

PRESS RELEASE

20 June 2017



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Assistant Conductor Jonathan Bloxham to continue in the position for 2017-18 Season

The **City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)** is delighted to announce that **Assistant Conductor Jonathan Bloxham** is to continue in the position during the recently announced 2017-18 Season.

Jonathan Bloxham was selected as CBSO Assistant Conductor in June 2016, by a panel led by **CBSO's Osborn Music Director Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla**. Bloxham made his mark on Birmingham early in the 2016-17 season, conducting the full CBSO orchestra in a surprise pop-up at New Street Station on a busy Saturday afternoon, as part of the Birmingham Weekender 2016. That month he also conducted the orchestra in *Cold Calling: The Arctic Project*, in collaboration with Birmingham REP.

Bloxham conducted his first Symphony Hall concert in November 2016, stepping in at short notice for Nikolaj Znaider. In December 2016, Bloxham conducted the CBSO in **Nitin Sawhney's *Animal Symphony***, which was broadcast on Sky Arts.

On **28 June 2017**, Bloxham returns to the stage at Symphony Hall to conduct the CBSO and renowned pianist **Peter Donohoe** in Schumann's *Piano Concerto*, in a programme also featuring Smetana's *Vltava* and Dvořák's *Symphony No.7*. The CBSO's 2017-18 season will see Bloxham working on a variety of projects with Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, including the CBSO's Debussy Festival, an ambitious internationally-significant festival taking place in Birmingham over two weekends in March 2018, to mark the centenary of the composer's death. He will also conduct a *Myths and Legends* family concert with Presenter Tom Redmond.

Jonathan Bloxham comments:

"After an incredible first season with the CBSO, I am thrilled to be staying on as Assistant Conductor! The support of Mirga and the players is so encouraging in my development as a conductor"

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla says:

"It's been wonderful to work with Jonathan. His warmth and humanity matches perfectly with the CBSO. We are very glad that we will continue to work with him in the 17-18 season"

As CBSO Assistant Conductor, Bloxham follows in the footsteps of Alpesh Chauhan who has gone on to have a successful international conducting career. The position of CBSO Assistant Conductor is generously supported by Tony Davis and Darin Qualls.

Originally an acclaimed cellist, Bloxham began his musical training at the age of 8 with a local cello teacher at his primary school in Gateshead. He then studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School & Royal College of Music with Thomas Carroll before completing a Masters Degree at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with Louise Hopkins. Bloxham is the recipient of several prestigious awards such as the Guilhermina Suggia Gift and Royal College of Music Cello Prize, and in 2012 gave his concerto debut at the Berlin Philharmonie.

Moving over into conducting, Bloxham has taken further conducting studies with Sian Edwards, Michael Seal, Nicolas Pasquet and Paavo Jarvi. Passionate about contemporary music, Jonathan has commissioned several new works by young composers such as Vlad Maistorovici, Jack Sheen and Freya Waley Cohen, and in May 2017 he conducted the premiere of Matthew Kaner's *Stranded* for solo violin and chamber orchestra with violinist Benjamin Baker at the Europe Day Concert at St. John's Smith Square, London

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In addition to his continuing work with the CBSO, Bloxham's forthcoming guest engagements include the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra in August, the RTE Concert Orchestra in the National Concert Hall Dublin in September and the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in City Halls Glasgow in October.

www.cbso.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

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 97-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 will continue to do what it does best – playing great music for people in Birmingham and beyond. As it approaches 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.