

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH ORCHESTRAS ANNOUNCES NEW CHAIR, NEW BOARD MEMBERS, AND ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

LONDON 28 NOVEMBER, 6.30PM

Chief Executive of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Gavin Reid, has been elected as the new Chair of the Association of British Orchestras (ABO). He succeeds Kathryn McDowell CBE, Managing Director of the LSO. New Board Members, also announced at the annual AGM this evening, are: Helen Sprott, Managing Director, Philharmonia Orchestra; Phil Boughton, Director of Orchestra & Chorus, Opera North; Simon Webb, General Manager, Philharmonic.

ABO Director Mark Pemberton said: "It was clear to the Board that Gavin Reid can provide the experienced leadership needed to guide the ABO through the next few years, including challenges such as Brexit and public funding. Gavin is a strong collaborator, whose great experience in bringing leaders, managers, musicians, audiences and funders together will be invaluable. He is already a very familiar and respected figure within the ABO, having previously served as a board member for six years. We are delighted to welcome him as our new Chair."

Gavin Reid said:

"It is a huge honour and privilege to be elected Chair of the ABO. I would like to thank Kathryn McDowell for her outstanding leadership of the ABO Board over the past three years as well as her tremendous commitment to the UK's vibrant orchestral life. Since its foundation 70 years ago, the ABO has played a vitally important role, tirelessly advocating, championing and supporting the work of the UK's remarkable orchestras.

Our sector faces some tough challenges over the next few years. There is the potential impact that Brexit could have on our collective ability to engage with artists, promoters, venues, and funders in Europe. Pressures on public funding show no signs of easing and we cannot and must not lose sight of the need to address issues of diversity and inclusion. That said, our orchestras have never been in greater artistic health, never more innovative, never more resilient and never more needed. I look forward enormously to working with my colleagues across the UK in addressing both the challenges and the opportunities that lie ahead. In particular I am excited to welcome delegates from this country, across Europe and further afield, to our 2018 Annual Conference in January – to be held in Cardiff - and to what I know will be a stimulating, challenging, and highly relevant discussion on the theme of collaboration."

The ABO conference, the UK's leading classical music forum, takes place 24-26 January 2018 in Cardiff, and is hosted by three collaborating organisations: BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Welsh National Opera and Sinfonia Cymru. The event, with Principal Media Partner Classic FM, Print Media Partner Rhinegold Publishing, BBC Radio 3 and the British Council, brings together delegates from every part of the sector.

Key speakers will include **Lord Hall**, Director-General, BBC, **Sir Ciaran Devane**, Chief Executive, British Council, **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.

For further information visit [@aborchestras #abo18](http://www.abo.org.uk/conference)

Notes

The **ABO** is the national body representing the collective interest of professional orchestras, youth ensembles and the wider classical music industry throughout the UK. Its mission is to enable and support an innovative, collaborative and sustainable orchestral sector, and it exists to provide advice, support, intelligence and information to the people who make British orchestras a global success.

Gavin Reid is Chief Executive of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, one of Scotland's National Performing Companies. Born and educated in Edinburgh, he studied the trumpet at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London before pursuing a freelance career performing and teaching. He was Principal Trumpet of Manchester Camerata from 1989-2001 and was also responsible for developing their education and outreach programme between 1996-2002. Gavin was appointed General Manager of Manchester Camerata in 2002. In 2004, he became one of the first Fellows on the Clore Leadership Programme. He is currently a Trustee of IMPACT Scotland (International Music and Performing Arts Charitable Trust), the organisation established to develop a new mid-scale performance venue – and home for the SCO - in the heart of Edinburgh city centre. He is also a Governor of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Prior to joining the Scottish Chamber Orchestra Gavin spent ten years as Director of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and served for six years as a Director of the Association of British Orchestras.

Helen Sprott is Managing Director of the Philharmonia Orchestra. Appointed in December 2016, Helen took up her new role in March after 12 years as Director of Music with Arts Council England. Before joining the Arts Council, Helen was an award-winning Commissioning Editor for Music and Performing Arts with Channel 4 Television where projects included Leaving Home, a six-part series mapping the development of 20th century music; Just Dancing Around, profiles of leading contemporary choreographers; Soviet Echoes, unseen archive of legendary Soviet musicians; and The Phil, a three-part observational documentary series tracking a year in the life of the Philharmonia Orchestra. Helen was Classical Music specialist on BBC 2's *The Late Show*; from 1988 to 1991, Helen was Commissioning Editor, Music Books, at Faber and Faber where publications included the Britten Letters; Prokofiev Diary 1927; a Purcell Companion; and books about Boulez, Gershwin, Janacek, and Nielsen, among others. Helen trained as a cellist and graduated in English Language and Literature from University College, London.

Phil Boughton, Director of Orchestra & Chorus, Opera North, read music at Edinburgh University before continuing his trombone studies as a postgraduate at the Royal College of Music. Throughout his education Phil worked in various positions within the arts ranging from Bars Manager of the Edinburgh Festival Theatre to Marketing Assistant of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Prior to graduating from the RCM he had begun his career in arts management in earnest and has worked for both the Royal College and Royal Academy of Music, the Royal Albert Hall; running the 2003 Proms season, the BBC Proms; organizing the 2004 Proms season, and spent ten years at Welsh National Opera as Orchestra Manager from May 2004. In September 2014 Phil joined Opera North as Orchestra Director and in June 2016 became Director of Orchestra and Chorus. Away from his musical work, Phil is a qualified white water rafting guide and keen outdoor pursuits enthusiast whether skiing, surfing, kayaking or cycling in extreme circumstances and inclement weather!

Simon Webb began his career as a cellist, working in orchestras in the UK, Portugal, Hong Kong and Ireland before joining the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1996. He chaired the LPO's board of directors from 2001-2005. On leaving the LPO in 2005 Simon worked in various roles for concert promoters and Arts Council England before joining the CBSO as Director of Orchestral Management in 2008. In 2014 Simon took up his current post as General Manager of the BBC Philharmonic, based in MediaCityUK, Salford and in 2015 was appointed a governor of Chethams School of Music in Manchester.

Outgoing board members are **Kathryn McDowell CBE** (ABO Chair 2014-17), **Michael Eakin** (ABO Chair 2011-14), **Peter Helps**, **Andrew Connolly** and **Carol Main MBE**. Gavin Reid is re-elected to the board in addition to becoming Chair.

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