



PRESS RELEASE

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BBC National Orchestra of Wales announces its 2018/19 Season in Cardiff and Swansea

Highlights include:

- BBC NOW marks the centenary of the end of World War One with the first complete performance of Stanford's *Mass Via Victrix (1914-1918)* and Mark Wigglesworth conducts a performance of Britten's *War Requiem* on Armistice Day
- Choral music focus with performances of Handel's *Messiah*, Berlioz's *L'enfance du Christ*, Bach's *Easter Oratorio* and Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*
- A celebration of some of the most iconic piano concertos with soloists Martin James Bartlett, Boris Giltburg, Angela Hewitt, Stephen Hough, Joanna McGregor and Lukáš Vondráček
- BBC NOW tours China in December 2018 with its Principal Guest Conductor Xian Zhang
- BBC Hoddinott Hall celebrates its 10th birthday with a weekend of celebrations and three live streamed concerts over the season
- Premieres include Paul Mealar's *Symphony No. 3* and the UK premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Sunshine*
- Concerts at the St David's Cathedral Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Cheltenham Music Festival, Lichfield Festival, and BBC Proms serve as a prelude to the 2018/19 season

Michael Garvey, Director of BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales said: '*Fresh from marking our 90th birthday, BBC NOW presents another season of great music-making. In this, the centenary of the end of World War One and the 10th birthday of BBC Hoddinott Hall, we both commemorate and celebrate: we remember the power music has to reflect what's going on in the world around us. With a big focus on choral music and the great piano concertos, there's something for everyone and for every mood.*'

Marking the centenary of the end of World War One

As part of nationwide events marking the centenary of the end of World War One, BBC NOW presents the first complete performance of Stanford's little-known *Mass Via Victrix (1914-1918)* at BBC Hoddinott Hall on **27 October**, conducted by **Adrian Partington**. As the Mass is as yet unperformed, the parts are being brought together by leading expert on Stanford **Jeremy Dibble**. Scored for orchestra, chorus and four soloists, the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales are joined by soprano **Kiandra Howarth**, contralto **Jess Dandy**, tenor **Ruairi Bowen** and bass **Gareth Brynmor John**.

Jeremy Dibble said: '*Charles Villiers Stanford completed his Mass 'Via Victrix 1914-1918' in December 1919 in memory of all those who died during the First World War. Apart from one movement, the 'Gloria' (which was performed in Cambridge in 1920), the work has never been performed as an entirety before. A large-scale symphonic work for four soloists, chorus, orchestra and organ, it encapsulates both a sense of relief and celebration for the allied victory but also commemorates, with a deep sense of mourning and loss for the many who died. The work bears the Latin dedication: "They have passed through fire and water, and*

you have brought them forth to refreshment." The Mass contains some of Stanford's most powerful music which recalls the quasi-operatic music of his Requiem and Stabat Mater.'

The concert also features F.S Kelly's *Elegy for strings, in memoriam Rupert Brooke*: written while recuperating from the Battle of Gallipoli for which he was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross, he composed the work dedicated to the poet Rupert Brooke whose midnight burial on the Isle of Skyros is one of the more well-known episodes in the early part of the war. Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* completes the programme, with each movement dedicated to the composer's friends who died fighting in the war. On **Armistice Day, 11 November**, **Mark Wigglesworth** highlights the poignancy of the day as he conducts Britten's *War Requiem* at St David's Hall, a work which powerfully captures the composer's deeply held humanitarian and pacifist beliefs. Soprano **Susan Bullock**, tenor **Allan Clayton** and bass **Roman Trekel** join the **BBC National Chorus of Wales** and the **Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Chorus**.

Choral Music

Choral music is a major focus of the Orchestra's season, beginning with a performance of Handel's *Messiah* at St David's Hall on **6 December**, conducted by **Stephen Layton** with soprano **Katherine Watson**, countertenor **Iestyn Davies**, tenor **Gwilym Bowen**, bass **Neal Davies** and **BBC National Chorus of Wales**. On **15 February**, **Sir Andrew Davis** conducts Berlioz's oratorio *L'enfance du Christ* at BBC Hoddinott Hall to commemorate 150 years since the composer's death. Helping to tell the story of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt is mezzo soprano **Dame Sarah Connolly**, tenor **Andrew Staples**, baritone **Roderick Williams**, bass **Matthew Brooks** and **BBC National Chorus of Wales**. On **18 April** BBC NOW is joined by two conductors: **Jonathon Heyward** conducts Rimsky-Korsakov's *Easter Festival Overture*, Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* and Grainger's *Blithe Bells*, whilst J.S Bach's *Easter Oratorio* is conducted by **Jonathan Cohen** with **BBC National Chorus of Wales**. The choral focus concludes at BBC Hoddinott Hall on **28 June** with Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, conducted by **Nathalie Stutzmann**.

Piano Concertos

BBC NOW celebrates some of the most iconic piano concertos ever written this season: beginning with **Thomas Søndergård** conducting Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 4* with **Stephen Hough** at **St David's Hall and Brangwyn Hall** on **18 & 19 January**, complemented with music by Mahler featuring BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2017 **Catriona Morison**. **Angela Hewitt** brings Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand* to **St David's Hall** on **7 February** and **Brangwyn Hall** on **8 February**, conducted by **Jun Märkl**. On **15 March**, winner of the 2014 Donatella Flick Conducting Competition, **Elim Chan** directs BBC NOW and **Joanna MacGregor** in Gershwin's *Piano Concerto* alongside works by Anna Clyne and Elgar. Soloist **Boris Giltburg** gives two performances of Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2* with conductor **Alexander Vedernikov** at **St David's Hall** on **11 April** and **Brangwyn Hall** on **12 April**, alongside Schubert's *Symphony No.9*. BBC NOW is conducted by Principal Guest Conductor **Xian Zhang** at **St David's Hall** on **9 May** and **Brangwyn Hall** on **10 May** for a performance of Bartok's *Piano Concerto No. 3* with **Lukáš Vondráček**. The programme also features Beethoven's *Coriolan Overture* and Mozart's *Symphony No. 40*. The final piano concerto of the season sees conductor **Mark Wigglesworth** leading a performance of Shostakovich's *Piano Concerto No. 2* at **St David's Hall** on **6 June** and **Brangwyn Hall** on **7 June** with soloist **Martin James Bartlett**, winner of BBC Young Musician 2014. The concert also includes a performance of Mahler's *Symphony No. 1*.

China Tour

As well as thrilling audiences at home, the orchestra regularly tours abroad and this season will travel to China in **December 2018** with Principal Guest Conductor **Xian Zhang**, more details to be announced in summer 2018. Supported by the British Council China, the tour forms part of the *Inspiring Women in the Arts* campaign launched in China in February 2018.

BBC Hoddinott Hall's 10th birthday

BBC National Orchestra of Wales' home, BBC Hoddinott Hall, celebrates its 10th birthday with a weekend of events **25-27 January 2019**. More details to be announced in the autumn. Following the successful live streamed concert in celebration of the Orchestra's 90th birthday in April 2018, a further three concerts will be live streamed from BBC Hoddinott Hall in the 2018/19 season.

Kicking off the new season BBC New Generation Artist **Eivind Holtmark Ringstad** returns to **BBC Hoddinott Hall** to perform Walton's Viola Concerto during an afternoon concert conducted by **Carlos Miguel Prieto** on **28 September**. The concert opens with Falla's *El Amor Brujo* and also includes Revueletas's *Sensemaya*, Arturo Márquez's Danzon No. 2 and finishes with Moncayo's *Huapango*. On **30 November** BBC NOW performs two premieres under the baton of **Geoffrey Patterson**: Paul Mealor's *Symphony No. 3 'Illumination'* receives its world premiere and Jonathan Dove's *Sunshine* is performed in the UK for the first time. The sun-themed programme is completed by Mathias' *Helios*, Per Nørgård's *Iris*, and Sibelius' *Night Ride and Sunrise*.

Other Highlights

On **4 October** at St David's Hall, BBC NOW's Conductor Laureate **Tadaaki Otaka** conducts two works by Vaughan Williams: his well-loved *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and *Songs of Travel*, with baritone **Sir Thomas Allen**. Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* completes the programme. BBC NOW's annual St David's Day Concert takes place at St David's Hall on **1 March**. Conductor **Grant Llewellyn** leads the celebrations with music by key Welsh composers including Hoddinott and Mathias, and two important Welsh composers 100 years on from their births in 1909; Arwel Hughes and Mansel Thomas.

BBC NOW at Summer Festivals

BBC NOW precludes its new season with a summer full of performances at some of most prestigious and well-loved classical music festivals across the UK. Beginning at **St David's Cathedral Festival** on **2 June**, **Nicholas Carter** conducts a programme centred around Elgar's *Cello Concerto* with soloist **Leonard Elschenbroich**. At the **Aldeburgh Festival** on **23 June**, **Mark Wigglesworth** conducts Dvořák's *New World Symphony* and Britten's *Violin Concerto*, performed by **Vilde Frang**. Emily Howard's *sphere* receives its UK premiere.

As resident orchestra for this year's **Cheltenham Music Festival**, the first of two concerts both conducted by **Martyn Brabbins** sees **Sheku Kanneh-Mason** performing Elgar's *Cello Concerto* and violinist **Daniel Pioro** performing Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* on **6 July**. On **7 July**, the strings of BBC NOW give the world premiere of Richard Blackford's *Kalon*, commissioned by Cheltenham Music Festival. The Orchestra conclude their performances in Cheltenham with the festival's first ever Family concert with a professional symphony orchestra on **8 July**, featuring popular classics and music from **BBC Ten Pieces** with conductor **Grant Llewellyn** and presenter **Naomi Wilkinson**. In the first of a three-year residency at the **Lichfield Festival**, the Orchestra gives the world premiere of Thomas Hyde's *Les at Leisure* at **Lichfield Cathedral** on **13 July**.

Plus, the Orchestra present their first concerts specifically aimed at younger children, '**Cyw a'r Gerddorfa**' (Cyw and the Orchestra) as part of the National Eisteddfod taking place in Cardiff Bay. BBC NOW will give four performances in BBC Hoddinott Hall over two days, **6 & 7 August**, including one 'relaxed' concert; audiences will be introduced to the orchestra through popular classic and songs from S4C's Cyw (S4C's service for young children).

BBC NOW performs five concerts at the **BBC Proms** beginning on **20 July**, conducted by **Thomas Søndergård** and taking in music by Lili Boulanger and Welsh composer Morfydd Owen, who died in 1918. On **22 July**, the orchestra performs Mahler's *Symphony No. 8 'Thousand'* which marks the last performance of **Søndergård** as BBC NOW'S Principal Conductor. On **27 July**, **Martyn Brabbins** conducts a centenary celebration of Parry, alongside music by Vaughan Williams and Holst. The orchestra's final concert at the Royal Albert Hall for the season takes in music by Dame Ethel Smyth, Dvořák and Richard Strauss on **1 August**, conducted by **Otto Tausk**. BBC NOW joins in the annual spectacular Last Night of the Proms celebrations on **8 September** with **BBC Proms in the Park Wales** in **Colwyn Bay**.

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A welsh language version of the press release is available.

Notes to Editors

BBC National Orchestra of Wales

For 90 years, BBC NOW has played an integral role in the cultural landscape of Wales and occupies a unique role as both broadcast and national symphony orchestra. The orchestra performs a busy schedule of live concerts throughout Wales and the UK, led by its artistic team Principal Conductor Thomas Søndergård, Principal Guest Conductor Xian Zhang, Conductor Laureate Tadaaki Otaka and Composer-in-Association Huw Watkins. Part of BBC Wales and generously supported by the Arts Council of Wales, the Orchestra is an ambassador of Welsh music, championing contemporary composers and musicians.

Performances can be heard regularly across the BBC, on Radio 3, Radio Wales and Radio Cymru, and the orchestra performs annually at the BBC Proms and biennially at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World. Building on its extensive work with Special Educational Needs schools, BBC NOW performed the first ever Relaxed Prom in 2017, which won the 2018 Fantastic for Families Award for Best Family Event.

In 2015, the Orchestra toured South America, visiting Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, as well as the Welsh colony in Patagonia where musicians worked in schools and with the community – its most ambitious tour to date. In December 2018, BBC NOW will tour to China with Principal Guest Conductor Xian Zhang.

The Orchestra's home is BBC Hoddinott Hall in Cardiff Bay, where BBC NOW continues its work as one of the UK's foremost soundtrack orchestra including Doctor Who, War and Peace, Hollow Crown and David Attenborough's Life Story. Recent television performances include the BBC Four series, Tunes for Tyrants presented by Suzy Klein and Rhod Gilbert's Work Experience: Classical Musician.

www.bbc.co.uk/bbcnow

BBC Orchestras and Choirs

The BBC's Orchestras and Choirs each play a unique role in British cultural life. Based in Cardiff, Glasgow, London and Salford, the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Singers and BBC Philharmonic, reach an audience of millions with their wide-ranging and distinctive programming. Performing with the world's leading conductors and soloists, the BBC Orchestras and Choirs give around 400 concerts a year in around 60 locations across the UK as well as touring worldwide. Contemporary music plays a central role in the musical life of each group, and every season includes a significant number of premieres, with many being commissioned by BBC Radio 3. The Orchestras and Choirs organise around 200 learning and outreach projects across the country, bringing music to tens of thousands of people of all ages across the UK. They are an integral part of the BBC's Ten Pieces, an initiative designed to encourage children to get creative with classical music and which has reached over 4 million people across the UK. The BBC Orchestras and Choirs are the backbone of the BBC Proms, collectively giving almost half of the concerts at the world's largest classical music festival.

BBC Radio 3

BBC Radio 3 broadcasts high-quality, distinctive classical music and cultural programming, alongside regular arts and ideas programmes, jazz and world music. The station features more live classical music programming than any other and is the home of the BBC Proms - broadcasting every Prom live and more than 600 complete concerts a year - alongside daily speech programming, 90 full-length operas, over 25 drama commissions and over 20 new BBC music commissions a year. Radio 3 is the most significant commissioner of new musical works in the country and is committed to supporting new talent, from composers to writers and new young performers, through schemes such as New Generation Artists and New Generation Thinkers. www.bbc.co.uk/radio3