



HEALTHY ORCHESTRA CHARTER

An Occupational Health & Safety Awards Scheme
for Orchestral Musicians and their Managers

O V E R V I E W



Objectives

The Healthy Orchestra Charter is a joint initiative by the Association of British Orchestras (ABO) and the Musicians' Benevolent Fund (MBF). Launched at the 2006 ABO Conference in Gateshead, the aim of the Charter is to set an industry-wide standard of care and award Charter Marks to orchestras that are displaying good practice towards the physical, mental and emotional health of employees - both orchestral musicians and their management.

It is anticipated that the Charter will

- help motivate occupational health and safety performance improvement in orchestras by providing a rising scale of targets to aim for;
- provide a means of recognising and celebrating occupational health and safety achievement within the orchestral sector;
- provide a series of exemplars of good practice, as positive role models for other orchestras to learn from and emulate.

Accessibility

The Healthy Orchestra Charter is open to all ABO members.

Instead of being a hard-and-fast checklist of 'dos and don'ts', the Charter is intended as a guide to provide orchestras with the information they need to keep healthy in a proactive way. Along with an address book of organisations specifically geared towards supporting the health of musicians that can be found on pages 10-12, the Charter has been designed to give an indication of the different areas that orchestras ought to consider, including rehearsal and performance conditions, venue facilities and management responsibility.

The Charter is non-competitive and awards will be based on how successful each applicant's practices, policies, procedures and facilities are in achieving the highest standards possible within their means for protecting the occupational health and safety of their employees.

Eligibility

All orchestras applying to the scheme must first be able to demonstrate that they are meeting the statutory legal Health & Safety requirements for an organisation of their size – please see page 5 for more details.

Award Levels

The Charter will offer three levels of achievement – **Bronze**, **Silver** and **Gold**. Organisations must achieve one level before proceeding to the next. Charter Marks are awarded for a period of three years, after which the Healthy Orchestra Charter Project as a whole will be reviewed.

The **Bronze Charter Mark** will be awarded to organisations demonstrating an understanding of the health of their employees by meeting a set of fundamental standards that show a commitment to good practice, as outlined on pages 7-8.

The **Silver Charter Mark** will be awarded to Bronze Award holders who are able to demonstrate to an assessor during a visit to the organisation that in addition to practising the procedures they presented as Bronze applicants, they excel in the areas identified as Silver Themes (see page 8), in particular that occupational health and health & safety considerations have become part of the organisational culture.

Finally, the **Gold Charter Mark** will be awarded by the assessment panel to Silver Award holders who have launched an outstanding new initiative in the fields of occupational health or health & safety with measurable benefits, which leads the way in the development of the sector's practice, sets new standards of care and contributes to the body of knowledge.

O V E R V I E W



Elements

Each of the Charter Marks will cover five main areas of activity, common to all orchestras:

- Management (e.g. duty of care, confidentiality, staff induction and training)
- Venue facilities (e.g. backstage areas, quiet spaces, temperature, lighting)
- Performance matters (e.g. rehearsals, programming, hours)
- Travelling (e.g. transport, accommodation, seating, on-site services)
- Additional services (e.g. hearing/eyesight tests, ergonomic assessment)

Why should orchestras apply?

Achieving a Charter Mark will

- provide a benchmark for accomplishment and set an agenda for continuous improvement;
- help motivate staff and freelance musicians that you employ on a regular basis to raise health and safety awareness within your orchestra;
- through positive PR gain recognition with promoters, suppliers, insurers, the media, trades unions and other stakeholder and partner organizations.

C O N T E X T



Musicians

It is widely recognised that many orchestral musicians can suffer physically and/or emotionally as a result of their profession. Long and irregular hours, repetitive physical movements, exposure to extended periods of loud noise and cramped working conditions can lead to a range of ailments from burnout to performance anxiety, muscular damage and substance abuse. Taking steps to address these risks will benefit the health and wellbeing of individual performers as well as the orchestra as a whole. Some typical issues are outlined below.

Posture

- Bad posture – playing a musical instrument puts an unnatural strain on the body and many people only address it when it becomes a problem
- Seating – poor seating can contribute to the inherent demands made on the spine by playing some instruments. This can be a particular problem when touring and seating varies from venue to venue

Lighting

- Bright and overly-hot lighting - an issue at nearly all venues and can affect vision over time
- Small and/or poor quality music - libraries often send parts that are very difficult to read and cause unnecessary strain for players' eyes

Noise

- New laws – from April 2008 orchestras will be asked to comply with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. These new regulations have reduced the level of noise exposure at which orchestral managers must take action to protect the hearing of their musicians to 80dB. Above 85dB employers will be required by law to provide suitable hearing protection for their employees.
- Multiple variables – hearing loss is a real threat for orchestral musicians, and could mean the end of a career if serious. Positioning in relation to other instruments, venue acoustics, and the kind of ear plugs given to players are just some of the variables that can affect a musician's exposure to noise

Heating

- Changes in temperature – heating is often not turned on until the start of a rehearsal and the gradual change in temperature that results can affect players and instruments
- Stage and backstage – it is important for backstage areas to be the same temperature as the stage as a sharp contrast could affect muscles and aggravate dormant problems

Backstage Facilities

- Relaxation – it is important but not always possible to create 'quiet' spaces for players to relax in either before or after concerts to reduce stress
- Green Room – adequate lighting and heating are a must, as well as a constant supply of water and an urn for tea/coffee help to keep players hydrated, warm and alert

Emotional stress

- Performance anxiety – this is often very difficult for management to resolve and can also affect management. Managers need to be aware of the issues at stake and know how to offer the right kind of

support to their employees and colleagues.

Other

- Bullying, alcohol or other substance misuse – serious issues that orchestral managers should be trained to spot early and about which musicians should be encouraged to be open and honest

C O N T E X T



Management and Administrative Staff

Musicians are not the only employees in whose health and wellbeing an orchestral manager should be interested. The members of an orchestra's management and administrative team are themselves often subject to conditions in which their health and wellbeing could be at risk if not protected. Again, some typical issues are outlined below.

Stage Management

- Noise – members of staff who are required to work onstage in rehearsals will also be subject to the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. From April 2008, their employer will be required by law to provide them with suitable hearing protection if they are exposed to noise levels in excess of 85dB.
- Posture – members of staff who are required to move risers, pianos, staging etc should be trained properly so as to avoid the possibility of musculoskeletal damage resulting from this kind of work

Backstage Facilities

- Adequate lighting, heating and space are not just important for players – there is often nowhere for an orchestra manager to sit, as in the case of one manager who reported that “I normally end up perched on our instrument box surrounded by paperwork and subs to give out and usually get very little done”

Emotional stress

- Managing staff can be stressful, and for those at the front line working with the musicians themselves the pressures are sometimes significant

A P P L Y I N G



Application Procedures

- **BRONZE:** Orchestras wishing to apply for a Healthy Orchestra Bronze Charter Mark can download an Application Form from the ABO website (www.abo.org.uk) or call 020 7287 0333 to request that a copy be posted to them. Please note that all Bronze applications must be signed by both the CEO and Musicians' Union or employee representative in order to be eligible.
- **SILVER:** In order to be considered for Silver Charter Marks, Bronze Award holders need to write a short letter (no longer than one page A4) to the ABO requesting a visit by one of the assessors, whilst also very briefly outlining why they feel that they are eligible for a Silver Award.
- **GOLD:** When visiting a Silver applicant, assessors may identify projects suitable for a Gold Award. Alternatively, member orchestras are asked to bring potential Gold projects to the ABO's attention as early on as possible in the planning process.

Requirements for Application

All orchestras applying for a Healthy Orchestra Bronze Charter Mark must first be able to demonstrate that they are meeting the statutory legal Health & Safety requirements for an organisation of their size, as outlined below.

Health & Safety Policy

Employers are legally required to have a written Health & Safety policy and to be able to demonstrate that they are implementing that policy. A standard Health & Safety policy comprises three separate components, which are as follows:

- 1 **Policy Statement**
A description of the employer's activities and a statement of their commitment to ensure the occupational health and safety of their employees by complying fully with the requirements of the HSWA Act 1974.
- 2 **Safety Responsibilities**
A definition of the legal responsibilities held by employees at each level within the organisation for implementing health and safety measures, as laid down in Safety Responsibility Statements issued by that organisation.
- 3 **Health and Safety Arrangements**
A detailed description of the management systems and processes put in place by the organisation to ensure that its health and safety policy is implemented and that records of this implementation in the form of Risk Assessments are kept.

Venues

In the case of orchestras whose senior executive is also responsible for managing a venue, for example an opera house, the Health & Safety policy of that organisation is likely to contain a wider range of policies than a freelance ensemble which relies on hired venues for rehearsals and performances. E.g.

- Fire Risk
- Public, Visitors and Trespassers
- Water and Legionnaires Disease

When on tour, orchestral managers should always check with the managers of venues visited that these policies are in place before allowing their employees to begin work.

B R O N Z E



Bronze Charter Mark Standards

Orchestras applying for a Bronze Charter Mark will need to demonstrate as a minimum that

- essential occupational health and safety management systems are already in place;
- implementation of control measures for any significant risks to their employees' health and safety is currently underway;
- they can provide evidence of learning from any enforcement experience as the result of an HSE inspection

Over and above these basic requirements, the Bronze Charter Mark will be awarded to applicants who demonstrate an understanding of the health needs of their employees and show a commitment to good practice by meeting a set of fundamental standards, as outlined below. Most of the areas suggested do not involve significant cost to the employer – only time and consideration – and therefore should be accessible to all ABO Members.

This is not a hard-and-fast checklist of 'dos and don'ts'. What is important is that you should be able to demonstrate awareness of the kind of issues highlighted and that your organisation is already taking steps in the right direction towards creating the safest possible working conditions for your employees.

Management

Introduction of a Healthy Orchestra noticeboard for posting articles and information about health issues affecting players, as well as details of approved/recommended local practitioners of traditional and complementary therapies

The senior management team or board of trustees is aware of the law in relation to the health and safety of its employees, including understanding their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act, Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2006, Health Act 2006 (relating to Non-Smoking in an enclosed work-space) and the Health and Safety at Work Act

Policies on health issues are made clear to players and management, preferably during an employee's induction to the orchestra

At least 30% of players and management staff have undergone a hearing test, with plans to increase this to 100% by April 2008

Health & Safety risk assessment training is provided for all heads of departments

The orchestra has a policy in place for managing sickness absence, including accurate data collection and reporting, and provision of guidance to new employees

Employees are given the opportunity to discuss matters of concern in a confidential environment

Venue facilities

All staff have access to drinking water in the room where they rehearse, or backstage

Flexible seating options are made available (wedges, chairs etc)

Lighting is controlled to ensure that it is adequate but not unnecessarily bright or overly hot

Room temperature is maintained at a stable level of around 20°C (18°C minimum) during rehearsals and performances, with extra heating or ventilation as required

Performance matters

Musicians are made aware of the importance of maintaining a good posture when performing, and (if resources allow) receive a regular ergonomic assessment of their workspace, including both on and off stage facilities

The importance of noise level monitoring is understood and due consideration given to adequate resting time between rehearsals and performances

Information is provided to musicians about the benefits of physical activity, particularly in relation to developing and maintaining a good posture for playing

Continued on next page

B R O N Z E



Continued from previous page

Travelling

Refreshments and good changing facilities are provided at all outdoor concerts

Consideration is given to travel times, modes of transport, gaps between travel and rehearsal, arrival and departure times when planning a tour

Checks are made with all venues visited for the Health & Safety policies that they have in place, and a copy of the policies for regularly used venues are kept on file

Additional services

Employees are provided with details of and access to a BAPAM or AMABO doctor

Information is made available about Stakeholder pension schemes for employees

S I L V E R

Silver Charter Mark Themes

Orchestras requesting a visit by an assessor in order to be considered for a Silver Charter Mark need to

- be certain that the **understanding of the duty of care** has been absorbed into their organisational culture **at all levels**
- be able to demonstrate considerable achievement in the **Silver Themes** listed below

Active Health Promotion

What does the orchestra management do to *actively* encourage its employees to take matters of occupational health and health & safety seriously? Are there any information distribution schemes? Visits by specialist lecturers? Occupational Health Awareness events? In-house info material tailored to the needs of local musicians?

Planning Procedures

Regarding venue facilities, performance matters and travelling arrangements, how much demonstrable awareness of occupational health and H&S issues exists at the early stages of planning cycles? How is this then followed through implementing adequate planning procedures? Is there an integrated approach across the organisation?

Provision of Services

Which essential services are provided in house (physiotherapy, hearing tests, health surveillance etc)? Are there additional services / discounts for employees with external providers?

Creative Thinking

Which examples can the organisation give to demonstrate that they think creatively about overcoming obstacles posed by occupational health or H&S related issues?

A S S E S S M E N T



How applications will be judged

Charter Marks will be awarded as a result of professional, administrative adjudication under the supervision of an independent, expert Adjudication Panel which is a sub-committee of the Healthy Orchestra Charter Steering Group. The current Panel comprises a range of highly experienced health and safety professionals, including representatives from the British Association of Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM).

The judging process for the Charter Marks is undertaken by the ABO/MBF Healthy Orchestra Charter team and consultants, beginning with an administrative 'sift' to ensure that required information has been supplied and to make notes for feedback, as necessary. **Applicants may receive telephone follow-up at any stage after submitting an application form, including potential requests for additional information, if required by the assessors.**

The Panel collectively decides at regular meetings to accept or reject an application for an award. Site visits for Silver Awards will be made by one Panel member, who reports back to the full Panel at the next meeting with a recommendation to either accept or reject the application. The panel then again takes a collective decision on the success or failure of the application.

Judging criteria

In deciding whether to award a Charter Mark to an applicant, the Adjudication Panel will take account of a range of performance indicators. These include measures of occupational health and safety management **input**, such as the level of development of health and safety management systems and culture, and **output**, such as consistent application of risk control measures.

R E S O U R C E S



MUSICIANS
BENEVOLENT FUND

Acas Equality Service

Advice and consultancy services on diversity in employment

Tel: 08457 47 47 47

www.acas.co.uk

Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

102 Clifton Street, London EC2A 4HW

Tel: 020 7739 5902

www.ash.org.uk

Alcohol Concern

Workplace Advisory Service, Waterbridge House, 32-36 Loman Street, London SE1 OEE

Tel: 020 7928 7377, email: contact@alcoholconcern.org.uk

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alexander Technique

A comprehensive guide to Alexander Technique resources worldwide

www.alexandertechnique.com

ASH, Scotland

8 Frederick Street, Edinburgh EH2 2HB

Tel: 0131 225 4725, email: ashscotland@ashscotland.org.uk

www.ashscotland.org.uk

ASH in Wales

374 Cowbridge Road East, Canton, Cardiff CF5 1GY

Tel: 029 2064 1101

Association of British Orchestras

20 Rupert Street, London W1D 6DF

Tel: 020 7287 0333, Fax 020 7287 0444, email: info@abo.org.uk

www.abo.org.uk

Body Control Pilates

Recognised leaders of the Pilates method in the UK and experience of working with orchestral musicians

Body Control Pilates, 6 Langley Street London WC2H 9JA
Tel: 020 7379 3734 Fax: 020 7379 7551, email: info@bodycontrol.co.uk
www.bodycontrol.co.uk

British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM)

4th Floor, Totara Park House, 34 - 36 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8HR
Helpline: 020 7404 8444, email: admin@bapam.org.uk
www.bapam.org.uk

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

1 Regent Place, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 2PJ
Tel: 0870 443 5252, email: bacp@bacp.co.uk
www.counselling.co.uk

British Tinnitus Association

Ground Floor, Unit 5, Acorn Business Park, Woodseats Close, Sheffield S8 0TB
Tel: 0800 018 0527 Fax: 0114 258 2279, email: info@tinnitus.org.uk
www.tinnitus.org.uk

Department of Health

Richmond House, 79 Whitehall, London SW1A 2NS
Tel: Publications unit on 08701 555455
www.dh.gov.uk

Department of Trade and Industry

Wide range of information on workplace issues
www.dti.gov.uk

Disability Rights Commission

Providing information and advice to disabled people and employers about their rights and duties
Tel 08457 622 633
www.drc.org.uk

Drugscope

32-36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EE
Tel: 020 7928 1211 Information Library 0207 922 8623, email: info@drugscope.org.uk
www.drugscope.org.uk

Employment Medical Advisory Service

(see the 'Health and Safety Executive' entry in local telephone directories) or visit www.guide-information.org.uk

Equality Direct

A confidential helpline service on all aspects of equality in the workplace
Tel: 0845 600 3444
www.equalitydirect.org.uk

Equal Opportunities Commission

Working to eliminate sex discrimination
Tel: 08456 015 901
www.eoc.org.uk

Equity

Guild House, Upper St Martins Lane, London WC2H 9EG
Tel: 020 7379 6000 Fax: 020 7379 7001, email: info@equity.org.uk
www.equity.org.uk

First Assist

A leading provider of Employee Assistance Programmes and counselling services throughout the UK and abroad

First Assist Group Ltd., Wheatfield Way, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 1YG

Tel: 020 8763 3405, email: advice.services@firstassist.co.uk

www.firstassist.co.uk

Focus Scotland Alcohol

166 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW

Tel: 0141 572 6700 Fax: 0141 333 1606, email: enquiries@alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk

Health Development Agency

Holborn Gate, 330 High Holborn, London WC1V 7BA

Tel: 020 7067 5800

www.hda-online.org.uk

Health and Safety Executive

Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG

HSE Infoline: 0845 345 055

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books. PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA.

Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995, email: hseinfoservices@natbrit.com

www.hsebooks.co.uk

www.hse.gov.uk

Institute of Alcohol Studies

Alliance House, 12 Caxton Street, London SW1H 0QS

Tel: 020 7222 4001/5880, email: info@ias.org.uk

Musicians Benevolent Fund

16 Ogle Street, London W1W 6JA

Tel: 020 7636 4481 Fax: 020 7637 4307, email: info@mbf.org.uk

www.mbf.org.uk

Musicians Union

Can facilitate inexpensive hearing tests and have a range of Healthy & Safety information sheets and Members Medical Helpline (available only to members)

www.musiciansunion.org.uk

Re-Solv

30A High Street, Stone, Staffs ST15 8AW

Tel: 01785 817885 Freephone helpline 0800 776600, email: information@resolv.org

www.re-solv.org