



Antigua & Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra  
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## PRESS RELEASE

### 15th July 2025 .... ABYSO Tutors Complete Training in the United Kingdom.

Ten tutors from the Antigua and Barbuda Youth Symphony Orchestra (ABYSO) have completed a three weeks long training programme in the United Kingdom. The training is part of the ABYSO Train the Trainers Programme which focuses on developing teaching capacity for orchestral instruments. The training is expected to ultimately lead to a recognised certification in music education for these tutors.



The tutors were: the Charles and Nicola Fairweather ABYSO sponsored concert master violinist Alfranique Joseph, Calynia Edwards violin, Alena Armstrong viola, Felicia Edwards and Téja Joseph cello, Nakiya de Freitas double bass, Clarita Thomas clarinet, Linica Edwards bassoon, Jeshawn Charles trombone and McKuelan Morris percussion.

The training began in Birmingham where the cohort of ABYSO musicians engaged in a varied programme of training developed by Sally Alexander MBE, Founder and Head Teacher of the Kimichi School, and conductor Keith Slade. The musicians participated in chamber music workshops, individual instrument tutoring and performed in a

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concert with the Fulltone Orchestra at Exeter Cathedral.



Alena Armstrong noted, “The programme in Birmingham included observation of students learning at the Kimichi School of Music and practicing repertoire for upcoming concerts. It was also a great opportunity to expose ourselves to repertoire we had never before seen or played, but were familiar with nevertheless. One of my most enjoyable moments, was learning how technology intertwined with music”.

The second half of the visit was spent in London in a training programme covering topics to include theories of musical learning, individual instrument sessions and visits to music schools in London with strong music programmes. The musicians also visited the offices of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) to learn more about the ABRSM’s teaching diploma.







In addition to the music education training, the musicians were also the guests of James Williams, Director of the Royal College of Music, for an introductory tour and information session about the College. ABYSO partners, instrument repairers David Woodhead and Mark Mee Bishop, organised training workshops on brass and woodwind instrument repairs. The period also included an Evening of Music and Appreciation at the Royal Over-Seas League with members of the Kanneh-Mason family.





Alfranique Joseph stated, “My recent training in London proved to be a transformative experience in my journey as a music educator. I had the opportunity to expand my knowledge in instrumental teaching, lesson planning, and explore a variety of unique and effective teaching techniques. Observing classes and learning from other educators allowed me to reflect deeply on my own teaching practice. These experiences not only affirmed my identity as a music educator but also provided clarity on the kind of teacher I aspire to become. I am confident that what I have gained from this journey will significantly enhance my practice and development as a music teacher”.

The ABYSO extends thanks to Antigua and Barbuda Ambassador to Jordan, His Excellency Sami Al-Mufleh, the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority and the Galleon Foundation for their support of this visit. Special thanks are also extended to





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Stringers London and the Kimichi School for lending cellos and a double bass to the ABYSO for use during the visit.

The ABYSO operates year-round, after school programmes for young people at all levels of instrumental or choral learning, from beginners to seniors. Public performances throughout the year showcase the young people's hard work and talent, ranging from orchestral standards to musical theatre shows and intimate chamber events. Exciting international partnerships bring world class musicians, composers and conductors to work alongside the young musicians, while traineeships bring new or enhanced skills such as instrument repair to the islands.

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