

ABO CONFERENCE, 18-20 JANUARY 2012 MARRIOTT HOTEL, LIVERPOOL

OUTCOMES

- **Ed Vaizey MP** opened the conference with a speech praising the ABO for its assiduous advocacy on behalf of its members, and for engaging so positively with the DCMS. He announced the members of the National Music Plan Monitoring Board. He then took questions from the audience, facilitated by Sarah Crompton, Arts Editor in Chief of the Daily Telegraph.
- Following the panel debate on **Measuring the Value of Culture**, the ABO will engage with the DCMS's development of an appropriate methodology.
- The intense interest in our three **Music Education** panels shows how engaged ABO members are in the development of music education hubs and in working productively with the new Bridge Organisations. Arts Council England wants to maintain the conversation with the ABO and its members.
- The ABO is keen for its members to help develop regional networks for the new **youth ensemble** membership.
- There is clear interest from our members in touring to **India** and the British Council sponsored session will we hope lead to productive relationships.
- The TMA and ABO will work on developing joint best practice guidance on **data sharing**. Sir Vernon Ellis will ask Arts Council England to play a leadership role in forging better relationships between touring company and venue.
- The **RPS** session was well attended and our thanks go to the RPS for curating such a productive session. We will continue to work with the RPS on future conference sessions.
- A draft **Green Orchestra Charter** was presented, and a revised draft will go to the ABO board for approval in the Spring. This will then be presented across the Specialist Managers Meetings during the year. It has been noted that Arts Council England intend asking their NPOs to implement Environmental Action Plans as part of their funding agreements.
- The main topic of the conference was building the personal capacity of the people who work in orchestras, both manager and musician.
- The launch of the **ABO/Rhinegold Awards** was a statement of intent that celebrating best practice and innovation is vital in inspiring the next generation of orchestral, concert hall and artist manager.
- The messages from the **What About Me?** session, facilitated by Roger Neill, will be put on the ABO website as part of the post-conference resources.

- The ABO is delighted to have worked so positively with the **Musicians Union**, and to have welcomed so many musicians to the conference. It is important to remember that this should not just be a conference for managers, but should also embrace the interests of the musicians. We will work with the MU on creating and promoting a fee package for musicians, and it is hoped that those orchestras that did not send musicians this year will be inspired to do so in future.
- Vasily Petrenko during his **In Conversation** with Richard Morrison talked about how much the RLPO's musicians enjoy their job, but also about the need for regular appraisals.
- This chimes with the outcomes of the three joint **ABO/MU** sessions, and our thanks go to the three Chairs who handled such sensitive topics so deftly.
- The spirit of co-operation was exemplary, and that spirit continued into a meeting of the ABO/MU steering group, resulting in the presentation of a first set of **principles** that will assist in the development of performance review systems, professional development opportunities and retirement planning. The steering group will meet at the earliest opportunity to move the agenda forward, and there will be follow-up sessions at the next conference, 23-25 January in Leeds, hosted by Opera North.