

## Music – the ultimate recession buster

By Robin Osterley, Chief Executive, Making Music

It is hard to escape the doom and despondency being generated by large sections of the media about the economy. The arts press is no different, with gloomy forecasts ranging from a huge decline in sponsorship, to the demise of many arts organisations due to shrinking audiences. So what of amateur music-making?

At Making Music we field, on average, some 300 enquiries per week. At the time of writing not one single enquiry has been as a result, directly or indirectly, of the economic downturn. Our members are getting on with the business of putting on events, providing musical opportunities for young people and adults, and rehearsing their members. And attracting new members too – see page 4.

A moment's thought will discover why. Unlike the professional sector, amateur groups rarely rely extensively on external funding – primarily because they have a regular and guaranteed source of income (membership subscriptions) and much lower costs. Although many do fundraise, it is often for special events or discretionary activities, so difficult times are more likely to cause a cutback in their activities than threaten their very existence.

This is hardly a cause for rejoicing, but it offers some reassurance that the voluntary music sector is more

resilient than its professional counterpart in times of economic trouble.

And there are plenty of other causes for rejoicing. Performing and listening to amateur music is one of the least expensive of hobbies. Typically our members charge around £100 per annum for subscriptions, although this varies widely according to type, size and geographic location. Taking this as an average, participants pay around £2.50 per week for a 40-rehearsal season. To attend an amateur music concert costs as little as £10, often less. Some interesting comparisons:

- A pint of beer and a glass of wine per week: £5
- A ticket to a local cinema: £6
- A ticket to see Stevenage Borough at home: £12
- A meal out including half a bottle of wine: minimum of £20
- An average ticket to *The Lion King*: £70

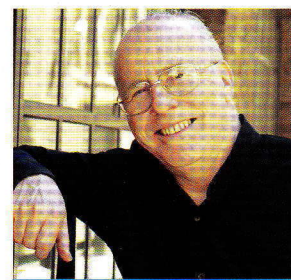
So it is really a recession-busting thing to do. And think of all the additional benefits: meeting new people, having exciting opportunities to perform or listen to great music, learning new skills, and pursuing a common goal. Research shows that musical activity is good for you – participating in music is surely one of the best ways to alleviate the stress of everyday life.

So when economic times are tough – do more music!



Chris Redgrave

## Highlights



Peter Broadbent

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Director of Conducting Courses at the Association of British Choral Directors offers advice for choral conductors



Music and the mind

### Pages 8 and 9

Alexandra Lamont, Senior Lecturer in Music Psychology, explores the impact of music on our emotions



Chi-chi Nwanoku

### Page 11

Principal double bassist with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment on diversity in our orchestras

## What gets my goat: tired old stereotypes

What gets my goat is the way we pride ourselves on progress and communication across the arts, yet maintain a wary division, and block real interaction because of the same old fears we've harboured forever. Progress in communications technology is astounding but in a way has driven human interaction further apart. Now we've even more excuses not to look each other in the eye, while we're joined at the hip to our mobile phones and laptops.

On the one hand, there's still a reserve and narrow-mindedness lurking amongst some audiences and even journalists who opt to hang on to old stereotypes. On the other hand, I was amazed to hear comments from some of my esteemed black colleagues recently, giving oxygen to a tired old argument that their heritage is the reason they aren't further up the career ladder. Since the election of the new US President, perhaps the word I should use isn't 'amazed', but 'obamazed!'

Both sides share responsibility and could benefit from listening to each other with fresh ears and paying more heed to content rather than how we each look.

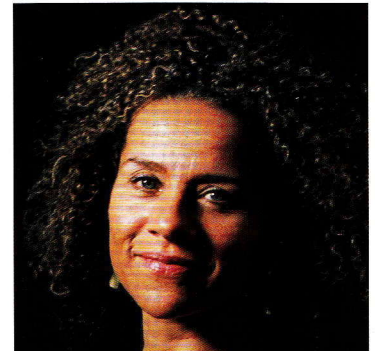
Is it still the case that a person of colour needs to prove themselves that much more in certain fields to their mainly white audiences in order to gain approval? I put it down to expectation, and built-in preconceptions of how and who is qualified to play classical music.

We all have to deal with these hidebound stereotypes, of course, and not just to do with colour. During my student days at the Royal Academy of Music,

one of my tutors told my parents I'd never get any work in the profession, because I played a 'man's' instrument! If I'd taken any notice of his bigoted advice I wouldn't be sitting here writing this. Not that I could ever compare myself to Barack Obama, but I've always believed in his wonderful, purposeful, optimistic rallying cry: 'YES, YOU CAN!'

Something amazing just happened in America. Obama's election is something we should all take pride and strength in (whatever our colour), and take to our hearts, wiping away issues of colour being an obstacle to success. No more assumptions of who can or can't play classical music, and no more whingeing about lack of opportunity.

Obama has proved 'You Can'. I think those in any doubt will now be less keen to stand up and claim that 'they couldn't!'



By Chi-chi Nwanoku, principal double bass at the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment

## A brief history of black classical musicians

By Vanessa McClune, Development Manager, Making Music

I arrived as a new member of the Making Music team earlier this year, and was quite green in my knowledge of classical music, even though I was familiar with the famous tunes one would hum along to during all-night revision sessions. My love of reggae, rhythm and blues, rare groove and most music with a heavy, foot-stomping bassline seemed a far cry from the western classical tradition popular with many of our choirs, orchestras and promoters. I knew a little about how black people were involved in the classical music scene today because I'd been to a few gigs and seen them perform, but I was intrigued to find out about their contribution throughout history. Amongst others, I discovered two very high-profile musicians, one of the Tudor period and one of the Victorian period, and I wanted to share some interesting facts about them.

### John Blanke (15th - 16th Century)

- A royal trumpeter for Henry VII and Henry VIII
- Paid 8d a day
- One of six trumpeters called to play at a two-day tournament celebrating the birth of a son to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon in 1511
- His image can be found on the 60-foot Westminster Tournament Roll

### Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)

- Born in Holborn, London
- Grew up in Croydon
- Educated at the Royal College of Music
- Entered the Three Choirs Festival, Gloucester in 1898
- Conductor with the Handel Society of London
- Professor of Composition at Trinity College of Music
- Has two schools named after him in the USA



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, dubbed the 'African Mahler'

## YouTube Symphony Orchestra

If you've never visited YouTube, then now is the time. The YouTube Symphony Orchestra is inviting amateur and professional musicians from around the world to audition! Video entries will be combined in the first ever collaborative online orchestra. A panel of musical experts from the LSO and Berlin Philharmonic, amongst others, will select the semi-finalists leaving the 100m-strong YouTube Community to select the best to perform at New York City's Carnegie Hall in April 2009. If you fancy performing alongside your heroes via cyberspace, just pick up your instrument, turn on the computer and get playing!

For help and further information visit [www.youtube.com/symphony](http://www.youtube.com/symphony)