

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA AND UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ANNOUNCE PIONEERING PARTNERSHIP

Trail-blazing agreement is a first between the world-renowned Orchestra and a UK university

The world-renowned Philharmonia Orchestra and the University of Leicester have announced a new partnership – the first of its kind between the Philharmonia and a university – that will provide a new platform for high quality music to be developed and showcased to a wider audience.

The partnership will bring illustrious musicians from the Philharmonia onto campus to provide masterclasses to students, thereby helping to nurture the next generation of talented musicians.

The University has enhanced its range of musical scholarships and this new agreement will also enable students of the University to attend Philharmonia concerts at heavily discounted rates, alongside exclusive opportunities to attend rehearsals and meet Philharmonia musicians and artists as part of social events around the concerts.

This partnership builds on years of involvement that the Philharmonia has had with the local community as part of its thirteen-year residency at the city's major concert venue De Montfort Hall, adjacent to the University of Leicester campus.

The partnership, regarded as a major coup for the University, has been spearheaded at Leicester by the Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Burgess and Assistant Registrar Jo Wood.

Professor Burgess said: "It is a real achievement to become the first university to develop a major link with a first-rate national orchestra. It is our belief that no other UK university has such a link with an orchestra.

"This Partnership embraces the Philharmonia's ethos that musical excellence should be available to all, both as consumers - as audience members - and as active participants. It also mirrors the University of Leicester's ambition to enhance and develop the student-led music activities on campus, bringing in Philharmonia musicians and staff to offer specialist support and expertise.

"In winning the title University of the Year from the *Times Higher Education*, Leicester was lauded for being 'elite without being elitist' – this partnership gives all students who are talented musicians, regardless of their background, the opportunity to have lessons with leading players. Reduced price tickets also give all students the opportunity to experience music at this level."

Mrs Jo Wood added: "This partnership will give music a stronger profile in the University alongside the work we have done on art and sculpture – the University already hosts a successful annual international sculpture exhibition and this agreement will enhance the cultural life of the University in a dynamic way by further enriching the life of staff and students as well as benefiting the local community by improving the quality of music provision within the University."

David Whelton, Managing Director of the Philharmonia Orchestra, said: "It's enormously important for us at the Philharmonia Orchestra to ensure everyone has access to the very finest quality music experience both as audience members and performers. The University of Leicester has a vibrant music scene hosting a number of orchestras and ensembles and it is a great opportunity for Philharmonia Orchestra players, many of whom are Professors at leading conservatoires across Europe, to share their knowledge and passion in a series of rehearsals and lessons. We hope that this partnership will inspire students and ensure that the musical life at the University of Leicester continues to grow from strength to strength."

Under the unique partnership, the Orchestra will work with the University in a number of ways including:

- making available Philharmonia Orchestra players to attend rehearsals of the University's music ensembles in the run-up to major concerts, offering sectional rehearsal tuition;
- offering the University's music scholarship recipients the opportunity to study on a one-to-one basis with a Philharmonia member;
- meeting formally with the new Chairpersons of Music Societies at the start of the academic year to offer programming advice and support, and to provide an informal support network throughout the academic year;
- offering support to the conductors of the University ensembles.

The University and the Orchestra have also agreed joint branding and promotion arrangements and further discussions will occur to develop the partnership in future years.

Over 1000 students visited the Orchestra's stall at the Freshers' Fair. James Williams, Director of the Orchestra's Residencies and Regional Programme, who was instrumental in setting up the partnership, added: "Having a stand at the Freshers' Fair, kindly given to the Philharmonia by the Students' Union, was a great opportunity to start spreading the news of the partnership to students both new and returning. There was a high level of interest in what the Philharmonia had to offer, from students already involved in the University's music ensembles to those who haven't ever attended an orchestral concert."

The partnership was formally launched at the Philharmonia's concert at De Montfort Hall on 14 October attended by representatives of the University.

NOTE TO NEWSDESK

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Picture opportunity: October 14, 6.55pm at De Montfort Hall, Leicester or by arrangement with the Orchestra.

The Philharmonia Orchestra

Acknowledged as the UK's foremost musical pioneer, with an extraordinary recording legacy, the Philharmonia Orchestra leads the field for its quality of playing, and for its innovative approach to audience development, residencies, music education and the use of new technologies – including webcasts, podcasts, downloads and computer games – in reaching a global audience. Together with its relationships with the world's most sought-after artists, most importantly its Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia is at the heart of British musical life.