

PRESS RELEASE

30 July 2018



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra announces appointment of new conductor for the CBSO Children's Chorus ahead of its 25th anniversary in 2019

The **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)** is delighted to announce that **Ula Weber** has been appointed as the conductor of the **CBSO Children's Chorus** ahead of its 25th anniversary in 2019.

A trained choral conductor and former primary school teacher, Ula Weber has been involved with many of the CBSO's Learning & Participation projects and is the regular conductor of SO Vocal, the CBSO's 200-strong community choir. Within Birmingham and the surrounding areas, she conducts a number of choirs, including the Birmingham City Council Choir, and performs with renowned choir Ex-Cathedra. She has also been one of Ex Cathedra's lead education vocal tutors and co-created its award-winning *Singing Playgrounds* project. She is also founder of the National Teacher's Choir, co-founder of music education organisation Vocal.Point, and Musical Director of Birmingham-based *Echo Doliny*, the National Polish Folk Choir of Great Britain.

Ula Weber was selected following a seven-month search for a new conductor, providing each of the final candidates with the opportunity to work with the CBSO Children's Chorus to prepare them for a specific performance. Ula's appointment has been made based on the musical and vocal attainment of the chorus during her trial period.

Ula Weber comments:

"I'm thrilled to be the new conductor of the CBSO Children's Chorus and I look forward to working with the children and indeed, the whole of the CBSO family. With some exciting projects in the pipeline, I can't wait to get started!"

CBSO Chorus Director **Simon Halsey CBE** adds:

"I'm delighted that Ula Weber will be joining the choral staff of the CBSO as the conductor of our wonderful Children's Chorus. Under her leadership the Children's Chorus will continue to go from strength to strength, and I look forward to working with her on many exciting performances and collaborations over the coming season, and into the CBSO's Centenary celebrations in 2020."

The CBSO Children's Chorus will also mark its 25th anniversary with a special fundraising concert on **28 March 2019** celebrating 25 years since former CBSO Music Director **Sir Simon Rattle** and CBSO Chorus Director **Simon Halsey CBE** founded the CBSO Youth and Children's Choruses. Both ensembles will take centre stage in the first half of the programme with their own conductors, with Sir Simon Rattle conducting the CBSO and CBSO Chorus in the programme's second half. The CBSO Children's Chorus will work with CBSO Music Director **Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla** on 21st and 27th November 2018 in two performances of Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker*, and also perform in the closing concert of the CBSO's 2018-19 season on **26 June 2019**, *The Damnation of Faust* conducted by **Edward Gardner**.

The CBSO are grateful to the Clive and Sylvia Richards Charity, Principal Supporter of the CBSO's work with young people.

Full season details can be found at www.cbsoco.uk

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Notes to Editors

About Ula Weber

A former “Outstanding” (Ofsted 2004) primary school teacher, Ula is a leading conductor, teacher trainer and workshop leader, whose work has taken her around the UK and as far afield as Hong Kong, Uganda, Ukraine, Thailand, China and New Zealand. Ula is an expert in developing choral and classroom singing and has delivered singing strategies for Sandwell and Dudley Music Hubs. She has had a number of songs and arrangements published and is the Co-founder of music education organization Vocal.Point. Ula sings with the renowned choir Ex Cathedra and is one of their lead education vocal tutors. She co-created Ex Cathedra Education’s internationally acclaimed and award-winning *Singing Playgrounds* project.

A trained choral conductor, Ula currently conducts CBSO SO Vocal (a 200-strong community choir run by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra) and the Birmingham City Council Choir (as featured in the 2013 BBC2 programme ‘The Choir’, with Gareth Malone). She is the founder and Musical Director of *Echo Doliny* (The National Polish folk choir) and the National Teachers’ Choir. Most recently Ula has taken on the role of conductor of the CBSO Children’s Chorus.

As Head of Events for the National Choral Organisation, Sing for Pleasure (SfP), Ula organises conducting and singing courses across the UK and abroad. She regularly tutors on SfP conductor training courses and is Course Director for their annual Summer School.

Ula guest conducts at national and international events and is regularly invited to lead singing, training, and corporate workshops for organisations including ABCD, BBC, G4S, Glyndebourne, NYCOS, Music Mark, Sing Up, Sistema Scotland, the UK Choir Festival and numerous Music Hubs across the UK.

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.