

York Youth Orchestra: End of Year Report 2024–25

Overview

The 2024–25 academic year has been a highly successful and enriching one for the York Youth Orchestra (YYO). Led by conductor Ben Crick in the Autumn and Spring terms, and supported by a dedicated team of professional tutors, the orchestra delivered three major concerts, including a flagship outreach project. These events offered outstanding opportunities for young musicians to perform high-quality repertoire in inspiring settings while engaging meaningfully with the broader York community.

1. Christmas Outreach Project & Concert – *The Snowman*

Date: 14 December 2024

Venue: Millthorpe School

Tickets sold: 306

Student musicians involved: 44

This concert formed part of our flagship outreach initiative, engaging approximately 100 children from three York primary schools. The project supported the broader curriculum by allowing pupils to study *The Nutcracker* and *The Snowman* in the classroom and respond through visual art. Each child submitted original artwork, which was displayed during the concert and included in the printed programme.

To support the schools, conductor Ben Crick and accompanist Dan Hield visited during the autumn term to lead in-school rehearsals. The concert featured a full orchestral performance of Howard Blake's *The Snowman*, narrated by Angus Williams, with a vocal solo from Ellie Reeve-Smith.

This event had a major audience impact and strengthened community engagement while promoting creativity, access, and cross-curricular learning.

2. Spring Concert – Selby Abbey

Date: 23 March 2025

Tickets sold: 111

Student musicians involved: 44

Programme:

- *Hebrides Overture* – Mendelssohn
- *Sea Pictures* – Elgar (Soloist: Anna Burford)
- *Symphony No. 7 in D Minor* – Dvořák

Sectional rehearsals were supported by a team of 8 professional tutors, all of whom brought valuable musical expertise and mentoring to the orchestra.

This concert also offered the orchestra a rare opportunity to accompany a professional opera soloist. Mezzo-soprano Anna Burford, whose distinguished career includes performances with Welsh National Opera, English National Opera and Glyndebourne, brought significant artistic value and inspiration to the ensemble.

Additional semi-professional adult players were engaged to fill gaps in the orchestration (e.g. harp), supporting the orchestra with continuity and confidence. These musicians were reimbursed modest expenses to enable their participation.

YYO received £93.90 in donations following this concert, kindly split by Selby Abbey from ticket income, and this has been recorded under Spring Event Revenue.

3. Summer Concert – St Chad’s Church

Date: 29 June 2025

Tickets sold: 62

Student musicians involved: 38

Programme Highlights:

- *Italian Symphony* (1st movement) – Mendelssohn
- *Kol Nidrei* – Bruch (Soloist: Eve Bate)
- *St Paul’s Suite* – Holst
- Additional chamber works for brass, wind, and string ensembles

This concert marked a joyful end to the academic year and a farewell to several leavers moving on to higher education. The performance reflected the hard work and progress of the ensemble throughout the year.

Participation Summary

- **Student musicians involved across the year:** 44 (largest ensemble size)
- **Primary school pupils engaged in outreach:** Approx. 100 (Christmas project)
- **Professional tutors engaged:** 8

Tutors delivered expert sectional rehearsals across all three terms, enhancing musical development while supporting the professional music education workforce.

Finance & Acknowledgements

The York Youth Orchestra operated on a carefully balanced financial model in 2024–25, enabling us to offer high-quality orchestral experiences while ensuring inclusion and sustainability. The year’s finances were managed across three concert projects: Autumn, Spring, and Summer.

Income & Expenditure Overview

Category	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total
Income				
Membership Fees	£1,840.00	£1,840.00	£1,840.00	£5,520.00
Event Revenue	£1,736.00	£93.90	£600.00	£2,429.90
Grants & Sponsorship	£4,519.58	£4,040.00	£2,199.50	£10,759.08
Total Income	£8,095.58	£5,880.00	£4,639.50	£18,615.08
Expenditure				
Conductor	£2,150.00	£1,450.00	£0.00	£3,600.00
Soloist	£204.50	£300.00	£0.00	£504.50
Tutors	£3,693.00	£2,920.00	£3,414.00	£10,027.00
Manager	£530.00	£530.00	£530.00	£1,590.00
Additional Players	£350.00	£250.00	£100.00	£700.00
Venue	£210.00	£210.00	£332.50	£752.50
Back-end costs	£272.08	£220.00	£263.00	£755.08
Music purchase	£686.00	£0.00	£0.00	£686.00
Total Expenditure	£8,095.58	£5,880.00	£4,639.50	£18,615.08

Hub & Charitable Support

- **Arts Council England funding (via York Music Hub) and private philanthropic support**, including the Calmcott Trust, underpinned the orchestra’s artistic programme. Together, these contributions enabled a rich and inclusive year of orchestral activity.
- **Note:** Staff costs reflect hourly rates only, excluding National Insurance or pension contributions, which vary by contract. Stripe fees are minimal and tied to online membership payments.

Voluntary & Community Contributions

- The **Friends of York Music Centre** supported refreshments, logistics, bursaries, and equipment, reducing budget pressures.
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Management & Delivery

The orchestral year was coordinated by **Jill Garside**, who managed weekly rehearsals, liaised with conductor Ben Crick, parents and students, arranged music hire and venue bookings, and provided day-to-day continuity. Her role was central to the programme's success.

Governance & Oversight

The artistic and strategic direction was overseen by Dan Hield, Director of York Music Education, supported via wider programme income.

Closing Remarks

Thanks to Arts Council England (via York Music Hub), the Calmcott Trust, the Friends of York Music Centre, and our tutors and volunteers, YYO has thrived. The 2024–25 season nurtured the next generation of musicians while enriching York's cultural life.