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FREE *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* App brings Britten's vision of inspiring children to the digital generation

FREE download: [Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra app](#) : 1 July 2013

Online: britten100.org : September 2013

Benjamin Britten's vision of introducing children to classical music by using the mass media of the day began in 1946 with a film featuring what became his most famous work, *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. The Britten–Pears Foundation now brings that pioneering idea to the digital age with a creative and fun iPad App.

Developed in partnership with the Royal Northern College of Music and supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, the ***Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra by Benjamin Britten*** App is designed to introduce a new generation to the orchestra and to the music of Benjamin Britten as part of the global celebrations of the composer's centenary in 2013.

Featuring specially-commissioned illustrations by award-winning artist **Sara Fanelli**, a specially-recorded complete performance of the *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* from **Sir Mark Elder** and the **Royal Northern College of Music Symphony Orchestra**, the app includes creative games, a chance to create music, aural quizzes, information about Britten's life and the genesis of the work, archive photographs, a copy of pages from Britten's original manuscript, an interactive score, and unprecedented insight into orchestral instruments and their players. There's even a light-hearted personality quiz which matches users to instruments of the orchestra.

Richard Jarman, Director of the Britten–Pears Foundation, says:

"In 1946 Britten was in the vanguard of music education with the film Instruments of the Orchestra, which used the most modern technology of the day to introduce children to the orchestra. We started by asking how Britten would have done this if he were alive today and could use our modern technologies. Our answer has been to create an App that will give children and families lots of fun in exploring the orchestra and its instruments. In doing this we ourselves have had lots of fun working with the enthusiastic students of the RNCM and with the wonderful illustrator Sara Fanelli. We hope the result will draw children into Britten's world."

Helen Lax, Regional Director, East, Arts Council England, says:

"It is fantastic to see digital technology being used so effectively to bring Benjamin Britten's work to life for new, younger audiences. This is a strong example of how digital technology, which provides an interactive way for audiences to engage with the arts, can make this happen."

The App is a key part of the British Library exhibition *Poetry in Sound: The Music of Benjamin Britten (1913 – 1976)*, which runs until 15 September in The Folio Society Gallery. The exhibition – which puts the manuscript of Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* on public display for the first time – explores the poetic and literary influences on Britten's distinctive musical sound world, including his creative collaboration with W H Auden and his settings of texts by such authors as William Blake, Wilfred Owen, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and William Shakespeare. Alongside the App, the exhibition features manuscripts of some of Britten's most celebrated compositions, photographs, concert programmes, and hitherto unpublished recordings of his music.

The App is available FREE at <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/young-persons-guide-to-orchestra/id665019589?mt=8>

A fully-interactive version will become available on the Britten 100 website, www.britten100.org, ensuring that children, families, schools and music-lovers have easy access to it from September 2013.

Further information and pictures from Victoria Bevan at Albion Media

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Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS:

App Content:

- **Information on Benjamin Britten's life** and the genesis of the work illustrated with archive photographs, recordings and manuscripts (including childhood works by Britten, pages from the original sketch of *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* and an early copy of the Purcell tune that Britten uses as the theme).
- **A new recording** of *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, multi-tracked so that the material can be used with the interactive score, the creative elements and the quizzes. This recording, conducted by Sir Mark Elder and produced by composer Colin Matthews, will be shared world-wide through the app and associated website. The complete recording will be available on all platforms.
- **An interactive score** gives users a chance to enjoy the patterns of the musical notation in relation to the sounds they are hearing, even if they do not yet read music. There are options of either watching a video of the orchestra or reading the narration.
- **Discover the instruments** and **Meet the Players** section. Interactive interviews with some of the inspiring student players that took part in the recording, who talk about themselves and their instruments.
- **An Aural Quiz**, with carefully devised levels, helps participants become familiar with the instruments of the orchestra and score, and develops their listening skills.
- **Personality Quiz**. An enjoyable way to introduce the instruments by matching them to users' personalities.
- **Be the Composer; Fugue and Variation Games**. By using elements from the score, users are able to make up their own compositions.

In developing and producing this app the Britten–Pears Foundation worked closely in partnership with the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM). The project provided a unique opportunity for RNCM students to input their creative ideas and performance expertise into the design of this new app. They worked closely with participants from local schools and colleges in devising, piloting and testing the ideas that make up the content of the app. Over 350 children from schools and colleges across Manchester participated in an open rehearsal with the RNCM Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Mark Elder. The orchestra then performed the work in front of a capacity audience before recording it. For many children this was the first time they had experienced the thrill of a live orchestral concert.

The App was developed by **AVCO**, a digital arts and technology company which has worked at the leading edge of interactive audio games and tools since 1997. AVCO has developed numerous games, websites and sound tools for BBC Radio3, BBC Innovations, BBC Education, The London Sinfonietta and NMC Recordings. AVCO also has a long-standing reputation in the visual arts having developed website and digital artworks for many high profile artists.

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Britten–Pears Foundation (BPF) promotes worldwide the music and legacy of Benjamin Britten and his work with singer Peter Pears, and is based at the home they shared, The Red House in Aldeburgh. It aims to develop his vision and inspire new audiences by: preserving, and encouraging engagement with the heritage of The Red House and its collections for future generations; working with young people to encourage their interest in Britten and their regional culture; developing relationships with the local community in Aldeburgh and the East of England, supporting the cultural life of the area; encouraging performances and better understanding of Britten’s music throughout the world; supporting the commissioning, performing and recording of new British music. BPF is at the heart of Britten 100, the widest ever global celebration of a British composer.

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FREE download: [itunes.apple.com/app /young...britten](https://itunes.apple.com/app/young...britten): 26 June 2013

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