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Partnerships with orchestras vital to unlocking children's potential, shows new report

British orchestras report highlights immense impact of music on young lives

Partnerships between Britain's orchestras and thousands of schools across the country play a vital part in supporting children's learning and development. That is the conclusion of a new report launched today by the Association of British Orchestras (ABO). ***Unlocking Potential*** describes how children have become more alert and engaged at school through involvement in music workshops; how teachers have seen music enhance children's creativity; and how exposure to orchestral music when young can lead to a musical career at the highest level.

More than 300,000 children in England alone now experience an orchestral concert during their time at school. ***Unlocking Potential*** highlights the broader education work that orchestras do, and describes more than 50 examples of projects which highlight the benefits to young people of learning from and working with orchestral musicians inside and outside of school.

The report also describes the example of Rachel Merloo who ten years ago attended a concert in her school given by the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO). Inspired by that performance, she began to learn double bass and is now trialling as a principal double bassist with the LPO alongside the very musicians that originally made such an impression on her.

Among the examples highlighted in the report are:

- The Hallé Orchestra's *World Music for Little Ones* and Scottish Chamber Orchestra's *Supersonic Bear Hunt*, groundbreaking initiatives developed with education professionals, which give primary school children their first taste of concert music.
- London Symphony Orchestra's pioneering *On-Track* programme in which the orchestra works with 10 East London Boroughs giving schoolchildren the chance to create live performances.

- The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment's flagship *Creation* project where the orchestra, composer and a Royal Society scientist work in schools in London, Norfolk and Suffolk to inspire greater understanding of science through music.

Director of the Association of British Orchestras Mark Pemberton said:

"Every professional orchestra in Britain is involved in some form of education work. Often this takes place in deprived or hard to reach areas, helping to give the widest range of children access to orchestral music. Every day and in every community children are developing their life skills and academic potential by learning and making music.

"At a time when public resources are stretched, these innovative approaches to delivering high impact work with our young people show the value of building long term partnerships, especially with individual schools."

Hon Ed Vaizey MP, Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries said in praise of the report:

"It is no surprise that seeing and hearing orchestras has such a positive impact on young people. We know that music can make a huge difference to educational success, with behaviour, well-being, confidence, team working and concentration skills all proven to improve with good music provision. I welcome this report, and its finding that British orchestras are reaching young people at every stage in their lives."

Unlocking Potential will be launched at Tuke School, Peckham, London on 10 June at 10.00am at a music workshop for children led by musicians from the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO).

Matthew Todd, Education and Community Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra said:

"We work with schools across London and beyond, and see huge benefits for young people when they participate in music making. There is a tangible difference in children's engagement and skills after just a few sessions with our musicians and it is our aim that these opportunities are extended to as many children as possible."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

For a copy of the report or to speak to Mark Pemberton, or to attend the event at Tuke School, please contact Kemi Bamgbose at DHA Communications on 020 7793 4036 or Jim Minton on 020 7793 4013 / 07837 240 234 kemi@dhacommunications.co.uk or jim@dhacommunications.co.uk

ⁱ Live the Experience, ABO Education report 2009