

Please address all correspondence to Marc Dooley:



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Dear Mr Dowden,

**Create a route back to making music again**

We are alarmed at reports, including in The Times, that an extended ban on amateur music making is being considered by you and the Cultural Renewal Taskforce. Writing in The Times, Richard Morrison is right to highlight the great anxiety felt by millions of participants in amateur music making in the UK at the prospect of an extended ban on musical activities as a result of a failure to invest in scientific research into their risks and to provide workable guidance. Such research and guidance would benefit all musicians, and there are promising European research projects we can build on. Amateur and youth musicians derive enormous benefits from singing in choirs, playing in orchestras, bands and other ensembles. The sheer pleasure of participation in music is a significant source of wellbeing and, in an increasingly atomised world, a driver of community cohesion. The music industry is currently being significantly supported by amateur and youth musicians – it is they who are employing freelance professional music teachers, buying instruments, purchasing sheet music, donating to livestreams, donating concert ticket refunds – while other professional fees have disappeared. These groups usually receive no external funding. In normal times amateur and youth groups employ many professional musicians, rent and purchase performance materials, and hire concert halls and other venues. All their professional suppliers will struggle without a return to normality for these groups as soon as possible. A route back to broad musical participation is urgently required.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Alexander OBE; *Chief Executive & Artistic Director, National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain* • Matthew Altham; *Musical Director, Pegasus Choir* • Beti Lyn Alwyn-Jones • Diana Ambache; *Director Ambache Chamber Orchestra* • Keiron Anderson; *Musical Director Nottingham Symphonic Wind Orchestra, Yorkshire Wind Orchestra Phoenix Concert Band* • Hazel Anderson • Michael Armstrong • Irene Auerbach • Philip Austin; *Librarian, London Phoenix Orchestra, The Rehearsal Orchestra and Philharmonia Britannica* • Martin Baglow; *Chairman, The British Association of Barbershop Singers* • Caroline Balding • Sally Beamish; *composer* • Quintin Beer; *Freelance Choral Conductor* • Lucy Bell • Dr David Blazey; *Independent Consultant* • Gill Blazey; *school music teacher* • Steve Block; *Former Music Advisor, London Borough of Enfield* Founder, *West London Sinfonia* • Laura Bookbinder LLCM ALCM; *freelance and peripatetic teacher of woodwind* • Stephen Bradley; *Musical Director - Luton Concert Band, Conductor - Luton Concert Orchestra* • Laura Bradshaw; *Trustee of the Natural Voice Network (NVN)* • Cathy Phillips Brady; *Freelance Creative*

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