



Welcome New Director Sarah Alexander



Dear NYO Supporter,

I am writing to you to say hello and introduce myself to you. I was appointed as Director of the NYO in May, and took over from Jonathan Vaughan in September. I have had a wonderfully warm welcome from the NYO, and I would like to thank everyone who has helped me in taking up the post. People who care deeply for the NYO have shared with me the values and traditions of the organisation, and how much it means to them. Players, parents of players, professors, staff members, governors, and members of the devoted NYO audience have impressed me immensely with the depth of their passion and loyalty for the tradition of music-making that is embodied in the NYO.

In the NYO offices in Kingswood, Bristol I found a copy of *Daring to Excel*, the story of the NYO written by its founder Ruth Railton. As some of you may have read in the last NYO Newsletter, my background is in opera. I have spent my career empowering young people from diverse backgrounds to excel in that art form. My work was informed by two fundamental beliefs. Firstly, if you take young people seriously as performers they will almost always rise to the challenge, transcending all reasonable expectations of their abilities. Secondly, professional artists have as much to learn from making work with young people as do the young people themselves. Reading *Daring to Excel*, I learned that Ruth Railton started the NYO at a time when opportunities for young people to be taken seriously as musicians were almost non-existent. She believed that by bringing the best young players together, they would flourish as musicians. More than that, she believed that young players could contribute significantly to musical life in the UK, and that professional players could be enriched by the process as much as the young players themselves.

I was more surprised than perhaps I should have been to discover that the values that motivated the creation of the NYO 60 years ago were precisely those that motivated me through 16 years work with young people, musicians, composers, writers and artists. Both values were realised spectacularly at the NYO's 2007 Prom, in an awe-inspiring performance of Shostakovich's *Leningrad Symphony*, which was played with a seriousness, commitment and emotional maturity that you would not reasonably expect from an orchestra of young players. Speaking to Mark Elder after the concert, it was clear that he and the Orchestra had been on a tremendous journey together, which resulted in the extraordinary musical journey we experienced in the audience. The Orchestra's commitment to their performance and Mark's commitment to the Orchestra embodied both the fundamental values that inspired Ruth Railton to set up the NYO 60 years ago. It is upon these same values that the orchestra will continue to thrive.

The NYO is and always has been forward-looking -- an orchestra of the future. I would like to see the NYO engaging in research and development, exploring new ways of drawing the full musical potential from young players. Our vibrant young orchestra should be attracting an equally youthful audience, so that they can share their excitement for classical music with their peers. I would like to see the NYO collaborate with organisations that excel in allied art forms, so we can make new work together that looks to the future as well as the past. I would like to see the NYO explore classical music in cross-cultural collaborations. I would like us to question how we play, where we play, and who we play for. And I would like to see the NYO explore the role of

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classical music as a means for examining the big ideas that shape our culture -- ideas that really matter to young people. These are my aspirations for the NYO. I look forward to hearing what other people who care about the Orchestra have to say, and to engaging in an on-going conversation about our future.

Many of you will have heard that we are entering a period of organisational change. In February 2008 we will be moving our offices to London. The administration is being restructured, and we are recruiting new staff to some key posts. At the same time, we are planning the launching a new-look website (<http://www.nyo.org.uk>) and I would very much welcome your feedback to the site when it goes live in the New Year.

The winter course promises to be especially exciting for two reasons. Firstly, James MacMillan will be conducting the Orchestra for the first time, in a programme of music including his own *Symphony Vigil*. In November, two of the NYO composers interviewed James. He told them that his music is inspired as much by his own spiritual commitments and his desire to open doors on thoughts and ideas as it is about music. He is looking forward to engaging the whole Orchestra in a conversation about the themes he explores in the symphony. The second reason to be excited is that the first of our two winter concerts will take place in the Roundhouse in Camden, making the NYO the first orchestra to perform in this fabulous space since it was re-opened last year.

I am very much looking forward to greeting our Orchestra at the December course, and to welcoming 70 new players to the NYO. And I very much hope that, over the coming year, I will have the opportunity to meet more of the people who will be reading this letter. The NYO is a unique organisation with a tremendous history, and I am thrilled to be entrusted with the job of guiding the organisation into the future.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Alexander
Director, NYO

NYO WINTER 2008 CONCERTS

Conductor	James MacMillan
Britten	Four Sea Interludes
Prokofiev	Romeo & Juliet (extracts from Suites 1 & 2)
James MacMillan	Symphony: Vigil

Friday 4 January, 7pm
Roundhouse, Camden, London
Box Office: 0870 389 1846
www.roundhouse.org.uk

Saturday 5 January, 7.30pm
Leeds Town Hall
Box Office: 0113 224 3801
www.leedsconcertseason.com

Free Pre Concert Events:
Music Workshop for all Ages 4pm
Talk by James MacMillan 5.30pm

Free Pre Concert Event:
Talk by Judith Blezzard 5.30pm

NB. We have arranged a special Family Price ticket offer of 4 tickets for the price of 3 for both these concerts. Please contact the relevant Box Office to take advantage of this offer.