

Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP  
Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ

25 July 2019

Dear Secretary of State

### **Supporting British Orchestras**

I am writing to welcome you to your new role. I recall from a conversation we once had at the Roundhouse when you were Secretary of State for Education that you used to be an enthusiastic attender of the BBC Proms, so we are hoping you will be a strong advocate for our world-leading orchestras.

The Association of British Orchestras (ABO) is the representative body for professional orchestras, youth ensembles and other organisations with an interest in maintaining a vibrant orchestral sector in the UK.

British orchestras are a national and global success story. Each year, they play to nearly 5 million people in over 3,500 concerts and performances in the UK, and tour to around 35 countries across the world. This means orchestras bring in a sizeable return on their public investment, and provide a vital inward investment and public relations role for the UK, which will be especially important over the coming years. Europe remains the largest marketplace, with our members reporting 96 visits to 26 different countries in 2016.

It is vital that positive steps are taken to ensure British orchestras can continue this success story. As the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport we urge you to:

- Maintain and increase public funding and creative tax relief for arts organisations in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. Since 2010, ABO members and the venues they perform in have seen significant cuts in public investment from funding agencies, devolved governments and local authorities, which is making it harder to sustain equitable access for our audiences to a healthy and diverse range of concerts across the country.
- Work with Government colleagues to secure clarity in their no-deal preparations that will prevent additional costs and delays for orchestras and musicians touring into the EU. This includes negotiating security co-ordination agreements with each of the EU27 nations to ensure our musicians do not face double-charging of social security contributions when working abroad, and properly preparing the UK ports most often used by our members, such as Dover-Calais, Eurotunnel, Immingham and Holyhead, for the mandatory inspection of CITES Musical Instrument Certificates.

- Secure a future migration system that permits continued recruitment of non-UK skilled workers in the performing arts sector. Orchestras will need continued access to high-quality EEA and non-EEA talent, that is not restricted by a future migration system, until such time as there is no longer a shortage of home-grown musicians (as recognised by the Migration Advisory Committee). The status of non-UK freelance musicians must also be clarified.
- To counter the current shortage of home-grown musicians, sufficient funding for sustained and equitable access to instrumental tuition and music education, to enable our most talented musicians to secure places at our world-leading conservatories and beyond into professional employment, must be provided.

We look forward to working positively and constructively with you in the coming months and would welcome the opportunity to meet to discuss these issues in more detail.

I hope very much to see you at a concert by one of our members, who I am sure will be extending invitations to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Pemberton', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Mark Pemberton**  
Director