

Headline feedback from ABO & sinfonia ViVA Creative Collaborations Session 17 February 2011

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Some reasons why orchestras matter:

- Live performance
- A metaphor for community, the orchestra demonstrates the group as one.
- Promotes teamwork & cooperation
- Gives pleasure & happiness
- Inspires & creates ambition
- Economic impact – on venues, audience, musicians
- Non verbal communication transcends barriers
- The whole ecology of the music world would be damaged, including jazz and pop music
- Part of our culture & culture is what makes life worth living



There are too many orchestras doing the same things. What's wrong with merging departments or even merging entirely?

- It could compromise identity
- There could be an impact on access for audiences / participants
- There are not too many. Larger organisations could 'parent' smaller ones.
- Spread orchestras out evenly (geographically)

If orchestras are going to find a place in the government's Big Society where community cohesion is a universal responsibility, what effect does this have on the focus of our priorities?

- Concerts and community/education work are not mutually exclusive – indeed they are interdependent.
- Musicians' roles are evolving: cascade knowledge and build skills base of members who are no longer restricted to the platform
- Through partnerships, utilise collective skills and communicate to all better what orchestras already do, and their increasing responsibilities within the Big Society.
- Orchestral outreach work is not nearly demand focussed enough.

If sharing is diluting is it inevitable that working in partnership results in a loss of identity?

- Not diluting
- Properly managed sharing can lead to a strengthening of identity
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated and aims are clear.
- Job losses through merging leads to pressure through under staffing

If in our education and outreach work we take it as a given that everyone has a valid contribution to make, why are our management structures so authoritarian?

- Size of organisation has a huge impact
- Don't agree – it's an assumption that management structures are authoritarian
- Must have structure in place that can be flexible enough to incorporate democratic thinking
- Need for expertise in creative thinking as well as management (especially financial management) due to the risk involved.
- Think hierarchical would be a better term than authoritarian.

Hopes for the future:

- Audiences will be larger and more diverse and the richness of orchestral provision nationwide will be maintained, and supplemented by resources to take our artistic product to those currently unable to access it and to ensure continuity of the musical legacy.
- Every child in every part of the country and every social background should have access to inspirational orchestral experiences.
- British orchestral music making will be the envy of the world.

Full Feedback:

Money's too tight to mention. If orchestras die, who cares?

Some reasons why orchestras matter:

- Inspiration / inspirational
- Spiritually uplifting
- Personal interaction
- Appreciation of artistry
- Value of tradition and its legacy
- Music is a therapy for mind/body/spirit
- Orchestras are part of our culture. Culture is what makes life worth living.
- Loose resource of active music making
- Soundtrack to life
- Chance of communication for the well being of society
- Creativity of the human spirit
- Expression of culture
- History and heritage
- Skills
- Metaphor for community – orchestra demonstrates the group as one
- Live orchestra music force/power creates appreciation for children
- Has the ability to include people
- Engenders a sense of community
- Part of us/our heritage/our culture
- Mechanism to share the universal language of music
- Collaboration and a great example of people working together
- Economic impact
- Basic human right
- Feel good factor
- Communicate
- Unite
- Live music matters
- Impact on community
- Mark of civilised society
- Orchestras are for everyone - young and old
- Access
- Employment
- Local businesses
- Creativity enriches life
- They make people happy
- Creating ambition
- Cultural ambassadors (local, national, international)
- Economic multipliers
- They bring joy
- They develop social skills
- They facilitate learning
- They provide economic benefits and employment
- They keep culture thriving
- They challenge people to be open minded
- Orchestral music is one of the finest flowering of civilisation
- They're part of the social fabric
- Bring joy to many people - live music
- Creative outlet for many - communication – a model
- Links between past and future (in both directions) – wellbeing - holistic
- Active listening - orchestra and audience symbiosis
- Values that they represent - model of what society could be - metaphor
- Give people happiness



- Orchestras bring people together
- Non verbal communication; transcend all barriers of verbal communications
- Enhances civilisation
- Expression of cultural identity
- Musicians, audience/venues, other art forms (film-makers)
- Socially
- Bringing people together
- Jewel in our cultural crown
- Unparalleled live music experience
- Investment in local economy
- Musicians, audiences, listeners and children would care
- Film goes and TV/radio viewers would care
- Orchestras promote teamwork and cooperation
- The whole ecology of music would be damaged, including jazz and popular music
- Orchestral music inspires creativity and gives pleasure to millions
- Important part of music is the live performance
- Microcosm of a society in harmony – team work and harmony
- Escapism – community therapy
- Promotes community cohesion – shared experiences
- Employment
- Enjoyment
- Tradition and innovation
- Art for art's sake
- Live experience
- Utility – film and TV soundtracks
- Education
- Goes where words end
- Communities
- Spiritually uplifting
- Audiences would be deprived of live performances (which transport you away from everyday life)
- New music could no longer develop – no film music
- Economic knock on – bad news - empty concert halls – unemployed musicians
- Education deprivation – inspiration disappears
- National pride suffers – cultural life of cities crumble

If orchestras are going to find a place in the government's Big Society where community cohesion is a universal responsibility, what effect does this have on the focus of our priorities?

- The vast majority of orchestra are already part of the big society
- Concerts and community work are not mutually exclusive, indeed they are interdependent
- Although good education work has taken place across the past 20 years, some has not been good enough
- Integration of performing and education activities
- Impact on planning cycles – education needs to be thought about earlier
- Changing role of musician away from solely performance
- Communicate better what we already do
- Partnerships – utilising collective skills
- Cascading down of knowledge and skills



Controversial:

- Orchestral education work is not nearly demand-focused enough
- Shifting how we spend budgets towards education, away from concerts
- Is the big society a political decoy?

If in our education and outreach work we take it as a given that everyone has a valid contribution to make, why are our management structures so authoritarian?

- Someone has to make the decision based on a democratic dialogue
- It depends very much on the nature and size of the organisation and what it is trying to achieve
- One has to have a basic structure in place from which one can break out
- There's room for improvisation around a basic premise, just as players interpret the score
- Arts organisations tend to be open and flatter structures
- The statement assumes too much – not all management structures are so authoritarian
- Challenging orthodoxy inspires creativity but the dichotomy between creatives and management is unhelpful/inaccurate
- Freedom of creativity needs organisation/structure to deliver a performance
- If we did agree with the assumption, someone would still have to take artistic and financial responsibility
- For everyone to have a contribution which is valid, it needs someone to take responsibility/leadership
- We think "authoritarian" is the wrong word
- Money v. risk
- Expertise

Controversial:

- Are they so authoritarian?
- We don't agree with authoritarian – maybe hierarchical? The terminology is flawed!
- Why does this question not relate to players?!
- Assumptions at the heart of statement
- We don't agree with the assumption that management structures are authoritarian
- To what extent is education a core activity of an orchestra?

If sharing is diluting is it inevitable that working in partnership results in a loss of identity?

To share is not to dilute

- Proper management will lead to productive synergies
- Why partnership is beneficial and often cost effective
- It is not inevitable
- It may be true
- Common goals are important
- We don't believe sharing is diluting
- Good sharing can strengthen identity
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated and aims are clear



Controversial:

- Job losses through mergers – pressure through understaffing
- Administrative v. creative like for like competition?

There are too many orchestras doing the same things. What's wrong with merging departments or even merging entirely?

- We disagree that there are too many orchestras doing the same
- Merging would mean loss of artistic identity
- It would cut access for participants and audiences
- Loss of identity
- Responsibility to your community
- Loyalty/audience could be lost
- Too big to manage – quality will suffer
- There are not too many
- Strength is its diversity the belief would be diluted
- Will reduce overall number of orchestras
- Nothing wrong in principal; but orchestras want to maintain own identities
- Perhaps merging with venues/other organisations would be easier
- Can bigger organisations 'parent' smaller ones?

Controversial:

- Tension between centralised and decentralised provision
- Spread orchestras out evenly (geographically)
- Define an 'orchestra'. Is it the management? The players? Or the audience?
- No controversy!

Hopes for the future: What do we want the orchestral landscape to look like when our primary school children leave education?

We hope that...

- It's still there
- Healthy and sustainable
- Local, national, amateur, professional levels
- More part of society
- The orchestral landscape will be: vibrant, integrated and appreciated, relevant and inclusive, flexible, challenging, engaged with modern society
- Every primary school child will have had an experience of live orchestral music
- That children can access music by normalising images of orchestra e.g. smile, dress, engage the audience, change presentation
- Current or greater variety of orchestras, and secure their place at the heart of contemporary culture and education
- Audiences will be larger and more diverse and the richness of orchestral provision nationwide will be maintained, and supplemented by resources to take our artistic product to those currently unable to access it and to ensure continuity of the musical legacy.
- Orchestras are the cornerstone of a vibrant cultural economy – and continue to perform inspiring concerts made accessible to all. Through inspirational and accessible education projects, through all stages of life.
- Primary school children, through educational activities, will come to symphony concerts and pay for tickets
- Rich and diverse in term of their structure, make-up and programming, with contemporary music not marginalised
- No one ever leaves education!
- Every child in every school can have a relationship with an orchestra
- Expanded landscape, enhanced funding, greater diversity, greater links to the community
- More orchestras!
- Children have enough experience of live music to want to continue engagement
- A continued diversity in orchestral provision across the UK
- It is a vibrant, creative, developing art form
- It is relevant
- A vibrant amateur landscape continues
- It continues to offer a pathway for talented musicians to enter the profession
- Every child in every part of the country and every social background should have access to inspirational orchestral experiences.
- Better quality orchestras – more attendance
- Relevance and meaning to local community
- Increased music attention



- A way is found to involve a younger audience in our music – surviving and THRIVING – to communicate the EXCITEMENT and buzz – get out of the museum mentality and stop greying of the audience... PRESENTATION issues. Mix genres... Take people out of their comfort zones!
- Primary school children learnt to play, sing and love the arts during their time at school and therefore become practitioners and participants in a thriving and diverse orchestral landscape, which celebrates the pleasure and experience of classical music.
- There is increased access for young people feeding through to future audiences, nationwide, not just hubs.
- British orchestral music making will be the envy of the world.