

Investing in orchestra funding will help young musicians benefit from the Bolivar effect

ABO urges Chancellor and Culture Secretary to secure the future of classical music

Responding to the Budget statement, Mark Pemberton, Director of the Association of British Orchestras (ABO) reiterated his call to the Chancellor and the Culture Secretary, urging them to continue to invest in orchestral music.

As expected the Budget saw the Chancellor announce that government departments would be expected to find efficiency savings, including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which is expected to save over £20 million in 2010/11. And £4 million of this will come from a reduction in funding for Arts Council England. However, the ABO is determined to argue that the overall funding for orchestras should be maintained so that they can build the next generation of music lovers and excellent British performers.

Commenting on the Budget and the need to continue to fund orchestras, Mr Pemberton said:

“With all the recent fervour surrounding visits by the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela and Lang Lang, not to mention a series of great performances by the excellent National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain, the spotlight has been trained on the life-enhancing, inspiring and educative effects of orchestras and classical music and the way they can change young people's lives.

“We sincerely hope, therefore, that the drive for public sector efficiency announced in the Budget does not lead to cuts to funding for orchestras.

“Any cuts in funding to orchestras will inevitably lead to a reduction in their work with schools, both in the classroom and in enabling 300,000 children to attend live concerts each year, so rolling back all that has been achieved over the past decade.

“I wrote to the Chancellor and Culture Secretary in advance of the Budget to set out our views, and will be making representations to Arts Council England. I know that they recognise the hugely important contribution orchestras make and I am confident they will give the case for continued investment the fullest consideration.”

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