



## **Semi-finalists announced for the inaugural Siemens Hallé International Conductors Competition**

The Hallé is delighted to announce the names of the ten semi-finalists in the inaugural Siemens Hallé International Conductors Competition, to be held at Hallé St Peter's in Manchester from Thursday 20 to Saturday 22 February 2020.

Ten outstanding conductors at the start of their careers (seven male and three female) from around the globe have been selected from a pool of 287 applicants representing 55 countries across six continents. Nine nationalities will be represented in the semi-finals: Joel Sandelson (British), Delyana Lazarova (Bulgarian), Andres Kaljuste (Estonian), Antoine Petit-Dutaillis and Chloé Dufresne (French), Elinor Rufeizen (Israeli), Diogo Costa (Portuguese), Francisco Valero-Terribas (Spanish), Jonas Ehrler (Swiss) and Rodolfo Barráez (Venezuelan).

After two days of competition, including a day rehearsing with the Hallé Youth Orchestra, four finalists will be selected to rehearse and perform with the Hallé on Saturday 22 February. The winner will be announced that evening and will be offered a two-year engagement as the 8th Assistant Conductor for the Hallé, which includes the role of Music Director of the Hallé Youth Orchestra during which time they will develop their skills under the mentorship of the Hallé's Music Director Sir Mark Elder CH CBE. The position of Hallé Assistant Conductor is a prestigious role for talented young conductors. The first Assistant Conductor was Edward Gardner OBE who held the post between 2001 and 2004, the most recent incumbent being Jonathon Heyward (2016 to 2019). In addition to leading the Hallé during their tenure, the winning conductor will receive a cash prize of £15,000 and the opportunity to establish themselves on the world stage through guest conducting appearances.

Serving as the judging panel are Sir Mark Elder CH CBE, Music Director of the Hallé; Professor Dr. Stephan Frucht, Artistic Director of the Siemens Arts Program; Arna Kristín Einarsdóttir, Managing Director of Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra; John Summers, Chief Executive of the Hallé; Carola Reul, Managing Director of the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie; Geoffrey Owen, Head of Artistic Planning for the Hallé; and Julia Albrecht, Director of the Artist Management Department of Konzertdirektion Schmid.

Among the unique elements of the Competition is the inclusion of a 'Digital Challenge', during which the ten semi-finalists will be invited to engage in a task that integrates motion technology into the conducting process. The exercise will test how each candidate adapts to unusual situations, and the technology developed will ultimately have lasting benefits for the Hallé's education and outreach initiatives.

The Siemens Hallé International Conductors Competition builds upon a remarkable partnership between the Hallé and Siemens that has been developed over the last two years. Creating links between engineering and music, this collaboration has not only brought classical music to Manchester audiences, but has also delivered a variety of education and community outreach projects that engage children and support communities throughout the North of England.

John Summers, Chief Executive of the Hallé, commented: "Since it started in 2002, the Hallé's Assistant Conductorship has identified and helped develop a number of rising stars of the conducting world, many of whom have gone on to great commercial and critical success. We are delighted to be working with Siemens to extend this opportunity to global audiences, bringing the very best and brightest musical talent to Manchester."

Professor Dr. Stephan Frucht, Artistic Director of the Siemens Arts Program, added: "Directing an orchestra and modern business leadership have a lot in common. Siemens has always recognized the value of the arts, which is why we are in a constant exchange with musicians and artists, much like with scientists and engineers."

## **SEMI-FINALISTS**

	<i>Country of Birth</i>	<i>Country of Residence</i>
<b>Rodolfo Barráez, 26</b>	<b>Venezuela</b>	<b>Germany</b>

Winner of the OFUNAM International Orchestra Conducting Prize (2018) in Mexico, Barráez's upcoming engagements include the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, Jalisco Philharmonic Orchestra, Minería Symphony Orchestra, and Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra.

<b>Diogo Costa, 30</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>Portugal</b>
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Trained at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, Costa's engagements already include the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the Porto Symphony Orchestra Casa da Música, and the Portuguese Symphony Orchestra.

<b>Chloé Dufresne, 28</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>France</b>
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Dufresne studied at the École Normale de Musique de Paris and is completing her Master's degree at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, whilst being principal conductor of the Orchestre Inter-Universitaire de Paris.

<b>Jonas Ehrler, 27</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>
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Ehrler made his debut with Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, Orchestre de Chambre de Genève and Ensemble Modern over the past season, having completed his conducting studies at the Zurich University of the Arts.

<b>Andres Kaljuste, 37</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>United Kingdom</b>
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Following his studies at the Sibelius Academy in Finland, Kaljuste has conducted orchestras including the Estonian Youth Symphony Orchestra and Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, with whom he will open the 2020 Estonian Music Days Festival.

<b>Delyana Lazarova, 34</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>Switzerland</b>
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Lazarova received the James Conlon Conducting Prize at the prestigious Aspen Music Festival in 2019, and has worked with Hradec-Kralove Philharmonic Orchestra in Czech Republic, Thessaloniki State Symphony Orchestra in Greece, Meiningen and Konstanz Symphony Orchestras in Germany.

<b>Antoine Petit-Dutaillis, 23</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>France</b>
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Petit-Dutaillis joined Alain Altinoglu's conducting class at the Conservatoire de Paris in 2017, and has worked with the Regional Orchestra of Avignon, the Ensemble Intercontemporain and Miskolc Symphony Orchestra (Hungary).

<b>Elinor Rufeizen, 32</b>	<b>Israel</b>	<b>United States</b>
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A recipient of the Bruno Walter Memorial Scholarship and Charles Schiff Conducting awards, Rufeizen recently graduated from The Juilliard School with a Master's degree in orchestral conducting, studying with mentors Alan Gilbert and David Robertson.

**Joel Sandelson, 25**

**United Kingdom**

**United Kingdom**

Sandelson is currently Leverhulme Conducting Fellow at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Assistant Conductor to Thomas Dausgaard at the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra. He previously studied conducting at the Royal Academy of Music under Sian Edwards.

**Francisco Valero-Terribas, 44**

**Spain**

**Spain**

Valero-Terribas studied at the Superior Conservatory of Music in Valencia, and since then has been Assistant Conductor at the Palau de les Arts Opera House in Valencia and Musical Director at the Contemporary Music Academy with the National Youth Orchestra of Spain.

[www.conductors-competition.com](http://www.conductors-competition.com)

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Hallé former Assistant Conductors:**

Edward Gardner	2001-2004
André de Ridder	2004-2006
Rory Macdonald	2006-2008
Ewa Strusińska	2008-2010
Andrew Gourlay	2010-2012
Jamie Phillips	2012-2016
Jonathon Heyward	2016-2019

**Hallé**

Founded by pianist and conductor Sir Charles Hallé in 1858, the Hallé sits at the heart of Manchester and shares the values of accessibility, education, ambition and excellence that has established this city as a world-class cultural centre. Today, under the direction of Sir Mark Elder CH CBE, the Hallé celebrates its 161st season, offering 70 concerts a year at The Bridgewater Hall and giving over 40 performances annually at venues throughout Britain. Its distinguished history of acclaimed performances also includes televised concerts, radio broadcasts and international tours for which the Hallé has received many accolades, most notably from the Royal Philharmonic Society and the South Bank Awards. In addition to its work on stage, the Hallé is proud to promote the widest range of education activity of any orchestra in the UK, serving more than 70,000 individuals of all ages. Further, its large variety of Ensembles - a symphony choir, youth, children's and training choirs and a youth orchestra - offer high-level training and performance opportunities to talented children, youth and adults throughout the region. Through all of its offerings, the Hallé plays an integral role in the civic and cultural life of Greater Manchester and indeed beyond. To learn more, visit [www.halle.co.uk](http://www.halle.co.uk).

## **Siemens AG**

Siemens AG (Berlin and Munich) is a global technology powerhouse that has stood for engineering excellence, innovation, quality, reliability and internationality for more than 170 years. The company is active around the globe, focusing on the areas of power generation and distribution, intelligent infrastructure for buildings and distributed energy systems, and automation and digitalisation in the process and manufacturing industries. Through the separately managed company Siemens Mobility, a leading supplier of smart mobility solutions for rail and road transport, Siemens is shaping the world market for passenger and freight services. Due to its majority stakes in the publicly listed companies Siemens Healthineers AG and Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy, Siemens is also a world-leading supplier of medical technology and digital healthcare services as well as environmentally friendly solutions for onshore and offshore wind power generation. In fiscal 2019, which ended on September 30, 2019, Siemens generated revenue of €86.8 billion and net income of €5.6 billion. At the end of September 2019, the company had around 385,000 employees worldwide. Further information is available on the Internet at [www.siemens.com](http://www.siemens.com).

## **Siemens Arts Program**

The Siemens Arts Program operates mainly in the areas of music, visual arts and cultural education and provides a platform for the company's own arts and cultural projects. One key objective of the program is the global support of excellent young artists. This is done through internally initiated competitions to find new talent and by networking young artists with established international cultural institutions (ARD Music Competition, Bavarian State Opera, Carnegie Hall New York, Paris Opera, Salzburg Festival). Further information can be found at <https://new.siemens.com/global/en/company/sustainability/arts-program.html>.