

PRESS RELEASE

9 May 2018



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra announces its 2018-19 Concert Season at Symphony Hall, Birmingham

- **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** curates *Baltic Way* - a 23-concert exploration of the culture of the Baltic states celebrating the centenary of their establishment and 30 years since their liberation
- **Kazuki Yamada** is appointed as the CBSO's new Principal Guest Conductor
- **Sir Simon Rattle** returns on 28 March 2019 to conduct a fundraising concert featuring **Beethoven's Ninth Symphony**, and celebrating 25 years since he created the CBSO Youth and Children's Choruses with **Simon Halsey CBE**
- Latvian violinist **Gidon Kremer** is Artist in Residence for the season
- UK premiere of **Roxanna Panufnik's *Faithful Journey – A Mass for Poland***, conducted by **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla**, with **Mary Bevan** and the CBSO Chorus
- **Weinberg Weekend** featuring **Gidon Kremer** and **Kremerata Baltica**
- **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** conducts **Mahler's *Symphony No. 2***, one of the CBSO's signature works, with the CBSO Chorus, **Lucy Crowe** and **Karen Cargill**
- **Something for everyone; *Friday Night Classics*** concerts feature the music of **Nat King Cole**, music from the **Harry Potter** and **Bond** films and songs from the '60s. **Alan Titchmarsh** and **Matt Baker** present the CBSO's family *Choral Christmas* concerts
- Debut artists include **Yuja Wang**, **Patricia Kopatchinskaja**, **Jeremy Denk**, **Elim Chan**, **Lucas and Arthur Jussen**, **Jan Lisiecki**, **Constantinos Carydis**, **Yulianna Avdeeva** and **Ray Chen**
- **Over 3000 new *Mystery Seats*** tickets available for just **£13**, making world-class music even more accessible

The **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)** is delighted to announce its 2018-19 Concert Season at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. The new season follows an enormously successful 2017-18, about which *The Guardian* wrote '*The CBSO is on a new high*', and widespread critical acclaim for its ambitious Debussy Festival curated by **Osborn Music Director Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** - the largest event of its kind in the world.

The 2018-19 season features concerts and events devised and conducted by **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** marking historic events in the Baltic States, UK premieres, the return of **Sir Simon Rattle** for a special fundraising concert, and a wealth of international artists making their CBSO debuts. The CBSO is also delighted to welcome **Kazuki Yamada** as its new Principal Guest Conductor, and violinist **Gidon Kremer** as Artist in Residence for the season. Through its concerts as resident orchestra at Symphony Hall Birmingham and on tour around the country and internationally, the CBSO and its family of ensembles continue to be ambassadors for cultural excellence in the Midlands.

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla comments on the CBSO 2018-19 season: "I am delighted to share our 18-19 season plans and look forward to taking our audiences on a true musical exploration as we perform music inspired by the different cultures of the Baltic region. I am particularly happy that my dear friend **Gidon Kremer** will join us as Artist in Residence and welcome **Kazuki Yamada** to the CBSO family"

The Baltic Way

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla marks the centenary of the establishment of the Baltic states in 2018, and 30 years since their liberation in 2019, with *Baltic Way*, 23 themed concerts and events celebrating the music and culture of the Baltic region. *Baltic Way* takes its name from the historic moment in 1989 during the fall of the Iron Curtain when 2 million people joined hands and sang together across **Gražinytė-Tyla's** native Lithuania and the other Baltic states.

PRESS RELEASE

9 May 2018



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

Concerts as part of the Baltic Way include the UK premiere of **Roxanna Panufnik's** *Faithful Journey – A Mass For Poland*, conducted by Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. Panufnik's father Sir Andrej Panufnik was the CBSO's Chief Conductor in the 1950's after fleeing Poland, and the piece – a major co-commission from the CBSO and the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra – marks 100 years of Polish history and features soprano Mary Bevan with the **CBSO Chorus**. Other events include a **Weinberg Weekend** led by Gražinytė-Tyla and Artist in Residence **Gidon Kremer**, and an outdoor Baltic-style song festival at the **University of Birmingham** led by Gražinytė-Tyla and CBSO Chorus Director **Simon Halsey CBE** with the CBSO's family of Choruses and guest choirs from around the region. On 16 February 2019 Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla marks 100 years since the creation of her native Lithuania by conducting the CBSO and CBSO Chorus in a concert featuring the UK premiere of *The Sea* by Lithuanian painter and composer Mikalojus Čiurlionis, accompanied by the live creation of accompanying images by Birmingham-born artist Norman Perryman.

New CBSO Principal Guest Conductor Kazuki Yamada

Since making his CBSO debut in 2012, conductor **Kazuki Yamada** has become a firm favourite with audiences at Symphony Hall and has toured with the Orchestra to his native Japan. The CBSO is therefore delighted to announce his appointment as Principal Guest Conductor. Yamada begins his tenure with three concerts in 2018-19, conducting works by composers including Bernstein, Ravel, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky and Mozart.

Rattle conducts Beethoven's Ninth

Former CBSO Music Director **Sir Simon Rattle** makes a welcome return on 28 March 2019 for a special fundraising concert featuring Beethoven's *Symphony No.9*. The concert will also celebrate 25 years since Sir Simon and CBSO Chorus Director **Simon Halsey CBE** founded the **CBSO Youth and Children's Choruses**, and both ensembles take centre stage in the first half of the programme. The **CBSO Chorus** and soloists Iwona Sobotka, Chrystal E. Williams, Joshua Stuart and Eric Greene then join the CBSO for Beethoven's unmistakable *Symphony No.9*. All guest artists, including Sir Simon, are generously performing for free with all concert proceeds going to support the CBSO's artistic projects and education work.

Artist in Residence Gidon Kremer

Legendary Latvian violinist **Gidon Kremer** is the CBSO's Artist in Residence this season at the invitation of Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, having been close collaborators for many years. He begins his residency by performing Bartók's *Violin Concerto No.1* in the season's opening concert under conductor **Omer Meir Wellber**. Kremer explores the music of Polish-Russian composer Mieczysław Weinberg throughout the season, performing his *Violin Concerto* under Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, and together they lead a **Weinberg Weekend** with Kremer bringing **Kremerata Baltica** - the renowned chamber orchestra which he founded - to perform with the CBSO at Symphony Hall and give a special concert with Kremer at Town Hall. During the weekend Kremer also performs Weinberg's unaccompanied *24 Preludes* at CBSO Centre, before a changing backdrop by Lithuanian photographer Antanus Sutkus.

The CBSO's family of Choruses

The **CBSO's Youth and Children's Choruses** were formed by Sir Simon Rattle and Simon Halsey in 1994, and the CBSO will celebrate this 25-year anniversary in the first half of a special fundraising concert on 28 March 2019. The programme also features the **CBSO Chorus** in *Beethoven's Symphony No. 9*. Other performances by the CBSO Chorus in the 2018-19 season include Mahler's *Symphony No.2 (Resurrection)*, the UK premiere of **Roxanna Panufnik's** *Faithful Journey – A Mass for Poland* and the UK premiere of Čiurlionis' *The Sea*. **Birmingham University Singers** join the CBSO Chorus for Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* under **John Wilson**, and CBSO Associate Conductor **Michael Seal** conducts the CBSO Chorus in the Classic FM Hall of Fame.

PRESS RELEASE

9 May 2018



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

The CBSO Chorus and Youth Chorus perform in two concerts at the **BBC Proms 2018** with the CBSO and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the CBSO's community choir **SO Vocal** join the other choruses for *A Choral Christmas* and the open-air Baltic-style Song Festival. The CBSO Chorus, Youth Chorus and Children's Chorus close the season with Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* under Edward Gardner.

Friday Night Classics

The CBSO's hugely popular *Friday Night Classics* concerts see the CBSO musicians showcasing their versatility in performing orchestral music from a variety of genres. Concerts this season include a celebration of Nat King Cole marking the centenary of his birth, songs from the '60s, music from the Harry Potter and James Bond movies, classic rock from West End musicals and classical music from Hollywood blockbusters. The festive season gets off to a swinging start with West End vocalists joining the CBSO for Christmas Swing, and the **CBSO Chorus** join conductor **Michael Seal** and presenter **John Suchet** for the **Classic FM Hall of Fame**.

Guest Artists

Internationally-renowned artists making their CBSO debuts this season include pianists **Yuja Wang, Jeremy Denk, Jan Lisiecki, Lucas and Arthur Jussen, Yulianna Avdeeva** and **Alexander Gavrylyuk**; and violinists **Augustin Hadelich, Ray Chen, Patricia Kopatchinskaja** and **Sergej Krylov**. Debut conductors include **Elim Chan, Constantinos Carydis, Stanislav Kochanovsky, Tianyi Lui** and conductor / oboist **François Leleux**, who play-directs a programme at Town Hall Birmingham.

Returning guest soloists include cellists **Steven Isserlis** and **Paul Watkins**; violinists **Baiba Skride, James Ehnes, Benjamin Beilman, Jennifer Pike** and **Christian Tetzlaff**; pianists **Rudolf Buchbinder, Steven Osborne, Benjamin Grosvenor** and **Stephen Hough**; mezzo **Karen Cargill**, soprano **Mary Bevan** and baritone **Christopher Maltman**. Returning conductors include **Sir Simon Rattle**, new Principal Guest Conductor **Kazuki Yamada**, and **Edward Gardner, Vassily Sinaisky, Alpesh Chauhan, Omer Meir Wellber, John Wilson, Michael Seal, Stephen Bell** and **Jac van Steen**.

Young people at the heart of the CBSO's work

The CBSO has an ongoing commitment to showcase and nurture the talents of young musicians and to present concerts for all age groups. The **CBSO Youth Orchestra** - one of Europe's leading Youth Orchestras - perform Copland's *Symphony No.3* and Szymanowski's *Violin Concerto No.1* under conductor **Cristian Măcelaru** and Shostakovich's *Symphony No.7 (Leningrad)* and Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* under the baton of **Michael Seal**. The **CBSO Youth Chorus** also perform in two concerts at the **BBC Proms** under **Ludovic Morlot** and **Andris Nelsons**.

The CBSO continues to collaborate with young people throughout the city, providing talented musicians from **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire** the opportunity to present pre-concert performances at Symphony Hall. The CBSO's Learning and Engagement projects continue to reach over 16,000 school pupils per year throughout the city, with the CBSO's musicians working alongside children from all backgrounds.

Following the success of the CBSO's annual Key Stage 2 and 3 concerts at Symphony Hall, concerts for Key Stage 1 school pupils are reintroduced this season at CBSO Centre, for pupils aged 5-7. The CBSO's annual Key Stage 2 and 3 school's concerts at Symphony Hall are performed in front of up to 12,000 local pupils from ages 7 - 14 and this season are conducted by **Michael Seal** and the CBSO's new Assistant Conductor and presented by **Catherine Arlidge** and **Tom Redmond**. CBSO's successful relaxed concerts for children and young people with special educational needs will also return in Spring 2019.

PRESS RELEASE

9 May 2018



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

Family Concerts at Symphony Hall are suitable for ages 5-11, which this season feature *Sounds of the Sea* conducted by **Timothy Redmond**, a *Musical Mystery* trail conducted by **Tianyi Lui** (both presented by **Tom Redmond**), and *Travels Through Time*, conducted by **Michael Seal** and presented by **Catherine Arlidge**. Tickets include free pre-concert craft activities in the foyer of Symphony Hall. For younger children, 15 **Notelets** concerts for under-5s provide a toddler-friendly interactive introduction to classical music, combining music with story-telling and presented in the intimate surroundings of CBSO Centre.

World-class music accessible to everyone

The CBSO announces a new discounted ticket scheme for the 2018-19 season, called **Mystery Seats**. Over 3000 tickets will be available across the season for selected concerts priced at just £13. By booking a mystery seat, audience members will be guaranteed entry to the concert, but won't know where they will be sitting until the day of the performance. This means all seats will be worth at least £19.50 but audiences could get lucky with a top-price ticket.

The Groups offer has been extended for the new season, to enable groups of 8 or more to benefit from the 20% discount on full price tickets, plus other benefits.

The CBSO remains committed to ensuring there are opportunities for people to experience great music regardless of financial barriers. Children aged 17 and under, school groups and benefit recipients can attend concerts from just £6, and students can also purchase tickets from just £6 via the **Student Pulse Birmingham** mobile app. Tickets for young professionals aged between 18 -30 are £10 for selected concerts and across the season a wide range of discounts and benefits can be unlocked by purchasing concert packages.

CBSO at summer festivals

The **CBSO**, **CBSO Chorus** and **CBSO Youth Chorus** perform at the **BBC Proms** on 15 August. The programme brings repertoire from the CBSO's recent successful Debussy Festival to the Royal Albert Hall. This all-French programme, which also features Ravel's *Bolero*, is conducted by **Ludovic Morlot** and features guest mezzo-soprano **Justina Gringytė**. Also at the **BBC Proms**, the **CBSO Youth Chorus** and the female singers of the **CBSO Chorus** perform Mahler's Symphony No.3 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and **Andris Nelsons** on 2 September. The CBSO returns to **Sutton Park** on 30 June for an open-air concert and will perform a programme including Schubert Symphonies No. 5 & 8 with **Edward Gardner** at the **Lichfield Festival** on 6 July. The CBSO and Ludovic Morlot take Debussy, Stravinsky and Ravel to the **Edinburgh International Festival** on 17 August at Usher Hall, and the Orchestra appears at the **Lucerne Festival** with **Omer Meir Wellber** and **Gidon Kremer** on 15 September.

BBC Radio 3 in Concert

The CBSO's long-standing association with **BBC Radio 3** continues throughout the season, with selected concerts being broadcast on *Radio 3 in Concert*. The CBSO's Prom will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 on 15 August, as will the CBSO Chorus and Youth Chorus's Prom with the Boston Symphony Orchestra on 2 September.

Classic FM's Orchestra in the Midlands

The CBSO is proud to continue its partnership with Classic FM, the UK's most popular classical music station, as its Orchestra in the Midlands. As part of *Friday Night Classics*, the **Classic FM Hall of Fame** returns on 16 November 2018 presented by **John Suchet**, and on 12 April 2019 classical music from the movies takes centre stage in **Classic FM's Movie Classics**.

Lunchtime Chamber Music at CBSO Centre and CBSO+ free pre-concert events

The Osborn Chamber Music Programme *Centre Stage* concerts at CBSO Centre are informal lunchtime chamber music concerts presenting works ranging from the baroque to the 20th Century. These concerts

PRESS RELEASE

9 May 2018



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

are programmed by the CBSO musicians themselves and are a lunchtime treat in the centre of Birmingham. CBSO+ free pre-concert events form an integral part of the season, making concerts a whole-evening experience. Events include free pre-concert talks and Q&As with conductors and soloists, and pre-concert performances by talented young musicians from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

Full season details can be found at www.cbso.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

About the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras, and the flagship of musical life in Birmingham and the Midlands.

Based at Birmingham's spectacular Symphony Hall, the orchestra and its ensembles give over 150 concerts each year in the UK and worldwide, playing a wide range of music including everything from Wagner operas to world premieres, film music and family concerts. With a far-reaching education and community programme, four choruses and a Youth Orchestra, it is involved with every aspect of music-making in the Midlands. But at its heart is a team of 90 superb professional musicians, and a 98-year tradition of making the world's greatest music.

The orchestra was founded by future Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain in 1920, and Elgar conducted its inaugural concert. But it was when it discovered the young British conductor Simon Rattle in 1980 that the CBSO became internationally famous, and showed how the arts can help give a new sense of direction to a whole city. Rattle's successors Sakari Oramo and Andris Nelsons cemented that global reputation, and continued to build on the CBSO's distinguished tradition as one of the UK's leading musical ambassadors.

Under the artistic leadership of Osborn Music Director* Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla the CBSO will continue to do what it does best – playing great music for people in Birmingham and beyond. As it approaches its centenary in 2020, the CBSO remains one of the most vibrant cultural organisations in the UK.

*The position of Music Director is generously supported by John Osborn.

BBC Radio 3

Since its launch in 1946, BBC Radio 3 – formerly the Third Programme, has been a bold pioneer in the cultural world. It is one of the world's foremost presenters, creators, commissioners and curators across classical, folk, world, jazz and contemporary music as well as drama, philosophy and ideas. The station is also the most significant commissioner of new and contemporary music in the UK, with 35 new works commissioned annually and broadcasts over 600 concerts a year, including live broadcasts from the greatest classical music festival in the world (BBC Proms). Radio 3's In Concert programme alone reaches the equivalent of 250 packed concert halls a week, and the BBC Orchestras and Choirs give around 400 concerts a year in over 60 UK locations. The station has always nurtured extraordinary artistic talents, provided a platform for important scientific and political debates/announcements, and broadcast ground-breaking experimental drama – always while delivering its core aim of connecting audiences with pioneering music and culture.

Classic FM

Classic FM is the UK's biggest single commercial radio station and the most popular classical music brand, reaching 5.7 million listeners every week. Classic FM's programmes are hosted by a mix of classical music experts and household names including John Suchet, Alexander Armstrong, Myleene Klass, Bill Turnbull, Alan Titchmarsh, Charlotte Hawkins, Aled Jones, Margherita Taylor and Nicholas Owen. Since its launch in

1992, Classic FM has aimed to make classical music accessible and relevant to everyone and in doing so, introduce an entirely new audience to the genre. ClassicFM.com is the UK's biggest classical music website and has 1.8 million unique monthly web and app users. Classic FM is owned by Global. It is available across the UK on 100-102 FM, DAB digital radio and TV, the Classic FM app, at ClassicFM.com and on the Global Player. Source: RAJAR / Ipsos-MORI / RSMB, period ending December 18th 2017.