

Media Information
May 18, 2015

The BMW LSO Open Air Classics again a major success **Thousands witnessed the London Symphony Orchestra** **free of charge in Trafalgar Square**

London. The London Symphony Orchestra, with its Principal Conductor Valery Gergiev, performed to a capacity crowd of Londoners and visitors of all ages on the evening of Sunday 17 May in the striking setting of London's Trafalgar Square. The concert, free and open to everyone, was the fourth highly successful annual concert in the BMW LSO Open Air Classics series, the result of a unique partnership between the LSO and BMW. The programme was all Shostakovich, featuring his Symphony No. 1, Festive Overture, and movements from his Violin Concerto, with the captivating, young violinist Nicola Benedetti as soloist.

Some of Shostakovich's jazz suites, in a special arrangement by Gareth Glyn, were also performed, with members of the LSO joined on stage by young musicians from the LSO On Track scheme and musicians from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. LSO On Track is an initiative for young instrumentalists from across the ten East London boroughs, who are coached and trained by LSO players.

The event was presented by Paul Rissman who, along with the LSO's percussion section, encouraged the whole audience to join in with a performance of Shostakovich's The Gadfly, using a rhythm based thigh-slapping and clapping routine, demonstrated from the stage. Large screens mounted on either side of the stage, and towards the back of Trafalgar Square enabled the whole audience to witness the concert close up.

Dr Ian Robertson (HonDSc), Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, said:

"For almost half a century BMW has supported more than 100 major cultural projects worldwide. It is an intrinsic element of our engagement to be involved with the arts and foster broader understanding and appreciation of them. And what better way to do that, than with events like this. We would like to express our gratitude to the LSO for being such a great partner and can't wait to move into the fifth year with them."

Kathryn McDowell, Managing Director of the LSO, said:

"These unique Trafalgar Square concerts, the result of our partnership with BMW, are truly thrilling for the Orchestra and audience alike, and allow us to take this wonderful music out of the concert hall and into this remarkable setting in the heart of London. I know it is hugely exciting and valuable for the young musicians who took part, and I am delighted that LSO On Track, the initiative through which we created the orchestra for the opening ceremony of the London Olympics, continues to offer thrilling opportunities for the young people of East London. The LSO is grateful to the Mayor of London for supporting this event which has become a real musical highlight for the city."

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From Moscow to Seoul, via Milan and London to Munich and Berlin; distinguished conductors from Daniel Barenboim and Valery Gergiev to Zubin Mehta and Kirill Petrenko; from chamber concerts of contemporary music to a comprehensive programme of cultural and musical education – the cultural engagement of the BMW Group in the field of music is as multifaceted as it is sustainable. Longterm partners include internationally renowned opera houses and orchestras such as Bayerische Staatsoper, Staatsoper Berlin, Münchner Philharmoniker and the London Symphony Orchestra.

About BMW's Cultural Commitment

For more than 40 years now, the BMW Group has initiated and engaged in over 100 cultural cooperations worldwide. The company places the main focus of its long-term commitment on modern and contemporary art, jazz and classical music as well as architecture and design. In 1972, three large-scale paintings were created by the artist Gerhard Richter specifically for the foyer of the BMW Group's Munich headquarters. Since then, artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Olafur Eliasson, Jeff Koons, Zubin Mehta, Daniel Barenboim and Anna Netrebko have co-operated with BMW. The company has also commissioned famous architects such as Karl Schwanzer, Zaha Hadid and Coop Himmelb(l)au to design important corporate buildings and plants. In 2011, the BMW Guggenheim Lab, a global initiative of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, the Guggenheim Museum and the BMW Group celebrated its world premiere in New York. The BMW Group takes absolute creative freedom in all the cultural activities it is involved in for granted – as this is just as essential for groundbreaking artistic work as it is for major innovations in a successful business.

Further information: www.bmwgroup.com/culture and www.bmwgroup.com/culture/overview

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The BMW Group

With its three brands BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial and mobility services. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 30 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2014, the BMW Group sold approximately 2.118 million cars and 123,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2014 was approximately € 8.71 billion on revenues amounting to € 80.40 billion. As of 31 December 2014, the BMW Group had a workforce of 116,324 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy.

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