

Mr Darren Henley
Managing Director,
Classic FM

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State
for Education

Mr Ed Vaizey MP
Minister for State for
Culture and Creative
Industries

9 February 2011

An open letter

Dear Mr Henley, Mr Gove and Mr Vaizey,

Following our submission to Darren Henley's Review of the funding and delivery of music education in England, ABRSM is pleased to acknowledge the significance of the Review as being unprecedented in its holistic perspective on music education in this country. As a provider of graded music exams for over 120 years and a proponent of their capacity to motivate musical achievement, we particularly welcome the recommendation that the value and place of these assessments in school performance tables should be better communicated to all concerned.

We identify with the view that a clear progression route should be made available to those children who demonstrate musical aptitude, and support the concept of the music education 'pyramid' outlined in the Review. Our summative assessments, through examination at **all** levels of this pyramid, provide one way to motivate children to continue the musical journey appropriate to their abilities and interests.

Among the other strong and important recommendations with which we concur, the call for a new qualification to be developed for music educators is one that we very much hope will come to fruition. ABRSM has a long-standing commitment to support and encourage music educators through our delivery of in-post training and continuing professional development courses. We also agree that this country has a number of world-class conservatoires, whose important role in the development of music educators must be recognised. We look forward to working with them and a range of other parties, such as TDA and Teach First, on how best to deliver the recommendations concerning the professionalisation of music educators.

We welcome the recommendation that a national register of music teachers should be established, with an accompanying kite mark. Given ABRSM's unique position in music education, we are well-placed to support the development of such an initiative, in partnership with others.

We agree that there is a shortfall in training and professional support for leaders in music education, and in response to this developed the course 'Managing and Leading Music Services in the 21st Century' in partnership with the Federation of Music Services in 2009. We would welcome the opportunity to provide further leadership programmes for music educators.

Music Services fulfil an essential role and we believe it is vital that Government funds for music education delivered via Local Authorities are ring-fenced. Without this protection, the progress made in the last few years will be eroded. If we have a concern, it is that the Review has been delivered against a background of several LA music services being cut already – a distinct threat to the aspirations expressed in the Review.

We wholeheartedly support the call for partnership and co-ordination across the music education sector, and are committed to continue and expand upon the existing level of co-operation with which we are already engaged. We look forward to working with Government and others in the sector to take forward these recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



Guy Perricone
Chief Executive