



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.

## Supporters

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

Monday 14 April, 7.30pm  
**Birmingham Town Hall**

Wednesday 16 April, 7pm  
**Sheffield City Hall**

## Programme

Stravinsky  
**Petrushka (1947 edition)**

Interval (20 minutes)

Jennifer Higdon  
**Percussion Concerto**

Bernstein  
**Symphonic Dances  
from West Side Story**

Paolo Bortolameolli –  
conductor

Jordan Ashman –  
percussion

**B:Music**  
**Town Hall**



**Sheffield City Hall**

This performance will last  
approximately 120 minutes.

# Hello and welcome To the Beat!

Music has been a huge part of my life from the age of seven. I remember performing *Pirates of the Caribbean* to my classmates in primary school, it was my first ever solo, and to this day, the memory is still with me. Playing the violin allows me to express emotions that I would normally struggle to put into words. It brings out a different, more creative side to me. It's opened doors for me to be a part of a new community, and form new friendships.



It's been difficult to find musical opportunities in my local area so I've had to look further afield to find these. Joining the NYO community has been an incredible experience. It's inspiring to be surrounded by so many talented young musicians who share the same passion and energy for orchestral music as I do. It's shown me what we are all capable of when we work together. I really believe that orchestral music has the power to move people, spark emotions and bring communities together by all playing as one regardless of our backgrounds.

Through the exciting music we'll perform for you this evening I hope we're able to inspire you, our audience, and help teenagers discover the magic of live orchestral music. Maybe we'll inspire someone in the audience today to pick up an instrument for the first time.

Music is for everyone and it should be accessible for all young people. I hope to inspire other young people to embark on their own musical journeys by playing my part in workshops, schools concerts and side-by-side performances with other musicians. By sharing our passion for music, I hope we can continue to inspire our generation, connect with new audiences and shape the future of music for the better.

I hope you enjoy the concert!

**Yunus Eshekh-Alonso**  
Violin, 17, *Bexhill-on-Sea*

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 vigorous 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

# Paolo Bortolameoli

### **What do you love about being a conductor?**

I'm the happiest man alive every time I'm in a concert hall. Conducting is a journey, not an endpoint. Every time I conduct a piece I have conducted before I learn something new and different about the piece and myself. I used to say, "How do I conduct that piece?" now I say, "Why do I conduct it?" For conductors, it's all about understanding the dynamic of creating an interpretation with others. It is not about the gesture; it's about inspiring and connecting with the orchestra.

### **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?**

Conducting an orchestra means being part of a collaborative human process in the pursuit of moments of beauty. Music is an integral part of who we are – an inducer of emotions, a

universal language, a daily companion, an abstract force that shapes our identity as individuals, and a longing for belonging to a community. My conducting, therefore, reflects my unmitigated enthusiasm for the art form. It is full of vitality and life, focused on expanding the reach of classical music to new audiences.

### **What was your most inspiring moment as a teenage musician?**

There are plenty, but the one I treasure the most happened when I was 14 as I stood in front of an orchestra for the very first time in my life. It was the National Symphony of my country! Why? Because I was part of a family concert and I was picked among several kids who wanted to live the experience. That moment changed my perception about being a conductor. I dreamt about that moment from that day on, and I knew I absolutely wanted to be a conductor.

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

The word YOUTH. The energy you get from a youth orchestra is something so special. So unique. You can feel their special excitement about everything. About the experience, the repertoire, the building friendships that might last forever.

I'm looking forward to working with them to discover their talent and add to this celebration of music through the lens of youthful joy!

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

Music is an unavoidable extension of our will to communicate with others. So is dance. Both are siblings. You can't play well without feeling the inner dance. You can't dance well without music. So yes, let's all celebrate this happy partnership together!







## 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

## **Michelle Huang**

Keyboard, 16, *Edinburgh*

Being a member of the Orchestra is like being a part of one big family. It feels incredibly empowering to know I am part of a community that come together with the same passion and enthusiasm to bring a piece of music to life, as me. Everyone is extremely supportive and committed to their work which gives me self-confidence and motivates me to work hard and push myself outside my comfort zone. Most of all, NYO always reminds me why I love music, especially in times when the stress and technical difficulties get in the way.

Orchestral music is able to conjure up different emotions that words can't describe and it's important to me that I share this feeling with other young people. Through projects like NYO Open and NYO Local, I hope to inspire people to give music a go and boost their self-confidence. The door is always open at NYO, and we want to show people that anyone can do music. By providing young people with a sense of community and support, I hope it can ignite a love of classical music in others in my generation.

## **Max Manuel**

Percussion, 16, *Risca*

What is not to love about hitting four big drums and creating a wonderful sound? I love playing timpani and percussion, but I also love being a part of the NYO community – playing with other people who are just as passionate as me about music.

But more than that, it's important to me to share the power of orchestral music and its ability to enrich lives, open doors to new opportunities and encourage creative expression. Recently I played my part in an NYO side-by-side project, where we worked with local musicians in Coventry. It wasn't just about helping to improve musical skills, but also about building teamwork and fostering connections, which really highlights the power of music in bringing people together. To have been able to act as a role model at only 16 years old, went beyond teaching musical technique, it was about offering encouragement, showing younger musicians what it means to be dedicated to music. Being able to share my experiences, and seeing potential in others deepened my appreciation of the importance of mentorship and leadership. It's humbling and motivating to play apart in the musical journeys of other musicians.



# The Orchestra of Spring 2025

## STRINGS

### Violin 1

**Peter Ryan**

Leader  
17, *Dublin* †

**Joe Netley**

18, *Canterbury*

Seat supported by  
Michael Twaddle

**Zachary Bacon**

**Darwin**

18, *London*

**Yunus****Eshekh-Alonso**

17, *Bexhill-on-Sea*

**Justin Chan**

19, *Manchester*

**Dora Daisy Bottrill**

17, *London*

Seat supported by  
Rosemary Cahill

**James Uttley**

String Leader

16, *Bingley* †

**Rebecca Nicolas**

18, *Bushey*

Seat supported  
by the Guyll-Leng  
Charitable Trust

**Hugo Dong**

15, *London*

**Sasha Branch**

15, *London*\*

**Natalie Fletcher**

15, *Prestwood*\*

### Violin 2

**Finn Kjaergaard**

Principal  
18, *London* †

**Lana Jackson**

17, *Liverpool*

Seat supported by  
Venetia Jennings

**Jennifer Mynott**

14, *Rugby*

Seat supported by  
The Reynolds Foundation  
and by John and Margaret  
Richards in memory of  
Elsbeth Gibb Webb and  
Josephine Richards

**Frederick Wilson**

16, *Altrincham*

**Penelope****Boisseau-Hardman**

18, *Newcastle*

*Upon Tyne*

Seat supported by the  
Guyll-Leng Charitable  
Trust

**Laura Maria****Gutierrez Muurisepp**

18, *London*

**Dan Robertson**

17, *London*

**Esme Greenwood**

14, *Sheffield*

Seat supported by an  
anonymous donor

**Maria Nikolaeva**

17, *Sheffield*\*

**Holly Clark**

17, *York*\*

### Viola

**Jessica Elliott**

Principal  
17, *London*

Seat supported by  
Nick Haycock in memory  
of Norah Williams

**Erin Croke**

16, *Rochdale*

**Hannah Tsui**

15, *London*

**Annabel****Cullington-Doss**

18, *Southampton*

**Carine Tsz Ying Ko**

15, *York*

**Imani Soren-Fahy**

16, *Rossendale*

**Georgie Emmanuel**

16, *Thame*\*

**Victoria Stolte**

16, *Truro*\*

**Tiffany Rodas**

19, *London*\*

### Cello

**Ella Harrison**

Principal  
18, *Harpenden* †

Seat supported by  
David Dutton and  
Mave Turner and The  
Reynolds Foundation

**Michael Francis**

18, *London*

Seat supported  
by Mark Ford and  
Stephen Metcalfe

**Jamie Zweimueller**

16, *London*

Seat supported by  
Mary Iliff

**Marharyta Dorosh**

17, *Winchester*

**Chloe Dong**

String Leader

18, *London* †

**Hayden You**

14, *Cambridge*

**Kalli Ziegler**

16, *London*

Seat supported by  
Ian and Helen Hart

**Louis Delstanche**

18, *Whitley Bay*

**Oliver Pearce**

15, *Old Colwyn*

**Anna Wilson**

15, *London*

Seat supported in  
memory of Paul Morgan

# The Orchestra of Spring 2025

## Double Bass

### Ellen Goodyer

Principal  
18, *Chesham* †

Seat supported by  
Simon Carrington  
and Alastair Hume

### Callum Campbell

15, *Glasgow*

Seat supported by  
Drs Charles and  
Jacqueline Ross in  
memory of Alex Ross

### Emilie Curtin

18, *Saffron Walden*

Seat supported by  
Drs Charles and  
Jacqueline Ross in  
memory of Alex Ross

### Prince Malachi

### David Nwoke

17, *London*

Seat supported by  
Anthony Albert

### Eduard Marcu

17, *London*

### Izzy Northcott

17, *Wells*

Seat supported by  
Ms Wyn Hart in memory  
of Gerald Brinnen

## WOODWIND

## Flute

### Isaac Skey

Principal  
17, *Haywards Heath* †

Seat supported by  
Graham Carter

### Emme Hensel

16, *Romsey*

Seat supported in  
memory of Ian Senior

### Aurora Margiotta

18, *Bonnyrigg*\*

### Natalie Worsley

15, *St Albans*\*

## Oboe

### Guadalupe Lowe

Joint Principal  
17, *London* †

### Esther Kallow

17, *Larbert*

### Abby Turnbull

18, *Medstead*

### Vinchy Ho

17, *Manchester*\*

## Clarinet

### Alicia Li-Yan-Hui

Principal  
17, *Cambridge* †

Seat supported by an  
anonymous donor

### Nina Linn

16, *Rochester*

Seat supported by  
Faith Guthrie

### Thomas Young

18, *Canterbury*

### Mark Pearce

18, *Ashted*\*

## Saxophone

### Emily Barron

18, *Lochwinnoch*

### Charlie Lambert

18, *New Mills*

## Bassoon

### Max Docherty

Principal  
17, *Glasgow*

Seat supported by  
Judith Line

### Megan Belshaw

18, *Reading*

Seat supported by  
Michael Waldman

### Ella Coleman

18, *Sandbach*

Seat supported in loving  
memory of bassoonist  
Edward Lyons

### Alice Mackenzie

16, *Basingstoke*

## BRASS

## Horn

### Claire Marsden

Joint-Principal  
18, *York* †

Seat supported by Brian  
Turnbull

### Emma Sandford

16, *London*

### George Brady

17, *Lauder*

### Conrad Thorndike

17, *Pontyclun*

### Robyn

### Verney-Kershaw

18, *Chesham*

### Joey Walker

16, *Staines-Upon-  
Thames*\*

## Trumpet

### Carys Wood

Principal  
17, *Saundersfoot*

Seat supported by  
the Gyll-Leng  
Charitable Trust

### Cole Craggs

15, *Wells*

Seat supported by  
The Ayudar Foundation

### Leo Stemp

17, *Bacup*

### Anna Ross-Bell

16, *London*

Seat supported by  
The Marsden Family

## Trombone

**Morgan Bland**  
Joint-Principal  
17, *Markfield* †

Seat supported by  
the Rock Solid Trust

**Tobias Calvert**  
16, *South Cave*

Seat supported by  
Juliet Maxey in memory  
of Robert Maxey

**Mercutio  
Silmon-Clyde**  
16, *London*

**Nye Bayley**  
15, *Winchester*

## Tuba

**Benedict Braddock**  
18, *Uppingham*

**Daniel Pryce**  
15, *London*

Seat supported by  
Anthony Albert

## PERCUSSION

### Percussion

**Charlie Shortt**  
Joint-Principal  
17, *Craigavon* †

Seat supported by  
John and Diana de  
la Cour in memory  
of Betty Ashcroft

**Jeffrey Cheung**  
18, *London*

**Max Manuel**  
16, *Risca*

**Lily Phanos**  
18, *Edinburgh*

**Gabriel Payne**  
15, *Manchester\**

**Sam Goldman**  
15, *London\**

## KEYS & HARPS

### Harp

**Olivia Clark**  
16, *Reading*

**Kylia Tsz-Yam Pai**  
16, *Nottingham*

### Keyboard

**Rachel Zhang**  
17, *London*

**Michelle Huang**  
17, *Edinburgh*

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](https://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



The National Youth Orchestra  
10 Great Turnstile  
London WC1V 7JU

info@nyo.org.uk  
020 7189 8100  
nyo.org.uk



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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.