



# National Open Youth Orchestra

## Behind the music - Meet three members of the National Open Youth Orchestra

### **[00:00:23.810] - Jamie**

I'd been, like, part of a choir previously, but because I was undiagnosed at the time, there was, like, this consistent disconnect. I wasn't sure how to voice my needs and I distanced myself from a lot of musical performance groups.

### **[00:00:44.950] - Holli**

Before NOYO, I had met other autistic people, but not really many. And just to see so many other people like me, it's definitely changed how I view actually being an autistic person.

### **[00:01:03.710] - Sally**

Yeah, I'm very self-critical with the music, but you just have to think, "hang on a second- do I want to be a robot or do I want to actually play with some feeling, with some expression?"

### **[00:01:14.870] - Alexander Campkin**

Writing the piece was really important for me because I feel like as a disabled composer, I've been up against a number of barriers. For me, this piece represents an opportunity to explore what can we do, not what we can't do.

**[00:01:43.290] - Jamie**

My name is Jamie. I live with my mum, my dad and my sister. Music is like, it's always been quite important to me. I've grown up in a very musical family. My mum is a music teacher at a special ed school. They introduced me to a lot of music at younger ages and I've developed a lot of my own tastes. Music is quite visual for me in my head, like, I will see almost like my personalised music videos. Getting into NOYO specifically, that was kind of through my mum. She said that they were holding auditions and maybe I could send in a tape and I was a little apprehensive. It turned out really well. At that point, sort of like, in my musical experience, I was at a point where I was thinking I was probably going to give up. The stress of practising exams was kind of just like sucking the joy out of the instrument. Disabled people as a minority are often one of the more isolated ones. It's very hard for us to interact with each other and form communities. You don't realise how important something is if you've lived without it until it's given to you. The residential meant that I was able to interact with other disabled musicians in, like, a social capacity. It encouraged me to connect with other autistic people, to seek that level of community.

**[00:03:16.030] - Holli**

Hello, my name is Holly. Today is my birthday and I am 19 years old. My mom told me I haven't actually opened all my presents, but they're going

to be a vacuum cleaner somewhere, which will help me next. Well, in September, because I'll start studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, I actually realised I wanted to become a professional musician when I was playing piano because I got a distinction in grade three. I find that actually being an autistic person, the harp is quite similar to my personality and how it's treated in an orchestra. Sometimes you just want to hide because you are the only person there, but you have to remember that you are part of the whole game, so you have to bring yourself to the table and just do your part. When I went on the website to see the Junior Guildhall Department, I thought "The National Open Youth Orchestra. What is that?" It doesn't seem like your standard youth orchestra. The key is the word "open" so we can have disabled people in the Orchestra But also non-disabled ones, and it just feels more inclusive and people won't judge you. I don't think I would ever have played 'What Fear We Then?' then in a classical kind of orchestra at all. We don't have the instruments. We can be more free with the music.

### **[00:04:55.670] - Sally**

My name is Sally. I attend Treloar's school. When I left primary school, I didn't really like music that much, but when I went to Treloar's, we had an amazing music teacher who was incredibly eager to get people to love music. Our music teacher Ms Watkins suggested that I start learning piano because when you're learning music, it's always good to have an instrument to visualise things on. She said "hey, why don't you audition for the National Open Youth Orchestra?" I had explained in my audition that obviously I have a deteriorating condition and I won't be able to play the piano to a standard that would be best for the orchestra. After I got in, Doug the music director presented me with the Clarion, the seaboard

ROLI and the LinnStrument. We tried them all. Eventually we got to the LinnStrument and I remember thinking, actually, I think this is what I want to go with. I went along to my first rehearsal after having numerous lessons. I didn't mess up, which was good. I was very nervous and I remember thinking, yeah, I actually quite like this.

**[00:06:06.570] - Jamie**

We're doing the filming for the, essentially, music video of 'What Fear We Then?'

**[00:06:14.550] - Sally**

I have practised it within an inch of its life and I think I am ready to do it.

**[00:06:19.540] - Holli**

I'm really excited to actually hear the recording where everyone's playing together. I think with this piece it will really bring the music to life for me.

**[00:06:28.120] - Alexander**

I was excited to explore the concept of the title. What fear we then? What is in our way? Why do we not have the same opportunities that other people may have? When I was a young person and I was diagnosed with a chronic condition, I didn't really feel like I had anyone to speak with. I hope that this piece asks the questions and it possibly opens a conversation about how disability is viewed within our society.