



THE
NATIONAL
YOUTH
ORCHESTRA

TO THE BEAT



The National Youth Orchestra warmly welcomes you – whether you're a musician or a member of the audience, you'll find a part to play in this unique community.

Play your part

Teenagers

Make music a bigger part of your life with free musical opportunities.

Music Educators

From Free for Teens tickets to workshops, school takeovers to long-term partnerships, together we can help more teenagers play their part in life through music.

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As a supporter and donor you can play your part in opening the door to orchestral music for thousands of teenagers.

**There's a part
for everyone
to play!**



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TO THE BEAT

Venues

Tuesday 15 April, 7.30pm
Roundhouse, London

Part of Roundhouse 360 Festival

Friday 18 April, 7.30pm
**Bridgewater Hall,
Manchester***

ROUNDHOUSE
three sixty



The
Bridgewater
Hall

Programme

Stravinsky
Petrushka (1947 edition)

Interval (20 minutes)

Jennifer Higdon
Percussion Concerto

Bernstein
**Symphonic Dances
from West Side Story**

Alpesh Chauhan – conductor

Jordan Ashman – percussion

This performance lasts approximately 120 minutes.

*This performance is being recorded for broadcast
on BBC Radio 3 on Monday 28 April at 7.30pm.

Hello and welcome To the Beat!

I'm Jenny and I'm this year's Co-Leader. I'm so excited to welcome you to our spring concerts, **To the Beat**, and hope you leave tonight feeling inspired by what you see on stage.

Having started in my local strings group at the age of four, I feel so lucky to be able to now be playing alongside so many passionate and committed young people. The size of NYO alone is staggering, but what has always stood out to me most is its authenticity – I haven't found any other orchestras where the players are so willing to commit so fully to the music on stage, or communicate so openly between musicians as we perform. It's so special to experience the emotion of the music as a collective, and the honesty with which NYO does this is what makes it so unique.

Everything about performing is meant to move and motivate people. That's why being able to inspire my own generation through music is so important. Music brings new dimensions and perspectives to life that really affect how people interact with the world around them, and this makes it an incredibly powerful catalyst in society. Teenagers and young adults often have so much to say, and being able to use music as a tool for expression and exploration is a privilege that everyone should have access to.

I hope you enjoy the concert!

Jenny Wells

Violin, 17, *Orpington*



Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)

Petrushka (1947 version)

Part 1. The Shrovetide Fair

1. *Introduction*
(at the Shrovetide Fair)
2. *The Crowds*
3. *The Charlatan's Booth*
4. *Russian Dance*

Part 2. Petrushka's Cell

1. *Petrushka's Cell*

Part 3. The Moor's Room

1. *The Moor's Room*
2. *Dance of the Ballerina*
3. *Waltz – The Ballerina & the Moor*

Part 4. The Shrovetide Fair (Evening)

1. *The Shrove-Tide Fair*
(Near evening)
2. *Dance of the Wet Nurses*
3. *Dance of the Peasant and the Bear*
4. *Dance of the Gypsy Girls*
5. *Dance of the Coachmen and Grooms*
6. *The Masqueraders*
7. *Conclusion*
(Petrushka's Death)

Stravinsky wrote his ballet, *Petrushka* following the massive success of his first ballet, *The Firebird*. He had an idea for a story about a puppet show traditionally seen at Russian Shrovetide Fairs, very similar to the Punch and Judy shows found in the UK. Stravinsky imagined a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios (broken chords). The orchestra in turn retaliates with menacing trumpet blasts.'

In Stravinsky's tale the protagonist, Petrushka, the Moor and the Ballerina are all puppets who magically come to life, with Petrushka and the Moor, competing to impress the Ballerina. Stravinsky introduced Street dancers and a performing bear to create a theatrical and flamboyant Shrovetide Fair.

At the start of *Petrushka*, Stravinsky sets the scene with a bustling fair, with dancers carrying a musical box, played on a small keyboard instrument with tinkling bells, called a celesta. A drumroll announces the Magician who runs the puppet show, and it's then that we meet Petrushka, the Moor and the Ballerina.

Drumrolls continue to signal each scene change throughout the music. Petrushka goes on to declare his love for the Ballerina but scares her with his dancing and is laughed at by mocking clarinets. The Ballerina and Moor begin to hit it off, their themes overlapping, before we see and hear a series of dances between the characters, with tension mounting.

Until – disaster, the Moor kills Petrushka! A marching bassoon part announces the return of the Magician, who picks up Petrushka's body (horns) and shakes it (shivering strings). Muted trumpets represent Petrushka's ghost appearing and making a rude gesture at the Magician who runs away in fright.

The ballet was premiered in June 1911. The music we hear tonight is a version of the ballet rewritten by Stravinsky in 1946–1947 for a smaller orchestra. It reflects his move away from the emotionally intense Romantic style to a neoclassical style which has more of an emphasis on clarity and structure.

Jennifer Higdon (b.1962)

Percussion Concerto (2005)

American composer Jennifer Higdon played percussion in her high school concert band, but otherwise had little classical training until she went to university, where she worked incredibly hard to catch up and started writing her first compositions. She explains: “I didn’t know any basic theory, how to spell a chord, what intervals were, and I had zero keyboard skills. I basically started from the very, very beginning. Most of the people I started school with were far more advanced than I was, and I had an extraordinary amount of catching up to do.” Fast forward a few years and Higdon has now won a Pulitzer Prize for her Violin Concerto, and a Grammy Award for the Percussion Concerto which you will hear tonight.



Higdon describes the piece: “My Percussion Concerto follows the normal relationship of a dialogue between soloist and orchestra. In this work, however, there is an additional relationship with the soloist interacting extensively with the percussion section. The ability of performers has grown to such an extent that it has become possible to have sections within the orchestra interact at the same level as the soloist.”

The work’s huge range of percussion includes pitched instruments like the marimba, which has wooden bars, and the vibraphone, which has metal bars, as well as non-pitched instruments such as wood blocks, gongs and drums. The soloist almost dances across the stage to move between instruments, unleashing a full-body workout of colourful contrasts: from energetic outbursts to moments of calm and flurries of beats so quick their arms become a blur.

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

Symphonic Dances from *West Side Story* (1957, arr. 1960)

1. *Prologue*
2. *Somewhere*
3. *Scherzo*
4. *Mambo*
5. *Cha-Cha*
6. *Meeting Scene*
7. *Cool Fugue*
8. *Rumble*
9. *Finale*

Premiering in 1957, the musical *West Side Story* brought together composer Leonard Bernstein and writer Steven Sondheim who was making his Broadway debut. The result was ahead of its time. This dream team created a piece of music bursting with raw, edgy energy. For their modern retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Bernstein and Sondheim updated Shakespeare's story to be set in New York's Upper West Side. The rival families were replaced with gangs of Americans (the Jets) and Puerto Rican immigrants (the Sharks) immersed in a dangerous turf war. Sondheim's punchy, slang-filled lyrics inspired Bernstein to write music full of jazz and Latin dance influences: brash and brassy, with pulsating rhythms and heartfelt tunes.

In 1960, Bernstein created a suite of dances from the musical. A *Prologue* full of syncopation (with the emphasis on the off beat) is followed by *Somewhere*, based on a love duet for the lead characters who are on opposite sides of a feud: Tony, a Jet and Maria, a Shark. A lightly skipping *Scherzo* (a playful and vigourous musical piece) precedes the raucous rhythms of the *Mambo*, then comes a graceful *Cha-Cha* based on Tony's love song *Maria*.

After the mysterious *Meeting Scene* we hear a *Fugue* (a technique that weaves together a tune and different variations of that theme) on the song *Cool*. This builds to the *Rumble*, when the gang warfare reaches boiling point and explodes – with fatal results. Tony's life is lost, and the suite's *Finale* is one of tender heartbreak. The work ends with a subtle dissonance – a clash between notes. The story may have ended, but its message lives on, reminding us that love, not hate, is always the answer.

Meet the conductor

Alpesh Chauhan

What do you love about being a conductor?

The thing I love the most about being a conductor is being at the front of that sound – that great, fullness of sound!

What do you think is so special about the sense of connection that you get between the orchestra, the conductor and the audience during a performance?

I see the rehearsal process as laying the foundation of a building – the bricks must be aligned, and everything must feel stable as the layers are built upon each other. And then in concert comes the decoration and the colour. That excitement of making music in the moment cannot be replicated or faked to any audience.

What was your most inspiring moment as a teenage musician?

As a teenager, I was lucky to have grown up in Birmingham – while at school, I was playing in three youth orchestras per week (all for free), and during the holidays with the CBSO Youth Orchestra. This is the most inspiring thing I could have wished for – to be surrounded by music and given the opportunity to make as much music with others as possible. That was my happy space!

What excites you the most about working with The National Youth Orchestra?

The energy on stage with NYO will certainly add another dimension to this programme. Especially for the young teenage romance of Maria and Tony in West Side Story and then the playfulness and intense colour with which Stravinsky wrote his Petrushka score. I can't wait to share these pieces with NYO and see how they inspire me, and how they enjoy this wonderful repertoire together.

What is your advice for today's teenage musicians?

My advice would be to remain as curious as possible. Go to lots of concerts and listen to recordings you may not necessarily be drawn to – and always think about what you like and what you don't and why that is?

This programme has a real rhythmic energy throughout, with lots of 'dance' moments – what encourages you to get up and dance?

I wish I could write "no comment"! I can't dance and nothing would possess me to inflict that on anybody. However, what happens on the podium, stays on the podium! People often comment on my movement on stage – it's for a conductor to show exactly what they want and how and to use all available body language to convey that. So, it's sound and the specific request on sound that might make me "dance" – but reserved strictly for the podium for me!





Meet the soloist

Jordan Ashman

When you were a teenager, you were part of the NYO community – can you tell us about that experience?

Being part of NYO Inspire was inspirational, as was my time with the Orchestra itself! Being around people who had the same love for music and mindset towards it was just amazing. Playing with others who were playing at such a high standard really gave me a boost.

What excites you the most about performing with NYO?

I am so looking forward to coming back and playing this incredible concerto with such passionate musicians. To perform as a soloist with NYO at such fantastic venues is a dream come true.

What do you love about being a percussionist?

I love the versatility and diversity percussion offers, as well as the vast range of sounds that can be produced! One minute you could be quietly playing triangle, the next virtuosically playing a concerto on marimba and the next playing drum kit in a rock band! I want to demonstrate and help people understand the versatility and beauty of percussion and just how amazing it can be!

If you could share one piece of advice with teenage musicians, what would it be?

Try not to let negativity impact you too much – always focus on having a positive mindset with forward momentum. If something starts to worry you, have a break and do something different.

NYO Musicians under the Spotlight

Hanhan Qu

Flute, 15, *Guildford*

For me, NYO is a community where I am constantly inspired by my peers. The synergy we create onstage when we perform is like no other. There is such a unique buzz which is almost electric. It never fails to surprise me. Yet, offstage we continue to lift each other up. I've found a real sense of belonging that comes from being surrounded by people who are just as excited about music as I am. I believe music is a vehicle for creativity and self-expression, NYO is the safe space where we can explore who we inherently are.

Through NYO Inspire and school workshops, we directly impact school children across the country. Often entirely improvised, workshops can be anything from body percussion to cartoon sounds! It's incredibly rewarding to see people becoming more confident as they get into the flow of music making. Recently, I remember performing in school concerts, and the kids loved it. 3000 children clapping along, cheering, whooping... Seeing their faces light up as we showcased each instrument for the first time and went on an adventure through new pieces was so heartwarming.

William Ewins

Percussion, 17, *Edinburgh*

To me, NYO is all about progression, both personal and communal. I have been a member of the Orchestra for three years, and each time I return I rediscover and reimagine my musical expression in ways I previously didn't think was possible. At the same time, I learn so much about playing in both large ensembles (the incredible sound of the full orchestra still leaves me shocked every time I hear it) and in small ones, both chamber music and contemporary newly devised pieces. I love being able to communicate my love of music to my peers on such a large scale!

Our impact as a group is more than just our concert tours: by going into schools and youth centres we can bring our love of music to people who may never have had the opportunity to see a live orchestral concert. One of my favourite memories with NYO is playing at Blackpool tower to thousands of school pupils with the NYO Inspire orchestra. You could see the wonder and fascination on their faces! I hope that they went home feeling a drive to learn more about what they heard and saw that day, and asked themselves: "I wonder if one day I could do the same thing as that boy hitting the big drums at the back?"



The Orchestra of Spring 2025

STRINGS

Violin 1

Jennifer Wells

Leader

18, *Orpington* †

Seat supported by an anonymous donor

Richard Eichorst

17, *London*

Seat supported by Isabella Fulford (NYO 2016–2017)

Madeleine Jones

17, *Diss*

Noah Hacking

String Leader

17, *London* †

Seat supported by Guy Rigby

Sophie Sze

17, *Sherborne*

Seat supported by an anonymous donor

Tristan McCardel

17, *Norwich*

Seat supported by The Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust

Nirvana Che-Lai

14, *London*

Hiya Ray

18, *Cardiff*

Imogen Gray

16, *London**

Winifred Allam

14, *Guildford**

Carla Lee

16, *Walton-on-Thames**

Violin 2

Eve Ward

Principal

17, *Dartford* †

Joe Stoller

18, *Guernsey*

Seat supported in memory of Aletta du Plessis

Althaea Tang

16, *West Wickham*

Seat supported by Peter and Nina Hamburger in memory of violinist Kathleen Malet (NYO 1949–53)

Joshua Yin Zhen Tan

14, *Stratford-upon-Avon*

Malcolm Wong

16, *Glasgow*

Saanvi Reddy

String Leader

16, *Blackburn* †

Seat supported by Matthew Cain

Myla Bonneville

15, *London*

Natasha Freedman

16, *London*

Seat supported by Emma and Phil Geddes

Lucy Qua

18, *Armagh*

Seat supported by Pat Moore

Benjamin Giliker

15, *Buxton*

Holly Viner

14, *Bicester**

Viola

Rebecca O'Shea

Principal

18, *Bath* †

Seat supported by The Joyce Fletcher Charitable Trust and Rod Mullick

Rebecca Wells

16, *London*

Seat supported by an anonymous donor

Hugo Jopling

17, *London*

Joseph Crown

16, *London*

Jaye Lau

String Leader

16, *Liverpool* †

Kit Ross

15, *London*

Riana Tam

17, *Wells*

Thomas Blew

17, *Dartford*

Esther Law

18, *Wells*

Cello

Gabriel Ward

Principal

18, *London* †

Seat supported by Karen and Kim Papworth

Charlotte Shlomowitz

15, *London*

Seat supported by Irena and Peter Milloy

Daniel Ryu

15, *Windsor*

Seat supported by an anonymous donor

Lewis Tang

18, *Manchester*

Oscar Wang

18, String Leader
15, *London* †

Emily Elliott

15, *London*

Loretta Rest

18, *Brighton*

Kohana Fish

17, *Bishops Stortford**

Austin Thomas

15, *Manchester**

Gregor Bates

15, *Glasgow**

The Orchestra of Spring 2025

Double Bass

Laurence Flower
Principal
19, *London* †

Seat supported by
David Richardson
and Janet Hilton

Rohan Malhotra
14, *London*

Kevin Lee
16, *Thatcham*

Isla MacFadyen
16, *Aberdeen*

WOODWIND

Flute

Hanhan Qu
Principal
15, *Guildford*

Manni Geng
15, *Altrincham*

Zuzanna Kujawa
16, *Glasgow*

Jacob Phillips
14, *Exeter*

Oboe

Alasdair Cottee
Joint-Principal
17, *Dunbar* †

Cara Garrow
17, *Oxford*
Seat supported by
the Allam sisters

Leah Wiseman
16, *London*
Seat supported by
Tim Mason and
Vanessa Blackmore

Isabel Street
18, *Preston*
Seat supported by
Steve and Jackie Street

Clarinet

Thomas McDonnell
Principal
18, *Hertford*
Seat supported by
Professor Alastair Watson

Robin Ball
18, *Derby*

Clarice Leung
17, *Nottingham*
Seat supported by
Stephen Goldring

Jasper Yeung
18, *Wells*

Saxophone

Alex Gardner
16, *Lancaster*

Tristan Ng
18, *Bourne**

Bassoon

Marcel Cress
Principal
17, *Northwich* †
Seat supported
by Jonathan and
Elizabeth Clowes

Leo Jemison
17, *London*
Seat supported by
John Kelly

Smera Sachin
17, *Cambridge*

Katerina Vidouris
17, *Guildford*

BRASS

Horn

Georgia Paxton
Joint-Principal
17, *Altrincham* †
Seat supported by
Michael Hopkins

Polly Bishop
17, *Harpenden*
Seat supported by
Helen Burningham in
memory of Bill Salaman

Jacob Adams
17, *Penarth*

Arthur Conyers
18, *Bristol*
Seat supported
by the Guyl-Leng
Charitable Trust

Xander Quinney
17, *Oxford*
Seat supported by
Nigel Beale

Melissa Hawkings
17, *Norwich**

Trumpet

Eleanor McKenzie-Jones
Principal
18, *Tonbridge* †
Seat supported by
Ursula Jones

Christopher Gibson
18, *Rugby*

Toby Roff
17, *Sevenoaks*
Seat supported by
Nigel Long

Ruby Nunns
18, *London*

Trombone

Jack Traynor
Joint-Principal
16, *Hamilton* †

Llion Dafydd Barker
15, *Pwllglas*

Seat supported by
Paul Allam

Michael Hickinson
15, *Ballymena*

Haris Jacobs
16, *Liverpool*

Seat supported by
the Rock Solid Trust

Tuba

Isaac Giaever-Enger
Principal
18, *Newbury* †

Yevindra Meedeniya Jayasekera
14, *London**

PERCUSSION

Percussion

William Ewins
Joint-Principal
18, *Edinburgh* †

Seat supported by
Alex Graham

Kieran Chow
18, *Wells*

Nathan Corish
18, *Cardiff*

Catriona Piper
15, *Bedford**

Yuma Angius-Thomas
16, *London**

Struan Cottee
15, *Dunbar**

KEYS & HARPS

Harp

Erin Fflur Jardine
Principal
16, *Cardiff* †

Aaron Stewart
18, *London*

Keyboard

Nina Papasthati
19, *London*

Abigail Bates
17, *Glasgow*

Age as of 18 April 2025

* Residency Guest

† Leverhulme Arts Scholar.
Seat kindly supported by
The Leverhulme Trust.



Pass on the music you love

As you feel the rhythm of tonight's concert, you are experiencing the determination, hard work and commitment that every musician on the stage has channelled into their preparation for this performance. We are incredibly proud of what they have achieved in just two weeks.

There's nothing quite like seeing all of their hard work live on stage, and as part of the audience, experiencing live music. Nothing like leaving a concert hall humming your favourite piece, spirits high from the joy of the total immersion in the sounds you love. It is indescribable. And irreplaceable. As an audience member, you play a vital part in concerts – you fill the halls and create the two-way connection that is so unique to live performances.

Increasingly, young people are locked out of this joyous experience. Whether it's because finances prevent them from affording a ticket, or maybe they think orchestral music isn't 'for' them, NYO are determined to ensure that every teenager knows there is a place for them in our community – from musicians to audience members.

That's why as many of our concerts as possible have free tickets for all teenagers. We are proud to be helping to fill concert halls with the next generation of audience members, performing classical and contemporary repertoire to appeal to all – to show them that this is music that they will love, too.

You can help throw open the doors to the audiences of the future. With a £20 donation, you could help a teenager experience live music for the first time, and pass on the music that you love.

To donate, visit our website:
nyo.org.uk/donate.

“When you see people your own age playing orchestral music, or enjoying it so much, you're breaking down those barriers or misconceptions and allowing people to see *this* is what orchestral music is and *this* is why we love it so much. It's one of the things that NYO does best – it gives young people the opportunity to see other young people perform.”

Smera, Bassoon, 17, Cambridge



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The National Youth Orchestra would like to thank all the individuals, legacy donations, trusts, foundations and companies whose generosity and foresight enable us to do what we do.