



[www.berlioz150.org](http://www.berlioz150.org)

\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE \*\*\*

## BERLIOZ 150 CELEBRATES THE LIFE AND WORK OF HECTOR BERLIOZ

The great French composer died 150 years ago - on 8th March 1869



*“Finally they’re going to play my music” were Berlioz’s last words before he died 150 years ago. Indeed Berlioz takes longer than most composers to understand, but finally one can say that he is now much loved.”*

**David Cairns, Berlioz 150 Patron-in-Chief**

The charity Berlioz 150 launched its programme to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Berlioz's death with an event to celebrate his life and works, hosted by the Institut Français in South Kensington on 7th March 2019. The evening included brief talks by three of the world's leading Berlioz authorities: **David Cairns**, author of the acclaimed two-volume biography of the composer; **Professor Hugh Macdonald**, General Editor of the New Berlioz Edition published by Bärenreiter Verlag; and **Professor Julian Rushton**, editor of the *Cambridge Berlioz Encyclopedia*. The actor **Malcolm Sinclair** read excerpts from Berlioz's writings, and the contralto **Jess Dandy** sang four Berlioz songs, accompanied by **Dylan Perez** on piano.

*“Berlioz isn't just a composer. He's a figure who lived during those particular years in the 19th Century whose influence as a person, as a thinker and as an artist spread far and wide.”*

**Professor Hugh Macdonald**

Berlioz 150 will mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Berlioz's death with a number of ambitious and memorable initiatives during 2019/20 which will raise awareness of and enthusiasm for classical music, especially among children - including those who lack access to music education. These include a partnership with Bristol Plays Music, the Bristol music education hub, to develop innovative educational resources using Berlioz's life and music to support music education in schools. The culmination of the programme will be ***Fantastique!*** the **largest-ever children's choral event in the UK**, with a target of 10,000 singing children, aimed at recreating something of the impact of the Charity Children's Concert which Berlioz attended in St Paul's Cathedral on 5 June 1851 and described as *“the most extraordinary thing I have seen and heard in the whole of my existence.”*

*“I'm so pleased that we're involved in Berlioz 150. [I agree with] everything that Lord Aberdare [Chairman Berlioz 150] said about the education work that Berlioz 150 is undertaking (...) if we can help in any way at the BBC (...) change those children's lives, then all that we've been doing here has been worthwhile. Thank you and best of luck to anyone involved in Berlioz 150, and all the best from the BBC.”*

**Alan Davey CBE, Controller of BBC Radio, Proms and Orchestras and Choirs**

*“Berlioz 150 will share its passion for Berlioz with UK-wide performances, events and publications planned for 2019-2020. The climax next year will be the largest children's choral event in the UK. That will be indeed fantastique!”*

**Claudine Ripert-Landler, Cultural Consellor to the French Embassy in the UK and Director of the Institut Français in London**

Berlioz 150 is also programming a children's choir event at the **V&A on 4th May 2019** as part of a planned Festival of Theatre and Performance, including Berlioz pieces sung by Irish mezzo-soprano Rachel Kelly who recently sang *La Damnation de Faust* under the direction of Sir Mark Elder in Manchester.

Berlioz 150 is delighted to be working in partnership with the **London Symphony Orchestra**, which at the end of last year released *Berlioz Odyssey*, a new CD box set featuring Sir Colin Davis's complete Berlioz recordings. **Today LSO Live** is releasing a new recording of *La Damnation de Faust* conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. Visit <https://lsolive.lso.co.uk/collections/berlioz150> to browse the label's award-winning Berlioz recordings.

This evening John Nelson will conduct the **Philharmonia Orchestra** in the *Grande Messe des Morts*, Berlioz's Requiem, at St Paul's Cathedral to commemorate the anniversary of his death on the actual date - 8th March. Berlioz, at the end of his life, said "If I were threatened with the destruction of the whole of my works save one, I should crave mercy for the *Messe des Morts*."

---

To download the full programme of the Anniversary event last night please click [here](#).

To download the Berlioz 150 Calendar of events please click [here](#).

To download High Resolution photos please click [here](#).

For more information about Berlioz 150 please get in touch with:

**Julien Planté, Project Director**

[julien@berlioz150.org](mailto:julien@berlioz150.org)

0773 643 8260

**LONDON, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**EMBARGO: Immediate**

**BERLIOZ 150 - TO INSPIRE IN YOUNG PEOPLE A LIFELONG LOVE OF MUSIC AND SINGING**

[www.berlioz150.org](http://www.berlioz150.org)

[@berlioz150](https://twitter.com/berlioz150)

**BERLIOZ 150 PATRONS:**

David Cairns CBE (*Patron-in-Chief*); Dame Janet Baker CH DBE;  
Lord (Michael) Berkeley of Knighton CBE; Nicholas Collon; Dame Sarah Connolly DBE;  
Suzi Digby (Lady Eatwell) OBE; Sir Mark Elder CH CBE; Sir John Eliot Gardiner CBE;  
Edward Gardner OBE; Sir Roger Norrington CBE; Chi-chi Nwanoku OBE;  
Sir Antonio Pappano; Sir Simon Rattle OM CBE; François-Xavier Roth; Robin Ticciati

Berlioz 150 is a charity registered in England and Wales number 1173910