



18 September 2017

New orchestra structure provides exciting opportunities for University of Cambridge's top musicians

Cambridge University Chamber Orchestra (CUCO) is to be renamed Cambridge University Orchestra (CUO) from October this year, as the University's premier orchestra expands into symphonic repertoire, as well as continuing to perform the chamber music for which it is so renowned. The new orchestra is set to perform a spectacular variety of programmes with some of the world's leading conductors.

Chloë Davidson, Executive Director of the Cambridge University Musical Society, says: *'Our orchestras comprise the best student musicians in Cambridge and for some time they have wanted to stretch their talents by exploring symphonic repertoire as well as chamber works. This wasn't possible while we had a chamber orchestra as our premier orchestra but we have now introduced a new structure which allows it to expand from 35 to 80 players when we want to perform large-scale symphonic works. We are delighted that the first large symphony performed by Cambridge University Orchestra will be Mahler Symphony No.1, on 17 February 2018, conducted by the new principal guest conductor of the BBC Philharmonic, Ben Gernon'.*

CUO is set up so that top professional conductors will always get to work with the best student musicians on the repertoire of their choice. The new season's impressive line-up of guest artists includes **Sir Mark Elder** returning in December to conduct a stunning programme of Schreker, Debussy and Brahms in King's College Chapel and the internationally-acclaimed **Jac van Steen** who will conduct Verdi's Requiem. As part of the new developments, **Sian Edwards** is joining the Society as Artistic Advisor, a new role which is designed to offer greater support and coaching to our student Conducting Scholars.

James Jones, second year violinist, says: *'Having made the choice, as an aspiring violinist, to attend university rather than conservatoire, I was concerned about being able to continue to gain experience playing in a high-level orchestra. However, CUCO absolutely provided that and more, with unmatched opportunities to play ambitious programmes under esteemed professional conductors. What really made an impression on me was the sheer dedication and drive from each member of the orchestra to create something undeniably special in every concert. There was a tangible sense of being part of a team and something greater than oneself alone. CUCO is set to be even more exciting and challenging this year as we will now be called the Cambridge University Orchestra and will be performing symphonic repertoire as well as chamber orchestra repertoire.*

The Cambridge University Musical Society is one of the oldest and most distinguished university musical societies in the world. It offers a world-class musical education for members of the University nurturing the great musicians of the future. The Society supports 7 ensembles which includes a second Symphony Orchestra – *Cambridge University Sinfonia*, Wind Orchestra and a Symphony Chorus.

For further press information and interviews please contact Chloe Davidson: cnd26@cam.ac.uk / +44 (0) 1223 763420 /mobile: 07813 834455

Principal Guest Conductor – Sir Roger Norrington
CUMS Conductor Laureate – Stephen Cleobury CBE
Artistic Advisor – Sian Edwards

Trustees of the Cambridge University Musical Society – Stuart Laing (Chairman), Simon Fairclough, James Furber, Stephen Johns, David Pickard, Jo Whitehead, Liz Winter, Nigel Yandell