

## **CITY OF BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF LORD TONY HALL AS ITS NEW CHAIR**



After an extensive search the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) has appointed **Lord Hall of Birkenhead** as its Chair, succeeding David Burbidge CBE who stands down after completing his successful five-year term of office.

Tony Hall - Lord Hall of Birkenhead – has held numerous executive and non-executive roles in the sector, including Director General of the BBC (2013-2020), Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House (2001-2013), and Managing Director, BBC News and Current Affairs (1989-2001). He is Chairman of the social work charity Frontline and is a crossbench member of the House of Lords, sitting on the Communications and Digital Committee. Lord Hall was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2006 New Year Honours for services to Opera and Ballet.

**Tony Hall** says *“I am thrilled to be taking on the role of Chair of the CBSO. It’s an amazing world-class orchestra doing incredible work in a city I’ve known since I was at school there.*

*I’ve always believed that everyone should have access to the best - and I can see that’s what motivates the CBSO too. The school set-up in partnership with Shireland Collegiate Academy in Sandwell shows that the orchestra is doing truly groundbreaking work. I know - together - there’s so much more we can do to bring the best music to everyone in Birmingham, the West Midlands and beyond.”*

During David Burbidge’s time as Chair the CBSO has maintained its position as an internationally celebrated symphony orchestra, at home in Birmingham. As well as sustaining a wide-ranging programme of concerts at Birmingham’s Symphony Hall and far-reaching learning and participation activities, 2023 has seen the opening of the Shireland CBSO Academy, the first free, non-selective state school in Britain to be established in partnership with a professional orchestra.

**David Burbidge CBE** commented *“It has been a privilege to have been Chair of the CBSO for five years. I have seen many wonderful concerts performed by our world-class orchestra in Birmingham and elsewhere in the UK, as well as joining the orchestra on several overseas tours including trips to Carnegie Hall and the Berlin Philharmonie. I have also seen the superb work bringing music into the lives of thousands of young people and we have now opened the ground-breaking Shireland CBSO Academy in the Black Country. Despite the problems of Covid, I leave the orchestra in good shape for the challenges and opportunities ahead and in very good hands under the leadership of our new CEO Emma Stenning and my immensely experienced successor, Tony Hall.”*

Tony's appointment completes the CBSO's new triumvirate of leadership that will now take the company forward, following recent appointments of both a new Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor – **Kazuki Yamada** – and a new Chief Executive – **Emma Stenning**, marking an exciting new era in the orchestra's history.

**Emma Stenning, Chief Executive** added *"David has been an invaluable mentor and guide during my first months at the CBSO, and it has been immensely inspiring to see the strength of his bond to our players, staff and family of supporters. His remarkable leadership has steered the company through triumph, challenge and change, and we thank him from the bottom of our hearts.*

*I can't wait to welcome Tony to the team. From our first conversation, his passion for music, commitment to learning and education, and excitement at what the CBSO can achieve, was palpable. I said from the start that we needed a Chair of vision, conviction, and fearlessness - someone who loves the music, and is simply unrelenting in their determination that it be for everyone. In Tony we have found that, and I can't wait for us to start working together."*

## Notes to Editors

### **About the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)**

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) is an internationally celebrated symphony orchestra, at home in Birmingham. A family of 90 incredible musicians, led by Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor Kazuki Yamada, proud to make exciting musical experiences that matter to the people of Birmingham, the West Midlands and beyond.

Resident at Symphony Hall, the orchestra's musicians perform over 150 concerts each year in Birmingham, the UK and around the world, with music that ranges from classics to contemporary, soundtracks to symphonies, and everything in between. With a far-reaching community and education programme, alongside a family of choruses and youth ensembles, it is involved in every aspect of music-making in the Midlands – and has been for more than 100 years.

This longstanding tradition started with the orchestra's very first symphonic concert in 1920 – conducted by Sir Edward Elgar. Ever since then, through war, recessions, social change and civic renewal, the CBSO has been proudly 'Birmingham's orchestra'. Under principal conductors including Adrian Boult, George Weldon, Andrzej Panufnik and Louis Frémaux, the CBSO won an artistic reputation that spread far beyond the Midlands. 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, Andris Nelsons and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, helped cement that global reputation and continued to build on the CBSO's tradition of flying the flag for Birmingham.

In April 2023, Japanese conductor Kazuki Yamada took up the post of Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor, and under his dynamic leadership, the CBSO continued to do what it does best – playing great music for the people of Birmingham, the Midlands, and beyond.

[www.cbso.co.uk](http://www.cbso.co.uk)

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