

EMBARGOED UNTIL 23.00 on 25 January 2018

MARIN ALSOP HONOURED BY ABO AT ANNUAL AWARDS

The annual ABO Rhinegold Awards, presented at the ABO conference dinner in Cardiff on Thursday 25 January, have recognised excellence in the fields of orchestral, concert hall and artist management. The prestigious **ABO Award** went to conductor **Marin Alsop**, the first woman to conduct the BBC's *Last Night of the Proms*, in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the orchestral life of the UK, and in particular her support for women conductors. She thanked the former chair Kathryn McDowell and the ABO Board in a video acceptance speech and a formal presentation will take place on 4 February at a concert at the Royal Festival Hall.

"It's an incredible honour to receive this award. I fell in love with British orchestras when I first conducted here in the 1990s; not only are they incredible musicians with an admirable and intense work ethic, they are always a lot of fun. This recognition means a great deal, not only to me, but to everyone I work with. Music has the power to change lives, to challenge, and to inspire and I dedicate this award to the future generation of conductors, musicians and audiences." Marin Alsop

New ABO Chair Gavin Reid presented a special ABO Award to **John Smith**, former **General Secretary of the Musicians' Union**.

Winners in the Artist Manager of the Year category were **Bettina Mehne** and **Bernhard Kerres** of **Hello Stage**. Their publication *Be Your Own Manager*, is designed to help musicians better understand the processes involved in career development, and complements their 'Hello Stage' online support portal and workshops in conservatoires.

Taking the accolade of Concert Hall Manager of the Year was **Richard Heason**, Director of **St John's Smith Square**. His vision for the venue as a national centre for championing engagement with Baroque music, a genre ideally suited to the architecture and acoustic of the converted church, has led to audience numbers rising dramatically and a re-vitalisation of the historic venue.

Sue Mallet, Director of Planning, **London Symphony Orchestra**, was the winner of Orchestral Manager of the Year for her outstanding track record in concerts planning and international touring as well finessing in the past year the arrival of Sir Simon Rattle and the first visit of an international orchestra to Vietnam. A legend in orchestral administration circles who has worked at the LSO for fifty years, she has trained generations of staff now working within the orchestral sector in this country and abroad.

ABO/RHINEGOLD AWARDS

Artist Manager of the Year

Bettina Mehne and Bernhard Kerres of Hello Stage

Concert Hall Manager of the Year

Richard Heason, Director of St John's Smith Square

Orchestra Manager of the Year

Sue Mallet, Director of Planning, London Symphony Orchestra

ABO AWARD

Marin Alsop

ABO SPECIAL AWARD

John Smith, former General Secretary of the Musicians' Union

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: Claire Willis, Director, ElevenTenths Tel: 07951 600362 Claire.willis@eleventenths.co.uk

ABOUT THE ABO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The ABO Conference is the UK's leading conference for the classical music industry, with delegates including chief executives, senior management staff and musicians from across the ABO membership, as well as the wider classical music industry including concert halls, festivals, broadcasters, and funding agencies. The 2018 Conference is jointly hosted by three collaborating organisations in Cardiff: BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Welsh National Opera and Sinfonia Cymru. Keynote speakers include **Tony Hall**, Director-General, BBC, **Sir Ciaran Devane**, Chief Executive, British Council, **Kevin Brennan, MP**, Shadow Culture Minister, **Nick Capaldi**, Chief Executive, Arts Council of Wales, **Sam Jackson**, Managing Editor, Classic FM, **Alan Davey**, Controller, BBC Radio 3, **Rebecca Allen**, President, Decca Records Group UK, **Jasper Hope**, Chief Executive, Dubai Opera, and BBC Radio 3 presenter **Katie Derham**. Debates and sessions will focus on all aspects of collaboration, including the challenges posed by Brexit, and progress in diversity one year on from the 2017 ABO conference.

About the Association of British Orchestras

The ABO is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras, youth ensembles and the wider classical music industry throughout the UK. The ABO's mission is to enable and support an innovative, collaborative and sustainable orchestral sector by providing advice, support, intelligence and information to the people who make British orchestras a global success. Recent initiatives include *Resonate* in association with PRS for Music and BBC Radio 3, which supports the best orchestral music of the last 25 years, and *Find Your Way* which identifies and offers training to future sector leaders. The ABO campaigned successfully for Orchestra Tax Relief and continues to lobby for the sector at the highest levels.

www.abo.org.uk

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CITATIONS

ARTIST MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Bettina Mehne and Bernhard Kerres of Hello Stage

It's become ever more important that individual musicians understand all aspects of the industry that sustains them. The winners (in the plural) of this year's Artist Manager of the Year Award made a major contribution to that need in 2017 with the publication of *Be Your Own Manager*, the fruit of their extensive research into how musicians can better understand the processes involved in career development - from marketing techniques, repertoire planning and approaching promoters to video production and project crowdfunding. Yes, as the title of the book suggests, help is offered to the large numbers of professional musicians who find it difficult to secure representation. But *Be Your Own Manager* is also a vital tool for *any* artist looking to get the best out of the relationship with his or her manager. The book has been a natural extension of their 'Hello Stage' online support facility for musicians. They've used their extensive contacts in the business to ensure that the advice offered is practical and straightforward. And finishing *Be Your Own Manager* has not been the end of things. They are involved in an ongoing round of workshops, not least in conservatoires, to take their message into the musical world.

CONCERT HALL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Richard Heason, Director of St John's Smith Square

When this year's winner became director of St John's Smith Square five years ago he faced the challenge of a venue that is distant from London's main entertainment areas. So recognising that hall hires play a vital part not only in the financial business model but also in the artistic programme, he decided to create a profile for the venue as a national centre for championing engagement with Baroque music, a genre ideally suited to the architecture and acoustic of the converted church. His artistic vision and marketing flair have in turn led to audience numbers rising dramatically. Highlights of the 2016-17 season included the first ever Holy Week Festival, a collaboration with Tenebrae, and the third edition of the London International A Cappella Choral Competition, welcoming 16 choirs from 11 different countries, and attended by the featured composer Arvo Pärt. This flexibility of mind and space explains why Southbank

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Centre found such a fitting second home there during the closure of the Queen Elizabeth Hall. During its residency, which continued throughout the 2016-17 season, Richard welcomed concerts from the International Piano Series, International Chamber Music Series, and resident orchestras such as Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and London Sinfonietta. His adaptability has allowed for these concerts to take place in all number of layouts of seating and staging, enhancing both audience and artist experience. He has also fostered a lunchtime concert series which, aided by the cuisine of the Footstool restaurant, has drawn a daytime audience to the venue. Audiences and participants will discover him on stage at least once in each season, for the annual Come and Sing Messiah, a scratch performance conducted by the director himself.

ORCHESTRA MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Sue Mallet, Director of Planning, London Symphony Orchestra

Our winner this year has an outstanding track record in concerts panning and International touring. She has an astute business mind, first class administrative skills with a razor-sharp eye for detail, and an ability to cultivate long-standing relationships with international partners and commercial clients. She inspires extraordinary loyalty and commitment in all who work with her, and has trained generations of staff now working within the orchestral sector in this country and abroad. And she's masterful in managing difficult personalities with humour and a sharp wit. Her contribution to the LSO has been recognized by all the members of the orchestra, its promoters in this country and worldwide, composers, film producers, sponsors and the orchestra's administration team. As one American agent once put it: "every professional orchestra needs a Sue, but to have one is extremely rare." With the arrival of Sir Simon Rattle as Music Director in 2017, her ability to mastermind a schedule of increased rehearsal and much greater complexity within a finite budget required her wealth of experience and planning skills. She also engineered the first visit of an international orchestra to Vietnam, working closely with a local team of pop promoters in Vietnam to pull together an extraordinary concert that reached over 60,000 people. 2017 was the 50th anniversary of Sue first joining the LSO as a PA to the Managing Director in a staff of 5 – she made her mark quickly and has never looked back! The Award of Orchestra Manager of the Year recognises this extraordinary achievement and extraordinary service.

ABO AWARD

Marin Alsop

The ABO Award is presented annually to the individual or institution considered by the membership to have made the most important contribution to the orchestral life of the UK. The ABO Award is unique among the many prestigious awards and prizes in the music world because its recipient is nominated by the member orchestras themselves. This year the ABO Board decided to recognise the contribution of one of the world's leading conductors, who has not only worked with a whole host of ABO members but has also striven to remedy the gender gap for women conductors.

The orchestras our winner has most recently conducted include the London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. She is also dedicated to nurturing young talent and has recently worked with the Britten-Pears Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the Royal Academy of Music. She has in previous years conducted the London Sinfonietta, BBC Philharmonic, CBSO and the Hallé.

She was Principal Conductor of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra from 2000 to 2008, the first woman to hold such a post with a British orchestra, and will be returning to them in November 2018 for a special Bernstein concert in Chichester Cathedral. And prior to that she was Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the City of London Sinfonia.

In September 2013, she became the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the Proms in its 118-year history. And her commitment to closing the gender gap for conductors has led to her annual Women's Conducting Masterclass at the Southbank Centre, which has already increased in scope in the four years since it started, with over 200 applicants in 2017 from around the UK and the rest of the world. It next takes place on 7 February 2018 on the stage of the Royal Festival Hall with the BBC Concert Orchestra, just a few days after the formal presentation of the ABO Award on 4 February, when she will be conducting the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in the Royal Festival Hall.

ABO SPECIAL AWARD

John Smith, former General Secretary of the Musicians' Union

After studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London from 1968 to 1971, **John Smith** joined the orchestra of English National Opera in 1974 and remained there, as Principal Tuba, for almost 20 years. During this time he became an MU activist serving as MU orchestra steward and sitting on various Union committees including a number of years as Chair of the MU Opera and Ballet Orchestras Committee. While working as a musician he completed an Open University BSc followed by a Masters degree in Industrial Relations as a distance learning student at Keele University. In 1994 he was appointed a full-time official of the Musicians' Union and was promoted to the post of Assistant General Secretary in 1997. He was elected General Secretary of the MU in December 2002, a post which he held until his retirement in 2017. In addition to his UK activities, he has been President of the International Federation of Musicians (FIM) since 2004 undertaking duties which include representing musicians' interests in discussions with organisations such as UNESCO, the World Intellectual Property Organisation and the European Commission. He also assists FIM in its work in developing countries. He has been a director of a number of UK music industry organisations including the umbrella industry body UK Music and served as a member of both the TUC General Council and the TUC Executive Committee. Most recently, John was elected Chair of PPL in July 2015.