



4 October 2017

**City Learning Trust, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Sandwell Council announce consultation for a new specialist Music School**

The City Learning Trust is consulting on its proposal to open a new specialist music school in Sandwell, West Midlands, in association with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, with ambitions to establish a global centre of excellence for music education.

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) is one of the world's great orchestras, renowned internationally for its distinctive combination of artistic excellence and deep engagement with the local community. The orchestra performs at the most prestigious international concert halls, as well as in its home venue – Birmingham's Symphony Hall.

Reflecting its ambition to offer access to world-class musical opportunities for everyone, the CBSO is working with Sandwell Council and the City Learning Trust – one of the most successful multi-academy trusts in the country – to submit a free school application as part of the next wave of applications to the Department for Education (DfE).

Subject to approval from the DfE, the new school would open in Sandwell in September 2020, coinciding with celebrations marking the CBSO's centenary. It would cater for students aged 7 to 19, from primary through to secondary and sixth form. In addition to the normal academic curriculum, the school would specialise in classical, instrumental and choral music. Every child would have the opportunity to learn at least one musical instrument, and students would also benefit from regular projects with CBSO musicians. The school's most talented young instrumentalists and singers would have access to opportunities through the CBSO's extensive talent development programme, which includes youth and training orchestras and two youth choruses.

Stephen Maddock OBE, Chief Executive of the CBSO said: “The CBSO is committed to supporting and developing the musical abilities and interests of children and young people from early years groups to university students. We currently do this through an extensive – and internationally admired – programme of opportunities ranging from workshops by individual musicians in schools, through pathways to support and develop outstanding talent, to orchestral concerts for young audiences at Symphony Hall. Our partnership with the City Learning Trust is a logical extension of this programme, and the proposed new school would give us the opportunity to further use our musical expertise to support young people’s achievement and aspiration.”

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, the CBSO’s acclaimed Music Director added “This school would give young people in Sandwell the chance to be inspired by our musicians throughout their education. I am thrilled that the CBSO is involved with the project”.

Carl Ward, Chief Executive, City Learning Trust, said: “Evidence suggests that regular access to high-quality musical opportunities can have a positive impact on attainment across all areas of the curriculum. Our hope is that, as well as helping young people achieve improved academic results, the proposed music school would also inspire the music teachers and music professionals of the future.

“The CBSO is one of the most vibrant cultural organisations in the UK. We are delighted and proud to be working together on this exciting initiative.”

Councillor Steve Eling, Leader of Sandwell Council commented: "I'm thrilled the CBSO is looking to come to Sandwell. We have so many talented young musicians here who will really benefit from being educated at a school partnered with such a renowned orchestra. If the application is approved we will work with City Learning Trust and the CBSO to find a suitable site for the new free school."

Carl added: “This new school would be well-supported by our established network of local, national and international business partners; we would encourage any businesses and organisations to get in touch if they are interested in supporting our education vision by nominating governors, giving students an insight into businesses and/or providing mentoring and coaching opportunities.”

The CBSO is the second orchestra with which the City Learning Trust has collaborated. Plans for the Hallé Music Free School, which will be based in Stoke-on-Trent, were announced earlier in the year and that school is also due to open in 2020.

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For information about The City Learning Trust visit [www.citylearningtrust.org](http://www.citylearningtrust.org)

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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 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.