



BBC National
Orchestra and
Chorus of Wales

Cerddorfa
a Chorws
Cenedlaethol
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PRESS RELEASE
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Didgeridoos, Beethoven and immersive experiences; BBC NOW presents 2019-20 season

Highlights of BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales' 2019-20 season include:

- BBC NOW presents a new way to experience classical music in *Classical Playlist: Live*, in collaboration with Swansea City Council
- The orchestra and chorus come together with Cardiff's music community to present Beethoven's most iconic works in 2020, marking 250 years since his birth
- Jess Gillam gives the world premiere of *Stravaganza*, a new work for saxophone and orchestra by Sir Karl Jenkins
- A new strand of concerts, *CoLaboratory*, explores surprising and experimental collaborations, fusing the musical worlds of American rap artist Dessa and Australia's leading didgeridoo player William Barton with BBC NOW
- Award-winning Welsh folk band Calan join BBC NOW to celebrate St David's Day
- BBC NOW join Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood for a special Late Night Prom featuring the world premiere of his new work, *Horror vacui*.

Announced today, BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of Wales (BBC NOW) presents their 2019-20 season, featuring epic orchestral and choral masterworks, rediscovered gems, invigorating contemporary music and exploratory new concert formats.

Michael Garvey, Director of BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales said: "*From the massed forces of Verdi's mighty Requiem to our development of the traditional concert format in Classical Playlist Live – we hope everyone will find something to enjoy in our 2019-20 season. It's a season with an incredible line up of artists, which showcases the orchestra's breadth alongside our ambition to make classical music accessible to all audiences through innovative concerts and imaginative learning work. We look forward to presenting our new season to our audiences here in Wales and further afield.*"

BBC NOW's Classical Playlist Live - A new way to experience classical music

In collaboration with Swansea City Council, BBC NOW presents a new style of concert aimed at introducing live classical music to those who might not have experienced it before. BBC NOW rewrite the rulebook of what an orchestral concert can be, with an immersive performance experience in Brangwyn Hall which presents a varied programme of orchestral and choral music in an informal and arresting format. BBC NOW's *Classical Playlist: Live* will be presented from three separate stages inside the hall, with lighting directing the listener's attention. Audiences will be able to stand, sit or walk around during the performance and will be encouraged to share their experience on social

media throughout the concert. This concert forms part of the celebrations to mark Swansea's 50th anniversary as a city, taking place in 2019 (5 October, Brangwyn Hall).

CoLaboratory – Exploring experimental collaborations

A new strand at BBC Hoddinott Hall presents an alternative orchestral experience for audiences, in which BBC NOW invite musicians from different genres of music to collaborate with them to fuse two musical worlds. The first concert in the **CoLaboratory** series sees the orchestra work with American rapper, singer and writer **Dessa** (7 November, BBC Hoddinott Hall). A style defined by a ferocity, wit, tenderness, and candour, Dessa gave six sold-out performances in a recent collaboration with the Grammy award-winning Minnesota Orchestra and her newest record, *Chime*, charted on the Billboard top-200 and debuted at number nine on the US Alternative charts. In the second concert of the series, BBC NOW is joined by **William Barton**, Australia's leading virtuoso didgeridoo player. Barton brings a taste of traditional Australian music to Cardiff with Peter Sculthorpe's *Earth Cry*, a searingly powerful work for didgeridoo and orchestra, alongside other orchestral works by Percy Grainger and Brett Dean, conducted by Jessica Cottis (24 April, BBC Hoddinott Hall).

Beethoven at 250

In the year that marks 250 years since the birth of one of the most influential figures in classical music, Cardiff's music community bring together Beethoven's most iconic works in 2020, as BBC NOW join Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Sinfonia Cymru, St David's Hall, and Welsh National Opera to present Beethoven 250.

BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales, conducted by Jaime Martín, and WNO Orchestra, conducted by Carlo Rizzi, join forces for **Beethoven: The 1808 Concert** - a monumental event at St David's Hall to recreate one of music history's most remarkable concerts – organised by Beethoven himself at the Theater an der Wien in Vienna 1808. The two orchestras present Beethoven's original concert programme, including his *Symphony No.5*, *Piano Concerto No.4* performed by **Steven Osborne** and *Choral Fantasy* with **Llŷr Williams** (19 January, St David's Hall).

Further Beethoven essentials across the season include Beethoven's momentous *Symphony No.3 'Eroica'* in a concert pairing the work with Strauss' elegy for strings, *Metamorphosen*, which quotes from the *Eroica* (13 March, Brangwyn Hall & 15 March, St George's Bristol) as well as the choral masterwork *Missa Solemnis* with the orchestra and chorus led by Conductor Laureate **Tadaaki Otaka** (5 June, BBC Hoddinott Hall).

Artistic Highlights

In a season showcasing **choral masterworks**, BBC National Chorus of Wales lead performances of Verdi's *Requiem*, conducted by **Richard Farnes** (3 October, St David's Hall), Bruckner's *Mass in E minor*, conducted by **Adrian Partington** (26 October, BBC Hoddinott Hall), Handel's *Messiah* with WNO Orchestra, conducted by **Christoph Poppen** (11 December, St David's Hall) and J.S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, conducted by **John Butt** (9 April, Brangwyn Hall & 10 April, St David's Hall).

The orchestra's commitment to new music continues, as rising star **Jess Gillam** gives the premiere of *Stravaganza*, a new work for saxophone and orchestra by one of the world's most recognised composers, Swansea-born **Sir Karl Jenkins**. Part of a programme that also features music by Charles Ives and two ballet scores, Debussy's *Jeux* and Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, the concert is conducted by the American **Ryan Bancroft**, whose past career as a dancer will enliven his interpretation of the programme (7 May, St David's Hall and 8 May, Brangwyn Hall). The UK premiere of **Judith Weir's** *Oboe Concerto* is performed by its dedicatee **Celia Craig**, former Principal Cor Anglais for BBC NOW, and a new arrangement of orchestral music from Wagner's *Parsifal*

receives its UK premiere, under the baton of its creator **Andrew Gourlay** (27 September, BBC Hoddinott Hall). The orchestra also continues their exploration of neglected works with **Grace Williams'** Violin Concerto, performed by **Madeleine Mitchell** (27 March, BBC Hoddinott Hall).

Guest artists joining BBC NOW for the 2019-20 season include violinists **Ning Feng** and **Esther Yoo**, pianists **Huw Watkins** and **Llŷr Williams** and cellists **Alban Gerhardt** and **Anastasia Kobekina**. Guest conductors include **Jessica Cottis**, **Jaume Santonja**, **Carlos Miguel Prieto**, **Clemens Schuldt**, **Joseph Swenson** and **Anu Tali**.

Welsh Collaborations

Welsh folk group Calan join BBC NOW to mark St David's Day with a UK premiere of *Cân Cnawd y Pridd* – a suite of five compositions inspired by collections of traditional Welsh songs and tunes at the National Library of Wales. The suite is dedicated to the memory of Meredydd Evans - one of the most important song collectors of the 20th Century, and a titan of Welsh culture. The piece is a joint commission between BBC NOW and Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne (1 March, St David's Hall).

As part of the orchestra's autumn tour, there will be a special concert in partnership with Pontio in Bangor features **Band Pres Llareggub** and special guests, coming together to mark the 50th anniversary of seminal Welsh record label **Recordiau Sain** – renowned for its unique contribution to Welsh popular music. Band leader Owain Roberts curates and conducts an evening of tracks from Sain's archive, which will also be broadcast on BBC Radio Cymru, as BBC NOW celebrates the artists and music produced in the half century since Sain's first single *Dwr* was released in 1969 (23 November, Pontio).

Festival highlights

BBC NOW performs at festivals across the UK and further afield, including five concerts at the **BBC Proms 2019**, four of which feature premieres. The orchestra joins the BBC Youth Ensemble for a special **Late Night Prom** curated by composer and lead guitarist of Radiohead, **Jonny Greenwood**, in which he presents the world premiere of his new electronic-inspired work *Horror vacui*, alongside works by Biber, Penderecki and Reich (10 September, London). The orchestra and chorus give the world premiere of Welsh composer **Huw Watkins'** *The Moon* with **Tadaaki Otaka** (8 August, London), **Marcus Stenz** conducts the UK premiere of a new concerto for two trumpets by **Tobias Bröström** (25 July, London), and the orchestra joins the winner of BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2017, **Catriona Morison**, in a world premiere by **Errollyn Wallen**, which pays homage to artist Howard Hodgkin (15 August, London). As always, BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales join the annual spectacular Last Night of the Proms celebrations at **BBC Proms in the Park** in Swansea (14 September, Singleton Park Swansea).

The summer sees BBC NOW make appearances at **St David's Cathedral Festival** performing Saint-Saens *Symphony No.3* alongside Poulenc's *Organ Concerto in G minor* (25 May); at **Lichfield Festival** the orchestra performs two major works, Shostakovich's *Cello Concerto no. 1* and Elgar's *Enigma Variations* (13 July); at the **Three Choirs Festival** in Gloucester they join together with the Three Choirs Festival Chorus and Three Cathedral Choirs Choristers for Joubert's *An English Requiem* (30 July). As part of the 2019-20 season, BBC NOW will also perform at the **Oxford Lieder Festival** (11 October) and **Bath MozartFest** (16 November).

Learning and Education

A new project combining music and Makaton (a sign and symbol language programme) will see BBC NOW working with Canolfan Addysg y Bont on Anglesey in North Wales in the autumn. Younger audiences can also enjoy a series of concerts in Newtown (22 September), Llandudno (22 March) and Cardiff (29 March), with live illustration from artist James Mayhew. During the concerts

Mayhew's work will be projected onto a screen so that the audience can watch the artwork being created in sync with the music.

This summer, BBC NOW joins together with local ensembles to help nurture the next generation of young musicians in Wales. A family-friendly concert at St David's Cathedral showcases young singers and instrumentalists from Pembrokeshire (24 May, St David's Cathedral), and workshops will take place to help the young musicians prepare for their performance. The Orchestra will also host the Six Counties Youth Music Strings, which will feature instrumentalists from Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Swansea and Neath/Port Talbot. A string ensemble from BBC NOW will mentor and coach the string players, and the project will culminate in an evening side by side performance (15 July, BBC Hoddinott Hall).

Discover More

BBC NOW's *Discover More* returns with a new series of pre-concert talks and insight from Discovery Guide Jonathan James, who will be joined by conductors, soloists and musicians from the orchestra. Designed for newcomers and regular concert goers, the series includes explorations of Verdi's operatic mastery, the art of 'jazzical' crossover, Sibelius' breakthrough symphonic sound and connections between dance and music, all supported by bespoke digital content.

Live Streams and Broadcasts

BBC NOW presents a new season of live streamed performances from BBC Hoddinott Hall – beginning with Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (27 September, BBC Hoddinott Hall). The orchestra will round off the current season with a live stream of Brahms' *Requiem*, under the baton of **Nathalie Stutzmann** (28 June, BBC Hoddinott Hall).

The orchestra's concerts can regularly be heard on BBC Radio 3 and on BBC Radio Cymru and available to listen again on the BBC Sounds 30 days thereafter.

For more information about BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales visit bbc.co.uk/bbcnow. Season tickets on sale 25 May 2019. Individual tickets on sale from 28 June 2019.

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A welsh language version of the press release is available.

Notes to Editors

BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales

For 90 years BBC NOW has played an integral part in the cultural landscape of Wales, occupying a distinctive role as both broadcast and national symphony orchestra. It performs a busy schedule of live concerts throughout Wales and the rest of the UK. It's part of BBC Wales and supported by the Arts Council of Wales, and the Orchestra is an ambassador of Welsh music, championing contemporary composers and musicians and works closely with Welsh Composer-in-Association Huw Watkins. BBC National Chorus of Wales is one of the leading mixed choruses in the UK and, while preserving its amateur status, works to the highest professional standards under Artistic Director, Adrian Partington. Based at BBC Hoddinott Hall in Cardiff Bay, the Chorus is made up of over 150 singers.

Highlights of the 2018–19 season for the Orchestra and Chorus include the first complete performance of Stanford's *Mass Via Victrix* (1914–1918), Britten's *War Requiem* with Mark Wigglesworth and Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ* with Sir Andrew Davis. BBC NOW also gave premiere performances of pieces by Paul Mealor and Jonathan Dove.

The Orchestra and Chorus' performances can be heard regularly across the BBC, on Radio 3, Radio Wales and Radio Cymru. BBC NOW performs biennially at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World and annually at the BBC Proms. Building on its extensive work with special educational needs schools, BBC NOW performed the first ever Relaxed Prom in 2017, which won the Best Family Event at the 2018 Fantastic for Families Awards.

In December 2018 the Orchestra toured to China with Xian Zhang and in 2015, as part of an extensive South America tour, the orchestra visited the Welsh colony in Patagonia where musicians worked in schools and with the community. In January 2018 the Chorus toured to Brittany to performing with Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne conducted by Grant Llewellyn.

The Orchestra and Chorus' home is at BBC Hoddinott Hall in Cardiff Bay, where BBC NOW continues its work as one of the UK's foremost soundtrack orchestras.

bbc.co.uk/bbcnow

BBC Orchestras and Choirs

The BBC's Orchestras and Choirs each play a unique role in British cultural life. Based in Cardiff, Glasgow, London and Salford, the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Singers and the BBC Philharmonic, reach an audience of millions with their wide-ranging and distinctive programming. Performing with the world's leading conductors and soloists, the BBC Orchestras and Choirs give around 400 concerts a year in over 60 locations across the UK as well as touring worldwide, providing hundreds of hours of broadcast for BBC Radio and television. They have given around 60 world premiere performances in the last year. The Orchestras and Choirs organise around 200 learning and outreach projects across the country, bringing music to tens of thousands of people of all ages across the UK. They are an integral part of the BBC's Ten Pieces, an initiative designed to encourage children to get creative with classical music. The BBC Orchestras and Choirs are the backbone of the BBC Proms, collectively giving almost half of the concerts at the world's largest classical music festival.