



CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF
ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ORCHESTRAS

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**ABO CELEBRATES 70th ANNIVERSARY WITH PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION
ATTENDED BY MINISTER FOR CULTURE MICHAEL ELLIS MP,
SHADOW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CULTURE TOM WATSON MP
AND HARRIET HARMAN MP.**

Hosted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Classical Music, and sponsored by Classic FM, guests at a Parliamentary Reception held last night in the Churchill Rooms in the Houses of Parliament were welcomed by Classic FM presenter John Suchet and speakers from across the political spectrum.

The event marks the formal start of the Association of British Orchestra's 70th anniversary as the representative body for professional orchestras and youth ensembles across the UK. Its mission is to enable and support an innovative, collaborative and sustainable orchestral sector and to provide advice, support, intelligence and information to the people who make British orchestras a global success.

The event also saw the launch of the ABO's anniversary website www.aboanniversary.org.uk with a timeline for the ABO and its members over the past 70 years, celebrating their contribution to the cultural wellbeing of the nation from 1948 to today.

Michael Ellis MP, Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, praised the UK orchestral sector's world-leading reputation. He said "British orchestras are among the very best in the world and are great cultural ambassadors for the country. This Government firmly supports UK orchestras, and this is why we introduced the creative tax relief, which is helping them to build resilience and increase their reach. I welcome the great job that the ABO does to champion Britain's orchestral sector, and I look forward to working with it and its members to support them to take the best of British classical music across the globe".

Tom Watson, Shadow Secretary for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport: “I’m delighted to help the ABO celebrate its 70th anniversary and celebrate the contribution that classical musicians make to the success of British orchestras here and abroad. Behind every great performance is the best of British talent, and it is great to see so much cooperation between the ABO and the Musicians’ Union. It is also important that we recognise how much more there is to British orchestras than just great concerts - their work in education and the community is the envy of the world and helps to nurture musicians and audiences of the future. The Labour Party understands the value of public investment in helping achieve this, and will continue to argue the case for sustained funding in the pipeline of British musicians for the decades to come”.

Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, Chair of Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance, said: “The success of British orchestras over these past 70 years is matched by the success of our world-leading conservatoires. As Chair of Trinity Laban, I am proud that our institution, alongside other specialist conservatoires, provides high quality training for the musicians of the future, with unrivalled graduate employment. Having an effective pipeline, from school to youth orchestra, conservatoire to professional employment in our great orchestras, is vital to ensuring genuine equality of opportunity for this country’s talented young musicians. British conservatoires are vital to ensuring our classical music industry remains the best in the world, and I’d like to thank the ABO for the support and advocacy that it provides for the sector”.

The ABO was founded in March 1948 with the encouragement of Arts Council of Great Britain. **Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England** said: “The ABO continues to be as relevant to the UK’s orchestral life today as it was seventy years ago. Since those early days it’s become an important and effective partner for the Arts Council, making major contributions to national cultural projects and stimulating debate and action in important areas for orchestras, such as improving diversity, embracing new technology and developing music education. It does all this while never losing sight of its members’ interests.”

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