



**REVIEW OF THE YEAR
2002/3**

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PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ORCHESTRAS | 7 OCTOBER 2003

INTRODUCTION

The last year has been a dynamic one for the Association. Beginning with a financial crisis and moving home for the third time in three years last October was not a happy time. However, within four months the Association was debt free and had just completed a critically-acclaimed Conference that was considered the best for many years. The rest of the year saw a steady rise in membership confidence and participation in the ABO's activities. As this brief report will show the level of activity undertaken by the Association is back to that which members should expect and has culminated in today's sell-out symposium on Cultural Diversity.

A key function of the Association in the last year has been to make the case that British orchestras continue to evolve, diversify and provide a unique high quality service to all sectors of the community. Writing in *Arts Professional*, new Director Russell Jones said, "Is it perhaps that orchestras make an easy target for those who delight in throwing the worn clichés of orchestras being elitist bastions of privilege, outdated product, pandering to white, middle class audiences that only want to listen to a handful of safe works? But the simple truth is that this representation of contemporary British orchestras is outdated, if it was ever accurate at all. The eminent French composer and conductor Pierre Boulez once described the orchestra as "an ensemble of possibilities" – the evidence suggests that British orchestras have proved him right."

The ABO has secured coverage in *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Evening Standard*, *The Economist*, *The Stage*, *Classic FM*, *BBC Radio 3* and *BBC Radio 4* in the last twelve months and constantly feeds information to journalists and broadcasters. The ABO's primary role is to provide an advocacy service for orchestras to ensure that the work undertaken on and off the platform to entertain, educate and challenge audiences, is widely known to all members of our communities. There is still much to do.

STRATEGIC PLAN

An immediate priority at the start of the year was to secure the Association's future and produce a Strategic Plan that would serve as both a recovery document and a guide to the three years ahead. The production of the Plan was assisted via the generous financial support of Arts Council England which saw the Association's financial situation stabilised. The Plan was adopted by members at the Spring General Meeting in May and is now operational. Copies of the Plan are available from Head Office. The assistance of ACE Consultant Susan Royce and former Chairman, Edward Smith, in the preparation of the Plan is acknowledged with gratitude.

The Association wishes to record its very sincere thanks to Hilary Boulding *Music Director, Arts Council England*, for her support of the ABO at a most critical time.

Hand-in-hand with the development of the Plan was the support of Shaftesbury plc and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The Association is grateful to Jonathan Lane, Brian Bickell and Andrew Lane from Shaftesbury for our wonderful accommodation in London W1, their interest in the ABO's work and support for our sister organisation, the National Campaign for the Arts.

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has been a long and generous supporter of the ABO, particularly with its Orchestras in Education programme. The Foundation's support during the year was essential and the Association is very grateful to Judith Dunworth and Shreela Gosch.

ABO CONFERENCE

Liverpool's successful bid to be European Capital of Culture for 2008 was given a helping hand by the ABO when over 260 delegates went to the city for the Annual Conference in February. Hosted by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, delegates were treated to a concert conducted by Music Director Gerard Schwarz in the elegant surroundings of the Philharmonic Hall. This, along with the conference dinner at the Town Hall, generously provided by Liverpool City Council, truly showed off Liverpool at its best.

Internationally-renowned arts philanthropist Alberto Vilar provided a personal view to a packed conference hall on the future of arts funding in a keynote address. Debate throughout the weekend covered a range of topics including relationships with funders, promoters and local authorities, the impact of technology on the sector and new perspectives in marketing featuring contributions from EasyJet and Everton Football Club. Two sessions have directly led to the conception of further events: a first look at cultural diversity with consultant Beverley Mason spawned a one-day symposium in October 2003; and two exhilarating sessions entitled "In the Community" have created the ABO's first ever satellite conference which integrates with the Annual Conference in 2004 in Boumemouth.

Sincere thanks are due to Eddie Thomas, Music Officer at (the then) North West Arts Board and to Roger Lewis, Managing Director, Darren Henley, Managing Editor and Natalie Wheen at Classic FM for their crucial support, without which the event would not have been possible. Special thanks to Michael Elliott and all his team at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

A SOUND EAR

The ABO's research into noise damage to orchestral musicians was once again in the broadsheet media as we announced a series of two-day training workshops to be run for orchestral musicians and managements in 2004 in association with the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. Copies of the original report, along with a report of the hugely successful seminar held in September 2002 which was attended by over 100 delegates from across the music industry including musicians, acousticians, medical advisors and orchestra managers, were widely circulated. The imminent rolling out of the training programme, under Alison Wright Reid's expert guidance, reinforces how the ABO remains committed to continuing the work initiated by the publication of the report and to working closely with the Musicians' Union, Musicians' Benevolent Fund and other bodies and keeping this issue firmly on the agenda. The ABO is very grateful to Christopher Yates, Helen Faulkner and Michael White from the MBF who have enabled the next phase of *A Sound Ear* to take place.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

When work was started on the ABO's new strategic plan in the autumn of 2002, the Education Programme was put on hold whilst the review of core aims and objectives took place and a new vision was created. Several changes of education personnel in orchestras and opera companies have taken place in the course of 2002/03, particularly at a senior level, including some new roles created by the BBC orchestras and BBC Singers, which emphasise the continued importance placed on this work by orchestras and the recognised need to continue working with their audiences and wider communities.

In June Fiona Harvey (née Penny) re-joined the organisation as Education Manager and has since started to meet with Education Managers; programme the meetings of the ABO Education Managers; relaunch the emailed Education Bulletin; re-convene the Association's Education Advisory Committee; and she has ensured representation at several external meetings, including: the Music Education Council Executive Committee (as a co-opted member), the National Music Education Forum, co-hosted by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Qualifications and Curriculum

Agency (QCA), and Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and the Music Business Forum. She also attended the DCMS / DfES conference 'Collaborate, Create, Educate' at the Barbican Centre in June, the Music Education Council's Conference 'The Importance of Music' in July and the seminar hosted and chaired by David Miliband MP in June, with a second one due to be held in mid-October 2003.

Plans for the future include planning and organising the satellite Education conference within the main ABO conference in Bournemouth (January 2004), in collaboration with Youth Music; further developments on the ABO website and producing a briefing paper about the variety, breadth and depth of ABO member orchestras' (and opera companies') education programmes which would also serve as a profile-raising and information document.

SPECIALIST MANAGER MEETINGS

The backbone to the year's events programme continued to be the series of specialist managers meetings for marketing, education, finance, sponsorship and concerts managers, providing opportunities for colleagues from different organisations to get together and discuss subjects of mutual interest and concern, and benefit from the latest business developments through talks and surgeries given by experts. Meetings for various membership groups have also been held, including Scottish members, Chamber Orchestras and Independent Contract Orchestra Managers. This invaluable service was also extended for the first time to orchestral archivists and chairmen and is to be extended this autumn to artistic administrators and platform managers.

TRAINING

The annual series of basic management training workshops, *Brass Tacks*, continued to prove popular, with a day on IT being added to the list of subjects offered. The popularity of these concentrated and targeted short courses has led us to develop a second series, in the spring/summer of 2004 in addition to the current autumn series.

WHERE DO I START?

Over 60 young people, careers advisors and others interested in careers in orchestra management attended this annual one-day event, led by Trevor Ford, which featured a range of speakers from across the membership discussing the different facets of the industry. It has firmly established itself as a recognised and respected course and will continue to be developed. Future developments may include repeating the event outside London in spring 2004 and collaborating with conservatoires on combined courses for music students. Feedback from delegates and speakers was overwhelmingly positive and provided nearly 30 new recruits to the ABO Volunteer register. This course has grown in popularity over the last three years and, under the organisational eye of Becky Guest, is sure to continue to flourish. Special thanks to Classic FM's Roger Lewis for his cameo appearance.

ABO AWARD

The ABO Award 2003 was presented to conductor Bernard Haitink KBE by former recipient Sir Simon Rattle at the Barbican, London on Wednesday 21 May 2003. The Award was presented at the conclusion of a programme of Brahms given by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bernard Haitink.

Bernard Haitink has held a number of key orchestral posts in Britain throughout his distinguished career. On receiving the award, the internationally-acclaimed conductor said: "I am delighted and honoured to be receiving this award. I have always cherished the special relationship with the British orchestras I have conducted and the quality of the music-making I have been privileged to enjoy over many years."

NEW MEMBERS

During the year we welcomed into, or back to, membership:

- Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra
- London Mozart Players
- Royal Ballet Sinfonia
- The Sixteen
- Young Musicians Symphony Orchestra
- BBC Radio 3
- Classic FM

Update REBORN

The Association's email newsletter returned to members' screens during the year and has been much appreciated. All staff from member orchestras should now receive *Update* on the first Monday of each month to be kept informed of ABO events and other topical information. Comments on improving *Update* are always welcome.

NATIONAL ORCHESTRAL WEEK / FESTIVAL

Roger Wright, Controller of BBC Radio 3 attended the Spring General Meeting to outline the partnership between Radio 3, ABO and Making Music that would see National Orchestra Week replaced in September/October 2004 by National Orchestra Festival. The Festival will be a celebration of the quality and diversity of British orchestras as well as providing unique audience development and outreach opportunities. Further details will be available in November.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

The ABO has always been at the heart of international collaboration and was a founder of the International Alliance of Orchestral Associations (IAOA). The ABO hosted a meeting of IAOA at the Liverpool Conference in February and new officers were elected. The ABO continues to hold the Secretariat of the organisation.

The Director travelled to Toronto as a guest of Orchestras Canada to speak at its critical conference on the future of Canadian Orchestras; called on Henry Fogel the new President of the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL) and attended, with Simon Crookall and Michael Henson, the ASOL's annual conference in San Francisco. The Director was also a guest of the Association of French Orchestras at its conference in Paris and will address German orchestras at a special conference in Berlin in November.

Through its membership of Pearle* (European League of Employers' Associations in the Performing Arts) the Association continues to play an active role with its European partners to ensure effective lobbying of European institutions, collaboration with other orchestral associations and a stream of knowledge for members on issues such as the EU Noise and Working Time Directives.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Members approved changes to the Articles of Association at an EGM in July. This will result in a new Board of 8 members, six being drawn from full members of the Association and two external directors. 8 candidates are standing for the 6 places at the AGM. Board members will co-opt the external directors at its meeting in November.

As a result of the changes David Butcher, Paul Hughes, Christopher Lawrence, Roy McEwan and David Murray decided not to offer themselves as candidates at the AGM. The Association is very grateful to all of them for their contributions, some over very many years, and wish them well for the future. Simon Crookall, Cathy Graham, Michael Henson, Malcolm Warne Holland and David Whelton have also made great contributions to the work of the Association in the past year and are all candidates for the new Board.

Special mention must be made of the ABO's Chairman, Simon Crookall who made a huge and devoted contribution during the last year. He was joined by Christopher Lawrence and Michael Henson on the Finance Committee which had serious issues to address at the start of the year. The Association is in their debt.

ON THE ROAD

ABO staff have been welcomed by many members during the year and are always grateful for such invitations whether they are standard promotions or special events. It is hoped to visit all members at least once a year but with 54 members it is surprisingly difficult to make dates work. Invitations to the Proms are particularly welcome, for obvious reasons, but also because it is helpful and cost efficient to be able to meet members when "they come to us". Particular thanks to Nick Kenyon for keeping the Director in refreshment during numerous Proms intervals.

LEGAL EAGLES

Moving offices, changing the Articles, Holiday Pay and data protection have all kept our honorary solicitors, Charles Russell, busy on the ABO's behalf. The Association is very grateful to Senior Partner Laurie Watt for all his support, the use of meeting space and for chairing the ABO Trust and Chairman SMM. The ABO is also very grateful to his colleagues Michael Scott, Sarah Jane Turcan and Peter Carey who have provided invaluable advice during the year.

STAFF CHANGES

The ABO office has welcomed Rebecca Guest as the new, full time, Membership Services Manager. Fiona Harvey (née Penny) has also returned to the ABO as part-time Education Manager. Fiona has been missed and we are delighted that our Education policy and co-ordination work is now back in safe hands.

VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

The ABO relies enormously on its dedicated team of volunteers and interns. Everyone is valued but particular thanks must go to Joe McCann who serves as Honorary Finance Director and comes to the office each week to keep the books and accounts shipshape. Thanks also to Chris Wright who gave many months of pro-bono support and helped with the production of the annual accounts.

The ABO is committed to providing meaningful internships for those seeking work experience at the start of their careers. The Association is grateful for all the commitment and hard work of James Harvey, Katherine Littlefield, Mary Frances McDonald and Alison Fleming.

ABO BOARD

2002 – 2003

Simon Crookall <i>Chairman</i>	Chief Executive	Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Christopher Lawrence	General Manager	The Academy of Ancient Music
Paul Hughes	General Manager	BBC Symphony Orchestra
David Murray	Director	BBC National Orchestra of Wales
David Butcher	Chief Executive	Britten Sinfonia
Michael Henson	Managing Director	Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
Cathy Graham	Managing Director	London Sinfonietta
Malcolm Warne Holland	Orchestra & Concerts Director	Orchestra of Opera North
David Whelton	Managing Director	Philharmonia Orchestra
Roy McEwan	Managing Director	Scottish Chamber Orchestra

ABO STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS*

Russell Jones	Director	<i>russell@abo.org.uk</i>
Adam Powell	Projects Manager	<i>adam@abo.org.uk</i>
Rebecca Guest	Membership Services Manager	<i>becky@abo.org.uk</i>
Fiona Harvey	Education Manager (part time)	<i>fiona@abo.org.uk</i>
Joe McCann*	Finance Manager	<i>joe@abo.org.uk</i>
Chris Wright	Financial Consultant (part time)	

In addition to all those listed above the Director of the ABO would particularly like to thank the following for their support in ways too numerous to mention over the past year:

Carol Ibsen, Office of Alberto Vilar
Ewan Balfour, Brunswick Group
Richard Crossland, ABL Consulting Ltd
Serge Dorny
Henry Fogel, American Symphony Orchestra League
Trevor Ford
Terry Franklin, Franklin Associates
Polly Khan, American Symphony Orchestra League
Joseph Kluger, Philadelphia Orchestra
Joseph McCann, Honorary Finance Director
Charles S Olton, American Symphony Orchestra League
Richard Pulford, TMA/SoLT
Jesse Rosen, American Symphony Orchestra League
Tim Stockil, Arts & Business
Sally Taylor
Alberto Vilar

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