

# HALLÉ MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 2 May 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

The Hallé announces its 2024–25 season with a dynamic new Principal Conductor, Kahchun Wong, and a season packed with stunning music and initiatives building upon the success of last year, when ticket sales grew by 23%, with a 36% increase in people coming to hear the Hallé for the first time.



- Kahchun Wong takes over from Sir Mark Elder as Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor.
- Sir Mark Elder becomes Conductor Emeritus and conducts Strauss’s epic ‘Alpine Symphony’ and a new ‘Concerto for Orchestra’ written specially for the Hallé by Huw Watkins.
- Thomas Adès commences his second season as the Hallé’s Artist-in-Residence, conducting Stravinsky’s cataclysmic ‘The Rite of Spring’ and two Sibelius symphonies, while also showcasing several of his own works, including his acclaimed ‘America: A Prophecy’ in a new extended version commissioned by the Hallé.
- The new sell-out ‘Rush Hour’ concert series returns, while the eclectic ‘The Hallé Presents ...’ initiative features Nitin Sawhney, Honey Dijon and a whole weekend of Philip Glass starring Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter Angélique Kidjo.

For almost 25 years, the Hallé’s success has been synonymous with Sir Mark Elder, who grasped the instrument first fashioned by Sir Charles Hallé back in 1858 and steadily honed it into a major player on the local, national and international stage. Now, as the orchestra embarks upon its 2024–25 season, it’s time for the hallowed Hallé baton – previously held by such luminaries as Hamilton Harty and John Barbirolli – to pass into new, younger hands. Cue charismatic Singaporean superstar Kahchun Wong, who electrified the players at their first encounter back in spring 2023 and who now takes over as the orchestra’s Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor, introducing himself to the Hallé’s audiences at the helm of an inaugural season that promises to be one of the Hallé’s most diverse and ambitious to date.

Having just recorded a full studio version of Benjamin Britten’s brilliantly exotic ballet *The Prince of the Pagodas* for his debut on the Hallé’s own award-winning label, Kahchun Wong opens his first season by

pairing Mahler's titanic First Symphony with a brand-new suite of dances from Britten's ballet, which he himself has arranged in collaboration with the Hallé's Composer Emeritus, Colin Matthews (while the complete recording of the ballet will be released to coincide with this opening concert). In a dazzlingly diverse season, Wong also conducts two huge choral works, Mahler's Second ('Resurrection') Symphony and Beethoven's Ninth – both with the Hallé Choir – as well as Bruckner's unfinished Ninth (complete with its recently reconstructed finale) as a tribute to the composer on his 200th anniversary, alongside a rich variety of classic and modern masterpieces by Brahms and Liszt, Britten, Arnold and MacMillan, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Stravinsky and Arutiunian, and Tan Dun, Unsuk Chin and Akira Ifukube.



Kah Chun Wong © Drew Forsyth

So, whether you're into Austro-German masters like the Three Big Bs (Beethoven, Bruckner and Brahms), British visionaries like Vaughan Williams or modern American Minimalists like Philip Glass, whether you're hooked on video game soundtracks like *World of Warcraft* and *Assassin's Creed* or want to be wowed by big-screen film scores like *Top Gun* and *Star Wars*, whether you're keen to embrace the multicultural fusion of multi-talented composer, performer and producer Nitin Sawhney, tempted to take to the virtual dance floor with the deck-spinning doyenne of House music, Chicago DJ Honey Dijon, or eager to experience some Queer Black excellence courtesy of lycra-loving bass diva Le Gateau Chocolat, or even if you just want to celebrate Christmas in classic style by singing favourite carols with your family, the Hallé's welcomingly all-inclusive new season really does have something for (well, almost) everyone.

As well as revisiting some of the greatest classical masterworks from the musical past in performances that we hope will feel as fresh as new, we also celebrate the very best of today's new music from living composers such as Thomas Adès, Philip Glass, Huw Watkins, Tan Dun and Unsuk Chin, thus continuing a time-honoured tradition that has seen the Hallé itself commissioning and premiering many of the major works, by Elgar, Vaughan Williams and others, that now form the mainstream concert repertoire of today.

But great music needs great performers to bring it to life. So for our new season we're proud to welcome back such inspirational artists as Masabane Cecilia Rangwanasha, Delyana Lazarova, Pavel Kolesnikov, Roderick Williams and Tianyi Lu, while there are also debut appearances for Mariam Batsashvili, Stephanie Childress, and Eldbjørg Hemsing. We are also delighted to welcome Giorgi Gigashvili – the latest winner of the prestigious Terence Judd-Hallé Award – for his Hallé debut.

Though internationally known and admired via its broadcasts, recordings and overseas tours, the Hallé still has its roots firmly anchored within its native Mancunian soil. Now as always, the orchestra continues to play a major part within the city's cultural life, not just through the regular concert seasons it presents as resident orchestra at The Bridgewater Hall, but also through all the innovative education, ensembles and



The Hallé © Bill Lam, Hallé Concerts Society

outreach projects that it offers to Manchester's wider community, including many who may never have visited a concert hall before, all under the banner 'Hallé Connect' and run out of the orchestra's Ancoats-based HQ at Hallé St Peter's and the RIBA Award-winning Oglesby Centre.

The arrival of Kahchun Wong as the Hallé's Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor opens a new chapter in the Hallé's long history of serving both music and the city with prowess and pride, while always remaining at the cultural cutting-edge.

**Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Kahchun Wong said:**

*'Over the past year, I've had the privilege of immersing myself in the Hallé world. From six intense days at Hallé St Peter's recording Britten's *The Prince of the Pagodas* for our label, to a most memorable tour of Spain at the start of 2024, it already feels like our journey together is well under way.'*

**The Hallé's Chief Executive David Butcher said:**

*'It's an historic and propitious new season for us all at the Hallé, full of great music and new initiatives in the pioneering tradition of our founder Charles Hallé. His trailblazing work has been fostered and developed by other musical legends through the ages: Hans Richter, Hamilton Harty, John Barbirolli, Mark Elder and now Kahchun Wong. Following his electrifying debut back in spring 2023 – and a recording and acclaimed tour of Spain – we can't wait to welcome Kahchun to Manchester for his first season and for our growing audiences to witness the rapport and alchemy which promises so many great performances ahead.'*

**Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, said:**

*'The Hallé has, for over 160 years, been not only a jewel in Manchester's musical crown, but an orchestra that has been hailed as amongst the best in Britain and beyond. Manchester has always been, and remains, an outward-looking international city, and we hope Kahchun Wong's appointment will enhance and expand that reputation.'*

**ENDS**

Full details can be found in the Hallé's new season brochure, at [issuu.com/thehalle/docs/season-2425](http://issuu.com/thehalle/docs/season-2425) and at [www.halle.co.uk](http://www.halle.co.uk)

Photos, media and interviews are available, please contact [press@halle.co.uk](mailto:press@halle.co.uk)

Hallé information and biographies are available from [www.halle.co.uk](http://www.halle.co.uk)

Further information is also available from [emma@vbpr.co.uk](mailto:emma@vbpr.co.uk)