



'AFTERSHOCK'
2021 ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ORCHESTRAS CONFERENCE
10-12 MARCH 2021

The annual **Association of British Orchestras Conference**, the UK's leading classical music forum, will take place online from Wednesday 10 March – Friday 12 March.

With **Classic FM**, the UK's most popular classical music station, as Principal Media Partner, **Classical Music** as Online Media Partner, **Help Musicians** as Charity Partner and the **British Council** as International Partner, the conference will bring together speakers, panellists and delegates from across the UK and abroad to examine the critical issues facing the classical music sector and to discuss the support and innovation needed to forge an ambitious and sustainable future for the industry.

Through a series of keynote speeches and interactive panel discussions, the three-day online conference will focus on the theme of **'Aftershock'**, analysing the seismic issues that have sent shockwaves through the sector – from the devastating impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the threatening repercussions of Brexit, to the urgency of the climate change crisis and the reignited call to confront classical music's inequities and action meaningful change in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement. It will also offer an opportunity to champion the invention and flexibility shown by orchestras and musicians in continuing to connect with audiences, and to discuss the new approaches they can take forward to adapt to the new post-COVID landscape and build recovery. For the first time, the opening day of the conference will be free to attend for musicians, hosted in partnership with Help Musicians.

Amongst the speakers, **Caroline Dinenage MP**, Minister of State for Digital & Culture will give a keynote speech, while the Chair of Arts Council England, **Sir Nicholas Serota**, will discuss his vision for rebuilding the arts and delivering on ACE's 10 year strategy *Let's Create*. The role of broadcasting in a post-COVID world will be explored in a session led by Controller of BBC Radio 3 and Classical Music, **Alan Davey**, and examining how other countries and their orchestras have coped with the pandemic, the British Council's Director of Music, **Cathy Graham OBE** will chair a discussion with international colleagues including **Simon Woods**, President and Chief Executive of the League of American Orchestras.

The risk inherent in the UK's mixed economy model for arts funding, the sustainability – both financial and environmental – of orchestras' reliance on international touring, the future for repertoire and commissioning, the opportunities and challenges of digital performance, classical music's role within the UK's health, wellbeing and social care ecology, and the urgent need for new

approaches to ensure orchestras genuinely reflect the communities they serve are amongst the other topics that will be discussed with speakers including **Katy Balls**, Deputy Political Editor, The Spectator; **Sarah Derbyshire MBE**, Chief Executive, Orchestras Live; **Chris Giles**, Economics Editor, Financial Times; **Richard Morrison**, Chief Culture Writer, The Times; **Jamie Njoku-Goodwin**, Chief Executive, UK Music; and **Vanessa Reed**, President & CEO, New Music USA.

Mark Pemberton, Director, Association of British Orchestras:

Now more than ever we need to bring together all those involved in orchestral music, managers and musicians, to reflect on the challenges we have faced this past year and look ahead to how we rebuild. A year's shutdown of the sector has stretched its fragile business model as never before, and has fallen particularly hard on freelance musicians, many of whom have faced a complete loss of income. We are grateful to our partners for showing their support for the ABO and its members, and hope the conference will provide a bridge to a more secure future.

Phil Noyce, Managing Editor, Classic FM:

At Classic FM, we constantly witness the positive effect that listening to classical music has on our audience. This reaction has been even more apparent over the past year, in which we've welcomed many new listeners to the station. They tell us they tune in for the comfort and companionship we provide through the music we play – all, of course, made possible by the many featured recordings from the UK's great orchestras, choirs, ensembles and soloists. It's a privilege to support the ABO conference after an extraordinary year as we continue to share the incredible work of British musicians with our 5.5 million weekly listeners and 5 million followers on social media.

Claire Gevaux, Director of Programme, Help Musicians:

Help Musicians is delighted to be the charity partner at ABO's annual conference in 2021, the charity's centenary year. The past 10 months have shown us the power of music to unite, soothe and lift us in the most challenging of times but it has also highlighted the ongoing need to support the musicians behind the music – both in times of crisis and opportunity. We look forward to discussing and sharing how we can all collaborate to help musicians adapt and thrive in the ever-evolving new landscape.

Nominations are still open for the long-standing **ABO/Classical Music Awards** presented in partnership with the ABO's Online Media Partner **Classical Music** which will be announced at the conference alongside the annual **ABO Award**. An opportunity to champion those who work tirelessly behind the scenes, ABO members are encouraged to nominate colleagues who have gone above and beyond to bring music to audiences and into our communities whilst the industry continues to navigate the unprecedented and critical impact of the pandemic. For more details visit abo.org.uk.

The ABO Conference is open to members and non-members. For further information on the schedule and how to purchase online tickets, visit www.abo.org.uk.

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Classical MUSIC

Help Musicians

BRITISH COUNCIL

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Association of British Orchestras (ABO)

The ABO is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras, youth ensembles and the wider classical music industry throughout the UK. The ABO's 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. Recent initiatives include Resonate in association with PRS Foundation and BBC Radio 3, which supports the best orchestral music of the last 25 years, and Find Your Way which identifies and offers training to future sector leaders. The ABO campaigned successfully for Orchestra Tax Relief and continues to campaign for the sector at the highest levels, to help build resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

www.abo.org.uk

@aborchestras

About Classic FM

Classic FM is the UK's most popular classical music brand, reaching 5.5 million listeners every week. Classic FM's programmes are hosted by a mix of classical music experts and household names including Alexander Armstrong, John Suchet, Moira Stuart, Myleene Klass, Bill Turnbull, Alan Titchmarsh, John Humphrys, Charlotte Hawkins, Aled Jones and Margherita Taylor. Since its launch in 1992, Classic FM has aimed to make classical music accessible and relevant to everyone and in doing so, introduce an entirely new audience to the genre. ClassicFM.com is the UK's biggest classical music website and has 3.5 million unique monthly web and app users. Classic FM is owned by Global. It is available across the UK on 100-102 FM, DAB digital radio and TV, the Classic FM app, at ClassicFM.com and on Global Player. Source: *RAJAR / Ipsos-MORI / RSMB Q1 2020*.

About Classical Music

Classical Music is a one-stop hub for the classical music industry, providing news, opinion, resources and practical advice for music professionals all those who have an interest in classical music, from practitioners to managers, service providers and general enthusiasts. Our website offers daily news updates from our in-house editorial team, regular commentary from specialist contributors, and advice and analysis from respected figures in the music industry and beyond.

About Help Musicians

Help Musicians is an independent charity with an extraordinary history. For 100 years, it has provided a broad spectrum of help, support and opportunities to empower musicians aged 18+, at any stage of their career or retirement, 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, offering emerging and established professional musicians assistance across health and wellbeing, business skills and creative development. Help Musicians aims to make a meaningful difference to the lives of professional musicians and is passionate about creating a world where musicians thrive.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. www.britishcouncil.org