



PRESS RELEASE

29 March 2018

BBC National Orchestra Wales celebrates its 90th birthday from 9 – 15 April 2018 on air, online and live in concert

- BBC NOW celebrates its birthday week from 9 – 15 April with the nation on air, online and in concert with a host of music, memories and festivities
- Live streamed concert 90 years to the day on Thursday 12 April looking back over BBC NOW's history and seminal moments
- A week of Afternoon Concerts on BBC Radio 3 survey landmark performances across the past nine decades from Monday 9 – Friday 13 April
- BBC National Chorus of Wales features on BBC Radio 4's *Sunday Worship* on 15 April recorded at BBC Hoddinott Hall
- BBC NOW delivers 'Musical Telegrams' to people celebrating their 90th birthdays in care homes across Wales

For 90 years, BBC NOW has played an integral role in the cultural and classical landscape of Wales, performing to audiences across the UK, abroad and on air. The Orchestra celebrates its birthday week from **9 – 15 April** on air, online and in concert with a host of music, memories and festivities.

BBC NOW: 90 Years of Music

Live streamed concert on Thursday 12 April, 7.30pm at BBC Hoddinott Hall

BBC National Orchestra of Wales gave its first performance on Thursday 12 April 1928, in the Assembly Rooms in City Hall, Cardiff. As the Radio Times announced that year, this was 'A New Orchestra for Wales... appointed no longer as merely a studio orchestra, but brought into being expressly to function both nationally and civically'. 90 years to the day from its first concert, BBC NOW takes a look back over its journey. In a live streamed concert conducted by **Grant Llewellyn**, the Orchestra will re-live some of its earliest performances and notable moments across its history including:

- Music from Wagner, which was performed by BBC NOW in its opening concert (1928) and *Men of Harlech* from the orchestra's first Eisteddfod appearance (1930).
- A celebration of artists the orchestra has worked with including Elgar (1930) and Walton (1961) who both visited as guest conductors; as well as music from one of its earliest major premieres written by Grace Williams (1947).
- Looking back at the start of BBC NOW's touring activity in the 1980s with music by Tchaikovsky whose works were performed on their first Canadian tour (1983).
- BBC NOW as the Doctor Who house band: in 2005 BBC NOW began recording the Doctor Who soundtrack and performs the theme tune by Grainger/Gold arr. Ben Foster.
- Handel's *Zadok the Priest*: BBC's Ten Pieces project launched in 2012 and BBC NOW recorded the first film, seen by over 120,000 children across the UK.

Michael Garvey, Director, BBC National Orchestra of Wales says: *“This is the first in a series of digital events that we are excited to be planning, throwing open the doors of our home in BBC Hoddinott Hall to a new virtual audience. For our 90th we’ve selected some iconic pieces of orchestral music from past performances, combined them with archive footage and anecdotes from our friends, to create a whistle-stop journey through the 90 years. We’re excited to be harnessing digital technology to bring orchestral music to as many people as possible, and our birthday is a great opportunity to do just that as we invite the nation to celebrate with us!”*

This concert is being live streamed on bbc.co.uk/bbcnow and will be available to watch again for 30 days thereafter.

BBC NOW at 90: Afternoon Concert

BBC Radio 3 Afternoon Concerts: Monday 9 – Friday 13 April

On air, a special week of Afternoon Concerts will mark the 90th birthday of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales on BBC Radio 3. From the band’s beginnings in 1928, to its current position as Wales’ National Symphony Orchestra, programmes will survey landmark performances across the past nine decades – including an early performance from the BBC’s then newly built broadcasting studios in Cardiff, its three decade-long partnership with Conductor Laureate Tadaaki Otaka and the adventurous tour to the recently reunified Germany. Programmes will also explore the role the orchestra plays showcasing the work of Welsh composers and some of the key artistic relationships from across the years.

On Friday 13 April Nicola Heywood Thomas presents a live Afternoon Concert from BBC Hoddinott Hall at 2pm, which looks back at artists and composers that have played significant roles in BBC NOW’s development. Celebrating its distinctive role as both a broadcast and national orchestra of Wales, the programme includes music by Bruch and Mozart, who featured in BBC NOW’s very first concert, and Welsh composers Huw Watkins and Mathias. The orchestra are joined by conductor **Grant Llewellyn**, current BBC New Generation Artist **Eivind Holtsmark Ringstad** (viola), and former member of the scheme **Annelien Van Wauwe** (clarinet) alongside Welsh pianist **Llŷr Williams**.

On air with BBC Radio Cymru – 9-13 April

Every morning on BBC Radio Cymru the **Bore Cothi** show takes a look at BBC NOW’s history, from the early studios it worked in, to its long and fruitful relationships with some of Wales’ most celebrated composers, Alun Hoddinott and Grace Williams. They’ll hear from contemporary composers **Guto Puw**, **Mared Emlyn**, **Gareth Glyn** and talk to current members of BBC NOW about their work as part of the National Orchestra of Wales. Tune in for the Welsh language broadcast of BBC NOW: 90 Years of Music live on BBC Radio Cymru on Thursday 12 April.

BBC Radio Wales Arts Show: Friday 13 April, 6.30pm

The **Radio Wales Arts Show** with **Nicola Heywood Thomas** takes a closer look at the BBC National Orchestra of Wales as it celebrates a musical milestone; it’s 90th birthday. The programme will feature music from across the years, alongside interviews with musicians and members of the administration team.

Sunday Worship BBC Radio 4: Sunday 15 April

On BBC Radio 4’s *Sunday Worship* on the third Sunday of Easter (15 April) **Beverley Humphreys** reflects on the need to continue growing in a sense of Resurrection and renewal. Focussing on the role of breath and breathing which underpins all human life, she is joined in BBC Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff, to mark BBC NOW’s 90th birthday, by the **Rev. Peter Noble**, the **BBC National Chorus of Wales**, its **Artistic Director Adrian Partington**, organist **Jonathan Hope** and **members of the BBC NOW**. The Director of the BBC NOW **Michael Garvey** reads Psalm 150 and past and present members of the orchestra’s Christian fellowship add accompaniment – **Ania Leadbeater**, **Paul Mann**, **David Haim** and **Dominic Jewel**. Music includes 'Let all the world in every corner sing' (Vaughan Williams); *Holy Holy Holy* (Hoddinott) and *For the Beauty of the Earth* (Rutter).

Musical Telegrams

BBC NOW delivers 'Musical Telegrams' to people celebrating their 90th birthdays across Wales in 2018. Musicians from the Orchestra will perform especially for people in three care homes across BBC NOW's birthday week, to celebrate the combined 90 year milestones with residents and their friends and families.

Dan Trodden, Principal Tuba - BBC National Orchestra of Wales says: *"It's a privilege to share our craft with people who perhaps aren't able to travel to see the BBC National Orchestra of Wales in the concert hall, and what an honour to share our 90th birthday with them too!"*

bbc.co.uk/now

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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 National Orchestra of Wales has played an integral role in the cultural and classical landscape of Wales, performing to audiences across the UK, abroad and on air. Led by Principal Conductor Thomas Søndergård, BBC NOW has a unique role as both a broadcast and national symphony orchestra. Generously supported by the Arts Council of Wales, and part of BBC Wales, the Orchestra presents annual seasons in Cardiff and Swansea, and as Wales' national orchestra is committed to championing Welsh music and musicians. BBC NOW's performances can be regularly heard across the BBC, on Radio 3, Radio Wales and Radio Cymru, with appearances biennially at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World and annually at the BBC Proms. In 2015 BBC NOW visited South America for its most ambitious tour to-date, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Welsh settlement in Patagonia with a community residency, followed by performances across Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

BBC NOW's dynamic learning programming offers unique opportunities to develop musical skills and explore the world of classical music. Building on its extensive work with Special Educational Needs schools, BBC NOW performed the first ever Relaxed Prom in 2017. The Orchestra's home is BBC Hoddinott Hall, a world-class concert hall and studio in Cardiff Bay, where BBC NOW continues its work as the UK's foremost soundtrack orchestra working on programmes and films including *War and Peace*, David Attenborough's *Life Story* and Louis Theroux's *My Scientology Movie*; and has recorded music for the *Doctor Who* series for the last 12 years.

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

History of BBC NOW

BBC National Orchestra of Wales gave its first performance on Thursday 12 April 1928, in the Assembly Rooms in City Hall, Cardiff. As the Radio Times announced that year, this was 'A New Orchestra for Wales', transforming one of the original station orchestras to 'a compact but classically complete little orchestra of thirty players, appointed no longer as merely a studio orchestra, but brought into being expressly to function both nationally and civically'. This first concert was broadcast on 5WA (an indirect ancestor of BBC Radio Wales), where the Orchestra became a regular feature to some of Wales' earliest radio listeners. Ninety years later, the Orchestra is still heard on BBC Radio Wales, and frequently on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio Cymru.

BBC NOW performed regularly in Cardiff, with six concerts a week in its first season. It also began touring Wales, performing at the National Eisteddfod of Wales in Llanelli for the first time in 1930. In the late 1950s, the BBC Welsh Orchestra as it was known then, made its first appearance on television and gave its first televised concert in 1961. The Orchestra gave its debut performance at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall in 1971, and since then has performed over 160 times as part of the festival. Performing on the world stage became more common place when BBC NOW began touring internationally, visiting Canada in 1983. The Orchestra has, to date, represented Wales in South America, China, Japan, USA and across Europe. Find out more online: www.bbc.co.uk/now