



# Keys of Change

Can music change the world? We believe it can.



THE FUKUSHIMA YOUTH SINFONIETTA  
BOSTON SYMPHONY HALL, APRIL 2016



MUSIC IN NEPAL

## Changing Lives with Music Around the World

In 2016 Keys of Change celebrated its fifth birthday. I must admit that when I packed my keyboard for that first Amazon trip five years ago, I was not fully aware of how much music can achieve in helping people around the world to enrich lives, and become an agent of healing and support in times of crisis. I am very proud of what Keys of Change has achieved bringing music to those in need around the world since 2011, with the past year the busiest ever.

March of this year marked the five year anniversary of the tragic events of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and subsequent nuclear disaster in Northeastern Japan. I was in Fukushima on 11 March 2016, the day of the anniversary, to start rehearsals with the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta, spending the day with the young musicians of the orchestra that wanted to use music to mark this as a day of hope and rebirth. The FYS travelled to the US soon after that, at the invitation of the Japan Boston Society and the US-Japan Council, for their North American debut at Boston Symphony Hall. The evening of 3 April 2016 was one of monumental success and pride for those on the stage, and deeply touching for those in the audience. The Fukushima students, guided and supported by Keys of Change musicians along the way, proudly shared their story and their

music on one of the world's grandest stages, as they did already in previous years in London and Tokyo, and brought tears to the eyes of the Boston audience, which was cheering with great enthusiasm on their feet at the end of the concert.

In November 2016 Keys of Change returned to India in order to work with the remarkable musicians of the Kolkata Youth Orchestra. Most of the young Kolkatan musicians, who live and learn music in an orphanage in the outskirts of Kolkata, come from extreme poverty and violence and have very few opportunities to share their voice and creativity with their community. Seven Keys of Change musicians over a period of two weeks provided daily coachings, sectionals, and support for more than 60 Indian musicians, who are living through extraordinary circumstances in their lives. They then joined their sounds together on stage in concerts, at the historical Grand Ballroom of the Oberoi Grand Hotel, and the community space of Vidya Mandir in the centre of the city, vibrating audiences in Kolkata coming from vastly different walks of life. Keys of Change was proud to have hosted and presented, together with the Kolkata Youth Orchestra, these concerts, while providing the tools and opportunity for the orchestra to develop further in years to come.

The rest of 2016 saw several other musical journeys, musical projects and playing music for children living in extraordinary circumstances, be it because of poverty, discrimination, or illness. One of these journeys brought me to the Himalayan country of Nepal, while our fellow trustee Zach Tarpagos reached out with his flute to young children affected by the recent Syrian refugee crisis. In Sierra Leone, a country heavily affected by a recent Ebola virus epidemic, we continued supporting educational projects, while in Ecuador the guitar music group keeps expanding and getting stronger.

We would like to continue using music as a powerful agent for improving people's lives, and keep demonstrating that simple goals, like the preparation for a concert, and act so powerful yet so under-appreciated, can bring varied communities together for the common purpose of playing music, while providing, hope and inspiration.

Thank you for your continuous support over the years. It is only because of your support that we have been able to bring music to thousands of people around the world, improving their lives and making the world a better place.

*Panos Karan, Keys of Change founder*

# The Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta Triumphs at Boston Symphony Hall

The young musicians of the FYS are keen to share with the rest of the world through their music the message that “Fukushima is well.” They are the living testament that music can change the world. Since its inception in 2012 the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta has performed for audiences around the world, with appearances at London’s Queen Elizabeth Hall and Tokyo Opera City, as well as in their very own Fukushima Ongaku Do Concert Hall. The FYS has also featured on BBC News, and NHK World. In numerous ways the work of the FYS has strengthened families, schools, and communities in the Fukushima area. This sense of unity and collaboration to overcome personal or social tragedies is unmistakably communicated to anyone who hears the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta perform.

In March 2016, the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta, an orchestra made of 48 Japanese musicians from Fukushima aged 13-21, accompanied by five Keys of Change musicians, traveled to Boston for a programme of musical activities, cultural exchange and collaboration with young American musicians. The eight-day project for the FYS culminated in its triumphant North American debut for an audience of 1500 at the historical and renowned Boston Symphony Hall on 3 April 2016. Before their departure, Keys of Change organised two weeks of rehearsals in Fukushima, and a performance at the Ongaku Do Concerto Hall, while in Boston the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta spent more than two weeks preparing for their big debut, with the guidance of “magician” conductor Honna Tetsuji, and also with the help of several musicians from the Boston area.

This was a life changing opportunity and there

was no moment in the day wasted for the musicians of the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta, be it meeting with the Governor of Massachusetts, visiting Harvard University, Fenway Park or collaborating with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra. As the days passed, the group grew ever closer, with new friendships forming between students and the musical harmony in the group becoming stronger as the group started testing their sound at the first rehearsals at Boston Symphony Hall.

The rare spirit of synergy and connection between musicians on the stage was remarkable on the night of 3 April 2016, from the 18th century cello lent to the section leader Ayaka Takahashi by her professional desk partner Masanori Taniguchi to the opportunity given to the young conductors Rintaro Miyashita and Sanjib Mondol of taking to the podium and conducting the orchestra.

It is a familiar “truth” that music is the strongest international and inter-cultural language. The U.S. tour was an extraordinary experience in bridging cultures and mutual communication for the Japanese students and the young Americans they encountered in Boston. The young musicians of the FYS speak frequently about how their musical activities have strengthened their self-confidence and their personal identities, enabling them to grow and face with hope, courage and confidence the challenges of their daily lives following the disasters of 2011. These are the remarkable lessons that they conveyed to the young Americans whom they met and collaborated with in the course of the tour.

## MUSICIANS



# Keys of Change Prepares the Fukushima Youth Sinfonietta for their U.S. Debut



# KOLKATA'S LARGEST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WINS THE HEARTS OF THE CITY

In November 2016, Keys of Change, came back to India, inviting to Kolkata seven professional musicians from Europe and Japan in order to encourage, inspire and create life changing opportunities for the young Indian musicians of the Kolkata Youth Orchestra. Keys of Change is no stranger to Kolkata. Founder Panos Karan and Greek flautist Zach Tarpagos have already been on several visits since 2013, working with young musicians and performing in orphanages, homes for the elderly and music schools. Over the past three years, Keys of Change have supported the Kolkata Youth Orchestra, a group of young musicians who come from extremely difficult backgrounds, providing musical coaching by European professionals and performance opportunities for the Indian musicians. In November 2014 Keys of Change put together a joint performance with the KYO, attracting an audience of more than 700. This year, Keys of Change prepared the musicians of the KYO for two distinctly contrasting concerts. The first one took place at the city's most glamorous and historical venue, the Grand Ballroom of the Oberoi Grand Hotel, for the listening pleasure of a select, by-invitation-only audience, while the second performance, open to the general public, was presented a few days later at the Vidya Mandir, one of Kolkata's main stages, for the listening pleasure of an audience of varied backgrounds. For the first concert Keys of Change envisioned an opportunity for the KYO to present its sound to a high profile audience and create a reputation for their musicians amongst the elite of the city, while the second concert was an open invitation to bring together a varied audience an audience as

possible.

While these concerts were the culmination of several months of rehearsals with their own conductor and founder of the orchestra, Sanjib Mondal, the final preparation was put together by Keys of Change who organised a two week music camp, supervised by the foreign musicians, putting together the largest Western classical symphony orchestra to have ever performed in Kolkata, made up almost entirely of musicians coming from a background of deep poverty and violence. More than 75 musicians came together for project, and then took to the stage sharing with their community a demanding programme of music by Beethoven, Vivaldi and Saint-Saens. They were rewarded with enthusiastic cheers and wide critical acclaim in Kolkata's main press outlets. The Keys of Change musicians, Panos Karan (piano), Zach Tarpagos (flute), Ana Chufu (flute), Jessica Heynes (violin), Mari Sagawa (violin), Gaku Suzuki (cello), and Rintaro Miyashita (violin and conductor) joined the concert as soloists, section leaders and conductor, together with local soloist Palalb Primanick, and guest soprano Meeryung Hall.

More than anything, Keys of Change wished this to be a chance for young people who are facing tremendous hardships to come together in a positive and creative spirit, to use music and music learning for improving themselves, share with the world something that would have never otherwise been expected from them: unity, determination, hope.

## MUSICIANS



# KEYS OF CHANGE PREPARES KOLKATA'S LARGEST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



## Himalayan Notes - Nepal

As part of our commitment to try and introduce a new destination in our projects once a year, in May 2016, Keys of Change travelled to the Himalayan country of Nepal. Visiting the main two cities of the country, Kathmandu and Pokhara, and travelling by road through the highest mountain peaks of this planet, pianist Panos Karan reached out to four orphanages, and brought music to children that are in great need of attention and support.

The improvised concerts took place in children's homes, which in many cases house a number of young children without parental care. One of the main problems is violence and domestic slavery. Thousands

of minors are sold every year to wealthier families as servants and maids, missing out on proper education, and often living in horrific conditions. Many organisations in Nepal rescue and support vulnerable minors.

Panos Karan brought with him a portable keyboard in a very recognisable blue case, and, in most circumstances, played on it, sharing with the children a variety of melodies and musical stories, using music as an invitation to imagination and communication. The end of each musical presentation had the children playing rhythms in small percussion instruments,

and, after a short rehearsals, participating in the music making.

We hope this was only the beginning of a very inspiring project. Keys of Change would like to return to Nepal, and continue sharing music with the children living in these homes.



## Middle Eastern Sounds - Lebanon

In August 2016, Keys of Change trustee Zach Tarpagos and his wife Ana Chifu visited Lebanon, and used music to provide comfort to children and their families affected by the recent Syrian refugee crisis. Our visits took place on missions that cherished Syrian refugees families. The missions offered shelter, food for the families and a daily schedule of school lessons and activities for the children. Having met the children and their guardians we presented them the music instruments we had with us, such as the flute and small percussion instruments. With great joy and impatience children came and tried them one by one and became acquainted on how an instrument can be help as well as the basic acoustic differences between wind and percussion instruments, how their sound is

produced and how they can contribute to the music making procedure. After that we played music with them. It came as a big surprise to us that children and adult listeners listened very, very carefully and quietly (without being asked to be quiet) and reacted in a sparkling but at the same time discrete way, to the music by smiling or talking to the person sitting next to them.

After one performance in one of the missions, an old man came up to us and full of pride opened his wallet and took out a small piece of paper. He unfolded it and smiling told us: "This is the ticket of the concert that Maria Callas gave in La Scala in Milan in 1964. I will always keep it to remember how beautiful life was and how beautiful life can be". The hope and the seed of optimism is present in

Lebanon. We felt it every single day in every single place we visited. The need that drives young people to seek for beauty and for ways of helping each other, communicating and expressing their inner feelings is so strong and powerful. We will be there to support these amazing people.



## South American Rhythms - Ecuador

2016 was another exciting year for Keys of Change in Ecuador, including a consolidation of our work with a group of guitar students and also a new venture – a summer music school in one of the most deprived areas of Quito.

For several years, Keys of Change has supported guitar lessons for about 15 young people from low income families. These students come for lessons every Saturday to a centre run by the Condor Trust for Education, our partner in Ecuador. For many of them, this is the highlight of the week, and the very high attendance records are a great testimony to their enthusiasm. Standards are improving and the repertoire, which

includes Ecuadorian and Western music, is increasing rapidly.

In July and August 2016, Keys of Change provided funds to enable a school on the outskirts of Quito to organise four weeks of musical activities during the summer holidays. 37 children and young people, aged from 4 to 15, spent every day learning instruments (the recorder and guitar), singing, dancing and enjoying themselves through a wide variety of musical experiences. At the end of the month, all of the students participated in a concert for parents and local people. The summer school was a huge success, not only in teaching music but in improving social skills, building up

friendships and strengthening the local community. The students and staff are very keen to repeat the experience in 2017. In the meantime, Keys of Change is providing finance for music lessons in the school, so all the gains of the summer school are not lost.



# How together we make this happen!

Apart from traveling all over the world playing classical music there has been a lot of work going on in London. Keys of Change organised a series of events, private and open to public, to fundraise and to share our stories and passion. Panos Karan and Zach Tarpagos have given many fundraising recitals, speeches, interviews and lectures. In February 2016 Panos played a fundraising recital at the Japanese Ambassadors' residences in Boston and Athens, and a month later Zach and Panos, together with several other musicians that were in Japan for the FYS project, performed a fundraising recital in Minamisoma (Fukushima). Panos performed a fundraising concert also Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, challenging himself with 12 Bach Preludes and Fugues.

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

We thank our partners - the Condor Trust for Education in Ecuador, the Fukushima Board of Education, the Japan Society of Boston, the US-Japan Council, the Oberoi Grand in Kolkata, the Kolkata Youth 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 that need it around the world.

We wish all our enthusiastic supporters, partners, listeners, and all the devoted music students around the world a happy and healthy 2017 filled with more and more music!

Keys of Change team

---

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

---

---

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

---



# A year in pictures



November: Kolkata



October: Quito



November: Kolkata



November: Kolkata



April: Fukushima



March: Minamisoma



February: Athens



March: Minamisoma



April: Boston



April: Boston



June: Nepal



November: Kolkata



November: Kolkata



Keys of Change  
Can music change the world? We believe it can.

# Another day in the office...



Keys of Change  
Can music change the world? We believe it can.