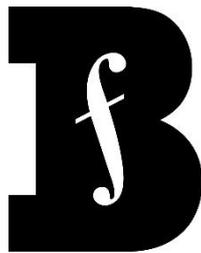


PRESS RELEASE: 1 May 2020



BENEDETTI
FOUNDATION

The first Virtual Benedetti Sessions

11 – 31 May 2020

During these unprecedented times, young people and teaching communities desire inspiration, goals to work towards and a greater sense of togetherness. The Virtual Benedetti Sessions hope to offer organisations across the world a project to engage with together and to provide uplift and excitement. Programmes of activity will be available for young musicians, conservatoire and university level music students, instrumental teachers, adult learners, non-instrumentalists, amateur musicians, parents, siblings and anyone else wanting to bang a pot or pan.

The Benedetti Foundation will provide musicians of all ages and stages, from all over the world, with three weeks of free, consistent online tuition and inspiration from **Monday 11 May**, preparing collectively for a final weekend of activity on **30 & 31 May** celebrating the coming together of the global music community. The Grand Finale will take place on **Sunday 31 May at 4pm BST**.

The Sessions, hosted on YouTube, Zoom and across social media platforms will be led by Nicola Benedetti and her expert Foundation team of tutors and ambassadors and will provide:

- regular **seminars and presentations**
- general musicianship activities so **all young people can join in** regardless of whether they play an instrument
- **fundamental principles** providing a **transformative, fun, exciting and substantive experience**
- **structured lessons and support**
- a series of workshops in **physical and mental** wellbeing
- two live **instrumental teachers' sessions** per week
- a weekly live session for **conservatoire and university music students** allowing them the opportunity to speak with and learn from **inspirational figures** in the music world
- two weekly sessions for **parents** to offer the opportunity to chat with our tutors giving advice and tips on supporting their children's learning at home

Nicola Benedetti commented, 'This is a difficult time for everyone – the pandemic has affected every corner of our lives. I have a desire to make sure we are being as active as possible in the most helpful and serious way. The first Virtual Benedetti Sessions will offer anyone who wants to get involved the opportunity to be inspired, to work towards a goal and to come together. We hope for a collective moment, not just of music appreciation, but a sort of meditation and reflection of these unparalleled times whilst, of course celebrating the wonderful and collective achievement of young musicians all over the world.'

There are two strands to the Virtual Sessions:

Open Access and mass participation

- Anyone can join in and prepare online with the Benedetti Foundation
- The Foundation will be working with partner organisations across the UK, and worldwide, to ensure engagement with participants across all communities and backgrounds.

- There are no geographical, spatial or monetary barriers to participation.

Audition-based participation

- Everyone will be invited to audition for a place on the final recordings.
- Through the preparation series and resources provided, musicians will submit a recording of their part. A number of these will be added layer by layer to form the final recording for the closing concert.

Repertoire

- An abridged version of *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis by Vaughan-Williams* for advanced string players (Grade 6+) with additionally arranged parts for younger, less experienced musicians (approx. 3 – 5). This will be led by conductor **Karina Canellakis**.
- *Mattachins* from the *Capriol Suite by Warlock* for Intermediate (Grade 3-5) level string players.
- *Souvenir de Florence*, 4th movement by Tchaikovsky – this will enable conservatoire and university students to engage in chamber music.
- *Arrangement based on Caprice No. 24 by Paganini* – a unique and inclusive construction, with all participants of the Virtual Sessions and an open invite to parents, siblings and anyone else hanging around that can bang a pot or pan.

What will happen

- The guided online tutorials will start on 11 May via Instagram, Facebook, YouTube with live streamed and pre-recorded content.
- For young school-age musicians, each instrument will receive weekly live sectional rehearsals via Zoom with their tutor. This will be enhanced with pre-recorded videos during the remainder of the week supporting them with technical advice, musical inspiration and practical tips on preparation.
- For children who do not play instruments the Foundation will provide first class tuition from its General Musicianship team. Through a combination of daily activities and live lessons they will work on:
 - Singing and rhythmic activities with a percussionist and Kodaly specialist
 - Producing creative responses through other mediums e.g. artwork and story writing
- The Grand Finale: 30 & 31 May
 - Over the final weekend there will be continuous activity from 10am – 5pm with an opening concert, presentations and tutorials run throughout the day, interspersed with live chats at 12pm, 3pm and 4pm.
 - To close the Virtual Sessions the music loving world is invited to a celebratory concert at 4pm on Sunday 31 May to premiere a collation of videos which share the story of the coming together of the music community through unprecedented times.

Sample weekly schedule

Each week will follow the same schedule and will consist of a combination of live and pre-recorded lessons which can be watched at any time. We hope this regular schedule will allow live sessions to be embedded into existing work.

- 8.45-9.00am – Warmups – participants will self-select from a playlist of warm up activities
- 10.00am – Nicky's Message of the Day & Daily Tutorials released
- 12-12.30pm – Creative Team Take Over – Live lesson on Facebook
- 4.15-5.00pm – Live Sectionals for Intermediate Orchestra [under 18, school children only]
- 5.30-6.15pm – Live Sectionals for Advanced Orchestra [under 18, school children only]

Our proposed schedule is:

- Violin 1 – Monday
- Violin 2 – Tuesday
- Viola – Wednesday
- Cello – Thursday
- Double Bass – Friday
- Conservatoire/University Music Students' Hour will take place on **Monday from 7.30-8.30pm**
- Instrumental Teachers' Live Hour will take place on **Wednesday and Thursday from 7.30-8.30pm**

- During each day, there will be a series of pre-recorded tutorials released from 10am which participants are able to access at any time.
- Each weekend, participants are sent the schedule, links and passwords for the following week and the platforms to find all the sessions on.

How to get involved:

- Sign up is open **Friday 1 May, 9am BST – Thursday 7 May, 9pm BST** – visit www.benedettifoundation.org/virtualesessions to join in
- There is **no cost** to participate in the Sessions – we are dedicated to keeping all our online work free of charge and accessible to all. However, we are a registered charity and in constant need of support. We are asking **those participants who are able to, to make a donation when they sign up.**

Tutors

Tutors are drawn from across the UK's conservatoires, orchestras and educational institutions and a full list can be seen at www.benedettifoundation.org.

Images of Nicola can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qu4hjnq5bojedpg/AACupz84jzKZGwkyDxkFJbb-a?dl=0>

Images from the Benedetti Sessions can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zwqulhxu3b5o7u6/AACTrM7cC3WXM18L1pyie503a?dl=0>

Promo video can be viewed on Nicola's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/6ZSYflgrtLI>

For general enquiries about or to pledge financial support to the Foundation, please contact:

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Notes to Editors

About the Benedetti Foundation

- The Benedetti Foundation puts on transformative orchestra-based workshops for young people and teachers, that showcase what Music Education at its best can look and feel like.
- The Benedetti Foundation unites those who believe music is integral to a great education, and inspires collective action targeted at increasing its reach and quality.
- The Foundation does this through uncovering and sharing its best practices and celebrating its greatest advocates, whilst loudly demonstrating a reenergised vision for the future.
- 50% of the activity carried out by the organisation is for teachers. Teaching music well is an enormous responsibility and is hugely challenging.
- The Benedetti Foundation is fiercely committed to providing meaningful support, extensive information and a sense of uplift, inspiration and respite to as many teachers as possible as well as to promoting music education practices which encourage both musical and civic betterment.
- The first three workshops took place in Glasgow (3 – 6 January), London (10 – 12 January) and Dundee (6 – 8 March). Across the three weekends, the Benedetti Foundation reached just shy of 3,000 young people and 350 teachers. Participants attended from across the UK and the Republic of Ireland stretching from Shetland to the Isle of Wight. In Scotland there are young musicians from 31 of the 32 local authorities with 81% state educated in Glasgow and 75% state educated in Dundee. 30 of the 32 London boroughs were represented with 64% of participants state educated.
- The Benedetti Foundation is a registered charity. It receives no government money and is currently funded through generous philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, trusts and foundations.

About Nicola Benedetti

- Violinist Nicola Benedetti is one of the world's leading advocates for quality music education, the role of arts and culture in the wider community and the transformational effect it has on all young people.
- She has been committed to education projects since the age of 15 and in the past 12 months, Nicola has worked with over 4,000 students and 700 teachers.
- This commitment to supporting music practitioners was underlined in July 2018, when Nicola took over as President of the European String Teachers Association.
- Nicola has contributed to campaigns to save and preserve music services across the country
- She holds named positions in several of the UK's most established and high-quality youth music organisations including the National Children's Orchestras, Sistema Scotland, National Youth Orchestras of Scotland, Music in Secondary Schools Trust, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and many more.
- As 'Big Sister' to Sistema Scotland, Nicola led Super String Sessions in autumn 2018, celebrating the organisation's 10th anniversary by bringing together 500 young people from a diverse range of learning backgrounds including through Sistema Scotland, Local Authorities and private tuition.
- Fiercely committed to music education and to developing young talent, Nicola has formed associations with schools, music colleges and local authorities.
- She is credited with broadening the appeal of classical music to young and new audiences through her extensive education work and appearances at events such as the Commonwealth Games Opening Ceremony and iTunes Festival.
- Nicola was the winner of the GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Instrumental Solo in 2020; awarded the Queen's Medal for Music in 2017, the youngest ever recipient, and was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2019 New Year Honours, in recognition of her services to music.
- Nicola Benedetti is one of the most sought-after violinists of her generation. Her ability to captivate audiences with her innate musicianship and dynamic presence, coupled with her wide appeal as a high-profile advocate for classical music, has made her one of the most influential classical artists of today.
- She is in much demand with major orchestras and conductors across the globe and this continues across the 2019-20 season with concerts throughout the UK, Europe and America.