



PRESS RELEASE

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BBC National Orchestra of Wales announce 2018 tour to China

BBC National Orchestra of Wales will tour China in December 2018, giving a series of concerts with Principal Guest Conductor Xian Zhang. Supported by British Council China, the tour forms part of the *Inspiring Women in the Arts* campaign launched today in China.

Director of BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Michael Garvey says “We’re delighted to be touring China with our Principal Guest Conductor Xian Zhang later in 2018. This tour is an exciting addition to BBC National Orchestra of Wales’ international plans and we’re looking forward to returning to China following our successful visit in 2012.”

Xian Zhang, Principal Guest Conductor said “I’m very excited to tour China with BBC NOW this year. I have conducted many Chinese orchestras, however to tour China with a foreign orchestra is a great opportunity for the cultural exchange of ideas and experiences.”

Nick Marchand, Director Arts China and North-East Asia, British Council said “Today we launch an *Inspiring Women in the Arts* campaign, a year-long programme to showcase the work of female artists and create new opportunities for leadership training, professional networking and mentorships. The campaign hopes to inspire our Chinese audience, sharing stories of the careers leading female artists have forged. In Xian Zhang - the first ever female titled conductor of a BBC orchestra– we have a role model we are delighted to support - as she leads Wales’ much-loved orchestra to China on a three city tour, later in the year. It’s a story we look forward to hearing!”

In September 2016 Xian Zhang assumed the position of Principal Guest Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra & Chorus of Wales. Zhang’s first season with BBC NOW culminated in a televised BBC Proms performance of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, anticipating the start of a two-year project devoted to the composer’s complete symphonies. Zhang is also Music Director of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and Conductor Emeritus of Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi.

The tour will be supported by British Council China, Arts Council Wales and Wales Arts International.

BBC National Orchestra of Wales visit China in December 2018. Further details to be announced in spring 2018. For more information visit bbc.co.uk/bbcnow

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Notes to Editors

Images available:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1gngofjm4nxykyu/AADmRiZnA5SZfKXRIGmBDiE_a?dl=0

- Photo 1 Xian Zhang Principal Guest Conductor of BBC National Orchestra of Wales credit BBC
- Photo 2 Nick Marchand, Director Arts China and Northeast Asia, British Council with artists of the *Inspiring Women in the Arts* campaign. Credit British Council
- Photo 3 Xian Zhang conducting BBC National Orchestra of Wales credit BBC

A Welsh language version of this press release is available.

BBC National Orchestra of Wales

For almost 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 the 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. They provide hundreds of hours of distinctive music-making for BBC Radio. 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.