



# Keys of Change

Can music change the world? We believe it can.



FUKUSHIMA YOUTH SINFONIETTA  
TRIUMPHS IN BANGKOK



BACK TO THE AMAZON

## Changing Lives with Music Around the World

One more year has come to an end, and with 2017 behind us I feel taller with pride observing increasingly more young people around the world empowered by music. I feel overcome with emotions when I realise how far Keys of Change has come, remembering how it all started six years ago, with a canoe and a keyboard, visiting indigenous communities on the banks of the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon. With this in mind, this year I travelled back to Peru to meet some of the communities in the Amazon that were visited for the first time back in 2011. I was so happy to see not only that people remembered us, but they even named their children after some of us!

In 2017 Keys of Change started two new education projects. In Serbia, a country where the effects and memories of the 90s conflict are still vivid, music classes are now taking place in five children's homes in and around Belgrade, taught by a local teacher. And in Greece, the country perhaps most affected by the recent European debt crisis, we have started music lessons in a children's home in Athens, with the vision to expand the same programme to children affected by the recent refugee crisis.

At the same time, our existing projects have continued to flourish. In Quito, Ecuador, our guitar students, looked after

by the Condor Trust for Education, are advancing their musical skills, and with a new teacher are learning more and more songs of all different genres, from classical to pop, traditional and rock. Not far from our guitar group in Quito is the school "Honrar la Vida", which works with children facing extremely difficult situations in life. After supporting their summer music camp for a second year in a row, Keys of Change is now supporting weekly music and dance classes. I visited both locations in Ecuador in October, and was overwhelmed by the difference an opportunity to learn music can make for these children.

Our amazing musicians from Fukushima completed their SE Asian debut in Bangkok. After their concerts in London (2014), Tokyo (2015) and Boston (2016), coming together to rehearse, and wishing to show to the world once again that young people in Fukushima are well, strong and creative, the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta travelled to Thailand in August for a musical project that was perhaps the most fun, inspiring and life-changing to date.

In 2017 Keys of Change started a new collaboration with a group of young musicians in Mexico. In a small community near Oaxaca, a group of music students facing extraordinary difficulties in life, have

come together to create a symphony orchestra, and share their music with the world. We are now proud to be part of the team supporting them, teaching them music, and helping them develop the skills that will give them strengths for the rest of their lives.

The greater value of our music projects is, we believe, intangible. Emerging from different challenges, and at times horrific life events, each child we work with has faced different adversities and hardships, both practical and emotional. Adjusting the approach, teaching methods, and responsibilities offered to each music student, ensures a much more meaningful educational and life changing result.

More than anything else, we are deeply grateful to all our supporters from around the world, from Japan to England and the USA, for believing that music is one of the most powerful ways to help young people going through all kinds of difficulties and adversities in life. It is because of the help all of you have given that Keys of Change was able in 2017 to teach music to more than 400 children and reach more than 5,000 people in audiences in all corners of the planet. Thank you!

*Panos Karan, Keys of Change founder*



# Keys of Change usa

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## Three NEW projects

### Serbian Sounds - Belgrade

Our newest musical education project is in Serbia. Keys of Change USA is providing music lessons to 95 children living in Serbia facing particular life challenging situations. Learning music not only enhances their emotional connectivity, but will improve their self-expression, and contribute to each child's healing process.

Keys of Change USA initially contacted several organisations operating in Serbia to assess the possibility of starting a musical education programme involving vulnerable children and young people. After conducting assessment visits, we concluded that it would be of great value to start music education programmes with the children under the care of five children's homes in and around Belgrade. Each supervising organisation selected approximately

20 students, based on an assessment of who would benefit most from the music lessons, and would also show a regular commitment to the activities. The priority, when selecting students to participate in the programme, ideally of elementary or middle school age, was placed on their willingness to use music as a tool of self-improvement, and a willingness to support and help others through music.

At each location, we are organising weekly music classes that are focused on singing (individual and choir), music appreciation, rhythmic games and percussion playing. Further down the line, individual lessons will also be offered to students either who are very keen or who need extra support.

The classes are taught by Serbian violin teacher Ana who has experience of teaching children at risk from frequently violent and abusive backgrounds, while the overall programme is supervised Keys of Change USA associate Zach, currently based in Greece.



### La Banda de la Musica - Oaxaca, Mexico

Incredible musical things are taking place in the dusty barrio of Vicente Guerrero, on the outskirts of Oaxaca, Mexico. In 2011, young people facing incredible difficulties, including drugs, violence and poverty, decided they needed an outlet in their daily lives to help them escape this hard reality of life in their barrio. They chose music, formed the Banda de la Musica and, with the help of a local music teacher, set up a music school. Apart from the opportunities and safety this created for young people in Vicente Guerrero, this was a deeply symbolic gesture, as the landfill of Oaxaca lies next to this community: while Oaxaca would bring their garbage to Vicente Guerrero, the young people of the community would give back music. Six years after its formation, and with significant positive results for the young

people participating in this musical programme, in 2017 Keys of Change USA decided to support the desire of these young musicians to create something beautiful in the face of all adversity. La Banda de la Musica has now developed into a youth symphony orchestra, the Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil Santa Cecilia, which has become a shining example of how music can improve the lives of children coming from some of the toughest backgrounds.

Starting in 2018, Keys of Change USA will be sending musicians from its network, starting with pianist and Keys of Change founder Panos Karan, to provide musical guidance and inspiration and organise musical activities. These activities will aim to strengthen the self-confidence and personal identities of young people facing an extraordinary situation in life,

and will enable them to grow and face with hope, courage and confidence the challenges of their daily lives. The core of this programme is self-expression and personal improvement through music.



### South American Rhythms - Ecuador

In Quito, high in the Andes and known for its beautiful historic centre and its delicious chocolate, many children face the harsh reality of poverty, domestic violence, and the effects of drugs in their community. In one of the most notorious districts of Quito, an organisation called Honrar la Vida is keeping children off the streets by providing not only primary and secondary education, but shelter, emotional support and tools to deal with the traumatic experiences many face. Keys of Change USA visited Quito in 2017 and our founder Panos Karan met the children of Honrar la Vida. It is remarkable how children who might have seen some of the worst situations in life, are full of positive energy and want to share beautiful things with others. Keys of Change USA decided that this is an ideal place to provide inspiration through music, and give a chance to

these children to express themselves with sounds.

During the summer of 2017 Keys of Change USA helped organise a summer music camp, by providing daily music lessons for more than 100 children. Given the hardships many of these children face, trust and collaboration with others is often lacking. The camp more than anything was therefore an opportunity for these children to use music, singing and sounds to work closely with others, and encourage trust and enthusiasm for creating something jointly. At the very least, the camp worked as an important excuse for the children to stay off the streets during the summer holidays.

The tremendous success of the summer music camp led Keys of Change USA to decide to continue offering music and dance classes to

the children at Honrar la Vida throughout the academic year, helping them continue building on some of the most important lessons that will follow them throughout their lives: collaboration, trust and hope.





# Keys of Change usa

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## Back to the Amazon

In 2011 and 2012, Panos Karan undertook a never before attempted journey, both literal and metaphorical, to share the power and the beauty of classical music with remote communities along the Amazon River. He left the concert halls behind and embarked on the brave mission of taking his piano and his passion to the people who live in the rainforest. He played nearly 50 piano recitals for as many villages and indigenous communities as can be reached, while establishing a musical education programme for two years in the community of Coca, in the form of guitar classes.

Panos Karan reflects on his Bach in the Amazon journey: "The idea for this project came from the desire to share the empowering effects of music with people who had never before had a chance to listen to our music, and who at the same time had no preconceptions about it. Our generation of musicians has reached

unprecedented refinement and virtuosity in musical performance, having been taught in specialist schools and conservatoires by specialist professors, with the aim of sharing this music in specialist concert halls for specialist audiences. We know however that music and its benefits belong (or should belong) to everyone, not just professionals and specialists. A Bach Prelude and Fugue or a Rachmaninov Piano Concerto belong to the Amazon Rainforest as much as to the shiny stage of Carnegie Hall. Somewhere along the way the idea emerged to travel as far as it takes to find people who are not infected by the travesty that our classical music can only speak to a specialist few."

In 2017, more than five years later, and with the support of El Britanico in Lima, and partial support of Keys of Change USA, Panos Karan returned to the Peruvian Amazon to revisit

some of the indigenous communities that he had reached before, and play music for them again, this time together with three Peruvian musicians, who felt passionate about sharing music with people living in some of the most isolated places on the planet. This five day trip was an opportunity not only to revisit some of the places visited before, but mainly to create a bridge between the musicians from Lima and the communities, who come for entirely different cultures.

Not only did the people in these communities remember Panos's last visit very well and were very excited to have him back, but the biggest surprise was when it was discovered that a young lady who gave birth to a baby boy soon after Panos's first visit in 2011, had named her son after our Keys of Change founder!



# The Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta Triumphs in Bangkok

The Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta (FYS) is one of the most positive things to emerge from the devastation of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in northern Japan. Set up by Keys of Change in partnership with schools in Fukushima, initially to bring hope to the young people in the area, the orchestra has made rapid musical strides and has performed in the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London (2014), Tokyo Opera City (2015), and in Boston Symphony Hall. (2016). Wherever it has performed, from Fukushima itself to London and Boston, the orchestra has had an extremely enthusiastic reception. We have repeatedly seen how the determination of the young people to create something truly excellent in the face of all kinds of adversity coupled with their high and continually improving standard, has the power to inspire other young people and adults.

In August 2017, the FYS, an orchestra made up of 41 Japanese musicians from Fukushima aged 13-21, traveled to Bangkok for a programme of musical, cultural and community activities, as well as a collaboration with young Thai musicians. The main goals of the programme, which was supported by the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra, Bangkok Christian College, Wattana Wittaya Academy and Yamaha Thailand, were to express thanks to the people of Thailand for their extraordinary support and aid to Japan in the aftermath of the 2011 disaster, to demonstrate to the world that Fukushima is full of active, recovering and creative people, and to present high-level musical performances and conduct exchanges with Thai musicians. The five-day project for the FYS culminated in its triumphant South East Asia debut for an audience of 1000 on the stage of the KBank Siam Pic- Ganessa Theatre in central Bangkok on 18 August 2017.

In anticipation of the Thailand visit, the FYS in close partnership with Keys of Change organised and coordinated rehearsals in Fukushima, concerts at Fukushima Ongakudo Concert Hall and Minamisoma Yumei Hatto Concert Hall. One of the priorities for this project was to provide musical support for student musicians through an inspirational team of professional musicians. Keys of Change was particularly proud to have been able to include several Japanese and foreign musicians during the preparation period.

During their stay in Bangkok the musicians of the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta, apart from the daily rehearsals, participated in a variety of activities and visits, giving them a chance to interact with Thai musicians and students of their own age, to explore

Thai culture, and use music to connect with Thai audiences coming from different walks of life. This was a life-changing opportunity and no moment in the day was wasted. From discovering about Thai culture in Ayutthaya to how to make Thai Tom Yum soup, as the days passed the group grew ever closer, with friendships forming between students. The musical harmony in the group became stronger as the group started sharing their sounds with the new Thai audience.

On 18 August 2017 the FYS stepped onto the state of the art stage of the KBank Siam Pic Ganessa Theatre for their SE Asian debut, with a performance of a demanding programme conducted by Maestro Rintaro Miyashita. The Fukushima musicians, with the support of several adult musicians with whom they had been rehearsing the previous weeks, performed at a standard that earned them a spontaneous standing ovation, and an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response from the Bangkok audience. The evening came to an emotional climax at the end of the programme with a special encore collaboration with the two boys' and girls' choirs of Wattana Wittaya Academy and Bangkok Christian College. More than 150 musicians and singers performed the powerful music of the late King of Thailand, "Alexandra" and "Love", as well as the traditional Japanese song "Furusato". As is the tradition in Thailand the concert concluded with the Thai Royal Anthem. The concert on 18 August 2017 was the biggest success the FYS experienced to date and saw wide coverage in the Thai and Japanese news media.

This was a life-changing experience for the students from Fukushima who participated in this project. More than anything, this was an opportunity to help with the healing process after the tragic events of 2011. The music, the rehearsals and performances were a tool to bring the individual students closer, to give them an opportunity to be heard, to help them express themselves freely, outside the (at times rigid) school environment. In addition, it contributed greatly to the development of particular musical skills, as well as to improving their leadership, collaboration and teamwork abilities. It is a familiar "truth" that music is the strongest international and inter-cultural language. The Bangkok tour was an extraordinary experience in bridging cultures and creating mutual communication between the Japanese students and the young Thais they met in Bangkok.

## MUSICIANS



# In Pictures: FYS in Bangkok



## Keeping busy

The musicians of the FYS performed a flashmob in Bangkok, visited Ayutthaya (left), enjoyed performing at the School for the Blind (below, left) and collaborated with the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra (below).



“This is a night you will remember for the rest of your life.” These were the words with which Keys of Change trustees Panos Karan and Zach Tarpagos encouraged the Fukushima musicians on the stage.



In concert  
The Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta performing on the stage of KBank Siam Pic- Ganesha Theatre. This was an opportunity to share with the world that the young people of Fukushima are well, and creating beautiful music.

# How together we make this happen!

Keys of Change is a very small group of people who put all their available energy and effort into using music to make the world a better place. Most of our funding comes from private individuals who share this belief, and as a result we believe that very little can go a very long way! Apart from traveling all over the world this year has seen a lot of work in London and the USA. Keys of Change organised a series of events, private and open to the public, to fundraise and to share our stories and passion. In March 2017 we organised a fundraising recital in Athens, in June Panos Karan gave a fundraising recital in Chapel Hill, NC, while in July he gave a fundraising recital in the home of one of our supporters in Malaga, Spain. In August, the KoC String Quartet in Fukushima performed at two fundraising concerts in Fukushima City and Minamisoma City. and in October Panos Karan performed at the Teatro Britanico in Lima. In June 2017, Keys of Change USA was established, in order to support distinct projects in the Americas and beyond, always with the aim of using music to improve the lives of young people.

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IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED IN ANY OF OUR PROJECTS PLEASE EMAIL US ON [INFO@KEYSOFCHANGE.ORG](mailto:INFO@KEYSOFCHANGE.ORG)

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Keys of Change has featured on BBC World, NHK in Japan, national television in Greece, Peru and Thailand, radio in Greece and Ecuador, and in numerous publications.

We thank our partners in 2017 - the Condor Trust for Education in Ecuador, the Fukushima Board of Education, El Britanico in Lima, the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra - for their help and empowering collaboration. We also thank our project managers, translators, volunteers, music teachers and our talented photographers around the world for their hard work in making everything possible.

And the most special thanks goes to you - our supporters, who donated generously, strongly believed in our cause and encouraged us every step of the way! It is only because of you and your help, that we are able to continue bringing music to young people around the world.

We wish all our enthusiastic supporters, partners, listeners, and all the devoted music students around the world a happy and healthy 2018 filled with more and more music!

Keys of Change team

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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHOTOGRAPHER FUMIKO TANAKA FOR CAPTURING THE MOST INSPIRING MOMENTS OF EVERY PROJECT!

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# A year in pictures



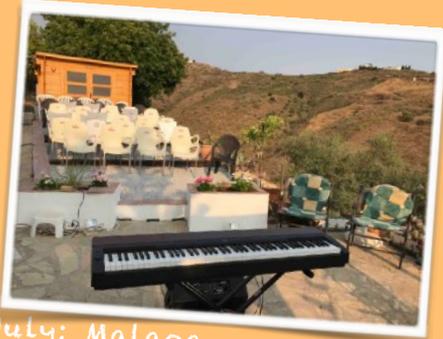
November: Xanthi



October: Quito



October: Lima



July: Malaga



August: Fukushima



August: Minamisoma



March: Athens



March: Minamisoma



June: Chapel Hill, NC



October: Amazon



October: Quito



August: Bangkok



August: Bangkok



October: Oaxaca



September: Serbia

# Another day in the office...

