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barbican

World's first disabled-led national youth ensemble, National Open Youth Orchestra, presents *Feel The Music*, a relaxed concert from the Barbican and Guildhall School of Music & Drama

National Open Youth Orchestra: Feel The Music

Sunday 21 April 2024, 3pm

Milton Court Concert Hall

Tickets from £1 with free tickets for companions

The world's first disabled-led national youth ensemble, the National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO), returns to the Barbican with an uplifting programme for 2024 before continuing their tour in Bristol, Poole and Birmingham. In a relaxed performance at Milton Court Concert Hall, the orchestra will welcome a diverse audience inclusive of disabled and neurodivergent concert goers and families to a joyous afternoon of music presented by the Barbican and Guildhall School of Music & Drama.

Following the triumph of their debut public performance at Milton Court Concert Hall in 2022, twenty-four of NOYO's brilliant young disabled and non-disabled musicians will perform a lively programme on acoustic, electronic, and accessible instruments. Among more traditional instruments, NOYO musicians also perform on some instruments not often found in orchestras, from electric guitars to accordions, or on accessible instruments that may be completely new to audiences - from the Seaboard RISE to the Clarion™, which some performers play using head movements.

NOYO's young members' voices are central to the programme. Whether through their choice to perform Ennio Morricone's theme from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, or through their introduction of bold interpretations of audience favourites such as Anna Meredith's *Nautilus*, Antonio Vivaldi's *Autumn* from *The Four Seasons* and Michael Nyman's *Timelapse*.

NOYO will also give the world premiere of new works that speak to themes close to their hearts:

They will present *Elements* by award-winning film composer Alexandra Hamilton-Ayres, a new piece chosen to be commissioned by NOYO's young musicians that communicates the devastating impact of climate change through four musical movements - *Flood*, *Air Pollution*, *Landfill* and *Wildfire*. Speaking about the work, Hamilton-Ayres says: "*The piece I created is about the elements - but the destructive elements - to drive awareness of the reality of climate change and what we truly face.*"

The orchestra will also present another commission: Ben Lunn's *Wittgenstein's Chorale*, which carries the orchestra's message of inclusion, poignantly celebrating the contribution of disabled people to the arts. It pays homage to a virtuoso pianist, Paul Wittgenstein, who, after losing his right arm in the First World War continued to play left-handed, commissioning and performing new works by both Ravel and Hindemith.

The final new work, *Soaring through Sparks* is written by composer Michael Betteridge for the Clarion, the first-ever digital instrument to be assessed by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music

(ABRSM) and of which, this year, there are four players in the orchestra. Betteridge says “*I wrote Soaring through Sparks when I was on the ABRSM composer mentoring programme. I was so excited to be writing for a relatively new instrument, which has allowed a whole range of musicians to excel where other more traditional instruments might pose barriers. I was blown away by how beautiful and powerful the instrument was in creating a wide variety of sounds. It's so expressive.*”

Programme to include:

Autumn from *The Four Seasons* Antonio Vivaldi
Arrangement by Liam Taylor-West, Charlie Groves, Julia Koelmans and Ellen O'Brien

Elements (premiere) Alexandra Hamilton-Ayres
Arrangement by Doug Bott, Charlie Groves and Rhian Davies

Nautilus (premiere) Anna Meredith
Arrangement by Julia Koelmans and Charlie Groves

Wittgenstein's Chorale (premiere) Ben Lunn
Arrangement by Charlie Groves, Doug Bott and Ellen O'Brien

Soaring through Sparks (premiere) Michael Betteridge
Arrangement by Doug Bott and Julia Koelmans

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly Ennio Morricone
Arrangement by Julia Koelmans

Timelapse Michael Nyman
Arrangement by Charlie Groves and Ellen O'Brien

National Open Youth Orchestra musicians:

David Mac, Accordion
Ziya Haji, Bass guitar
Connor Bates, Cello
Alessandro Vazzana, Clarion (Quha Zono head mouse)
Denizhan Kiddle, Clarion (Quha Zono head mouse)
Evie Read, Clarion (touch screen)
Leo Manh-Carstensen, Clarion (touch screen)
Charlie Hyde, Drums and Percussion
Ethan Heer, Electric guitar
Jake Carswell, Electric guitar
Bethan Cole, Flute
Georgina Spray, French Horn
Alexander Davies, Marimba
Luke Christian, Saxophone
Ben Evans, Seaboard RISE
Torin Van Breda, Tenor horn
Oscar Abbott, Tuned percussion and Piano
Jonah Lace-Braun, Trombone
Bert Newitt-Regan, Trombone
Sam Carter, Trumpet
Cass Alabaster, Violin
Francesca Shannon, Violin
Sophia Breeze, Violin
Sophie Capen, Violin

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Barbican are proud to partner with the National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO) in leading its London Ensemble. Made up of 11–25-year-old disabled and non-disabled musicians, the London NOYO Ensemble rehearse together ten times a year at Milton Court Concert Hall. Applications for the London NOYO Ensemble are now open and close on 24 March 2024.

National Open Youth Orchestra 2024 Performances

- Milton Court Concert Hall, London - Sunday 21 April 2024, 3pm
- Bristol Beacon, Bristol - Saturday 4 May 2024, 3pm
- Lighthouse, Poole - Saturday 18 May 2024, 3pm
- Birmingham Town Hall - Sunday 2 June 2024, 3pm

Relaxed performances

The relaxed atmosphere of National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO) concerts is designed to make contemporary classical music accessible to all. It aims to be suitable for disabled and neurodiverse audiences, as well as those who find a more informal setting beneficial. Adjustments include dimmed lights, a chillout space for quiet time before or during the performance, and a relaxed attitude to noise and audience movement. Relaxed area seating is available. Wheelchair spaces and free companion seats can be booked through venues' box offices.

About the National Open Youth Orchestra

The National Open Youth Orchestra is a world-pioneering inclusive orchestra where brilliant 11–25-year-old disabled and non-disabled musicians rehearse and perform together.

They premiere original music written for them by cutting-edge composers and new arrangements of well-known pieces, reworked for the National Open Youth Orchestra's diverse group of musicians and instruments. Its sound innovatively blends acoustic, electronic, and accessible instruments - some of which are not traditionally found in orchestras, such as the electric guitar or the accordion, and others unfamiliar, such as the LinnStrument, the Seaboard RISE or the Clarion™, which some musicians play with eye or head movement.

Since its launch in 2018 as the world's first disabled-led national youth ensemble, the National Open Youth Orchestra and its partners have successfully established a programme for young disabled musicians to develop their skills at an advanced level, offering accessible ensemble practice and performance opportunities in five regions. Alongside young musicians, the orchestra has pushed the boundaries of contemporary classical music, inspiring composers with a new range of instrument sounds and showing it could help widen audiences for contemporary classical music through relaxed performances.

The National Open Youth Orchestra is a dynamic orchestra that evolves each year, with twenty-four musicians coming together this year to present a broad programme of contemporary classic music. All National Open Youth Orchestra musicians have come through the ranks of five regional NOYO Ensembles, which are delivered through major partnerships:

- London NOYO Ensemble, in partnership with [Barbican](#) and [Guildhall School of Music & Drama](#).

- Bournemouth NOYO Ensemble, in partnership with [Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra](#);
- Bristol NOYO Ensemble, in partnership with [Bristol Beacon](#)
- Birmingham NOYO Ensemble, in partnership with [Services For Education](#), [B:Music](#) and [Midlands Arts Centre](#).
- Cardiff NOYO Ensemble, in partnership with [Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama](#) and [BBC National Orchestra of Wales](#)

In 2023-24, there are 42 musicians rehearsing in NOYO Ensembles.

Together, their mission is to show that combining high levels of inclusion and musical excellence isn't just possible, but the way forward.

The National Open Youth Orchestra is a programme of Open Up Music (Registered Charity N°1167028). Open Up Music is an Arts Council National Portfolio organisation (NPO), and an Arts Council and Department for Education National Youth Music Organisation (NYMO). It is also generously supported by founding sponsor ABRSM, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Lightbulb Trust, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The Rayne Foundation, John James Bristol Foundation, The Radcliffe Trust, D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust and Chapman Charitable Trust.

Find out more about the National Open Youth Orchestra at noyo.org.uk

For further information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:

Barbican:

Ed Maitland Smith, Communications Manager for Music

e – Edward.MaitlandSmith@barbican.org.uk / t – 0203 834 1115

Simone Gibbs, Communications Officer for Music

e – Simone.Gibbs@barbican.org.uk / t – 0203 834 1185

Lucy Thraves, Communications Assistant for Music

e – Lucy.Thraves@barbican.org.uk

Guildhall School of Music & Drama:

Flora Davidson, Press and Content Officer, RDMR

e – flora@rdmr.co.uk / t – 07946 169086

Open Up Music:

Julia Le, Head of Marketing and Communications

e - julia@openupmusic.org / t - 0753 5482886

Barbican press room

All Barbican Centre press releases, news announcements and the Communications team's contact details are listed on the Barbican website at www.barbican.org.uk/our-story/press-room

About the Barbican

The Barbican is a catalyst for creativity, sparking possibilities for artists, audiences, and communities. We showcase the most exciting art from around the world, pushing traditional artistic boundaries to

entertain and inspire millions of people, create connections, provoke debate, and reflect the world we live in.

We are an international arts and events centre rooted firmly in our own neighbourhood, collaborating with local communities and putting the City of London on the map as a destination for everybody. Central to our purpose is supporting emerging talent and shaping opportunities that will accelerate the next generation of creatives.

As a not-for-profit, we rely on the generosity of individuals and organisations, including our principal funder the City of London Corporation. Every ticket purchased, donation made, and pound earned supports our arts and learning programme and enables the widest possible range of people to experience the joy of the arts.

Opened in 1982, the Barbican is a unique and audacious building, recognised globally as an architectural icon. As well as our theatres, galleries, concert halls and cinemas, we have a large conservatory with over 1,500 species of plants and trees, a library, conference facilities, public and community spaces, restaurants, bars, and a picturesque lakeside oasis.

We're proud to be the home of the [London Symphony Orchestra](#), and a London base of the [Royal Shakespeare Company](#). We regularly co-commission, produce and showcase the work of our other associates and partners including the [Academy of Ancient Music](#), [the BBC Symphony Orchestra](#), [Boy Blue](#), [Britten Sinfonia](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), [Darbar Festival](#), [Doc'n Roll Film Festival](#), [Drum Works](#), [EFG London Jazz Festival](#), [Human Rights Watch Film Festival](#), [London Palestine Film Festival](#), [National Open Youth Orchestra \(NOYO\)](#), [Serious](#), and [Trafalgar Entertainment](#).

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About Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Guildhall School is a vibrant, international community of [musicians](#), [actors](#) and [production artists](#) in the heart of the City of London. Ranked as number one in Arts, Drama & Music by the [Complete University Guide 2024](#), one of the top ten performing arts institutions in the world ([QS World University Rankings 2023](#)), as well as the number one higher education institution in the [Guardian University Guide 2024](#) music league table, we deliver world-class professional training in partnership with distinguished artists, companies and ensembles. A global leader in creative and professional practice, we promote innovation, experiment and research, and are also one of the UK's leading providers of lifelong learning in the performing arts, offering inspiring training for children, young people, adult learners, and creative and business professionals.

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