

The Orchestra of St John's

Our Vision

The Orchestra's vision is two-fold: delivering concert programmes of the highest artistic quality, while also seeking innovative ways to share the talents of our musicians with vulnerable people, who might not otherwise have the opportunity to access and engage with classical music. Founded over 50 years ago by John Lubbock OBE, OSJ's concert programme draws an audience of almost 8,000 people per year. Our concert venues include SJE Arts, Oxford and Dorchester Abbey. We present world-class soloists, such as Steven Isserlis and Tamsin Little, alongside young emerging professional soloists. We pride ourselves on being a diverse and inclusive orchestra, nurturing new talent and celebrating renowned musicians. OSJ also has a rich history of commissioning and performing new works by young composers. Through our community outreach programme, which has been supported by Arts Council England, we aim to make classical music accessible to everyone, especially the vulnerable in our community.



'...the sheer quality of playing and the sensitivity of the accompaniment was every singer's dream.'
Sir Simon Rattle

*Left: OSJ performance with Sheku Kanneh-Mason
(BBC Young Musician of the Year 2016)*

OSJ in the Community

OSJ's community outreach programme engages with disadvantaged people in the community, who might not otherwise have access to live performances of classical music. John Lubbock, OSJ's Founder and Director, was awarded his OBE in 2015 for his charitable work. A short video of our activity during the past year can be viewed here: www.osj.org.uk/2020-season-video/

- Each year OSJ musicians deliver **Music for Autism** workshops for over 6,000 disadvantaged young people attending special educational needs schools throughout the country
- Our **Serenading** series of performances engages with hundreds of vulnerable mental health patients and staff in local NHS hospital wards in Oxford (launched in 2020 in response to COVID-19)
- OSJ's **Young Artists** scheme supports over 50 young musicians per year, headhunting talent from music colleges providing mentoring, championing and a platform for solo opportunities

Our musicians have been working with disadvantaged SEN young people with complex needs, delivering **Music for Autism** workshops in special educational needs schools for decades. Our Music

for Autism workshops are unique, we have developed a wide network of school partners across the country. Our SEN partners have seen a dramatic drop in funds and specialist staff for music provision, OSJ provides workshops free of charge. In response to COVID-19 restrictions we expanded our delivery to offer remote **Music for Autism** workshops, we also created a virtual library resource for SEN schools of pre-recorded session videos.

...I have never before witnessed something that benefitted each individual child no matter how locked into their own worlds. Alice Langtree, Special Needs Consultant

...I applaud the work of this charity for not only focusing on young children with autism, but also aiming to improve the lives of young adults with autism... Cherie Blair



Our **Serenading** series of outdoor performances engage with vulnerable mental health patients and staff in local NHS hospital wards. Serenading was launched in 2020 responding to the urgent need for mental health support services working to increase levels of wellbeing within the community during the pandemic. Due to the cancellation of performances and the closure of venues and shielding periods for vulnerable people, many haven't had the opportunity to attend live performances of classical music. Working with Oxford Hospitals Trust and Oxfordshire Mental Health Trust, our musicians have been delivering performances for mental health patients. Performing in communal spaces surrounding the hospital wards, music floats into open doorways and windows to be enjoyed by all. Musicians perform to patients in wards specialising in: Psychiatric care, Adult Mental Illness and Learning Disabilities. Many of these patients have been shielding or are in isolation due to complex health needs.



OSJ is committed to supporting young musicians and nurturing their talent by mentoring, championing and providing a platform for emerging new talent. Our **Young Artists** scheme provides the opportunity for young musicians to flourish as soloists and conductors in the early stages of their careers, irrespective of background. Barriers to professional progress have increased dramatically for the next generation of musicians. The cancellation of live performances, due to venue

closure during the pandemic, led to a sharp decline in opportunities for professional musicians to perform. Many musicians are self-employed and have experienced a reduction in income: '... music and entertainment industries have also been drastically affected, with an estimated 30-50% of the live music industry's workforce facing unemployment, and 90% of grassroots music venues under threat of closure ([Let The Music Play, UK Music](#))'.¹

"That there is an orchestra of the calibre of OSJ willing to take the risk of sharing its privileged platform with raw talent under development is inspiring and gratifying" Jo Cole, Head of Strings, the Royal Academy of Music, London

COVID-19 Response

At the heart of our work is the belief that music can be hugely beneficial for improving mental health: decreasing feelings of isolation and increasing levels of wellbeing. Despite the current COVID-19 crisis we have been able to continue to share the expertise and talents of OSJ musicians with the community. The COVID-19 crisis highlights how instrumental the arts are to tackling loneliness and



isolation in society. The recent **Orchestras in Healthcare Report**, 2021.... 'highlights the vital role they (orchestras) can play in alleviating some of the significant mental and physical health issues connected to COVID-19', Dr Darren Henley OBE, Chief Executive, Arts Council England.ⁱⁱ OSJ's work during this time responds to the increasingly urgent need for mental health support services working to increase levels of wellbeing within the community.

We fully appreciate you every week and enjoy the different instruments that you all play. Without fail every Wednesday one of our guys ask are the music people coming today. Thank you all once again you are making a big difference and this difficult time. Please continue with your great work. Kathy McKee and everyone at Evenlode (Oxford Health)

Support Us

As a charity we rely on the philanthropic support of grantmakers and individuals to deliver our programme free of charge. OSJ is a small organisation making a big impact, engaging thousands of disadvantaged people each year with the joy of classical music. As a charity we need to raise over **£100,000 per year** from grantmakers and individuals to continue our outreach work. Our concert ticket income, prior to the pandemic, accounted for less than 10% of our total annual operating costs. We have a skeletal staff structure and minimal overheads. Due to the cancellation of our concert series during the pandemic, and related fundraising events, we have been forced to drawdown on vital reserves to continue our work in the community over the past year.

How to Give

Bank transfer: Orchestra of St John's Ltd Metro Bank Sort code: 23-05-80 Acc. No: 30657004

Online via CAF Donate: www.osj.org.uk/how-to-support-osj

Cheque/ CAF voucher: payable to The Orchestra of St John's

Contact Simon Payne, General Administrator for further information:

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ⁱ <https://youthmusic.org.uk/unlocked-youth-music-report>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.orchestraslive.org.uk/news/orchestras-in-healthcare-report-launch>