



Music against Child Labour Initiative

A Manifesto



International
Labour
Organization

All children have the right to their childhood: to learn, to play and to grow in safety. Yet, today, 152 million girls and boys are still trapped in child labour, 73 million in its worst forms¹ – forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation, illicit activities or hazardous work. Many are deprived of education.

Work, including the work of musicians, is a transformative force in society and the world of music is a valuable partner in the worldwide movement against child labour. Music can strike a powerful chord against child labour and for social justice, raising public awareness and inspiring people to act.

Music alone cannot defeat child labour, but it can contribute to combating the suffering of children robbed of their rights and of the chance to fulfil their potential. Engaging girls and boys in collective musical activity can support their withdrawal and protection from child labour and assist in building their skills and self-esteem. Access to musical and other creative education makes schools more attractive to children and helps to ensure they continue their education and are protected from risk.

We – conductors, musicians and soloists, youth musicians and trade unionists in the world of music, with the International Labour Organization (ILO) – are calling on conductors, orchestras, choirs and musicians of all genres, worldwide – adult and youth, professional and amateur – to dedicate a concert or a song to this Music against Child Labour Initiative.

Music – in all its forms – is a universal language. Although we sing in every tongue, it also expresses emotions we cannot say in words. It links us all. Together, the world of music can raise its voice and instruments against child labour. Join us in telling audiences and the world that child labour must not be tolerated, that children have a right to play and learn. Join our "call to batons". Join the Music against Child Labour Initiative. Join us in showing the Red Card to Child Labour!

This Initiative is supported by the following founders: the late Claudio Abbado; José-Antonio Abreu; Alessio Allegrini, Founder, Musicians for Human Rights; Daniel Barenboim; Pilar Jurado; Benoît Machuel, General Secretary, International Federation of Musicians (FIM); Diego Matheuz; Rodolfo Mederos; Eduardo Mendez, Executive Director, Fundación Musical Simón Bolívar, El Sistema; Antonio Mosca, Director, Suzuki Orchestra, Turin; Guy Ryder, Director-General, International Labour Organization; Blasko Smilevski, General Secretary, Jeunesses Musicales International.

This appeal was launched at the Salle Pleyel in Paris on 11 June 2013 by the signatories above. The Global Concert series in support of the Initiative began in Brasilia in October 2013 at the III Global Conference on Child Labour.

The ILO and its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour, the world's largest programme against child labour, thank the conductors, orchestras, musicians' trade union organizations and youth networks supporting this campaign, and the Salle Pleyel and Piano 4 Etoiles for their cooperation in its launch.

For further information about the ILO Music against Child Labour Initiative please contact: childlabour@ilo.org or go to: www.ilo.org/MusicInitiative.

¹ The Manifesto was updated in 2017 to take account of the latest ILO Global Estimates of child labour.