

## **ABO Speaking note**

Good morning. It's a real pleasure to be here today speaking to you, and to be doing so in Gateshead, a place rightly renowned for really excellent cultural work.

Most towns would struggle to offer just one significant cultural offering, but Gateshead spoils us with three. Between the Angel of the North, the Baltic and the Sage, this is a town that sees the value of culture, and celebrates it with enormous style and success.

And here at the Sage, we see a real success story. Celebrating its tenth anniversary last year, its contribution to the arts has been truly outstanding:

Some outstanding cultural moments from last year include:

- its role as part of Bridge North East, working with more than a thousand schools and arts companies;
- hosting the BBC's Free Thinking festival for the fourth time;

- the Gateshead International Jazz Festival attracting audiences from across the world; and

- what it has brought to the local economy - £283 million across that first decade, more than three times its total capital costs and revenue funding.

As Anthony Sargent, its first General Director, who has only recently retired, has said:

*“When we began this journey, one thing was extremely important to us – that we would ‘irrigate, not drain’ the local economy.”*

And that, clearly, is what he and his team have achieved.

And more broadly it’s also fair to say, I think, that the northeast provides a rather good riposte to the argument that London has everything and the regions have nothing. The three places I’ve mentioned so far, alongside the Bowes Museum, Beamish, the National Glass Centre and a host of other galleries and performance spaces, traditional and modern, as well as Hadrian’s Wall, tell a

convincing story. This part of the country has a lot more going for it than vast skies, breathtakingly beautiful countryside, and . . . *Ant and Dec*.

I'm also very pleased to be addressing this particular conference. Because it's a gathering that has provided a platform over the years for many of my ministerial predecessors, and many more leading figures from the music world. I gave the keynote speech at your Liverpool conference just three years ago, and last year had the honour of being invited to open the London conference. So it's good to be back.

And while I'm handing out tributes – as only a politician can – let me offer a particular bouquet to Classic FM, your media partner for this event. They are an outstanding success story and a great example of how it is perfectly possible to make high-quality and serious culture accessible and attractive to audiences and advertisers alike.

And I'm delighted that its managing director, Darren Henley, is going to run Arts Council England, or ACE as we know it. Darren - as you all know - is passionate about music, and has done a huge amount to influence our policy in this area.

And I am thrilled that his predecessor at ACE - Alan Davey - is going to run Radio 3, a station I now listen to a lot more than I used to. And this is not just because it's a great station. Some of you may recall I made some comments last year about music on the radio, which were rather bizarrely reported as me having said I 'never listen' to Radio 3. Now as it happens, at least four of its presenters are personal friends of mine, so I had my card marked on that one pretty briskly!

But what I would mostly like to talk to you about today is what the Government has done in the field of cultural policy in the time we've had so far and, in particular, where music and music making fit in to it all.

The first and most important thing to do, of course, is restate our overall position. We are entirely committed to supporting our glorious British orchestras and the classical music organisations that support them.

The arts are something that we in this country are outstandingly good at, and the music making we produce in particular is something of which we should be very proud indeed.

And we've backed these words with hard cash. In the five years of this Parliament we will have invested over £500 million in classical music organisations.

It sounds rather crude to put it that way, but as I have learned in this job, funding is the beginning – and often the end – of the argument about arts policy.

We provide our funding through Arts Council England. Their National Portfolio Organisation – or NPO - programme provides invaluable support for our national arts infrastructure, and this in turn means that the overall quality of what we have to offer – in an international – context, remains strong.

What else is the Arts Council doing? Well, it's

- over-seeing the work of the brilliant National Youth Music Organisations;
- funding tours to towns and parts of the country which can sometimes lose out. Tours by companies like English Touring Opera, the RPO, Manchester Camerata, and through the good offices of Orchestras Live. The latter, incidentally, is an NPO that specialises in this sort of thing, and arranged 632

events last year which reached nearly 54,000 people, more than half of which were 18 year old and under; and it's

- supporting any number of initiatives to get serious music, well performed, into places like care homes, prisons and hospitals.

The funding ecology for the arts in this country has always been a mix of government support, earned income and fund-raising. But, as you know, securing private support from business or from philanthropists is no walk in the park. The difficult economic climate has affected – and continues to affect – private and public funding sources alike.

So it's worth remembering that we have also been supporting orchestras – and other arts companies – in this area as well, through the Catalyst Endowment fund, which aims to help private fund-raising through match-funding arrangements and endowments that ensure that both the arts company and potential donor get a lot more bang for their buck.

The Philharmonia, the Halle, the CBSO and the London Philharmonic Orchestra have already received £1 million endowments from the Fund, and the LSO have

had three times that amount. The Liverpool Phil and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra have each received £240,000.

But there's a broader point here. The Catalyst programme can help organisations across the whole cultural spectrum develop their private fundraising skills, but 'skilling-up' is only part of the equation. It's deploying those skills that makes the difference. And the orchestral sector, along with much of the rest of the cultural sector, needs to work hard in what is becoming a highly competitive market.

Take legacy giving, for example. This is an area where the charity sector as a whole is increasingly focused. But one thing that most people agree on, and this is hardly surprising, is the fact that donors will give - through this means - most readily, when the cause is one for which they have a passion. And music, particularly when experienced in the setting of a live performance from dozens of hugely talented people is something that moves people in a profound – and yes, passionate – way.

And while many people feel uncomfortable asking for private support, donations or support in a legacy, those same people are only too pleased to give

when asked to do so. This really shouldn't be a sticking point for arts companies – when you put your mind to it, you very often find you're pushing at an open door.

Let me also, if I may, quickly touch on the international dimension to what music can - and should - do.

The UK is - rightly - seen as a world leader in music. So, as new markets start to emerge - in Brazil, China and India for example - there is a fantastic opportunity for musicians and, of course, orchestras.

And music - if you'll forgive me stating the obvious - is not limited by language or the availability of translators.

We take it for granted that each summer at the Proms we'll enjoy fine performances from overseas orchestras and soloists, but this should be a two-way street. And to a great extent it is. This is why we support international exchanges through ACE, the British Council and a whole network of embassies and consulates, taking advantage of the GREAT Britain campaign.

So I would urge all of you to look into this as an engine of income generation. It needn't just be the big beasts of the orchestral jungle who feel the benefit. The world is big and there are plenty of opportunities for everyone. And if you need any further incentive, only a few days ago ACE announced that the first tranche of an £18 million fund for international export and exchange was available for applicants.

Let me now say something about an issue that I know many of you care hugely about: music education. Well. I care hugely about it too.

Before I look at what we are doing nationally, let me say that I'm hugely impressed by what Boris Johnson is doing in London. He is pulling together a group of inspiring musicians and expert head teachers who will go into schools and try to mentor the music teachers themselves, passing on their wisdom and experience in this most tricky of areas.

To give just one example, BBCCO (one of the trickier acronyms I've come across, sounding as it does like a mixture of the Big Brother house and Conservative Central Office), is one of the Greater London Authority's funded music partnerships. It's made up of Barnet Music Service, Harrow Music Service and the BBC Concert Orchestra. It will enable over 300 students arriving at

secondary schools in some of the most deprived areas of Barnet and Harrow to continue learning a musical instrument through music service support, weekly in-school ensemble sessions, plus workshops and performance opportunities with BBCCO players.

Boris, as some of you know, is passionate about music. He's also going to create a new award to recognise outstanding commitment to music that will be presented annually at the London Music Awards.

When he announced this at the end of last year, he said something that I very much agree with:

*"Music has a bigger purpose, personally and socially. It's unique in challenging human beings to draw upon a huge range of intellectual skills and use them, in that moment, to turn the mundane into the beautiful — to create emotion."*

For my part, I tried to learn the drums as a child. Disappointingly for me, but possibly to the enormous relief of our neighbours, the drums and I didn't get along. Why? To be honest I can't remember, but I confess that I felt a pang of recognition when I saw the film 'Whiplash' a couple of weeks ago. Have you

seen it? It tells the story of a talented young drum student, Andrew Weiman, whose talent secures him a place at a prestigious music academy. His teacher, the frankly psychopathic Terence Fletcher has very high standards indeed. Standards that he imposes with a ferocity that includes hurling a chair at the unfortunate Andrew when he loses the tempo, and any number of other 'motivational' inducements.

Perhaps it was the absence of a Terence Fletcher in my life that stalled my progress. Thankfully, I'll never know.

But I firmly believe a love of music and, ideally, an ability to make music is a good thing, and an important one too. And that has informed our policy in this area.

As you know, our approach has been to break away from the historic way of funding music education on a rigid local authority basis which bore no particular relationship with the actual population of school-age children in the area concerned.

Our music hubs are based on what I would hope is common sense: bringing together schools, local authorities and centres of musical excellence and

expertise in an area, so that *quality* experience is paramount, rather than bureaucratic convenience.

For me, it is vital that orchestras play a role in the hubs. All of you have fantastic education programmes, whether it's the Hallé, the Royal Northern Sinfonia or the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, to mention just three. It is simply daft for such programmes to exist in a silo separate from the local authority, and I hope the hub approach will break down barriers.

In an era when, for all too familiar reasons, public funding has had to suffer I'm proud to say that music education has fared well. An additional £18 million for music education, announced last summer, means that total levels of investment in 2015-16 will return to those of three years ago, and that the Government's investment in music education since 2012 will have been around £390 million.

Meanwhile, only a couple of days ago we were able to announce that youth dance and music schemes will benefit from an increased £109 million in government spending in the coming year

The Music and Dance Scheme, which provides financial assistance to applicants for specialist arts schools, also had its financial support bumped up by £1 million – bringing its total funding to £29 million. The MDS, as it's known, is a particular favourite of mine because it has been quietly getting on with its core business: helping outstandingly talented children receive expert help, tuition and guidance from specialists, for a number of years now and doing so with an absolute bare minimum of fuss and bother. I couldn't be happier than to hear it's got extra funding, and at a time when it can do real good for youngsters who, in times gone by, wouldn't have had a hope of getting that kind of help in realising their potential.

So, when you put all this together, is it money well spent? Yes it is. In the first year of the hubs' operation, for example, 14,000 primary schools and more than 3,000 secondary schools benefitted from the approach. And this in turn meant that more than half a million school children got at least one term of ensemble teaching and over 600,000 regularly attended at least one school or hub-led instrumental ensemble or choir.

Figures for the second year of this approach are still being analysed but early indications are that all these figures are on the up.

The long-term benefits of this will take some time to work through, of course. But I firmly believe that we are now taking the right approach.

I am also pleased that we secured the future of In Harmony. There's an important lesson here. In Harmony was a great idea pioneered by the last government – but great ideas only work if they are sustainable. By rolling up In Harmony into our wider music education policy, I hope we have secured its future and heightened its impact.

And, again this week, it's been announced that an extra £1.1 million will be spent on In Harmony programmes.

For my finale let me also mention the orchestras tax credit. I am delighted that the Chancellor has seen the impact tax credits can have on our creative industries. And I am thrilled that orchestras are next in line to benefit. Some of the details need working out, but we hope to have the tax credit implemented in April 2016.

On Friday the Government launched the consultation on the design of the new Orchestra Tax Relief and I would encourage all of you to make sure that your views and experience and those of your sector are heard and utilised as part of the consultation so that the tax relief can work as effectively as it can for your organisations.

The arts, culture and creativity are what we are good at in this country. Our musical history and heritage is rich and deep, but its future success depends on all of us in the different parts of Government – local and national - sharing a vision and working together with all of you in the music world.

I know we can do it. Over and over again, indeed, we are finding examples of how this is happening already, and I hope I've been able to highlight just some of them today.

To be honest, the future for orchestral music and the brilliant individuals and groups who are its current custodians is looking pretty bright to me. I hope it is to you too.

Thank you.