



EMBARGOED UNTIL 9am Friday 11 February 2022

Kanneh-Mason Family Honoured at the Association of British Orchestras Awards 2022

- **The Association of British Orchestras (ABO) has presented its prestigious ABO Award to 'The Kanneh-Mason Family'**
- **Nominated by their peers throughout the industry and celebrated with ABO/Classical Music Awards are former Executive Director of the London Mozart Players, Julia Desbruslais, Britten Pears Arts chief executive, Roger Wright, Matthew Sims, Head of Arts and Venues for Leeds City Council, and Chief Executive of the International Artist Managers' Association, Atholl Swainston-Harrison**
- **A Special ABO Award was also presented to ABO Chief Executive Mark Pemberton**
- **Presented by Classic FM presenter Myleene Klass and ABO Chair Simon Webb, the awards event marked the end of the 2022 ABO Conference which took place both in-person in Glasgow and online this week (9 – 11 February)**

As the **Association of British Orchestras** Conference ends today (Friday 11 February 2022), the industry body has announced the **Kanneh-Mason Family** as the recipient of its prestigious annual ABO Award. The award was collected by parents **Kaduata Kanneh** and **Stuart Mason**, on behalf of the entire family for their commitment and inspiration given to other aspiring young musicians and fellow parents.

Simon Webb, Chair of ABO said: 'With this year's Award the membership of the ABO took the opportunity to thank the remarkable Kanneh-Mason family and marked their unique and extraordinary role in inspiring us all with the presentation of the ABO Award. I am particularly pleased to have presented this award to Kadiatu and Stuart, members of their family have performed with many of the members of the ABO bringing joy and inspiration to us all, and will

continue to do so for years to come; it is the parents who have made this possible with their tireless commitment and their conviction for the value of music in their children's lives.'

Announced at a live event in Glasgow's Old Fruitmarket, City Halls on the evening of Thursday 10 February, the award ceremony also revealed the winners of the 2022 **ABO/Classical Music Awards**, celebrating the achievements of colleagues across the sector through nominations by their peers, and were presented with ABO Online Media Partner **Classical Music** and ABO Principal Media Partner **Classic FM**. The event was hosted by ABO Chair and BBC Philharmonic Director **Simon Webb** and Classic FM presenter **Myleene Klass**.

The ABO/Classical Music Award for 2022 **Orchestra Manager of the Year** was awarded to former Executive Director of the London Mozart Players, **Julia Desbruslais**. Following a bumper year for nominations in this category, she was praised for establishing a digital business model with the company's online 'Classical Club', launching a partnership with Black Lives in Music, demonstrating a deep commitment to social justice and community cohesion, and launching a series trail-blazing young soloists and offering free educational resources for young people in Croydon. The award coincides with her retirement from her role as Executive Director of the London Mozart Players.

The winner of the **Concert Hall Manager of the Year** category is Britten Pears Arts Chief Executive, **Roger Wright**, honouring Britten Pears Arts' work in keeping an active programme going throughout the pandemic. In 2020 despite the cancellation of the annual Aldeburgh Festival for the first time in its history, Britten Pears Arts moved much of its work online and re-opened to the public as soon as permitted, becoming one of the first organisations in the country to stage live performances in a Covid-safe environment. Public funding including the Culture Recovery Fund and the generosity of so many individual supporters made it possible for Britten Pears Arts to employ a huge number of freelancers including musicians and those in the wider creative community. In 2021 the Festival was also impossible to stage normally, but Britten Pears Arts presented socially distanced concerts from May and Summer at Snape saw the opening of the Dome Stage, a free outdoor performance space and in Snape Maltings Concert Hall daily concerts throughout August.

As has happened in the past, the awards panel were minded to also bestow a special commendation, this time in the category of **Concert Hall Manager of the Year**, with a special **Commendation Award** being presented to **Matthew Sims**, Head of Arts and Venues for Leeds City Council. Under Sims' leadership, Leeds Town Hall saw the continued efforts to tap into the tenacity and energy which had seen it rapidly re-open after the first lockdown and continue to host major concerts, opera and organ recitals, not least showcasing performers from the north of England. The venue will also receive a multi-million-pound refurbishment programme that will see the addition of

a new performance space, complete renovation and redecoration of the Grade 1 listed building's Victoria Hall as well as a complete overhaul of the organ. The closure of the Hall for this redevelopment in November last year followed an epic performance of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony.

The recipient of this year's **Artist Manager of the Year** was awarded to Chief Executive of the International Artist Managers' Association, **Atholl Swainston-Harrison**. The citation noted that the artist management profession has faced unprecedented challenges during the Covid crisis with a heroic effort needed to meet the countless trials and tribulations. Intriguingly, members chose to nominate someone outside their immediate circle for this award. Swainston-Harrison provided them with vital practical support in 2021 not just in relation to the fallout from Covid, but also the ongoing thorny problems thrown up by Brexit. Whether the challenge was Covid or Brexit, the nominators cited his role (with his team) in de-mystifying the labyrinth of rules and regulations; his collaborations across the music industry in the UK and with fellow associations in Europe; his involvement in lobbying government to mitigate current uncertainties; his crucial support for artist managements' hard-pressed financial directors. Atholl Swainston-Harrison was hailed as 'A role model for artist managers everywhere'.

The event also paid gratitude to its Chief Executive **Mark Pemberton, OBE** presenting him with a **Special Award** to mark the work he has done over the years in guiding organisations and members through the dual challenges of Brexit and the pandemic, to encourage him to continue his efforts, and to demonstrate the immense value that is placed on his work.

Simon Webb stated: 'The ABO Board, on behalf of the membership, can choose to make a Special Award for individuals who we feel have made a contribution to our sector that is worthy of particular note, and following strong encouragement from a significant number of the members, and I am delighted to have presented Mark Pemberton with this Special Award. Those of us who know and love the orchestral sector, audiences, musicians, ABO members, can be in no doubt of the importance of the work Mark has done, and continues to do in ensuring the orchestral sector thrives whatever the challenges we face. As we gathered for the first time in person for two years, we could not allow this opportunity to pass, and would like to add my personal thanks to Mark for all he has done during his time with us – long may his tenure continue.'

Over the past three days the 2022 ABO Conference has brought delegates from all areas of the classical music industry together to take an in-depth look at the challenges the orchestral sector has faced in this most unprecedented of years. Focusing on the theme of '**Rebound**' as the economy begins to rebound from the worst of the pandemic, the conference looked at whether the same applies to the

classical music sector and how British orchestras and other partners within the industry can work to come back stronger than ever with positive actions towards improving inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability. Through a series of keynote speeches and panel discussions the conference looked to the future with confidence as it examines the critical issues facing the classical music sector and discussed the support and innovation needed to forge an ambitious and sustainable future for the industry.

For further details on the conference and the work that the ABO does, visit www.abo.org.uk.

For further information and images please contact

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Notes To Editors:

ABO CONFERENCE AWARDS – 2022 WINNERS

ABO AWARD:

The Kanneh-Mason Family

Special Award

Mark Pemberton OBE, Chief Executive of the ABO

ABO/CLASSICAL MUSIC AWARDS:

Artist Manager of the Year

Atholl Swainston-Harrison, Chief Executive of the International Artist Managers' Association

Concert Hall Manager of the Year

Roger Wright, Britten Pears Arts Chief Executive

Commendation

Matthew Sims, Head of Arts and Venues for Leeds City Council

Orchestra Manager of the Year

Julia Desbruslais, former Executive Director of the London Mozart Players

About the Association of British Orchestras (ABO)

The ABO is the national body representing the collective interest of professional orchestras, youth ensembles and the wider classical music industry throughout the UK. Our mission is to enable and support an innovative, collaborative and sustainable orchestral sector by providing advice, support, intelligence and information to the people who make British orchestras a global success.
[@aborchestras](http://www.abo.org.uk)

About Classical Music

Classical Music is a one-stop hub for the classical music industry, providing news, opinion, resources and practical advice for music professionals all those who have an interest in classical music, from practitioners to managers, service providers and general enthusiasts. Our website offers daily news

updates from our in-house editorial team, regular commentary from specialist contributors, and advice and analysis from respected figures in the music industry and beyond.

www.classical-music.uk

About Classic FM

Classic FM is the UK's most popular classical music station, reaching 5.1 million listeners every week. Classic FM's programmes are hosted by a mix of classical music experts and household names including Alexander Armstrong, Moira Stuart, John Suchet, Myleene Klass, Bill Turnbull, Alan Titchmarsh, John Humphrys, Charlotte Hawkins, Aled Jones and Margherita Taylor. Since its launch in 1992, Classic FM has aimed to make classical music accessible and relevant to everyone and in doing so, introduce an entirely new audience to the genre. ClassicFM.com is the UK's biggest classical music website and has 3.5 million unique monthly web and app users. Classic FM is owned by Global. It is available across the UK on 100-102 FM, DAB digital radio and TV, on Global Player on your smart speaker, iOS or Android device and at ClassicFM.com. Source: RAJAR / Ipsos-MORI / RSMB Q3 2021.