



# Newsletter 2019

Music Director  
**Damian Iorio**



I usually begin a newsletter by repeating myself about how the playing standards seem to improve each year. This is not only true of the senior orchestra but also of the intermediate orchestra which is going from strength to strength. I am privileged to have Rachel Erdos as Intermediate Orchestra Director, and together with the fantastic team she has around her, she has developed a programme which is enjoyable, inclusive, fun, and gets the kids playing to an incredible standard! As the amount of applications for the intermediate orchestra has increased over the past couple of years, we had to decide whether we should disappoint a lot of applicants, or increase the intake. We didn't want to increase the numbers in one orchestra too much and risk losing the intimacy and chamber feel of the orchestra, which is central to the ethos of NYSO, so we made the big decision to create a third orchestra this year. This also allowed us to welcome another director to work together with Rachel Erdos, and it was a great pleasure to have the talented and enthusiastic violinist, conductor and teacher Alex Laing to work alongside Rachel, who will write more about this development below.

'One of the best things about NYSO was the coaching – the amazing coach took such an interest in both the viola section as a whole and each individual player that my technique and musical expression improved daily. As a string orchestra is smaller than the string section of a symphony orchestra, we each receive close attention from our coach and from Damian Iorio, our conductor. This is an amazing opportunity. Damian is inspiring and encouraging, yet expects the best from all of us. I will take his advice and expertise with me throughout my musical career/life.'

The Easter residency was held at Felsted School in Essex. As always, the senior orchestra focused mainly on sectional rehearsals. The coaching team work very hard to prepare each section separately, and I take the full rehearsals in order to help them understand the big picture. By day 5 it is usually quite clear which repertoire is ready to perform at the workshop. I also like to rehearse pieces which are not yet ready for performance to show how we work and improve in rehearsal. It is also an opportunity to explain and illustrate the music, giving parents and players more of an insight into the pieces and the composers.

Summer was spent in a new part of the country for us. Monmouth School for Girls is situated in beautiful grounds with a glorious view and has good facilities which suited us very well and gave all three orchestras the space to work. It also had a good playing field where rounders and football was played in the free time (yes, they actually get some free time!). The traditional intermediates versus seniors game was rather interesting as we have so many intermediates now!

On the programme was a wonderful arrangement of Mussorgsky's Pictures

at an Exhibition by Jacques Cohen. The rest of this virtuosic programme comprised Bridge's Suite for Strings and Britten's Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge. It was good for the orchestra to perform works of both teacher and student (Britten studied with Frank Bridge, and his Variations are a homage to his teacher). As an encore we prepared Borodin's Nocturne from his 2nd Quartet, kindly arranged by Jeff Moore.

Our first concert was in Monmouth itself, opening their annual festival, and it was good for the orchestra to perform their first concert to such an enthusiastic audience. After our great success at Lake District Summer Music last year, we had received an invitation to return again and open their festival, so the following day we made the long journey up to Ambleside. The orchestra took the long hours in the coach in their stride and once again performed to great success. The audience at the festival is an absolute joy to perform to! The third concert took us back to Wales and a return, after many years of absence, to Aberystwyth Music Fest. Again the orchestra had a long and tiring bus journey, but the upside is that they got to see a lot of



the beautiful landscape of England and Wales. Once again the orchestra played at an extremely high level and after the concert the organisers spoke with great admiration of what the musicians had achieved. All three festivals have spoken to us about returning in the future.

There was still a London concert to come, but before that we had received an invitation to appear on the BBC Radio 3 programme *In Tune* with presenter Katie Derham. This was a great honour for us, and also a sign that people are really taking notice of NYSO and what we achieve. As the studio for *In Tune* is not big enough for everyone I took a reduced group who performed some extracts from our programme. For some it was their first experience of being interviewed live on air, but they all represented NYSO fantastically! The following day we had our final performance at Kings Place, which has been our London home for a few years now. It has a great acoustic which challenges them, but when they get to grips with it they are well rewarded! Performing in such a prestigious venue is part of the valuable experience that NYSO offers.

It is important to mention, as always, the people who work tirelessly to make this all work. None of this would happen without the effort and energy given by our wonderful administrator Carol Parker. The Pastoral Team, headed by Vaughn Williams, look after everyone (coaching team and myself included!) with care and attention, helping create the special atmosphere which is so important. I am privileged to work with a coaching team that comprises some of the best and most experienced musicians in the country. And behind the scenes Anne-Marie Norman, who helps co-ordinate and organise, and the board, headed by Charles Clark, which is a bedrock of support.

Next year sees the senior orchestra returning to the oldest and one of the most important festivals in the UK – The Three Choirs Festival. The programme will include Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* and the *Concerto for String Orchestra* by Herbert Howells, who was born in Gloucestershire and is a very important composer for the festival. The rest of the programme is being negotiated as I write this, and details will be up on the website as soon as everything is agreed. It will be another exciting year, and I am looking forward to it very much!



**Alex Laing**  
Intermediary Orchestra Conductor

It has been my pleasure and privilege to work with the NYSO family this year as one of the directors of the Intermediate Orchestras.

The two residencies this year were to my mind, a huge success. The excellent coaching team worked hugely hard to pull together an excellent programme for the two age banded orchestras. The younger orchestra tackled music including Mozart, Elgar, Corelli and Rautavaara which allowed them to soak up large amounts of advice on how to approach music across different ages with the stylistic challenges that this demands. The older orchestra got to grips with Mozart too, but also with Beethoven, Schubert and Prokofiev. It was exciting and gratifying that these super musicians embraced the Prokofiev *Andante*, which, while not overtly immediately accessible quickly became interesting and then passionate in interpretation.

There were many highlights of the year, but, importantly for me was the inclusion of 2 fabulous players from South Africa,

Lindo (viola) and Sfiso (cello) who joined NYSO from the excellent ARCO programme set up by the Head of Strings at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and NYSO board member, Louise Lansdown.

It was also wonderful for me to experience the care and variety taken with a NYSO education. Musical ideas and challenges are explored not just with instruments but also with the fundamentals associated with Kodaly and Dalcroze. It was plain to see the increased senses of pitch and pulse that this gave the children (and me!) and great for me to collaborate with experts in these methods, Holger Aston and Monica Wilkinson. When you add Alexander Technique under the careful, encouraging and inspiring John Crawford, it is clear that NYSO provides a wonderful, thorough and also holistic musical education.

The concert in the summer was terrific culminating in both orchestras together on stage to perform *Libertango* by Piazzola. It was particularly good to be able to see so many young players who will undoubtedly form the core of the senior orchestra in the coming years. The future is bright.

Particular thanks from me to Rachel Erdos, who, not only negotiated the challenges of running two orchestras simultaneously while teaching me the ropes of helping to run a NYSO residency but also enthused everyone with her own infectious passion for music and education.





**Rachel Erdos**  
Intermediate Music Director

The launch of a new intermediate orchestra in 2019 has been a milestone moment for NYSO Intermediates. We had so many excellent young players audition that two balanced groups were formed and we welcomed Alex Laing to come and direct.

It was a great pleasure to work with Alex, our fabulous coaching and pastoral team and this brought a new energy to it all.

I was delighted with the musical and social success of the residencies. Although there were a larger number and larger age range of intermediate members, the way Alex and I were able to organise the sessions still gave plenty of scope for intimate chamber groups and then also the buzz of working and playing with larger forces. Truly the best of both worlds.

Alex has written about the repertoire covered by both orchestras which was varied and demanding and much enjoyed by the players I think.

Our concert in Monmouth was a great success with both groups finishing the performance together with Piazzola's Libertango.

We will continue with two groups in 2020 and I look forward to exploring even more possibilities for evolution in the NYSO intermediate orchestras!

**Charles Clark**  
Chairman, NYSO

We are proud to be one of the nationally important orchestras for young musicians, whether they go on to be professional musicians or use the skills they learn with us in other areas of activity. The ratio of coaches to students and the attention they are able to devote to them to allow their individuality to flourish is one of our strong differentiators.

I am delighted that we now have our new additional intermediate orchestra to complement our two existing orchestras. We can now benefit more young players, particularly at a stage when without the right encouragement it is too easy to stop playing. It also provides a natural progression from that stage through our other orchestras. Welcoming the students from ARCO was also a highlight. In other news Julian Lloyd Webber has graciously agreed to join our distinguished patrons Alina Ibragimova and David Takeno. Sir Mark Elder and Dr Jane Glover have stepped down after many years as our patrons. Having the endorsement and support of such great musicians is immensely important and I would like to thank them for all they have done for NYSO over so many years.

The coming year is our 25th year. We owe Viviane Ronchetti and the many others who have made NYSO what it is a great debt of gratitude. Looking forward, we are honoured to be the opening concert of the 2020 Three Choirs Festival (Tewkesbury Abbey, Saturday 25 July).

This anniversary was a timely moment for fundraising for bursaries. It is central to our ethos to welcome young players without regard to their financial means. In addition to our many Friends and other generous individuals who support us we are particularly pleased this year to thank the Angus Allnatt Charitable Foundation, The D'Oyly Carte Foundation and the Garfield Weston Foundation together with longstanding supporter John Lewis & Partners for their generosity in providing funding for future bursaries.

I also want to thank Damian, Rachel, Alex and Vaughn, together with the dedication of our coaches, pastoral team and administrators. None of NYSO's work would however be possible without the players, their talent, hard work

and supportive families and teachers. I am immensely indebted, as we all are, to Carol Parker for her infinite patience, knowledge and wisdom as NYSO's wonderful administrator. To ease the burden on Carol, Vaughn has kindly agreed to take on many of her responsibilities in relation to the organisation of the residencies for next year.



**Vaughn Williams**  
Pastoral Director

The addition of the second intermediate orchestra shows just how NYSO continues to go from strength to strength. This is something the pastoral team are immensely proud to be involved with.

The increased numbers in the orchestra inevitably brought new challenges. With typical aplomb the pastoral team took them in their stride and focussed on making the residencies enjoyable whilst fostering an environment in which all felt safe and well cared for. Moreover, we concentrated on encouraging the players to take advantage of their time off. Working so hard during the day, the value of quality downtime cannot be overstated. Rounders and football proved to be the games of choice and even saw the intermediates take on the seniors in a friendly match. These interactions are vital to building good rapport between the groups and ensure that everyone feels part of something special.

As a pastoral team we are enormously fortunate to work with such well behaved and self aware young musicians. From a senior orchestra perspective, tight travel schedules combined with maintaining such a high level of musicianship for concerts could prove to be detrimental. It is a testament to the determination and professionalism of the orchestra that this was all handled so well; they were all a true credit to the orchestra throughout. Pastoral Assistants Clara Hilger, Jennifer Begley, and Joanna Burden deserve a great deal of credit for their part in this success.

Similarly, the intermediate orchestras were a delight and it was lovely to see

'The Kodaly and Dalcroze lessons were a key part of my experience. My understanding of Solfa and of the music we were playing has deepened. By using movement I really felt the rhythm of each piece. I could visualise each action and input it into my playing. I also really enjoyed playing the pieces in small chamber groups with input from tutors on how to play together better. This has developed my listening skills and affected how I play with other people, even if it's just with a piano accompaniment. It's such a great example of how I can take the skills that I've learnt at NYSO and apply them in my musical life.'

so many new faces as well as welcoming our stalwarts back for another year. We enjoyed an extra special treat this year with the arrival of two South African students. Karen Butler and her intermediate team (too many to mention!) must take enormous kudos for creating such a secure environment more akin to family than that of staying in a school. The orchestras felt comfortable and were confident that they would be cared for in all circumstances.

I found 2019 personally extremely rewarding. I am enormously thankful to the entire pastoral team for their hard work and dedication throughout both residencies to ensure the security and wellbeing of NYSO's musicians. Happy musicians make for beautiful music could be our motto. I am looking forward to 2020 with great anticipation and have no doubt it will bring another magnificent

#### **Music Director**

Damian Iorio

#### **Intermediate Music Director**

Rachel Erdos

#### **Intermediate Conductor**

Alex Laing

#### **Founder**

Ms Viviane Ronchetti

#### **Patrons**

Julian Lloyd-Webber  
David Takeno  
Alina Ibragimova, MBE

#### **Trustees**

Charles Clark (chairman)  
John Bimson  
Louise Lansdown  
Richard Davison  
Alison Pickard  
David Woodhead

#### **Coaching Teams**

##### **Senior Orchestra 2019**

Leon Bosch  
Diana Cummings  
Ian Jewel  
Tom Martin  
Simon Smith  
Gillian Thoday

##### **Intermediate Orchestra 2019**

Holger Aston (Kodaly)  
John Crawford  
Cathy Elliott  
Louise Lansdown  
Rebecca Leyton  
Diana Mathews  
Duncan Reid  
Anita Strevens (Dalcroze)  
Daisy Vatalaro  
Celia Waterhouse  
Monica Wilkinson (Dalcroze)

#### **Pastoral Team**

Lara Agar  
Katy Allan  
Richard Barber  
Jenny Begley  
Joanna Burden  
Karen Butler  
Frances Clement  
Lydia Dobson  
Christopher Green  
Clara Hilger  
Rowena Taylor  
Vaughn Williams (Pastoral Director)

#### **Support Team**

Carol Parker - Administrator  
Jane MacArthur - Accountant  
Anne-Marie Norman - Co-ordinator of external engagements

#### **Webmaster**

Infotex

#### **NYSO would like to thank the 'Friends' of NYSO and the following organisations for their generous support of NYSO's work 2018:**

Angus Allnatt Charitable Trust  
Awards for Young Musicians  
Benslow Instrument Loan Scheme  
The Foyle Foundation  
Diana Fry  
The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust  
Future Talent  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
John Lewis & Partners  
Lord Lexden OBE  
Norsk Musikforlag AS  
The Old Enfield Charitable Trust  
Philip Bates Trust  
Queenswood School  
Viviane Ronchetti  
Tomastik-Infeld Vienna  
Friends of NYSO

NYSO is also pleased to acknowledge the generosity of a number of individual donors who have requested anonymity.

#### **Residential Venues 2019**

Felsted School, Felsted, Dunmow  
Monmouth School, Hereford Road, Monmouth

#### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2020**

##### **Easter Residencies 2020**

**Senior Orchestra 4 - 9 April**  
**Intermediate Orchestra 4 - 9 April**  
**Stamford School, Brazenose House, St Paul's Street, Bramford**

##### **Summer Residencies 2020**

**Senior 17 -25 July**  
**Intermediate 22 - 28 July**  
**Venues to be confirmed**

#### **Contacting NYSO**

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