

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**19 June 2018**



**City of Birmingham**  
**Symphony Orchestra**

**City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's four-year World War One education project culminates with free world premiere performance of a new War Requiem created by composer Kerry Andrew and Birmingham schoolchildren**

A landmark education project delivered by the **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)** to commemorate the centenary of World War One will culminate on 27 June with the world premiere of *The Mud and the Sky: A World War One Requiem* – a major new work for young singers created over four years by award-winning composer Kerry Andrew and pupils from primary schools in the Perry Barr district of Birmingham.

The concert will feature professional musicians from the CBSO and a 200-strong choir of pupils from participating schools and members of the CBSO Children's Chorus. It will take place at Birmingham's spectacular Symphony Hall at 6.15pm on 27 June – entry is free of charge and everyone is welcome to attend.

The project has involved pupils from Anglesey Primary School, Brookvale Primary School, Rookery School, St. Mary's Primary Academy and Welford Primary School. Every year since 2014, pupils have found out about World War One by visiting Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery or the Imperial War Museum in London, before taking part in a series of workshops led by CBSO musicians in which they learned about music and songs dating back to World War One, developing lyrics and musical ideas inspired by their reflections on the conflict.

Renowned composer Kerry Andrew then used the children's ideas to create a section of the War Requiem, after which CBSO choral conductors taught pupils to sing the new piece ahead of an annual end-of-year performance at the CBSO Centre for parents and well-wishers.

Each school has also benefited from an annual interactive concert performed for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils by a visiting ensemble of CBSO musicians

Composer Kerry Andrew comments: "It's been wonderful working on this project over the last four years. I've loved using the children's inventive musical ideas and lyrics as source material for all four movements; it is very much a World War One requiem seen through their eyes, drawing on images of the trenches and those back home".

CBSO Chief Executive Stephen Maddock OBE added: "We are incredibly proud of everything the young people have achieved over the last four years, and we are looking forward to hearing their performance on 27 June. This landmark project has been very important to all of us at the CBSO, demonstrating clearly the value of high-quality music education for young people. We are deeply committed to playing a part in providing world-class opportunities in schools where musical provision would otherwise be limited, and with the support of donors and funders we have invested well over £100,000 in musical activities in participating schools since 2014".

The project has been made possible principally through the generous support of an anonymous donor. Additional support has been received from Isabel, Peter and Christopher giving in memory of Ernest Churcher, the City of Birmingham Orchestral Endowment Fund, the Lillie Johnson Charitable Trust, the Rachel Baker Memorial Charity and St. Thomas' Dole Charity. The orchestra is also grateful to the Clive & Sylvia Richards Charity, principal supporter of its work with young people.

To find out more about supporting the CBSO's work with young people in Birmingham, contact [development@cbsoco.uk](mailto:development@cbsoco.uk)



**City of Birmingham  
Symphony Orchestra**

Video of the project can be found [here](#)

Images of the project can be found [here](#)

**For further press information please contact:**

Rebecca Driver Media Relations

web: [www.rdmr.co.uk](http://www.rdmr.co.uk)

email: [nasarene@rdmr.co.uk](mailto:nasarene@rdmr.co.uk) | [rebecca@rdmr.co.uk](mailto:rebecca@rdmr.co.uk)

tel: 020 7247 1894

**Notes to Editors**

**About the CBSO's Learning & Engagement Programme**

The CBSO is deeply embedded in the local community through its Learning & Engagement programme, with people engaging over 70,000 times per year with its activities. The programme encompasses concerts for toddlers, families and schools, work in the region's schools, partnerships with 13 West Midlands Music Education Hubs, musical activities supporting the personal development of young people with disabilities, workshops enabling local gifted and talented young instrumentalists to study with CBSO players, MA courses at two local universities, an extensive choral programme, and a growing strand of activity enriching lives of older people with dementia.

**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.