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The National Youth Jazz Orchestra launches the *NYJO Jazz Exchange*: Young musicians to take charge of their artistic voice

Today NYJO announces the most exciting development in its 54-year history: **the NYJO Jazz Exchange**, a two-year national project encouraging young professional musicians to take charge of their artistic voice.

For the first time, NYJO's national professional programme will reach those seeking alternatives to the traditional jazz orchestra format, through the creation of a new ensemble.

Launching in January 2020, the NYJO Jazz Exchange will empower ten musicians to identify their creative needs and drive their own professional careers. They will be supported by world-class mentorship, regular rehearsals, paid performances and masterclasses.

Recruitment will welcome both nominated and self-nominated applicants, with particular focus on regions outside London. NYJO will work closely with the jazz community to identify suitable applicants.

The first ensemble will be coached by award-winning instrumentalist, Orphy Robinson MBE. Orphy works in a variety of forms including jazz, free improvisation and funk, and has a long-standing association with classical violinist Nigel Kennedy. Orphy said:

"It is a privilege to be leading the NYJO Jazz Exchange. This exciting new project will provide progressive professional opportunities to those who don't identify with traditional musical education routes. As a young player, I would have benefited enormously from this scheme. The jazz scene is constantly changing, and it's important that NYJO does too."

The NYJO Jazz Exchange is jointly funded by Arts Council England and the Peter Sowerby Foundation.

Joyce Wilson, London Area Director at Arts Council England said:

"We are pleased to support the National Youth Jazz Orchestra as it develops the careers of outstanding emerging professionals. Supporting musicians by providing space and resources within a flexible framework, encouraging creative risk-taking and valuing young artists' voices and ideas is an important investment the future health of the jazz community."

David Aspinall, Chair of Trustees at the Peter Sowerby Foundation said:

"This grant for the National Youth Jazz Orchestra builds on a successful round of activity supported by the Peter Sowerby Foundation for young people in Yorkshire. We look forward to seeing the talent and potential that it uncovers for the future benefit of jazz development nationwide."

Ends



Notes to editors

For images and logos, please download from the [NYJO Jazz Exchange Dropbox](#).

For more information about the project, and interview requests with Orphy Robinson, please contact **Grace Owen, Development and Communications Manager, NYJO**; 020 7494 1733, grace@nyjo.org.uk.

About the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (NYJO)

Since its founding in 1965, The National Youth Jazz Orchestra (NYJO) has grown from one jazz orchestra to a multi-faceted organisation working in jazz education at all levels. Alumni include Guy Barker, Laura Jurd, and Amy Winehouse. NYJO works in partnership with over 90 music education organisations to level the playing field in jazz education, creating and supporting infrastructure in cold spots so that every young person can reach their potential in jazz, no matter their background or postcode. www.nyjo.org.uk.

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development body for arts and culture across England, working to enrich people's lives. We support a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to visual art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better. Between 2018 and 2022, we will invest £1.45 billion of public money from government and an estimated £860 million from the National Lottery to help create these experiences for as many people as possible across the country. www.artscouncil.org.uk.

About the Peter Sowerby Foundation

Peter Sowerby Foundation was established in 2011 to distribute the personal wealth of Dr Peter Sowerby through grants to organisations that meet his charitable objectives and those of his late wife, Ann. The Foundation awards grants in its two key areas of interest, Breakthroughs in Healthcare (including terminal illness & hospices and end of life care) and Good Causes (including community, environment & conservation, education and arts). www.petersowerbyfoundation.com.



Q&A

Q: How will the NYJO Jazz Exchange recruitment process work?

A: Applications will be open to professional musicians nationwide, who are aged 23 or below on 1 January 2020. NYJO will seek recommendations from the national jazz community for suitable applicants. A panel of experts will assess all nominations on individual merit. Further details of the application process will be available on the NYJO website in due course.

Q: What instruments will be in the creative ensemble?

A: The instrumentation of the ensemble is not pre-determined, unlike NYJO's existing 24-piece jazz orchestra. The panel will choose ten musicians based on talent and potential, rather than the instrument they specialise in or prior educational experiences.

Q: How does this project differ from the existing jazz orchestra?

A: The NYJO Jazz Exchange will operate alongside to the existing jazz orchestra. The new ensemble will take ownership of their progression and direction, whilst collaborating with the existing orchestra on appropriate projects.