

PRESS RELEASE: 24 January 2020

NICOLA BENEDETTI RESIDENCY IN BIRMINGHAM

- Two performances of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
- Masterclass at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
- Benedetti Sessions in partnership with Services For Education Music Service and generously supported by Town Hall Symphony Hall
- Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 2 with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra

Nicola Benedetti comes to Birmingham this February for two concerts with the **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)**, a masterclass at the **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire** and a day of **Benedetti Sessions** at Town Hall Birmingham in partnership with Services For Education Music Service, showcasing the breadth of this unique artist as violinist and educator. Benedetti returns in April with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra at Symphony Hall Birmingham where she is Artist in Residence in 2020.

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra: Thursday 6 February, 2:15pm & Saturday 8 February, 7pm, Birmingham Symphony Hall

The CBSO and conductor Klaus Mäkelä are joined by Nicola Benedetti for an energetic concert showcasing Tchaikovsky's much-loved Violin Concerto alongside Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, a flamboyant, no-holds-barred adventure into the wildest extremes of the romantic imagination. Benedetti commented, '*Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto is the quintessential virtuosic and romantic display. It's a feat of stamina, it's open hearted melodically and harmonically, it has all the hallmarks of Tchaikovsky's relentless repetitiveness and nothing else has been written that comes close. I can't wait to perform this wild work with the CBSO and Klaus Mäkelä.*'

There will be a special pre-concert showcase from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Symphony Orchestra on Thursday 6 February (1pm), in which wind, brass and percussion musicians will play Messiaen's *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum* under the baton of CBSO Associate Conductor Michael Seal.

Nicola will also be interviewed by the CBSO's Youth Ambassadors following the concert on Saturday 8 February. This innovative programme offers the opportunity for a group of young people aged between 16 and 21 to explore behind the scenes of the CBSO and share their perspectives on the future of classical music. The CBSO will repeat the concert programme with Nicola in Cambridge for a gala concert celebrating 30 years of orchestral music at the Corn Exchange (Friday 7 January, 7:30pm).

Masterclass at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire: 6 February, 6:30pm

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire welcomes Nicola Benedetti to give a violin masterclass, sharing their trailblazing passion for music education, carrying the torch for classical music in the 21st century. The masterclass is open to the public; tickets are £5 and can be purchased [online](#).

Julian Lloyd Webber, Principal, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire commented, '*All of us at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire are delighted to welcome Nicola Benedetti for her first visit to our state-of-the art conservatoire. I have long admired Nicky not only for her supreme talent but also for her massive commitment to the musicians of the future which completely tallies with RBC's vision which we are delighted to share with our valued partners at the CBSO.*'

Benedetti Sessions at Town Hall Birmingham in partnership with Services For Education: 9 February

The first Benedetti Sessions took place over three days in both Glasgow and London at the beginning of January and catered for all string playing abilities with workshops for Beginner String Orchestra; Intermediate String Orchestra and Advanced String Orchestra, as well as offering general musicianship for beginners, a series of workshops for string teachers and non-specialist primary classroom teachers. On 9 February the Benedetti Foundation presents a one-day format of the Benedetti Sessions for the first time, delivered in partnership with Services For Education Music Service and Town Hall Birmingham. The day will focus on intermediate string players with 100 young people aged 9 – 15 years old, all from Birmingham. The young musicians will experience warm up sessions, general musicianship and full string orchestra rehearsals covering technical and creative aspects of music-making, as well as collective listening and collaborative ensemble playing. As with the three-day Benedetti Sessions, the Intermediate Orchestra will be conducted by Alex Laing and will work on Warlock's *Capriol Suite* Movement 1 and Mascagni's *Intermezzo* from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. There will also be a professional development day for Birmingham string teachers. The full 3-day Benedetti Sessions will be coming to the West Midlands in 2021. Nicola Benedetti is one of the world's leading advocates for quality music education, the role of arts and culture in the wider community and the transformational effect it has on all young people. She has been committed to education projects since the age of 15 and in the past 12 months, Nicola has worked with over 4,000 students and 700 teachers.

Sakari Oramo & Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra – Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 2: Sat 25 April

After Sakari Oramo left Birmingham in 2008, he went to Sweden – and gave the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic a taste of the energy and freshness he brought to the CBSO. This is the first Birmingham appearance since 1991 for this Scandinavian orchestra, featuring Nicola Benedetti playing Prokofiev's zingy Second Concerto as well as Victoria Borisova-Ollas and Sibelius's symphonic blockbuster.

Images of Nicola can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/qu4hjnq5bojedpg/AACupz84jzKZGwkyDxkFJbb-a?dl=0>

For further press information on the Nicola Benedetti please contact:

Rebecca Driver Media Relations

Tel: +44 (0)7989 355446 | Email: rebecca@rdmr.co.uk

www.rdmr.co.uk

For further press information on the CBSO please contact:

Rebecca Driver Media Relations

Tel: +44 (0)7807 831113 | Email: maddie@rdmr.co.uk

www.rdmr.co.uk

Notes to Editors

About Nicola Benedetti

Nicola Benedetti is one of the most sought-after violinists of her generation. Her ability to captivate audiences with her innate musicianship and dynamic presence, coupled with her wide appeal as a high-profile advocate for classical music, has made her one of the most influential classical artists of today. With concerto performances at the heart of her career, Nicola is in much demand with major orchestras and conductors across the globe and frequently makes appearances in the world's leading concert halls. Nicola records exclusively for Decca (Universal Music). Her most recent recording features premiere recordings of two works written especially for her by jazz musician Wynton Marsalis: *Violin Concerto in D* and *Fiddle Dance Suite* for Solo Violin. The album is nominated for two GRAMMY awards. Benedetti's 2016 recording of Shostakovich & Glazunov Violin Concertos was met with critical acclaim and described as her best recording to date. Her past eight recordings on Universal/Deutsche Grammophon include a varied catalogue of works from Szymanowski Concerto (London Symphony Orchestra/Daniel Harding) to Homecoming; A Scottish Fantasy, which made Nicola the first solo British violinist since the 1990s to enter the Top 20 of the Official U.K. Albums Chart. Nicola Benedetti was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2019 New Year Honours List, for services to music and was the Winner of the Best Classical Award at The Global Awards 2019.

About the Benedetti Foundation

The Benedetti Foundation will strive to unite the world of music education through uncovering and sharing its best practices, and celebrating its greatest advocates. It will create explosive, life changing experiences around mass musical events for teachers and young people, that are dedicated to music participation on all levels. The ultimate destination is an empowered society that is more creative, enlightened and fulfilled. The Benedetti Foundation is fiercely devoted towards pulling together individuals and organisations that too often work in isolation. It will also produce a signature series of orchestra-based weekend workshops – The Benedetti Sessions - to address, equally, the needs of young musicians and of teachers.

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 100-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 continues to do what it does best – playing great music for people in Birmingham and beyond. Celebrating 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.

About Royal Conservatoire Birmingham

[Royal Birmingham Conservatoire](#) is a world class institution providing exceptional training for the musicians, actors, stage managers and performers of the future. Part of Birmingham City University, its outstanding facilities attract the best and brightest students to Birmingham, along with internationally renowned performers and teachers. With limitless collaboration opportunities for staff and students, the Conservatoire is a stimulating environment with an international reputation which celebrates diversity. Granted a Royal title by Her Majesty The Queen in September 2017, the bestowment follows the HRH The Earl of Wessex becoming the Conservatoire's first Royal Patron in March 2016. Celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2018, Birmingham School of Acting merged with Royal Birmingham Conservatoire on 1 September 2017. Comprising 11 studios, including a large performance studio, the Conservatoire has set a new benchmark for drama training facilities in the UK.

About Town Hall Symphony Hall

Town Hall Symphony Hall's mission is to inspire a love of live music, through performance, participation and learning. Managed together by Performances Birmingham Limited, a Registered Charity No 1053937, Town Hall and Symphony Hall are the centre of Birmingham's cultural heart – presenting the world's most exciting and diverse artists, orchestras and bands, including Kraftwerk, The British Paraorchestra of Great Britain, Satinder Sartaaj, Chineke!, Gary Barlow, Joan Armatrading and the world-renowned City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

We believe that music is essential to everyone and has the power to transform and change lives, to entertain and uplift, to create shared experiences and to educate.

Each year, we programme nearly 800 concerts and events and bring the best jazz, folk, world, roots, classical, rock and pop performers to audiences of over 550,000. Our Jazzlines programme is a key part of the region's jazz infrastructure, nurturing new talent and creating performance opportunities, while our Learning & Participation team works with 18,000 people from across Birmingham each year. Find out more at thsh.co.uk

About Services For Education:

Services For Education is an education and training charity based in Birmingham. Established in 2012, it is part-funded by the Arts Council, England, and comprises the Music Service and the School Support Service. Services For Education's Music Service, which is one of the largest in the country, works across 384 of the city's schools, teaching music to approximately 38,000 children. It also provides 28,000 musical instruments free-of-charge. The School Support Service provides expert and professional training and development to teaching and support staff in some 570 schools in Birmingham and the West Midlands.

Services For Education has been recognised regionally and nationally for its work. Recent award wins include:

- Education Awards 2019: Outstanding Contribution to the Local Community
- Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce 2019: Excellence in Training & Education
- Birmingham Awards 2018: Contribution to Education
- Music Teacher Awards 2018: Music Education Council Major Award Winner