship through the AAM global performance programme**

The Academy of Ancient Music is one of the UK's most active cultural ambassadors on the global stage and has had a long standing reputation for taking the best of British culture to audiences world wide, having performed on every continent except Antarctica since beginning in 1973. In 2008-9 alone, the orchestra performed over 60 concerts on four continents.

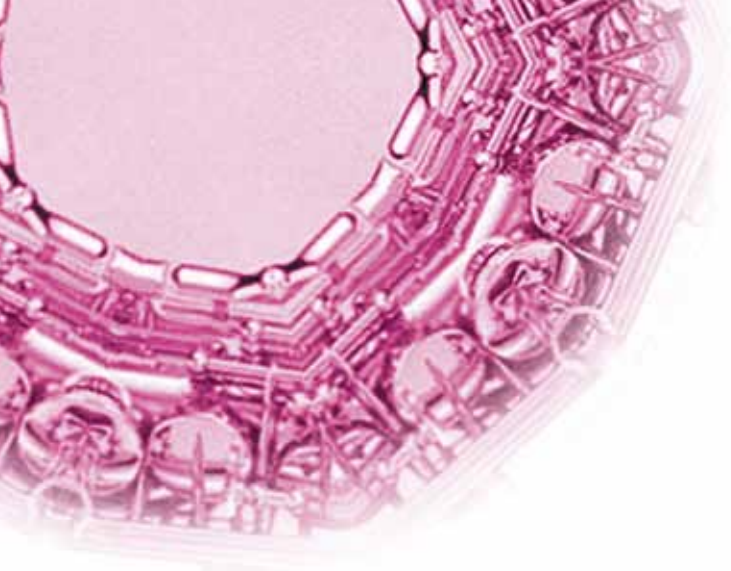
In April 2009, the Academy of Ancient Music in partnership with the Choir of Kings College Cambridge, extended its commitment to reaching audiences far and wide by hosting the first ever live cinecast of a choral concert- building on the successes of opera cinecasts from Royal Opera House in London and the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The cinecast performance of Handel's Messiah was enjoyed live in real time by audiences in over 250 cities worldwide and recording later released as a CD and digital download by EMI Classics.

*"One of the world's great orchestras helped make last night a highlight of the Beijing Music Festival"* **China Daily, October 2008**

*"The Academy of Ancient Music's sounded sparkling and fresh. For three decades, this British chamber ensemble has given illuminating performances."* **Washington Post, April 2006**







## Scottish Chamber Orchestra: Samaagam

The Samaagam was initially developed from a 2006 Player Fellowship programme in which 7 members of the SCO participated in the Laboratory Music project, where a group of SCO musicians collaborate with musicians from non-classical genres and backgrounds to come up with creative and innovative sounds.

During a series of workshops learning about Indian music, the SCO musicians decided to create a sarod (an Indian stringed instrument) concerto in collaboration with leading Indian classical musician, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan. The project was later developed by the Concerts department of the Orchestra and led to the premier of the new piece in 2008 which was performed at the St Magnus Festival, Scotland and City of London festival, England. As a result of the project's success, the piece was taken on tour to India in February 2009 and led to spin off education projects in Orkney and Perth, Scotland.



Photo: Academy of Ancient Music, Marco Borggreve

Musical Excellence

## London Sinfonietta: Residency in St Paul, Minneapolis

As part of the International Chamber Orchestra Festival, The London Sinfonietta travelled to St Paul, Minneapolis in January 2009 to take part in four concerts alongside some participation work in local schools and pre concert discussions.

London Sinfonietta musicians went into local schools and colleges to provide some coaching to students and some also took part in pre concert discussions about the works to be performed that evening.

The concerts were a huge success and helped maintain and increase the reputation of the London Sinfonietta. Successful links were created with orchestras and venues in St. Paul. Already there has been a joint commission between the St Paul Chamber Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta for a future project with music composed by Gerald Barry, and we hope this will be the start of a long standing relationship leading to more commissions in the future.

Reviews of the event featured in the US press including several reviews in the New York Times.

Plans are already being worked on to take *Songs of Wars I Have Seen* to other venues in the United States within the next couple of years.

*"I...walked away stunned. One hopes that these works will find their way to New York soon."* **New York Times**





# **Flexibility and reach: building stronger communities through music**

## **Our ambitions:**

Chamber orchestras want to give communities in more villages, towns and counties the opportunity to experience a live performance.



Photo: sinfonia ViVA's *In the Space Between* at Lincoln Drill Hall. sinfonia ViVA

## sinfonia ViVA: Partnership with Lincoln Drill Hall

Lincoln Drill Hall had little experience of promoting orchestral activity and no formalised audience for its events, so the key objective was to develop a tradition of concert going to the venue for people of all ages and bring world class classical music to the local audiences.

The project began in 2005, with sinfonia ViVA performing two main concerts per year, in autumn and spring, introducing and developing new audiences to orchestral music. In 2007 in partnership with Orchestras Live and Lincoln City Council's Arts team, the orchestra developed a 3rd concert specifically designed to link to education activity in 3 primary and secondary schools in the local area.

The long term partnership has been successful as audiences for the concerts have more than doubled in 5 years and has also led to sinfonia ViVA becoming the 'orchestra in residence' at Lincoln Drill Hall.

Photo: Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's *Night Shift*.  
Joe Plommer



Experiencing a live orchestra concert can be inspirational. But not everyone has the opportunity to travel to a large concert hall or inner city venue to have that experience.

Chamber orchestras have the flexibility to play in venues from city centres to village halls, airports to carnival floats. We pride ourselves in taking music to people and giving them the concert experience they might not otherwise have.

The way the concert is delivered can determine whether audiences come back for more. Chamber orchestras are renowned for the intimacy of their approach to concerts; giving audiences a special insight through personal contact with musicians and the music they play.

*"We like to support this Orchestra when they come to Lincoln. This programme – as usual – was varied and attractive. Lively presentation – excellent music, very well played. Amusing, pithy introductions, not too wordy!"*  
Audience member

*"We go to all of your concerts at the Drill Hall. We love your presentation and intimacy with the audience. The players look full of happiness and enthusiasm."*  
Audience member

*"This is an excellent group that plays to international standard."* Audience member

## Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment: The Night Shift

As part of the OAE's Futures programme, the Night Shift presents orchestral music in a new way to attract an audience that may not usually attend an orchestral concert. By stripping away concert-going formalities and creating a relaxed and welcoming environment, The Night Shift breaks down barriers between audience and performers. The format comprises:

- Pre and post concert entertainment (DJs, folk musicians, jazz pianists and trios, dancers)

- Drinks allowed in the hall
- £10 ticket price – with discounts for small groups, students and for advance booking
- Ability to book tickets via text message
- Relaxed atmosphere in the hall – the audience is encouraged to move about talk and clap as they wish
- The concert is introduced from the stage, with the presenter interviewing performers and taking questions from the audience

Audiences have grown rapidly since the concerts started in 2006, doubling from the first to the second year of the scheme and growing by 50% from the second to the third year. But the end of the third season, over 5000 tickets had been sold to Night Shift performances.

Around 80% of the audiences are under 35, around 30% are students and 15-20% haven't been to an orchestral music concert before.

*"Without selling the music short, the OAE has created a winner with the Night Shift – or rather, its audience has. [it is] the rarest of classical music-birds: a newfangled concert format that lives up to the hype."* Tom Service, Guardian Blog

## Birmingham Contemporary Music Group: Rural Tours

For over a decade, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group have embarked on regular Rural Tours in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, giving rural audiences the opportunity to experience the best in live, high-quality contemporary orchestral music.

The ensemble performs a series of mini concerts in local villages free of charge culminating in a final concert. The tours are successful, regularly attracting strong audiences with an average attendance per concert in 2008 of 1000 people.

After the rural tours, concert goers from these rural areas are also invited to the CBSO centre in Birmingham city centre to experience the ensemble perform in their home venue.

*“I love the initiative of bringing BCMG to small venues in Shropshire. I hope it will attract a wider audience to contemporary music. Being free is an important factor in people trying it out, as are the engaging introductions to the piece.”* **Shropshire audience member**

## Ensemble Cymru: Tours in North Wales

Ensemble Cymru is one of Wales’s leading orchestras renowned for their commitment to provide infrastructure and extend access to classical music to rural communities across Wales.

As the only chamber orchestra in Wales based outside of Cardiff, Ensemble Cymru performs over 100 concerts per year in all 6 counties of North Wales, ensuring that local people can experience excellent classical music, usually only available in big cities, on their doorstep.

### Community Cohesion

## London Mozart Players: Residency in East Lindsey, Lincolnshire

East Lindsey has an increasing population of migrant workers and ethnic minority groups – and building a sense of community between the migrant population and existing residents has been a key council priority.

London Mozart Players has a strong relationship with the local council after six years of residency, in which time





it has generated a huge following for live classical music in the area. This success has led to a further residency being developed this year with South Holland District Council, Lincolnshire, which aims to reach into the heart of the fenland communities.

*“Music is important and the London Mozart Players bring communities together to appreciate and enjoy music of the highest quality.”* **Councillors Adam Grist, Portfolio Holder for Leisure at East Lindsey District Council**

## Health

### **sinfonia ViVA: Fever**

sinfonia ViVA's *Fever* is an ongoing project that provides creative music workshops in a variety of health settings for young people and their carers. It gives the participants the opportunity to access top quality music making and helps to promote their self esteem and personal wellbeing. Spread over two days *Fever* delivers four one hour sessions, at different locations for the children, their carers and the staff.

The project is unique as it is flexible, as the musicians deliver the themed workshops in a range of locations and various size groups across the Midlands and beyond. *Fever* has been a great success, engaging parents, carers and staff in music making alongside professional musicians.

*“Music can be adapted for all abilities therefore raising self esteem and empowering young people.”*  
**Staff member, Derby Royal Hospital**

# Promoting participation: creating a unique learning environment

## Our ambitions:

Chamber orchestras want to give more children the opportunity to learn, engage and participate with orchestras in education, community and outreach projects.

Our work with children and young people is founded on active participation and tailoring programmes to local needs.

Chamber orchestras have successful long-term residencies, building solid relationships with schools and communities, and inspiring new generations of music-lovers. Residencies range in location from inner city schools to rural community centres.

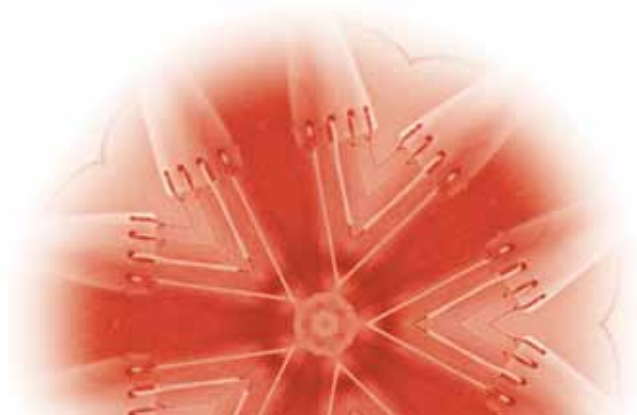
Alongside this, we are well placed to play a central role in the future of music education; complementing the work of teachers (classroom and instrumental) and helping support the ambitions of the Music Manifesto; including identifying and nurturing our most talented musicians and developing a world class workforce in music education.

## Academy of St. Martin in the Fields: The Buzz Project

The Academy of St Martins in the Fields' 'The Buzz' project took inspiration from the flight of bees creatively engaging participants in science, citizenship and music. The project had two strands: a project with school children and a family music day. Both strands culminated in a concert which portrayed the migration of bees through repertoire from England through to Australia.

The project aimed to:

- highlight the plight of the bee and its significant role in our heritage and well-being through music
- engage the KS2 participants (with varying educational needs) in music-making
- provide access to the concert hall, orchestral musicians and classical music, as well as access to nature, for schoolchildren in inner-city London
- help participants understand the behaviour and environmental needs of bees
- provide an innovative and interactive route by which families and schoolchildren can hear and enjoy together classical music



This schools part of the project involved working with 5 groups intensively. Sessions included a visit to an apiary, in-school composition workshops and an interactive concert involving over 350 more children from inner city schools.

The Family Music Day included a percussion composition workshop, instrumental demonstrations by members of the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields and an interactive bee workshop.

The project was successful at engaging children with varying educational needs as well as families –and for many of the children involved it was their first contact with a composer and orchestral musicians, and also their first trip to a concert hall or woodlands.

*'It was so good that I had to lean out of my seat because I was so interested.'* **Participant**

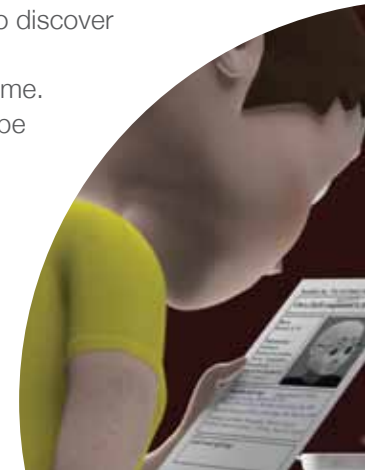
*'I've never been to a place like Wigmore Hall and I would like to go to another concert.'* **Participant**

*(The best bit was) 'Singing our songs at the end because it made me feel proud.'* **Participant**

## **Manchester Camerata: Floating Worlds**

Manchester Camerata's Floating Worlds project, delivered in partnership with the Royal Northern College of Music and supported by the Royal Exchange Theatre and Youth Music, was designed to provide young people aged 10-13 with High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome, the opportunity to participate in creative music making and drama. The project was uniquely devised to meet the needs of these young people, enabling them to participate in activities which are normally difficult due to the nature of Autism.

Delivered as a series of weekly sessions throughout the autumn in 2008, the project provided a safe environment for the young people to discover their artistic talents, and to develop friendships, some for the very first time. The project's success can not only be seen through the extensive media coverage it has attracted but also through the way in which the project has transformed some of the children's lives.



*“My son Elliott took part in your Floating World project and I just wanted to let you know the lasting effects of your wonderful project. Elliott discovered a love of singing and performing and your project gave him the confidence to find his voice. Since taking part, he took up the euphonium and had lessons in school which he loved and he joined a wind band at Chorlton High School and actually performed with them on your main stage in the summer!*

*Elliott is still acutely aware he is different and has had some difficulties fitting in at his high school, but the love of music and drama which he discovered with you, has given him a sense of self worth and belief. He has moved on to the tuba now, but continues to sing and has since applied for the CBBC series of the choir... Thank you for making a difference for Elliott.”*

**Mother of participant**



Delivering Cultural Priorities


## **Scottish Chamber Orchestra: The Lost Book**

The Lost Book was a collaborative adventure in storytelling that aimed to encourage people of all ages to read, watch and tell stories.

SCO Education worked with animation company Binary Fable on the project From January – July 2009 and the soundtrack for the animation was commissioned by SCO Education and performed by SCO musicians.

The results have been impressive: before the project, only a quarter of those who expressed an opinion had heard of The Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust and 17% had heard of the OBOE reading campaign.

After The Lost Book, 100% had heard of both. 38% said they are more interested in writing stories as a result of their involvement in The Lost Book – and 25% had signed up for Scottish Chamber mailings and 30% were more interested in seeking out contemporary composers.



*"It let me put in ideas and see them being produced into a very professional animation, complete with amazing music. It was like being part of a Hollywood film! I become a part of something I would never have been able to do without The Lost Book project."*

**Female, 25-34, Manchester, UK**

Working with schools

## **Scottish Chamber Orchestra: Masterworks**

Masterworks in an annual programme run by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra that reaches over 30 secondary schools and tours to six Scottish regions a year. Since its inception in 1998 this highly popular and adventurous programme has put established classics and contemporary music under the microscope. In 2009 Masterworks focused on James MacMillan's *Tryst*.

Masterworks consists of a programme of training and school visits which culminate in a week of performances.

*"I learned how complex orchestral music is, but how simple concepts can be very effective,"*

**Pupil**

*"I think the pupils really benefited from seeing and hearing professional musicians"*

**Teacher**





## Working with Business

Orchestras can help business leaders and their teams develop skills and qualities for success.

### **Britten Sinfonia: Sinfonia at Work**

Sinfonia at Work is Britten Sinfonia's new innovative programme for business. Started in 2008, the orchestra has delivered successful workshops with South Poland Business Link in Krakow and the Judge Business School, Cambridge.

The workshops cover a number of areas where the skills of musician can help those working in business, including teamwork, communications, leadership, flexibility and presentation skills.

*“The Britten Sinfonia workshop demonstrated that what you create together is more important than individual competition. It expanded our thinking outside the business school ‘box’ and demonstrated that individuality and teamwork are both necessary components of creative harmony”.*

**Daniel Vankov, Judge Business School and former Finance Manager, Publishing Industry**



Photo: Britten Sinfonia: Sinfonia at Work. Sophie Dunn



## Delivering in Partnership

Chamber Orchestras work closely with local authority and promoter partnerships to maximise their impact and effective reach. A key partner is Orchestras Live.

## Orchestras Live

Orchestras Live is the national development agency for professional orchestral music in England. Our mission is to inspire, motivate and empower the widest range of people through excellent live orchestral music. We work in partnership with local authorities and other promoter partners to reach communities and parts of the country which don't have access to high quality orchestral music and we collaborate closely with the whole range of professional British orchestras.

Last year our work to design, deliver and support orchestral residencies, concerts and projects amounted to 240 different events working with 74 local authorities and other partners across England in partnership with 43 professional orchestras.

Through formal and informal concerts, concerts for children and families, community and education projects ranging from workshops to year round residencies, we reach over 70,000 people each year. Our partners value us for our contribution to community cohesion, our ability to generate new audiences and our success in engaging young and hard to reach people in listening to and participating in live orchestral music.


In 2004, we created Orchestras Live Concerts - a national programme of world class orchestral music by the best of British professional ensembles playing for the widest range of audiences across England, enabling people to enjoy high quality orchestral music on their doorstep. Seven years on, Orchestras Live Concerts consists of 60 concerts each year in promoter centres as far afield as Cumbria in the North West to Dartington in the South West over to East Kent in the South East. We now work with a national network of 29 different promoters and 21 orchestras, almost all of whom are professional British chamber orchestras. Orchestras Live Concerts reach total audiences in excess of 11,000

people and we have a strong commitment to promoting new commissions and work by living composers. Our future priorities are to expand the reach of Orchestras Live Concerts by working with new promoters in new areas, to champion new commissions and to help new and emerging orchestras to find their audience.

The success of Orchestras Live Concerts thrives on a dynamic relationship with the British chamber orchestra sector and our orchestra partners tell us that their partnership with us enables them to expand both their reach and the range of work they offer. Our promoter partners strongly value the work of the British chamber orchestras in giving a high quality musical experience to their audiences. Orchestras Live Concerts is an important part of the orchestral provision in England and celebrates the excellence and flexibility of British chamber orchestras, conductors and soloists.

British Chamber Orchestras are an essential part of the orchestral landscape of the UK and we look forward to working with them and seeing them thrive throughout the next five years.

**Henry Little, Chief Executive, Orchestras Live**  
[www.orchestraslive.org.uk](http://www.orchestraslive.org.uk)



To find out how chamber orchestras can play a part in delivering local priorities and contribute to vibrant communities - and for more information on opportunities for supporting orchestras and helping to expand their work, please get in touch. For a full list of chamber orchestras in membership of the ABO, visit [www.abo.org.uk](http://www.abo.org.uk).

**Association of British Orchestras** 20 Rupert Street, London W1D 6DF  
T +44 (0)20 7287 0333 F +44 (0)20 7287 0444 E [info@abo.org.uk](mailto:info@abo.org.uk)

The ABO is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras throughout the UK. We currently have 65 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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