



**City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra announces appointment of**  
**David Burbidge CBE DL as Chair**

After an extensive search the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra has appointed David Burbidge CBE as its Chair, succeeding Bridget Blow CBE who stands down after completing her successful six-year term of office.

David recently led Coventry's successful bid to win the UK City of Culture title for 2021, and continues his role as Chairman of the Coventry City of Culture Trust. He has previously served as Chairman of the Belgrade Theatre and Coventry Cathedral Development Trust, as a trustee of the RSC, and on the development boards of Garsington Opera and Compton Verney. He holds a CBE for services to cultural philanthropy having led five multi-million-pound fundraising campaigns including the Central Campaign for the £112 million rebuilding of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

In his business career David was Managing Director of Burbidge & Son (a manufacturer of bespoke quality kitchen and bathroom furniture, of which he remains Chairman), Chairman of Burbidge Capital Ltd and a director of Coventry Building Society. He was High Sheriff of the West Midlands in 1990-91, is a Deputy Lieutenant of the West Midlands, and holds two honorary doctorates.

Bridget Blow CBE commented "David is a nationally-admired advocate for the arts and will bring to the CBSO strong governance experience and a formidable fundraising track record. I have enjoyed my time as Chair immensely and am pleased to be leaving the orchestra in such capable hands".

During Bridget Blow's time as Chair the CBSO has maintained its position as one of the world's great orchestras and the flagship of musical life in Birmingham and the Midlands despite a challenging series of cuts to national and regional funding for the arts. As well as sustaining a wide-ranging concert programme at Symphony Hall and expanding its work in the region's communities and schools, the CBSO has also more than doubled its fundraised income during this period. In February 2016 the organisation appointed Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (described by BBC Music Magazine as "*Europe's most exciting young conductor*") as its Music Director, and her work to date has won global acclaim.

Stephen Maddock OBE, Chief Executive added "Bridget Blow has been a transformative Chair, having modernised our governance and helped us to significantly strengthen our finances over the last six years. We are delighted that David has agreed to join us as we build on her legacy. These are challenging times, but we have great opportunities ahead in the run-up to our centenary in 2020 and David promises to be an outstanding champion for our work."

David Burbidge CBE said "I am honoured to have been invited to become Chair of the CBSO. I will do all that I can to secure and enhance the standing of our region's world-class orchestra."

Peter Knott, Area Director, Arts Council England, said: "We're delighted to welcome David as the Chair of CBSO. His extensive knowledge and commitment to arts and culture has been key to shaping the cultural landscape of the Midlands including Coventry securing the City of Culture 2021 title.

"CBSO has an outstanding national and international reputation and his wealth of experience working in business, heritage and culture will stand him in good stead to continue their excellent work.

"Bridget has been instrumental in leading the orchestra over the past six years. These are exciting times for Birmingham as we approach the CBSO's centenary in 2020 and the Commonwealth Games 2022 and we look forward to seeing what the future holds for top-class music in the city."

## PRESS RELEASE

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**City of Birmingham**  
Symphony Orchestra

### Notes to Editors

#### **About the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)**

Based at Birmingham's spectacular Symphony Hall, the City of Birmingham Symphony 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 97-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.

[www.cbso.co.uk](http://www.cbso.co.uk)

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