

## Press Release

For release: Tuesday 24 October 2017



### **Britten Sinfonia turns 25 today**

### **£25 for 25 years fundraising campaign announced**

### **Classic FM celebrates 25 years of Britten Sinfonia in 'The Full Works Concert'**

### **Thomas Adès, Sir Mark Elder and Jeremy Denk amongst guest artists helping the orchestra to celebrate during 2017-2018 season**

Exactly 25 years ago, on 24 October 1992, Britten Sinfonia gave its first concert. Since then, the award-winning orchestra has given more than 1500 concerts, been heard by over half a million people in 25 countries across four continents and commissioned over 300 new works. Britten Sinfonia has also created two sister ensembles - Britten Sinfonia Voices, and Britten Sinfonia Academy (for exceptional teenage musicians from the East of England) - made 36 recordings and worked with 125,000 participants through its Creative Learning programme.

To mark its first quarter of century, the orchestra has today (Tuesday 24 October) launched **£25 for 25 years**, a fundraising campaign to spearhead another 25 years of trail-blazing music on the international stage and in the community. The campaign simply asks music lovers to give a £25 birthday donation to the orchestra - £1 for each year of its existence. Donations can be made online at [www.brittensinfonia.com](http://www.brittensinfonia.com). Britten Sinfonia is no stranger to crowd-funding, with schemes that have allowed people from all walks of life to come together to contribute to new music: the orchestra's Musically Gifted scheme has to date raised over £85,000 for new commissions, and its earlier 'tenner for a tenor' initiative, saw 350 people make contributions to a new work by Jonathan Dove for the orchestra and tenor Mark Padmore. **#£25for25yrs**

Britten Sinfonia's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary season (2017-2018) underlines why, over the past quarter century, it has become one of the world's finest chamber orchestras. It's a season of invigorating, adventurous music making with musical insight, integrity, the joy of musical exploration and fantastic musicians at its core.

Concerts include: the launch of a **four-year Brahms Symphony Cycle with Sir Mark Elder** with each symphony, performed for the smaller forces that Brahms envisaged, set alongside Mahler Lieder and lesser known works by 20<sup>th</sup> century English composers (8-10 November); the second year of **Thomas Adès Beethoven Symphony Cycle**, which juxtaposes the symphonies with music by Gerald Barry (May/June), and a jazz infused programme including Gershwin's original jazz band scoring of *Rhapsody in Blue*, with American pianist **Jeremy Denk** (February). There are also choral works by Bernstein, Vaughan Williams, Mozart and Stravinsky featuring Britten Sinfonia Voices, and a series of new 'lunchtime' commissions, including a collaboration with jazz pianist/producer/composer **Nik Bärtsch** as part of the **EFG London Jazz Festival**, which is also marking its first quarter century (November).

**Classic FM**, which has also turned 25 this year, will broadcast a '**Full Works Concert' dedicated to 25 years of Britten Sinfonia at 8.00pm this evening** (Tuesday 24 October) and feature an exclusive performance by Britten Sinfonia Leader **Thomas Gould** at ClassicFM.com in November.

**David Butcher**, Britten Sinfonia Chief Executive and Artistic Director, who has been with the orchestra since the start, comments:

*"Britten Sinfonia's ethos has changed little over the past quarter century – the music always comes first. The orchestra is home to some of the country's finest chamber musicians, led by Thomas Gould and Jacqueline Shave; there's intelligence to the orchestra's music making, and a fearless curiosity and pleasure in its approach that I think is infectious. As an orchestra, we are a little unusual in that we don't have a music director or principal conductor; instead we collaborate with a wide range of outstanding international artists on bespoke projects. This approach has been revelatory. As we move into our next quarter century, we aim to continue to tread new musical ground, and unearth surprises at every turn, and alongside our audiences and musical partners, to have a really good time doing it!"*

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