



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra appoints Kazuki Yamada as Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO) is delighted to announce that Japanese conductor **Kazuki Yamada** has been appointed as its Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor with effect from 1 April 2023 for an initial four and a half-year period.

Yamada made his debut with the CBSO in 2012 and has been the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor since October 2018. Following an intensive search process led by a committee made up of CBSO musicians, Board members and management, and with strong support from the Orchestra, a unanimous decision was made by the Board of Trustees to invite Kazuki to be the CBSO's next Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor. He succeeds Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, who has led the orchestra since 2016.

Born in Japan, Kazuki Yamada will become the first non-European to lead the CBSO. Yamada is also Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo. In Japan he holds further titles of Permanent Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic and Principal Guest Conductor of the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra.

The CBSO is known for performing the widest range of orchestral and choral music, and Yamada will continue this tradition in his role as Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor. His performances are marked by his trademark physicality and energy, and he will continue to build on the deep connections he has already forged with the musicians and audiences alike.

Kazuki Yamada commented: "I first worked with the CBSO in 2012 and immediately felt a very sincere connection with the players. This connection has really grown and developed over the last 9 years; our tour together to Japan in 2016 was one of the highlights of my career. After this the relationship was even deeper. I am so happy, thrilled and above all honoured to be continuing our journey together as the Orchestra's Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor".

CBSO Players' Committee Chair Joanna Patton commented: 'Kazuki is a kind, respectful musician filled with an energy which connects the Orchestra with a sense of magic. His concerts are stories without words, filled with emotion, freedom and a sense of trust that is simultaneously exhilarating and rewarding. We can't wait to continue to share this most special connection with our audiences both here in Birmingham and further afield.'

CBSO Leader Eugene Tzinkidelean commented: 'I have rarely met a musician that is more faithful to the score or as respectful to the orchestra, whilst also being a brilliant and virtuosic Maestro. I honestly don't know what I love most about playing with him: his impeccable technique, his exquisite taste in music, style, or the depth of his artistic thoughts. I'm really looking forward to many years of making music together - with deep love and respect for the music, but also with the incredible panache that I'm sure will swiftly become our trademark.'

CBSO Chief Executive Stephen Maddock commented: 'It is with genuine delight and huge excitement that the CBSO makes today's announcement. From his very first concerts with us, there was an immediate rapport between Kazuki and our musicians, and enormous respect for his musicianship and craft. Over time that has only deepened, and I know that those who have already seen Kazuki conduct the Orchestra will be as thrilled as we are by this news. His energy,



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dynamism and precision make for electrifying concerts and I have no doubt that audiences in Birmingham and beyond will very quickly come to await his next performances as eagerly as our musicians already do, as we embark on new musical adventures together.'

Press images available [here](https://www.cbso.co.uk).
[cbso.co.uk](https://www.cbso.co.uk)

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Notes to Editors:

About Kazuki Yamada

In one of the most anticipated orchestral appointments of the year, Kazuki Yamada has just been announced as Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Commencing the role in spring 2023, Yamada builds upon the deep musical bond formed with players during his time as Principal Guest Conductor of the orchestra, a role held by him since 2018.

Alongside his commitments in Birmingham, Yamada is also Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo. Having already worked with the two organisations in partnership, conducting collaborative performances of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Monaco in 2019, Yamada's new appointment sees a continuing link forged between Monaco and Birmingham, with the CBSO Chorus set for a return to Monaco in 2023 for a performance of Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

Time spent under the close supervision of Seiji Ozawa served to underline the importance of what Yamada calls his "Japanese feeling" for classical music. Born in 1979 in Kanagawa, Japan, he continues to work and perform in Japan, as Permanent Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra.

Yamada's passionate and collaborative approach to conducting means he commands a busy international diary of concerts, opera and choral conducting. His guest conductor appearances have included Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Bergen Philharmonic, Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica Nazionale della RAI, MDR-Sinfonieorchester Leipzig, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre de Paris, Melbourne Symphony, Seattle Symphony and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, with whom he held the position of Principal Guest Conductor from 2012-2018.

Yamada performs again with Krystian Zimerman in 2022, following their Beethoven cycle in Monte Carlo in 2020. He has also worked with soloists such as Emmanuel Ax, Boris Berezovsky, Håkan Hardenberger, Martin Helmchen, Nobuko Imai, Steven Osborne, Baiba Skride, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Frank Peter Zimmermann.



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In the 2021/22 season, Yamada's engagements include returns to Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse and to Opera de Monte Carlo for a production of Berg's *Wozzeck*, guest appearances with NHK Symphony, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra Washington and Het Residentie Orkest. In future seasons Yamada appears with Philharmonia Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg and Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre Nationale du Belgique. He continues his relationship with the Opéra de Monte Carlo with forthcoming performances of Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust* alongside a fully staged performance of Saint-Saëns' rarely programmed *Déjanire*.

With the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo he recorded three discs of Mendelssohn symphonies nos. 1 and 3, as well as Fauré Requiem with Tokyo Philharmonic Chorus. A further release is planned of Strauss' *An Alpine Symphony* and Saint Saëns' *Melodies persanes*.

Strongly committed to his role as an educator, Yamada appears annually as a guest artist at the Seiji Ozawa International Academy in Switzerland. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on international concert halls reaffirmed his belief that - in his words - '*the audience is always involved in making the music. As a conductor, I need an audience there as much as the musicians*'. Yamada studied music at the Tokyo University of the Arts, where he discovered a love both for Mozart and the Russian romantic repertory. He first achieved international attention upon receiving first prize in the 51st Besançon International Competition for young conductors in 2009. After living in Japan for most of his life, he now resides in Berlin.

About the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)

The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra is one of the world's most renowned 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, five 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 75 superb professional musicians, and over a 100-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, Andris Nelsons and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla 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 Kazuki Yamada the CBSO will continue to do what it does best - playing great music for people in Birmingham and beyond.



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The positions of Music Director and Chief Conductor and Artistic Advisor are generously supported by John Osborn.

Find out more at cbsoco.uk

Previous CBSO Chief Conductors and Music Directors

Appleby Matthews (1920 - 1924)

Sir Adrian Boult (1924 - 1930)

Leslie Heward (1930 - 1943)

George Weldon (1944 - 1951)

Rudolf Schwarz (1951 - 1957)

Sir Andrzej Panufnik (1957 - 1959)

Hugo Rignold (1960 - 1968)

Louis Frémaux (1969 - 1978)

Sir Simon Rattle (1980 - 1998)

Sakari Oramo (1998 - 2008)

Andris Nelsons (2008 - 2015)

Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (2016 - 2022)