

Orchestras for All Impact Report 2019-2020



Year in Numbers

85%

NOFA members feel that they are **open to new ideas, adaptable and flexible** after their year in NOFA

85%

Modulo participants **played in an ensemble for the first time** through in-school masterclasses and online activities

89%

Conductors for Change participants felt **confident about the musical and non-musical benefits of inclusive ensemble leadership** after completing an online module

10,000+ online audience members wowed
500 young musicians supported
400 young musicians' debut in an orchestra
100 music leaders trained
80 recordings for virtual performances
32 face-to-face contact days
20 new ensembles formed
12 contact days delivered
10 accessible arrangements created
10 Conductors for Change modules launched
10 ambassadors and young leaders trained
3 professional orchestras engaged

Welcome



We are delighted to share with you our Impact Report for 2019-2020, celebrating the life-changing experiences Orchestras for All have offered young people and music leaders across the UK in a challenging year for us all in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Orchestras for all has an ambitious vision: music without boundaries. One day, we hope that Orchestras for All won't need to exist.

However, barriers are stopping too many young people who lack financial, social or cultural support from accessing music-making opportunities across the UK. These barriers of inequality have been amplified, exaggerated and intensified during the Coronavirus pandemic, which we aim to counteract through our work in three key programmes:

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

Modulo Programme: Supporting under-resourced schools and community groups to run ensembles ('Modulos'), regardless of level of skill or instruments available.

Conductors for Change: A training programme for music teachers and community music leaders to develop their conducting and ensemble leadership skills.

The barriers young people face in accessing high quality ensemble music-making opportunities remain as acute as ever. **The number of music teachers**, the first port of call for teenagers wanting to access music education in school, continues to fall sharply each year. **Poorer students** are, on average, **20.1 months behind their wealthier peers** at GCSE music, while disadvantaged students are also **38% less likely to take the subject**.

We are proud to share with you the impact that we have made over the last year through our season, **My Routes, Our Routes**, exploring human migrations and journeys, alongside the music that defines individual contexts, backgrounds and histories. We **recruited our most diverse and inclusive NOFA in our history**; welcomed our inaugural **Young Composer in Residence, Lucy Hale**; we announced our **largest-ever cohort of schools** to take part in our Modulo programme; collaborated with our **three professional partner orchestras**; launched our **Conductors for Change** online course and we celebrate our bold, ambitious and meaningful response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

We would love to go on this journey together, continuing to effect substantial change in the lives of young people who face many barriers to participating in the educational, social and leisure opportunities that should be available to everyone.

Nick Thorne
Executive Director

Susanna Eastburn MBE
Chair of Trustees

What We Do

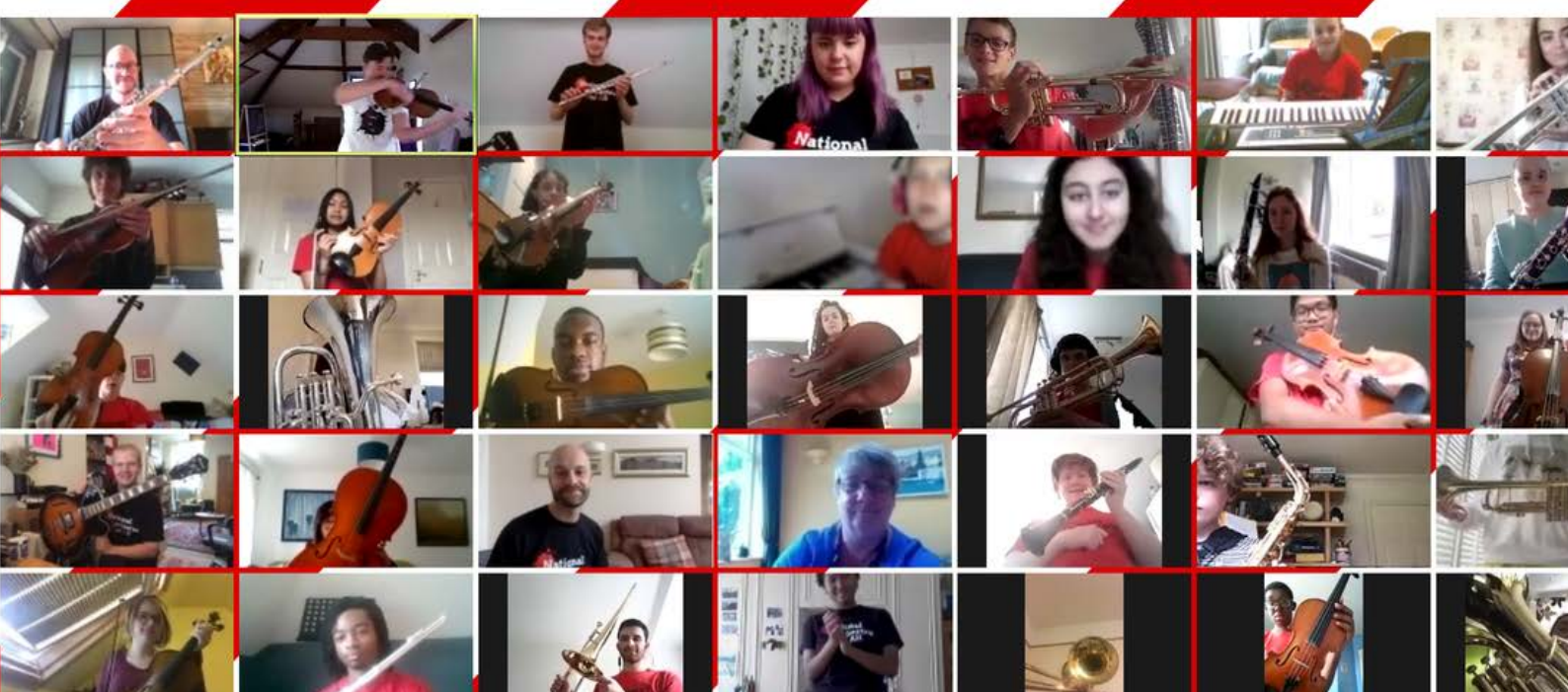
Orchestras for All has a big vision: music without boundaries. To achieve this vision, we:

- **identify** young people who lack opportunities to access ensemble music-making and have shown a dedication to music in the face of challenging circumstances
- **equip** music leaders with the skills, resources and networks to establish inclusive ensemble music-making opportunities and, in the long-term, cultivate a culture of music-making in their community
- **collaborate** with young people, music leaders, professional musicians and music organisations, and cultural venues to create exciting, innovative and inspiring events and performances around the UK, that express the identities of the young people we work with

Our programmes

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

- **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 three times a year to learn, create, rehearse and perform ensemble music
- **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, 2019-2020 has welcomed 35 new ensembles to start across the country
- **Conductors for Change:** 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 animateurs and leading professional conductors



COVID-19 Response

It goes without saying that 2019 / 2020 hasn't quite gone according to plan due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the national lockdown of the UK in March 2020. However, there are enough barriers to music-making as it is, and we haven't – and won't – let this be another.

Online Response

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

- **National Orchestra for All** assembled on Zoom for three days in April 2020 that saw 60 specialist music sessions and – just as importantly – time for friends to be reunited, including sharing with each other their own amazing musical creations during lockdown
- **Modulo** schools were provided with weekly resources so students could continue music making from home and be part of a nationwide musical community
- **Conductors for Change** launched its online course so teachers and music leaders across the UK could take time to build the tools, strategies and practical conducting techniques to develop an instrumental ensemble within their school or community

Strengthening the organisation

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

- **Youth voice** has always been an integral part of our work, and in Autumn 2020 we will appoint two new young trustees from our alumni to ensure young people take part in conversations throughout the organisation. The trustees will run a Youth Advisory Board of young people from all over the UK
- **Policy and system development** - we've taken time to have conversations with our team, trustees and young people we work with to strengthen our organisational values in diversity and inclusion, safeguarding and the environment while evolving our database and financial systems and processes
- **Adaptability** – the organisation has adapted and delivered its activity successfully online and will continue to build on this success with particular focus on reaching young people who have no internet access.



“

Emilia had a really great time and it was wonderful to see her really engaged with music again in a way that has been lacking since lockdown.

– NOFA parent

NOFA's Inaugural Young Composer-in-Residence, Lucy Hale

Lucy was NOFA's first ever Young Composer-in-Residence, tasked with co-creating with NOFA members a brand-new composition for the *My Roots, Our Routes* season. Currently an RPS Composer 2020, she was the inaugural (2018/19) Young Composer-in-Association with BSO Resound, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's RPS Award-winning disabled-led ensemble. A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music, Lucy has received commissions from Drake Music in partnership with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the National Open Youth Orchestra. Here, she tells us more about working with NOFA members:

It was OFA's focus on breaking down barriers to music-making that inspired Lucy to apply for the role of young composer-in-residence: "because of my childhood experiences of feeling shut out of music, your aims and ethos really chimed with me". Lucy relished the challenge of creating a composition project for NOFA exploring the *My Roots, Our Routes* season, landing on the Silk Road as an overarching theme for the composition: "I collected folk tunes from different locations on the silk roads, then devised activities enabling NOFA members to use them as a springboard to develop their own ideas".

The process of working with NOFA members was exciting and rewarding for Lucy: "Their creative ideas were always really interesting. My highlight was hearing all the ideas NOFA members came up with: they were all so original!". Lucy challenged NOFA to think in new ways about the composition process. One member said, "It was really fun because I haven't done it before, so it was a bit challenging. We managed to create a big piece of music that made us think about how music can make us feel or tell about a person."

Lucy with OFA Ambassador, Matthew, NOFA Programme Manager, Steven and OFA Artistic Associate, Emma.



Young People

Our Outputs in 2019-2020



500 young musicians supported

Young people aged 11-18 from across all four nations of the UK participated in National Orchestra for All, Modulo and Conductors for Change activities throughout the year, supported by our team of professional orchestral tutors and pastoral staff.



12 contact days

We engaged directly with young people at residential courses, Modulo Meet workshop days and Ensemble Leadership Training Days in the Midlands, North West, South East, South West and Yorkshire – including events held in inspiring and iconic venues including the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Royal Academy of Music.



80 virtual recordings contributed

NOFA and Modulo members submitted audio recordings, film and photos for virtual performances and compositions on the theme of *My Roots, Our Routes*.



100 contact hours

Even with Covid-19 restrictions, young musicians participated in 100 hours of music-making and pastoral support, in person and online, with our tutor teams.



“ I had a key worker and found the support was good so I felt much more like I belonged... because of Covid-19 I'm proud to still be able to participate in music
- NOFA member

Edwin



Edwin has been a member of NOFA since 2019, playing saxophone. When he arrived at the Summer Course in August 2019, Edwin said, "I was terrified - I had meltdowns and just wanted to go home".

Through emotional and musical support from the NOFA staff and volunteer team and the warm encouragement and friendship of other NOFA members, he gradually relaxed enough to join in with course activities "By the end, I made friends and was happy and elated to be a part of the final performance".

Edwin's mum, Jo, said, "it was great to see him being accepted for who he is and grow in confidence and charisma as part of the NOFA family". Jo sees Edwin's increased resilience as a longer-term benefit of participation in NOFA: "he rode the huge waves of anxiety and survived - this has helped him see he can get through difficult experiences and the rewards are worth it".

Sarah, NOFA's woodwind tutor, has seen Edwin's progression: "Just a year ago he found it hard to sit through a session and now he is one of the main contributors!". Edwin's proudest moment?

"Getting my NOFA t-shirt and performing with NOFA - I loved it: one of the most fun experiences".

“ NOFA helped me feel less anxious around a lot of people at once and helped me become better and more skilled at different percussion instruments
- *Shahab, NOFA member*

Dan



Dan is a music teacher at Lyng Hall School in Coventry. His students had been inspired by a performance from the National Youth Orchestra and he joined the Modulo Programme in January 2020, keen to build on their newfound enthusiasm for orchestral music-making:

“The opportunity of Modulo, to work with fantastic musicians whilst surrounded by peers at a similar level was key to helping them feel comfortable with learning to perform as an orchestra”. Participation in the programme, particularly the Modulo Meet day at MAC Birmingham in March, turned out to be a crucial launch pad for orchestral music-making in Dan’s school: “None of our young people had been playing for more than six months. They all rose to the challenge brilliantly.”

Since COVID-19 lockdown took Modulo activities online for the remainder of the year, Dan is proud that his students’ enthusiasm for music-making, spurred on by the March Modulo Meet, has evolved into determination:

“At the Modulo Meet, one of our trumpet players was struggling with confidence. She received encouragement from many people around her and this gave her the courage to carry on. In June, she was one of the first to submit entries for the online Modulo activities”.

Dan is excited for the future of music-making at Lyng Hall through continued participation in the Modulo Programme: “This has been a wonderful stepping stone to help my students believe in their own music making”.

“ We had a really eclectic mix of students join our Modulo, and watching them all develop as young musicians makes me really proud.
- *Ellie, Modulo teacher*

Our Team



Youth Voice

Our ambition is to embed Youth Voice across the organisation. Youth Voice is already integrated into our work with NOFA as we currently have Young Leaders (NOFA members aged 16 – 18) and Ambassadors (NOFA alumni aged 18 – 20). All NOFA members are also encouraged to input their opinions and ideas into new repertoire.

As we evolve this vital area of our work in Autumn 2020, we will appoint two NOFA ambassador alumni to become trustees from Summer to bring youth voice to the governance conversations at OFA. The new Trustees will Chair a termly Youth Advisory Board to gather insight from young people across the UK.

Staff team

Our committed core staff team evolved in 2019 – 2020 as Stuart Burns, Executive Director, left after five years tirelessly developing OFA to the organisation it is today. Nick Thorne joined the team in January 2020 following leadership roles at Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. The programmes team also evolved, with Anna Williams-Haines taking on a strategic role as Head of Programmes, Myffy Dymond programme managing the Modulo programme and Emma Oliver-Trend joining us as Artistic Director for the 2020-2022 season. Marianna Hay will continue working with us in her role as Founder after she returns from maternity leave in Spring 2021.

Our artistic partners continue to develop with **City of London Sinfonia**, **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra** and the **BBC Philharmonic** as part of the Modulo Programme, and we continued to work with specialist **SEN Support Workers** to provide expert care for young people with complex additional support needs in NOFA.

Volunteers

We are grateful for the continued enthusiasm, guidance and support from our committed board of trustees led by our Chair, Susanna Eastburn. We could not deliver the work we do without the crucial support of volunteers – whether as musicians or behind the scenes during our events, or supporting with fundraising, evaluation and general admin support. This year we were supported by 70 volunteers across our work. All of our volunteers are offered appropriate training, particularly around our safeguarding policy, and we have a clear policy on the use of volunteers. 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 reasonable expenses.

NOFA

Our Outputs and Impact in 2019-2020

We're proud that the 2019-20 NOFA was the most diverse group OFA has ever worked with, with members breaking down the most challenging barriers to make music. 40% of NOFA members came from areas of deprivation, 25% qualified for Free School Meals, and all members experienced significant barriers, including physical or mental health conditions, disability, emotional, social or behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties or lived in areas with limited music-making opportunities. NOFA members represented all four corners of the UK, from Stornoway to Belfast, and Peckham to Pembroke Dock.

Already determinedly breaking down these barriers to make music together, NOFA weren't going to let Covid-19 lockdown stop them! **They started the season** with an energising 2019 Summer Course at the University of Leeds and a creative and inspiring Winter Course in Liverpool led by young composer-in-residence, Lucy Hale. **In April 2020**, instead of meeting together in person in London as planned, NOFA found themselves gathering together online via Zoom for the first time. Across the three days, NOFA worked together to **virtually record** Klezmer tune *Bulgar from Odessa* and support each other during the strange first few weeks of lockdown. **Over to NOFA member Kate to explain:**



Dia duit (hello)! I have played the trumpet in NOFA for two years. During lockdown NOFA's online Spring Course provided me with a sense of normality. It was amazing to see other NOFA members (friends for life!) and to be able to create and share music from our homes.

Thanks to the magic of the internet, we were able to meet and have a chat with our Young Composer in Residence, Lucy Hale, who worked with our ideas to make a piece of music. We were then able to ask her questions about herself, composing and the piece itself which was extremely insightful and interesting.

Myself and other Young Leaders also hosted an online NOFA recital which felt really special. Lockdown was an extremely hard time for everyone. Coming from a place with the highest percentage for poor mental health in the UK, I know how important it is to look out for each other and keep busy - NOFA's online course enabled us to do just that.



“My favourite thing was being able to create music with new people and working with different composers to make exciting new music”
- NOFA Member

Modulo

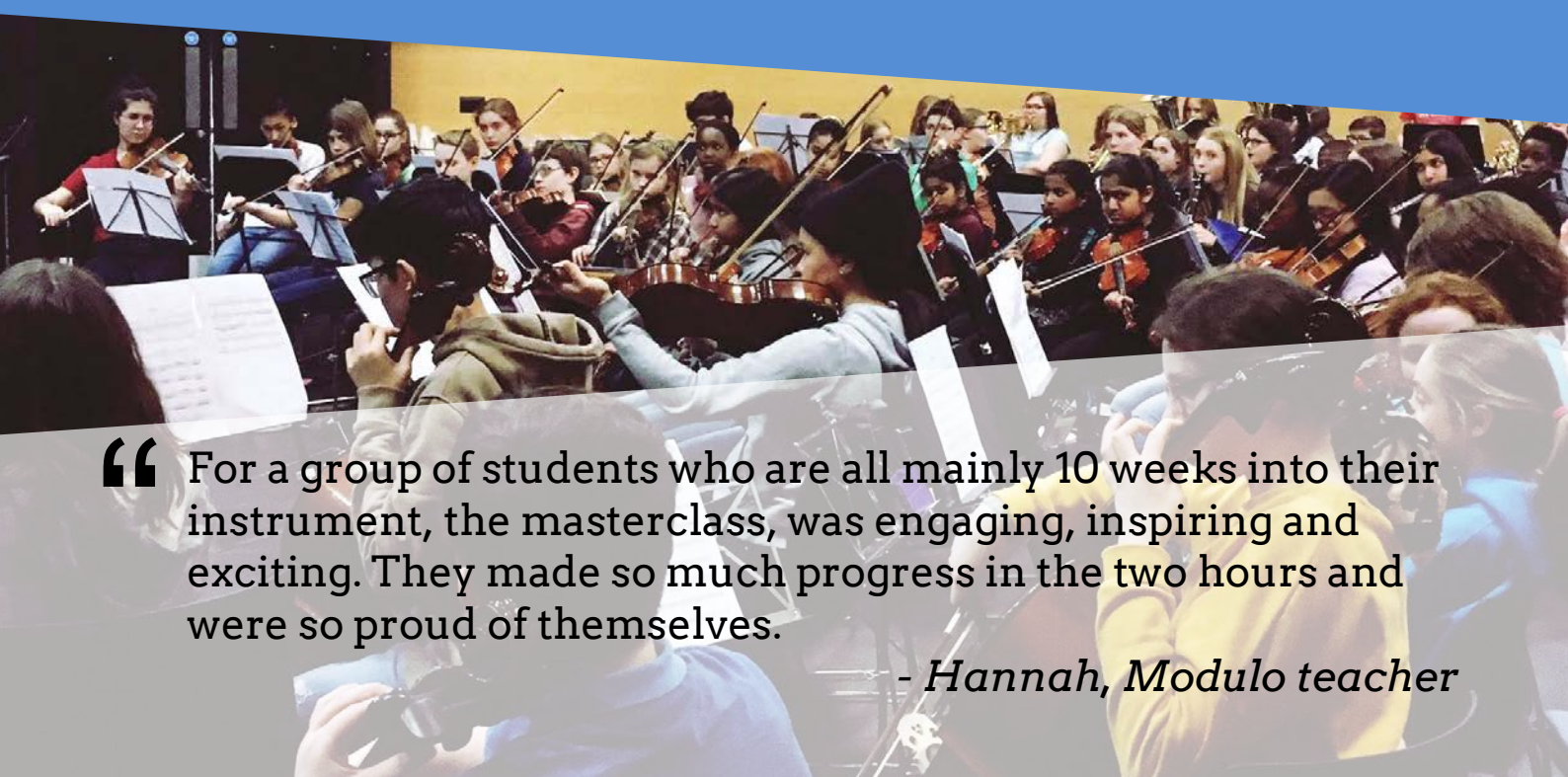
In July 2019, Modulo hosted its two biggest ever Meets at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and the Royal Academy of Music bringing together over 300 young musicians from as far north as Bradford and as far south as Kent. By March 2020, 20 of the Modulo network's 35 schools had participated in masterclass rehearsals on Modulo repertoire with our artistic partners, **BBC Philharmonic** and **City of London Sinfonia (CLS)**.

Just days before lockdown began, 87 young musicians from the West Midlands came together at MAC Birmingham for a joy-filled *My Roots, Our Routes*-themed Modulo Meet, supported by musicians from the RBC LEAP Ensemble. Although subsequent face-to-face Modulo Meets were unable to take place, the Modulo network found a brand-new way to meet in Summer 2020, with 40 young musicians collaborating online across the term to create their very own *My Roots*-themed film and soundtrack, led by composer Dr Daniel Bickerton. Another 70 young musicians joined in with online videos led by the Modulo BBC Philharmonic and CLS tutor teams.

Here's Harri, an OFA Ambassador from Durham, to explain more about how Modulo Online worked:
Hi! I've played trombone with NOFA for four years and now I'm a NOFA Ambassador.

Orchestras for All's Modulo Programme went online this year as well. The programme provided a much-needed sense of normality. Modulo members got to catch up with their friends and meet new ones. Everyone was engaged in the sessions, working through the music and talking about their experiences at home during the past few months.

Modulo members got to work together creatively as well: during June, each Modulo member had sent in a short recording, and a composer - Dan Bickerton - had drawn all the parts into one short track. The piece was premiered within a composition webinar during the course, with the arranger, Dan. It's been a difficult time for everyone. Despite the fact that we need to be careful, it's now incredibly important to have some social interactions with friends. I've realised that there's no match for human interaction.



“ For a group of students who are all mainly 10 weeks into their instrument, the masterclass, was engaging, inspiring and exciting. They made so much progress in the two hours and were so proud of themselves.

- Hannah, Modulo teacher

Conductors for Change

In July 2019, Conductors for Change launched a 10-module online course in inclusive ensemble leadership. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation-funded project is the first of its kind, and covers areas of ensemble leadership that music teachers feel unprepared for or unconfident in delivering, particularly in inclusive contexts. Alongside covering traditional conducting techniques, through short videos filmed in real life contexts, the course invites users to reflect on approaches to group composing, leading music without notation and arranging music for inclusive ensembles. Since its launch, over 100 music leaders have taken at least one of the modules.

The course and complementary face-to-face and online courses are designed to support teachers leading musicians participating in other OFA programmes. Ellie, a teacher from London, participated in CFC alongside leading a Modulo:

Ellie Page, Hackney New School, London

Ellie has recently completed her first year as a teacher, training with the Teach First programme. She was keen to develop her own ensemble leadership skills alongside kickstarting ensemble music-making for her students. However, when she arrived at her school, she was faced with a daunting prospect: "At the start of the year, ensemble music-making was virtually non-existent."

Ellie was keen to reinvigorate a culture of music-making, and develop her own music leadership skills. Having participated in a conducting workshop through OFA's Conductors for Change, she signed up to the Modulo Programme, increasing the engagement and confidence of young musicians in her school: "we have had pupils learn instruments from complete beginner, and they can now play pieces from start to finish as part of an ensemble."

The impact on her pupils has been clear: "it has been an eye-opening experience for them: many would previously have thought that orchestral music was not for them." A Modulo masterclass with musicians from the City of London Sinfonia was a turning point for her group: "there was an incredible energy around the room. That was the first time it really felt like we were forming a new ensemble, and it was a really special afternoon to be a part of."

Participating in Conductors for Change alongside Modulo has given Ellie a solid foundation for leading high-quality music-making in her school now and in the future: "In my first year of teaching, OFA was invaluable in allowing me to grow in confidence when leading an ensemble. It has been rewarding for all of us and it is something I am excited to see grow within our school in the future".



The Year Ahead

Strategy 2021-2026

2021 will see the launch of our new 5-year strategy focussing on our renewed vision: a country where any young person aged 11 - 18 can access the benefits of making music together. Our mission will be to 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 will set 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 ten years of inclusive music-making we will programme a special season of work called *The Way We See It*. Empowering young people through high quality ensemble music-making will be at the heart of Orchestras for All's new strategy, and we will be placing ever-increasing focus on the development of youth voice and youth leadership through our programmes.

In a change to previous seasons, this season will pilot a two-year membership for NOFA members and Modulo schools.

Coronavirus response

We will continue to focus on the unique needs that our organisation services - young people that face barriers to music making. This is more important than ever as the vulnerable group of young people we work with are facing even more significant challenges to their home lives, educational outcomes and wellbeing during this time.





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