



**** UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01 HOURS, WEDNESDAY 24
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Put classical music in London Olympic anthem, say 7 out of 10

**** Scots Tenor Nicky Spence and Classical Boy Band Blake back public call for
classical anthem ****

**New poll reveals public support for Nessun-Dorma style theme tune for London
2012**

The British public want a classical anthem played by a British orchestra as the iconic tune for the London 2012 Olympics, according to the results of a new ICM poll released by the Association of British Orchestras today.

69% of those polled said the anthem should be either classical music or a combination of musical styles including classical music - in the vein of 'Barcelona' – used for the 1992 Olympics where Freddie Mercury teamed up with opera singer Montserrat Caballé. Only 14% favoured a pop song. Half of those polled (48%) said the theme should be played by a British orchestra.

The poll of 2,000 people also asked respondents to vote for their top classical sporting anthem. 40% chose Nessun Dorma – the theme for the 1990 Football World Cup anthem - with a quarter preferring World in Union – the 1995 Rugby World Cup Theme.

Mark Pemberton, Director of the ABO, said:

“Orchestral music has long been used as the soundtrack for major international sporting events - from the Olympics to World Cups - and this survey shows that the public see them going hand in hand. The Olympics should be a celebration of the best of British culture – and orchestras can play a central part in that.”

The poll, commissioned ahead of the ABO Conference at the end of this month which focuses on the theme of 'identity', also found that people see classical music soundtracks as key to their enjoyment of films and that people are keen to hear classical music in other settings. It revealed:

- **69%** feel classical music used in films **contributed to their enjoyment of the film**
- **Nearly a quarter (23%)** went on to **buy or download the classical soundtrack** after seeing a film
- **39%** say hearing classical music in films influences them to **listen to more classical music**

Scots Tenor Nicky Spence, who recently recorded the Scottish segment of the Rugby World Cup Anthem said:

“The power of classical music can stir energies from beyond our realm of imagination - from Purcell to Wagner over hundreds of years, the nation has clung to classical music in times of heightened emotion, triumph and tragedy. It seems the only appropriate gesture there is - a classical theme song, played by a British Orchestra backing a British Artist.”

Jules Knight of Classical Boy Band Blake, said:

“Classical music has always provided the most stirring and emotional accompaniment to sporting events, films, television, theatre and many other vital parts of our daily lives. It's emotional impact upon people of all ages, creeds, and colours is as timeless, relevant and immediate as it always has been throughout history. The Olympics is an event that merits a moving and memorable 'soundtrack' that perhaps only music with 'classical' style themes can do justice to.”

Mark Pemberton said:

“More people are accessing orchestral music in more places than ever before; and they're enjoying it. Last year orchestras played to millions of people, performing around 60 concerts a week.

“British orchestras are working hard to challenge the traditional stereotypes of classical music as stuffy and elitist. A key part of this is forging innovative partnerships with other musical genres - such as the BBC Concert Orchestra and the Hallé's acclaimed concerts with Indie band Elbow and Britten Sinfonia's performance at the Latitude Festival last year.

“There's still more to do, but it's clear people acknowledge and value the key role it plays in British culture and identity.”

Ends.

The ABO is the national body representing the collective interests of professional orchestras throughout the UK and you can find details of all our members on this site, orchestral facts and information as well as the latest news and comment on the issues that affect British orchestras. See www.abo.org.uk

The ABO Conference, **IDENTITY: the orchestra's place in contemporary culture** takes place at Glasgow Royal Concert Hall between 24-26 February. For a full programme see: <http://www.abo.org.uk/Events/Annual-Conference/Conference-2010-overview/>

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Polling summary:

ICM interviewed a random sample of 2057 adults aged 18+ via online between 5th – 7th February 2010. Surveys were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults. ICM is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Further information at www.icmresearch.co.uk

1. Of the clips that you have just heard, which is your favourite classical 'anthem' that has been used in sporting events?

Nessun Dorma: 40%

World in Union: 23%

O Fortuna 17%

Pavane 9%

None of them 11%

2. Do you think that the theme tune/anthem for the London 2012 Olympics should be....

A classical piece of music: 28%

An existing pop or rock song: 7%

A newly commissioned piece of classical music: 14%

A newly commissioned piece of pop music: 7%

A combination of musical styles, including classical and pop: 27%

Other type of music 2%

Don't know 17%

3. If the London 2012 theme tune/anthem is an orchestral piece, do you think it should be..?

Played by a British professional orchestra: 30%

Played by a British youth orchestras: 18%

Played by an orchestra made up of the best musicians in the country: 22%

Played by an orchestra made up of musicians from all the countries represented in the Olympics: 18%

Don't know 13%

4. Below are some examples of films with classical music soundtracks: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Star Wars Episode II, Revenge of the Sith, Lord of the Rings trilogy, Lawrence of Arabia, Gladiator, The Queen, Raiders of the Lost Ark.

How far do you agree with the following statements?:

I feel classical music used in films can really contribute to my enjoyment of the film:

Agree: 69% (30% strongly)

I have brought / downloaded a classical music film soundtrack as a result of watching the film:

Agree: 23% (9% strongly)

Hearing classical music in films influences me to listen to more classical music in general

Agree: 39% (10% strongly)

Films that use a classical music soundtrack would be just as good without the music

Disagree : 57% (26% strongly)