

HALLÉ



Kahchun Wong announced as new Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Hallé

- Kahchun Wong will formally take up his appointment from the start of the Hallé's 2024-25 season
- Sir Mark Elder to become Conductor Emeritus of the Hallé from 2024-25
- Thomas Adès to become Artist in Residence of the Hallé from 2023-24 for two years



Kahchun Wong pictured outside Hallé St Peter's, Ancoats - Photo credit Tom Stephens / Hallé

TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023 – The Hallé is delighted to announce that Kahchun Wong will become Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of Manchester's iconic symphony orchestra from September 2024. His initial contract will be for five years. Sir Mark Elder will become Conductor Emeritus after 24 transformative years which have left the Hallé enriched, revered and the envy of the musical world. The orchestra together with the Hallé Choir and youth ensembles now look ahead with confidence and a new energy, poised to explore and embrace yet more musical challenges and adventures.

Kahchun Wong said: "I am deeply honoured to be the new Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of the Hallé. It is an orchestra I have always admired for its beautiful sound and tradition. It is a privilege to become a part of Manchester's vibrant cultural scene and to continue the high standards of music making associated with Sir Mark Elder and our distinguished predecessors. I am looking forward to working with the visionary team at the Hallé in charting our artistic future together."

David Butcher, Chief Executive of the Hallé said: "Everyone at the Hallé is excited about Kahchun Wong's appointment. From the very first moment in rehearsal it was clear there was a special alchemy between Kahchun and the players, which blossomed into a magical and unforgettable experience for musicians and audience alike. This is an appointment which, alongside new positions for Sir Mark Elder and Thomas Adès, will thrill audiences all around the world, not least our loyal and ever-growing following in northern England's cultural capital."

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 this appointment will enhance and expand that reputation."

Councillor Luthfur Rahman OBE, Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council, said: "The Hallé is much more than just a world-beating symphony orchestra, it has been part of Manchester's musical DNA for the last 165 years and has done much during this time to enhance Manchester's own reputation on the world's stage as a city of culture and the arts to be reckoned with. With this exciting new appointment the Hallé is set to continue to delight audiences both in Manchester and around the world, and we can't wait to welcome Kahchun Wong to our city."

Sir Mark Elder said: "Working with these extraordinary musicians and performing for our wonderful audience has been the centre of my life for nearly 25 years. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to continue to develop these two relationships as Conductor Emeritus and I much look forward to many exciting concerts in the years to come. I wish Kahchun every success and I know the people of Manchester will welcome him warmly."

Kahchun will conduct the Hallé at The Bridgewater Hall this Saturday 24 June at 7pm. He appears as part of *Manchester Classical*, a Hallé-led festival of music for new audiences featuring all the city's professional orchestras, in a series of hour-long concerts throughout the day and into the night on 24 and 25 June. Kahchun Wong will be conducting Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and John Harle's *Briggflatts* featuring Jess Gillam on saxophone. This will be the public's first chance to see Kahchun Wong with the Hallé following the announcement of his new role.

Kahchun will also lead the Hallé on a tour of Spain in January 2024, and conduct Fauré's *Requiem* with the Hallé at 6pm on Thursday 2 May 2024 in The Bridgewater Hall, just days before Sir Mark Elder's final run of concerts in Manchester as Music Director of the Hallé.

Hallé main website: www.halle.co.uk

Hallé biography: www.halle.co.uk/who-we-are

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Kahchun Wong was born in 1986 in Singapore. He started his musical life playing the cornet in his primary school brass band and then composed for wind orchestras during his national service in the military band. He then studied opera and orchestral conducting in Berlin, before becoming the first Asian to win the Gustav Mahler Conducting Competition.

Praised by *Musical America* for the “depth and sincerity of his musicality”, Kahchun Wong will begin his tenure as Chief Conductor of the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra from 2023-24, building upon the deep musical bond forged with players during his time as Principal Guest Conductor of the orchestra. In the same season, he will also assume the role of Principal Guest Conductor at Dresdner Philharmonie, beginning with a concert of Strauss, Elgar and a newly commissioned work by Narong Prangcharoen.

Upcoming engagements in 2023-2024 include return visits to the Cleveland Orchestra, Seattle Symphony and the Hallé, as well as debuts with the London Philharmonic and Hong Kong Philharmonic. Other recent guest appearances include the Bamberg Symphony, Czech Philharmonic, Detroit Symphony, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Orchestre Nationale du Capitole de Toulouse, Shanghai Symphony, Singapore Symphony, Hiroshima Symphony, Kyushu Symphony, Osaka Philharmonic, Tokyo Symphony, Tokyo Philharmonic, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony and Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra.

He conducted the New York Philharmonic's annual Lunar New Year concert in February 2019, and later that year the Federal President of Germany awarded him the Order of Merit for his achievements in Singaporean-German cultural relations.