

ORCHESTRAS FOR ALL

IMPACT REPORT

JULY 2020-JUNE 2021



OUR VISION

Our vision is where any young person aged 11-18 can access the benefits of group music-making in the UK

WELCOME FROM OUR TRUSTEES

Having just completed our first year as trustees, we have watched in awe as Orchestras for All (OFA) has evolved to overcome every single obstacle thrown its way. Driven by **passion, determination and innovation**, OFA has found new ways to bulldoze right through the barriers that young musicians face today and utilised the power of the Internet to connect musicians from up, down, left and right of the country. With **12 online days for National Orchestra for All (NOFA), five Music Leadership Training webinars and 43 schools engaging with the Modulo Programme** in the midst of a global pandemic, OFA never ceases to amaze us – but we wouldn't expect anything less.

While we currently stand as trustees of OFA, we also speak as **proud alumni** whose only real access to orchestral music-making was through its programmes. For both of us, this charity was – and still is – **a vital lifeline to musical activities that completely changed our lives for the better**, so this past year has been a rewarding opportunity for us to reflect and finally give back!

Our reflections on the organisation have resulted in the **formation of OFA's Youth Board**, a diverse cast of nine members and alumni whose impacts are already being felt across everything that OFA does. From rebranding and new wellbeing initiatives, to further polishing of NOFA courses, the list goes on. This is all being pioneered and developed by the Youth Board under the banner: **"Nothing about us, without us"**. We feel truly honoured to be working with such thoughtful, talented and enthusiastic young musicians.

What's more, everything we have achieved this past year even led to OFA being **shortlisted in the Impact category at the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards** – but for us, this is just the beginning. We look forward to seeing what the future holds in a post-pandemic world, with youth voice at the forefront of our actions. A very special thanks to **Arts Council England, Youth Music, our loyal funders and individual donors, ambassadors, volunteers, and wellbeing staff and orchestral tutors** for helping to make the work that we do possible.



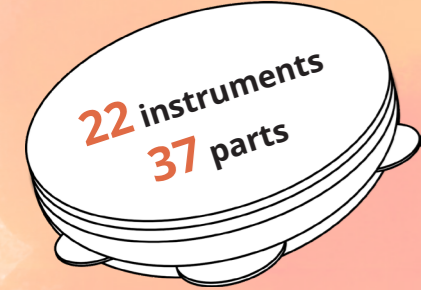
Beth White



Joelle Sogunro



YEAR IN NUMBERS



5 ambassadors

100 members



{MODULO}



10 new ensembles

2 new musical arrangements

2 virtual recordings

3 orchestral partners:

BBC Philharmonic, City of London Sinfonia, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

49 volunteers across all three programmes

14 masterclasses



2 composers engaged for creative workshops

41 professional musicians leading young people

2 online days
10 hours of support sessions



43 schools
5 music hubs

24 schools participated in online activity



{MUSIC LEADERSHIP TRAINING}

5 webinars:

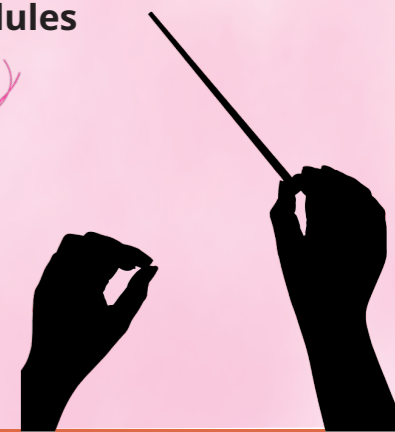
- Welcome to Modulo
- Conducting Skills 1, 2 and 3
- Learning by Ear

123 customers

and 67 live participants

10 online modules launched

8.5 hours live training



WHAT WE DO



Orchestras for All has a vision: **where any young person aged 11-18 can access the benefits of group music-making in the UK**

To achieve this vision, we:



empower

young people to access high-quality ensemble music-making, inspiring audiences and the wider sector



energise

music educators to lead change in their local communities



engage

partners to roll out our approach in a way that supports their needs and regional network

OUR PROGRAMMES

Orchestras for All has developed **three innovative programmes** to break down the barriers that too many young people face when accessing ensemble music-making opportunities:

■ **National Orchestra for All (NOFA)**

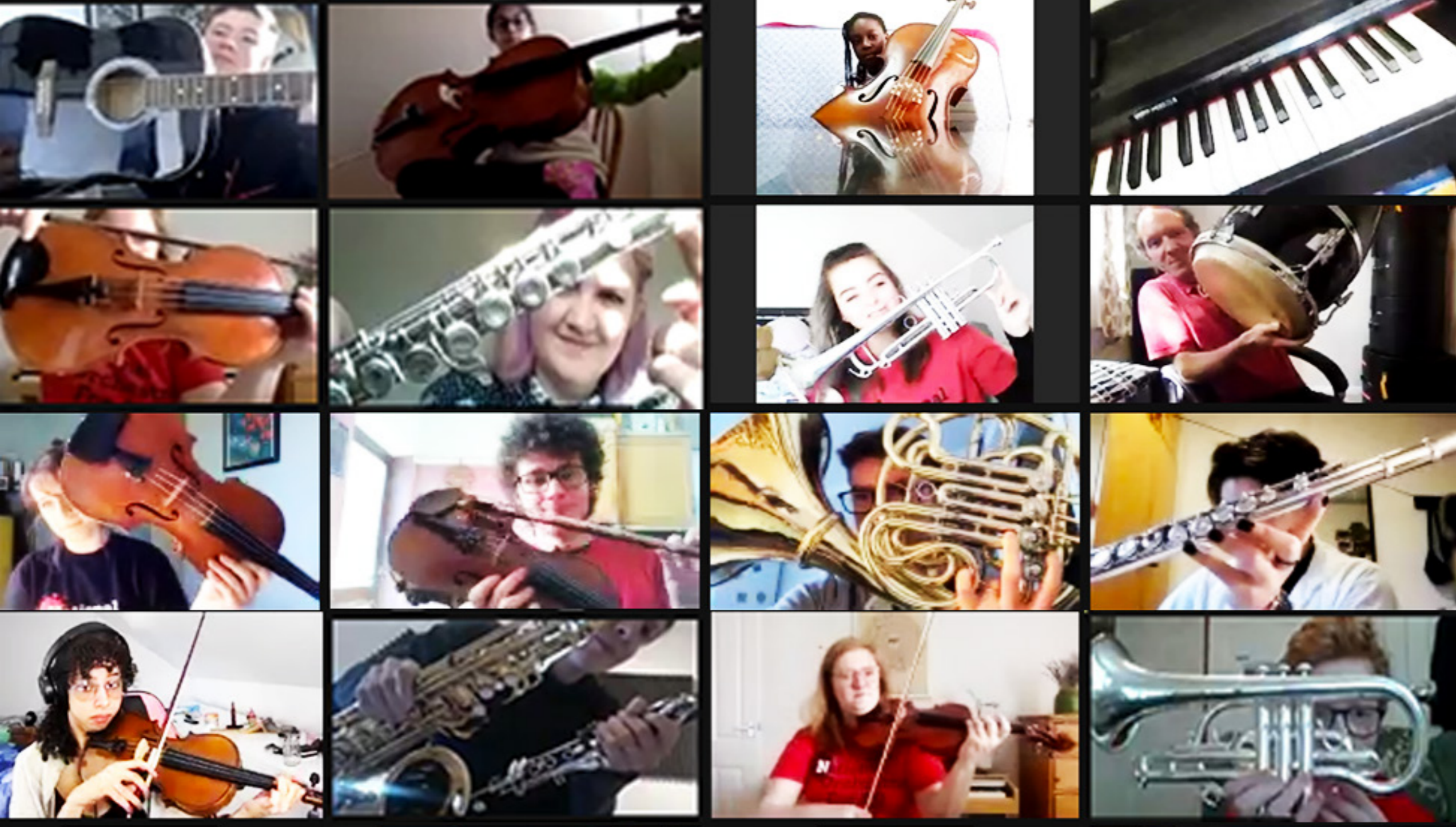
A unique, mixed skill level youth orchestra comprising **100 young musicians** from across the UK facing barriers to music-making, who come together to learn, create, rehearse and perform ensemble music. This year we have doubled our contact time with our members by moving all activity online, offering six NOFA events complemented by a focus on wellbeing and welfare as a direct result of the needs exacerbated by the pandemic.

■ **Modulo Programme**

Supporting under-resourced schools and community groups to run ensembles (“Modulos”), regardless of level of skill or instruments available. From Bradford to Aylesbury, Gravesend to Liverpool, 2020-2021 has seen 48 schools and community music groups sign up, with over **10 new ensembles created**.

■ **Music Leadership Training**

An online and face-to-face training programme for music teachers and community music leaders to develop their conducting and ensemble leadership skills, developed in partnership with experienced music educators, expert amateurs and leading conductors. **Enjoyed by 190 participants in 2020-2021.**



COVID-19

When we filed our last impact report in July 2020, against a backdrop of Covid-19 and the first national lockdown, there could have been no way of knowing that 12 months later the coronavirus pandemic would still be gripping the planet – **altering all aspects of our delivery and throwing up even more barriers to music-making** for each of our young participants.

Now as we emerge from lockdown three, 18 months of social distancing, a nationwide vaccination programme and a difficult traversing of a roadmap out of government enforced safety precautions, we find ourselves publishing our 2020-2021 impact report.

Here we highlight how our team came to navigate the most challenging year in the charity's history, while also celebrating the **relentless resilience** and **creative pragmatism** of OFA to surmount overwhelming obstacles, triumphing in our delivery of online offers that have continued to engage young people across the UK.

ONLINE RESPONSE

In 2020, we designed, developed and delivered an ongoing programme of online support for the vulnerable group of young people that we work with.

■ National Orchestra for All (NOFA)

We doubled the number of events for National Orchestra for All across a 12-month period from three to six, meeting online throughout and delivering a total of **78.5 contact hours** and a staggering **258 sectionals and workshops** to NOFA members online, in addition to providing **179 bespoke 1:1 lessons** for NOFA members across the whole year during courses and scheduled between events.



Given the need to nurture the wellbeing of NOFA members suffering from the devastating impact of two interrupted academic years in school, periods of home online learning and general social isolation, the Orchestras for All team had to adapt quickly.

To address this need, we programmed **welfare sessions with trained wellbeing colleagues**, **“space to speak” counselling support**, **friendship breakout zones** and **fun games sessions** before, during and after NOFA courses, while the wellbeing team made **hundreds of welfare calls** to maintain links with our members and support parents and families throughout this traumatic time.

Dispatching equipment, replacing broken instruments and providing **“out of hours” musical and holistic support** for each of those members identified as being most in need has all become part of the response to maintaining our national orchestra throughout the pandemic.

■ Modulo

Despite music-making in schools experiencing an unprecedented crisis due to government guidance around social distancing, bubbles and the termination of instrumental lessons and ensemble enrichment programmes, Modulo has reached **43 schools and five community groups** over the past year.

We provided them with **weekly resources** to continue making music, **delivered webinars** to support and nurture music teachers, **arranged online ‘Modulo Meets’** – bringing together schools from classrooms across the country – and navigated government guidance to offer **in-person masterclasses from orchestral partners**.

A total of **14 ensembles** regularly engaged with Modulo activity, using resources and attending online events. We saw **323 students** engaging with Modulo activities and of these, **192 young people had never experienced ensemble music-making before**. Statistics to be proud of at any point in OFA’s history, but especially during a global pandemic that all but shut down music as an industry in the UK in 2020-2021.

■ Music Leadership Training

After a successful rebrand, **two modules were launched in 2021** (making a total of 10) complemented by a well-attended, diverse webinar season of **five online events** to upskill teachers in conducting, inclusive ensemble provision and learning by ear.

A total of **186 modules have been downloaded** and completed this year and **67 participants** have joined us for the live webinar offer.



YOUNG PEOPLE

4 Youth Board meetings

348 young people across the year for Modulo

192 students playing in an orchestra for the first time

102 young people in summer national meet for Modulo

10 Young Leader training sessions

9 Youth Board members

Phoebe: "I honestly don't think I would have gone down the route I have done in studying performing arts at A Level and then going on to do music at university if I hadn't experienced travelling the country in a large youth ensemble with Orchestras for All."

Isaac: "When my dad became sick with his chronic pain, my sister got glandular fever and then chronic fatigue syndrome. With my mum working a lot of the time as well, I kind of took on a bit of a young carer role at home – but NOFA was a place just for me."



"The fun activities we had at the start of the sessions really made my day!"

"I learnt a new type of bow hold."

"I played with other musicians my age, which is always a wonderful experience."

"It was very hard at the start but now I feel like I have succeeded."

"I have learned how to work with other people to create something as a group."

"Finally understood how time signatures like 3/2 work!"

"I feel more confident in playing in front of others."

Word cloud containing the following words: Welcoming, Alive, Good, Cool, Amazing, Vibrant, LOUD, Freedom, fun, Vibes, Unique, Creativity, Happiness, Symphony, Excitement, Bravery, Musical, Enthusiastic, Modulo, Lively, DRAMATIC.

"This is so magical."

"It was relaxed and fun!"

"I learnt more about Henry Purcell – he is one of my favourite composers!"

{NOFA} NATIONAL ORCHESTRA FOR ALL

We are so proud that against a backdrop of lockdowns, social distancing and the cessation of any live or face-to-face activity for almost a year, the 2020-21 NOFA managed to meet virtually six times across the season to come together and play three different pieces of music for 22 instruments and even have time to collaborate on their own unique composition, 'The Great Interstellar Orchestra'.

A rich and culturally diverse group, this year's cohort showed grit and determination to make music together and support each other in spite of finding themselves in a world that has felt chaotic and traumatic for many young people.

As always with NOFA, we recruited members from across the UK, with 40 per cent of participants coming from areas of deprivation, 25 per cent qualifying for free school meals, and all members experiencing significant barriers to music-making – including physical or mental health conditions, disability, emotional, social or behavioural difficulties, learning differences or living in areas with limited music-making opportunities or rural isolation.

Across the season, NOFA members have played **Britten's 'The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra'**, **Mahala Rai Banda's 'Spoitoresa'**, and remixing and reinterpreting the NOFA-developed composition, **'Crossfade'**, written by **Jack McNeill**.

Navigating the challenges of Zoom delivery, members have enjoyed **50.5 hours of online activity**, received **102 one-to-one music lessons** and participated in **201 sectionals and workshops** at the online events! Nurtured by a superb wellbeing team, NOFA members received hundreds of welfare calls across the whole year to safeguard their needs and prioritise supporting their emotional and psychological response to the pandemic.

Coming together to play music has never been so desperately needed as it has been in the last 12 months, and the whole team has been determined to increase our outreach and offer to ensure that no young person feels isolated and alone as a result of the successive lockdowns.

More than ever before, NOFA has been a lifeline for its young people. NOFA member, Emma, says: *"It's made me more confident in everything I do. I'm not as shy and held back anymore... When I start new things outside of NOFA, I find that the confidence is still there."*



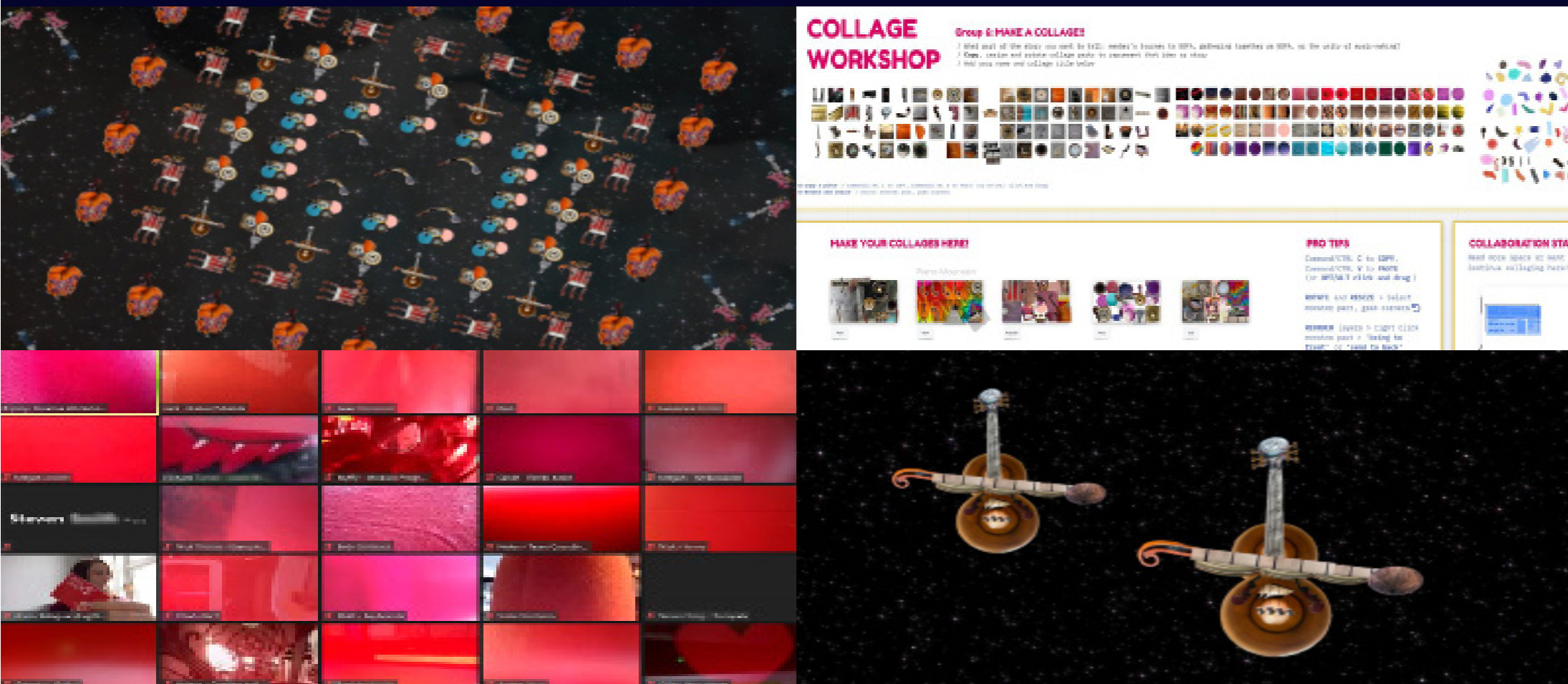
50.5 HOURS OF ONLINE ACTIVITY

102 ONE-TO-ONE MUSIC LESSONS

201 SECTIONALS AND WORKSHOPS



HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR



‘THE GREAT INTERSTELLAR ORCHESTRA’

In June 2021, Orchestras for All shared a captivating video to highlight the importance of **youth voice** and **self-expression**. By harnessing the power of technology and exploring new ways of connecting, digital creativity became possible during the pandemic.

Titled ‘**The Great Interstellar Orchestra**’ and premiered via YouTube, the six-minute film combines beautiful sounds and striking animations, created and performed by the young musicians of **National Orchestra for All**.

As part of the orchestra’s four-day spring course, members were invited to a series of virtual workshops on remixing and collage led by British composer, **Jack McNeill**, and digital visual artist, **Bryony Simcox**. It was the unique stories and creations that emerged from young musicians during these sessions that formed the basis of the audiovisual composition.

After seeing the digital work – which was also named by NOFA members – for the first time, **Troy, a young pianist with NOFA**, said: *“I thought it was amazing! By the end I was so interested in it, I wanted to see more. I’m really happy that I was a part of it and that I was able to contribute to all of this. It will show [others] how we’re all going on a journey... where we are, what we want to do and what we want to achieve.”*

NOFA percussionist, Abz, added: *“It’s got the different noises and different instruments, and it represents us all as a whole. We’re not the same but we’re all linked in some way.”*

Jack explained: *“The sounds you hear are all recorded by NOFA members. This piece is about giving young people a voice. It fully represents the diversity of NOFA’s creative ideas, with some instrumental melodies peppered across the piece, interspersed with percussive interludes, rich ambient textures, and almost synthetic-sounding extended techniques. If you listen carefully, you will hear the voice of every single NOFA member.”*

<https://bit.ly/GreatInterstellarOFA>

{MODULO} ORCHESTRAS FOR ALL

In a year that saw school music departments facing significant barriers to orchestral music-making, the Modulo Programme rose to the challenge. As well as **removing the participation fee**, we increased and adapted our provisions and events. The 2020-21 cohort was regionally diverse and across the year, we **welcomed 43 schools and 348 young people – with 192 students playing in an orchestra for the first time.**

This year we focused on developing our online offering, holding **two virtual ‘Welcome to Modulo’ sessions** in November – one for students and another for teachers. Here we provided activities for students, music leadership training for teachers, an introduction to our resources and opportunities to connect with the national Modulo community.

The January 2021 lockdown presented further challenges, with Modulo ensembles unable to rehearse in schools, so we launched **weekly online sessions for students to participate from home.** For six memorable weeks, we **welcomed over 88 students** who enjoyed musical activities and received specialist support from our team of **seven professional tutors**, while connecting with other young people from across the country.

When schools reopened in March, we were delighted to return to in-person provision with **14 workshops** over the summer term, led by musicians from our trusted partners, **BBC Philharmonic, City of London Sinfonia** and **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.** During the spring and summer terms, our national Modulo Meets were held online, with **ensembles from 14 school classrooms** as well as self-isolating students joining us across two events. The group enjoyed music-making sessions, focused sectional rehearsals, full orchestra activities and even developed new compositions together, with special guests including conductor **Karin Hendrickson**, composers **Jack McNeill** and **Martin Riley**, and digital visual artist, **Bryony Simcox.**



■ PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIES

“Modulo is brilliant because it doesn't feel like being in a strict orchestra and it is organised chaos!”

“This is so magical.”

“Thanks all of you – this is one of the best days I've ever had!”

“I really enjoyed joining in, especially in lockdown with no school or music groups happening.”

“I learnt two new chords on ukulele and loved it. It is the best thing I have done this year!”



■ TEACHER TESTIMONY

Claire, Heworth Grange School: *“It has been so hard with all the restrictions, so finally getting to do a proper rehearsal was brilliant – the pupils loved it! I can't believe how well they did with their instruments. The wind players had all managed six new notes by the end of the day. Watching the pupils supporting each other was a joy. Although they're all from the same year group, they're not necessarily from the same classes but I can already see new friendships forming and they have the 'status' of being part of the Modulo Orchestra. This is known by their peers and they're proud of it!”*

“All the pupils were inspired in our second rehearsal to develop their note playing, showing much more resilience than I was expecting and have witnessed in beginner instrumentalists before. I think it really helped them to see such a wide range of experience in the other schools. The Modulo Programme is brilliant and I'm already petitioning my Head for us to make it a regular part of our school – maybe even having Modulo groups in different year groups!”



“The masterclass was really fun and was also inspiring for me, which gave me ideas on where I want to take my music to in the future.”

“The masterclass was a really worthwhile experience. The session was led by professional musicians who all gave us advice about having a musical career as well as helping us improve our band's pieces. The exercises and warmups I played on the drums were really fun too.”

“[The best thing is] the fact you don't have to have an instrument to join and can be any level.”



MUSIC LEADERSHIP TRAINING

ORCHESTRAS FOR ALL

After its initial launch in 2019, Orchestras for All's **10-module online course** in inclusive ensemble leadership underwent a rebrand and is now known as **Music Leadership Training (MLT)** and is hosted on its own virtual learning environment within our website. The project is the first of its kind and covers areas of ensemble leadership that music teachers feel may have been lacking in formal training, or that they lack confidence or experience in, particularly in inclusive contexts.

Alongside covering **traditional conducting techniques**, through short videos filmed in real life contexts and in partnership with leading practitioners, the course invites users to reflect on **approaches to group composing, learning music by ear, leading music without notation** as well as **arranging music for inclusive ensembles**.

Since its launch, **over 100 music leaders** have taken at least one of the modules gaining crucial professional development to be applied in their classrooms or community music setting. This has been complemented by **five online webinars** linked to the content of the modules offering **an additional 8.5 hours of online training**. With a programme of **eight new webinars planned for 2021-2022** with diversity and inclusion partners, mental health experts and social enterprises providing additional context to the music-making opportunities, MLT continues to go from strength to strength.

■ PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIES

Tor: *"It was all so, so useful! I came away with new techniques for conducting in 2/4, which will be invaluable. The bit where Sian focused on my piece was also immensely helpful, very personalised and inspiring."*

"This was exactly what I needed to keep my spark about ensembles during a tough time for music at schools. It has given me renewed energy for getting our groups back again as soon as possible. I am inspired to do more conducting training because of this so thank you to Sian, and thank you to Orchestras for All for putting the training on."

Victoria: *"The sessions were excellent and really useful – thank you for organising them and I will look forward to future events with your organisation."*

* ENJOYED BY
190 PARTICIPANTS
IN 2020-21

* **8.5 HOURS OF**
ONLINE TRAINING



STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANISATION

We have taken some vital steps to strengthen the organisation during the pandemic, ensuring that we are best placed to support the most vulnerable young people as they come out of this crisis facing even more disadvantages than before.

Recruitment

Strengthening the team with careful and measured recruitment in the last year has seen us welcome a new **Team Coordinator**, **Head of Programmes** and the creation of the role of **Content and Communications Producer**.

We have also enhanced our team working with NOFA members by securing additional **wellbeing staff**, who will work to meet the social, emotional and mental health needs of our young people. We have also welcomed a **Wellbeing Lead** to the team, which will add capacity and expertise in supporting NOFA.



YOUTH VOICE



RECRUITMENT



DEVELOPMENT



ADAPTABILITY

Policy and system development

We have taken the time to have conversations with our team, trustees and the young people that we work with to strengthen our organisational values in **diversity and inclusion**, upskilling all those employed by Orchestras for All with EduCare on-line courses in **Safeguarding and Child Protection**, **GDPR** and **Safer Recruitment**, while evolving our database, financial systems and processes as well as making the move to Office 365 to streamline the way we work as a team.

Adaptability

While many of our contemporaries faced the difficult decision to shut up shop due to the impact of the pandemic, Orchestras for All has adapted and **successfully delivered its activity online**. We will build on this success by ensuring that even after the pandemic, we continue to embrace digital platforms in order to **reach more young people across the UK** – particularly those who may be experiencing rural isolation or have access and inclusion needs.



OUR TEAM

Youth voice

Youth voice is fully embedded across the organisation. In NOFA, our amazing **Young Leaders** (NOFA members aged 16–18) and **Ambassadors** (NOFA alumni aged 18–20) lead aspects of NOFA events, steer focus group conversations, moderate spaces, offer peer led wellbeing support and work to encourage all NOFA members to input their opinions and ideas into new repertoire and plans for future NOFA events. All feedback is acted upon and plans adjusted based upon the contributions of our young members.

Since Autumn 2020, we have benefitted from two NOFA Ambassador alumni accepting roles as **Trustees** on our board to bring youth voice to the governance conversations at OFA. The new Trustees also chair a termly **Youth Board**, made up of **nine NOFA members**, to gather insight from young people in the UK on matters ranging from fundraising and marketing to programme delivery and new recruitment. Our Young Trustees also take an active role in recruitment for the core team and for other spaces on the board.

Staff team

Our committed core team evolved in 2020-21 as Head of Programmes, **Anna Williams-Haines**, left after almost a decade of work, having held multiple roles in the organisation as it developed.

Donna Edmonds joined the team in April 2021 following a career in education, leading schools for 20 years.

A new role of Content and Communications Producer was created when **Helena Asprou** joined the team in January 2021, revolutionising strategy around content, social media reach and messaging, while **Helen Cordina** joined as the new Team Coordinator in March 2021.

Marianna Hay MBE, our founder, has stepped aside from the staff team and takes the role as Founding Director to support the staff team on a voluntary basis throughout the year.

Our artistic partners continue to develop with **City of London Sinfonia**, **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** and **BBC Philharmonic** all part of our Modulo Programme, while key appointments in wellbeing and welfare – including the development of a Wellbeing Lead role – will nurture the social, emotional and mental health needs of NOFA members affected by the pandemic.

Volunteers

We are grateful for the continued enthusiasm, guidance and support from our committed board of trustees led by our Chair, **Susanna Eastburn MBE**.

We could not deliver our work without the crucial support of our volunteers – whether as musicians, helping behind the scenes during our events, supporting with fundraising or evaluation, or general administrative support.

All our volunteers are offered appropriate training, particularly around our safeguarding policy.

We commit to **fair recruitment of volunteers**, are flexible in terms of allowing volunteers to give any period of time that suits their needs, and cover all reasonable expenses.



THE YEAR AHEAD: JULY '21-JUNE '22

STRATEGY 2021-2026

In 2021, we launched our **five-year strategy** focusing on a renewed vision: a country where any young person aged 11-18 can access the benefits of group music-making.

As part of our mission, we offer young people with complex lives a range of inclusive ensemble music-making opportunities that redefine what an orchestra is, who it is for, and what it can do. The strategy sets out our plans to:

1. **Empower young people to access high-quality ensemble music-making, inspiring audiences and the wider sector**
2. **Energise music educators to lead change in local communities**
3. **Engage partners to roll out our approach in a way that supports their needs and regional context**



'THE WAY WE SEE IT'

To celebrate 10 years of inclusive music-making, we launched a special season of work, titled **'The Way We See It'**.

Empowering young people through high-quality ensemble music-making is at the heart of Orchestras for All's new strategy, and we continue to place ever-increasing focus on the **development of youth voice and youth leadership** through our programmes.

In a change to previous seasons, this season has also seen us pilot a **two-year membership for NOFA members and Modulo schools** to ensure consistency.

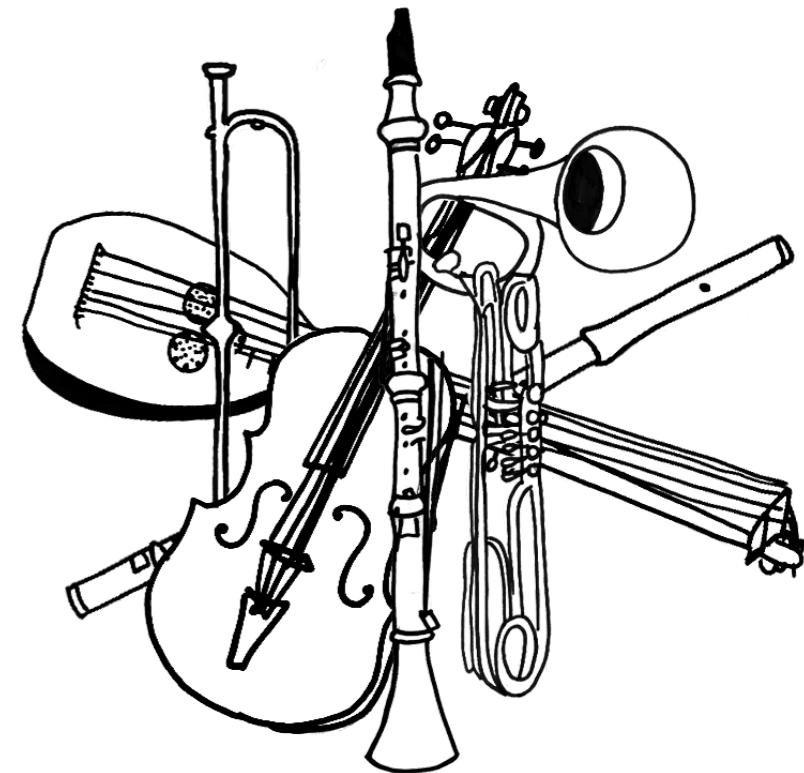
LOOKING FORWARD

Despite the unprecedented challenges we have all faced as a direct result of COVID-19, we are determined to remain optimistic and look forward to the future. We have reflected on what we have learned over the past 18 months, growing both as a team and as a charitable organisation, and will take these lessons with us as we open **exciting new doors of musical opportunity** for our young people.

The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the need for **resilience, adaptability** and of course, **compassion**, during hard times, alongside the absolute necessity for human beings to experience **meaningful connections, creativity** and **collaboration**. We are doing everything we can to offer a rich diet of activity across all three of Orchestras for All's programmes, and by providing the cultural entitlement that each of our musicians deserves, we hope to see them emerge from this experience both healthy and happy.

We will continue to focus on the unique requirements of our inspiring orchestra members and associates, and will be relentless in our optimism to provide them with **services that meet their needs**.

Promoting **positive wellbeing** and our key values of **kindness** and **inclusivity** has never been more important. We will safeguard and nurture the emotional, psychological and spiritual needs that are often developed by having access to music-making ensembles.



■ CONTENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

As part of Orchestras for All's five-year strategy, we are improving content and communications both internally and across each of our digital channels, helping our organisation to share its work more widely, **build stronger connections** with our audience and act as a catalyst for **even greater change**.

Over the past year, we have also embraced a **bold new visual identity** in close collaboration with our Youth Board to reflect the aspirations of our three core programmes.

Average of **4,140** monthly web visitors (Jan-Jun 2021) – 2,000 more per month than in 2020

41,144 unique page views for the website, **33,893** of which came in Jan-Jun 2021

18 pieces of media coverage

2020-21
snapshot

26 blogs published in Jan-Jun 2021, each with double the number of page views than in 2020

Reach increased across all social media channels:

Instagram +50%
Facebook +7%
Twitter +10%
YouTube +38%
LinkedIn +37%

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