

Pioneering National Open Youth Orchestra presents its debut performance and a world premiere at Milton Court Concert Hall, London

Sunday 24 April, 4pm

The **National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO)** will perform a relaxed BSL-interpreted performance at Milton Court Concert Hall, London on 24 April at 4pm, marking the beginning of its first ever series of concerts taking place across the UK from April to June 2022.

This concert will be the first performance from a ground-breaking national youth orchestra, where talented, young, disabled and non-disabled musicians play together. The performance will include a live premiere of ***What Fear We Then?*** by **Alexander Campkin**, co-commissioned with **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra**. Some of the musicians play electronic instruments including the **Clarion**, **LinnStrument** and **Seaboard RISE**, others play more familiar acoustic instruments.

The National Open Youth Orchestra (NOYO) is a world-first. The ambitious orchestra launched in September 2018 to provide a progression route for some of the most talented, young, disabled musicians in the UK. A pioneering ensemble, NOYO promotes musical excellence and inclusivity, supporting 11–25-year-old disabled and non-disabled musicians to rehearse and perform together. Some of the NOYO musicians play acoustic instruments; others, play electronic instruments such as the Clarion, which can be played with any movement of the body. NOYO collaborates with cutting-edge composers to create new and exciting music for a diverse range of musicians and instruments. With four regional NOYO centres spread across the U.K., the **Barbican** and **Guildhall School of Music & Drama** are delighted to partner with NOYO in hosting London's NOYO Centre.

In April, over 20 of the UK's most talented, young, disabled and non-disabled musicians will take to the stage together for the first time under the NOYO banner, to play exciting new music inspired by the diversity of the orchestra. NOYO will present a broad-ranging, contemporary classical programme, allowing the audience to enter a captivating musical universe where the familiar merges with the unknown. Alongside Alexander Campkin's new work, the programme also includes Liam Taylor-West's *Day One* and Oliver Cross' *Barriers*, as well as new arrangements of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's *Variations on an African Air*, Harold Arlen's *Sleeping Rainbows* and Yann Tiersen's *Comptine d'un autre été, l'après-midi*.

Commenting on the collaboration with NOYO, **Alexander Campkin** says:

"It took me on a journey of discovery - a journey of questioning myself and my own background. I've used my own personal journey to depict the story of this piece. I started playing the viola when I was a child, but then when I was 17, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Suddenly I was told, no, you can't play anymore because you have this disability. I didn't tell anyone I'd been diagnosed with MS. It was a secret that put an extra barrier. I was hiding for almost 20 years. And it was only a couple of years ago that I was open and suddenly the world felt a bit easier.

This process [of writing the piece] began with me attending rehearsals in NOYO's three centres in Bournemouth, Bristol and in London, to get to meet the players and them showing me their talents - what they could play on their instruments, some of which I'd never come across before, for instance the Clarion. I then wrote some sketches. We tried them out. There are so many things that we can do to level the playing field, to really give people the opportunity to perform music where perhaps traditional acoustic instruments wouldn't be possible. It's so inspiring seeing NOYO work around any barriers that musicians might have to be able to realise their artistic visions."

The afternoon's music will be a joyful celebration of diversity as a creative force that can push the boundaries of classical and contemporary music in new and exciting directions.

NOYO harpist, Holli, who is in her third year with the orchestra, says *"I like the word influential to describe NOYO. A lot of the music we play, you wouldn't really get that in a stereotypical classical music concert. It brings a different kind of element of programming."*

Will Gompertz, Barbican Artistic Director, commented:

"We are thrilled to support this incredible orchestra. The Barbican has been a space for artistic exchange, learning and performance for 40 years and, with the National Open Youth Orchestra's inaugural live concert fast approaching in April, we're especially proud to have them within our community of talented young people at this pivotal moment. As we continue to invest in our Creative Learning programme, witnessing this remarkable orchestra perform and grow while working to improve access and encourage creativity, is as inspiring as it is affirming."

Sean Gregory, Vice Principal and Director of Innovation & Engagement, Guildhall School of Music & Drama said:

"We are excited to be hosting the National Open Youth Orchestra's inaugural concert at Milton Court in April. Since first becoming involved with this inspirational ensemble over four years ago, I have been nothing short of amazed by its innovation, musicality and pure tenacity, as well as struck by how much there is still for us to learn with regard to the provision of access and excellence for all in our sector. This event heralds a significant next phase of national artistic and educational collaboration for NOYO, which we feel privileged to be part of, both as Guildhall School and through our creative alliance with the Barbican."

Programme:

What Fear We Then? Alexander Campkin

Day One Liam Taylor-West

Variations on an African Air Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (new arr.)

Sleeping Rainbows Harold Arlen / Traditional (mash-up)

Comptine d'un autre été, l'après-midi Yann Tiersen (new arr.)

Barriers Oliver Cross

Tickets for the National Open Youth Orchestra concert at Milton Court Concert Hall, London, on 24 April are on sale now, bookable from the [event page](#).

Applications to join the orchestra from September 2022 are open until 31 March. Visit noyo.org.uk for more information.

Video assets can be found on NOYO's Vimeo [page](#) including a recorded performance of *What Fear We Then?*, an interview with composer Alexander Campkin and an interview with NOYO members.

Press imagery and a PDF of this press release are available in [this folder](#).

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Note to Editors:

Relaxed performances

NOYO concerts are presented in a relaxed atmosphere suitable for a neurodiverse audience, as well as those who find a more informal setting beneficial. Adjustments include dimmed lights, chillout space for quiet time before or during the performance, 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 (NOYO)** is the world's first disabled-led national youth ensemble. It was launched in September 2018 to provide a progression route for the UK's most talented 11–25-year-old disabled musicians, as members of a pioneering inclusive orchestra where disabled and non-disabled musicians play and perform together.

NOYO's first ever series of concerts takes place across the UK from April to June 2022 and covers events at Milton Court Concert Hall, London (24 April 2022), St George's Bristol (15 May 2022), Lighthouse Poole (22 May 2022. Live and streaming) and Birmingham Town Hall (5 June 2022).

Applications to audition for the orchestra this year will open 1-31 March 2022 at noyo.org.uk. NOYO promotes musical excellence and diversity, working with cutting-edge composers to create exciting new music written for a wide range of musicians and instruments: both acoustic and electronic.

Its first commission, 'The Umbrella' by Liam Taylor-West won a British Composer Award in 2018.

The National Open Youth Orchestra is delivered through four regional NOYO Centres: London NOYO Centre, in partnership with Barbican and Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Bournemouth NOYO Centre, in partnership with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Bristol NOYO Centre, in partnership with Bristol Beacon, and Birmingham NOYO Centre, in partnership with Midlands Arts Centre, Services For Education and B:Music.

The National Open Youth Orchestra is a programme by Open Up Music (Registered Charity N°1167028). Open Up Music is supported using public funding by Arts Council England. The National Open Youth Orchestra is also generously supported by founding sponsor ABRSM, and trusts including Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Boshier-Hinton Foundation, The Steel Charitable Trust, The Radcliffe Trust, Borrowes Charitable Trust and The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust.

For more information, visit www.noyo.org.uk

About the Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the [Barbican](http://www.barbican.org.uk) pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over a million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and

performers are featured, and more than 300 [staff](#) work onsite. The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery The Curve, public spaces, a library, the Lakeside Terrace, [a glasshouse conservatory](#), conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, [London Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Orchestra, [BBC Symphony Orchestra](#); Associate Ensembles the [Academy of Ancient Music](#) and [Britten Sinfonia](#), Associate Producer [Serious](#), and Artistic Partner [Create](#). Our Artistic Associates include [Boy Blue](#), [Cheek by Jowl](#), Deborah Warner, [Drum Works](#) and [Michael Clark Company](#). The [Los Angeles Philharmonic](#) are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the [Australian Chamber Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court, and [Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra](#) are International Associate Ensemble.

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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 the top conservatoire in the Guardian University Guide 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.