

## MARIN ALSOP

My Lady and Chancellor,

Marin Alsop has recently made history in the world of music. With her appointment as Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony in 2007 she became the first woman to head a major American orchestra. This follows her continuing success as Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Principal Conductor. She is also a highly acclaimed recording artist. In 2005 she was named a MacArthur Fellow, the first conductor ever to receive this most prestigious American honour.

Ms Alsop was born in New York City and was educated at Yale University and the Juilliard School, where she took her Masters degree. She was initially a violinist but soon made her mark as a conductor, winning the first of many awards in 1989 when she was a prizewinner at the Leopold Stokowski competition in New York, and also received the Koussevitzky Conducting Prize at the Tanglewood Music Center.

Increasingly prominent conducting opportunities and appointments followed these first successes, and Marin Alsop's CV now lists many of the greatest orchestras in the world. She is a regular guest conductor with the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Her long-standing commitments in the United States include 15 years as Music Director of the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California, and 12 years with the Colorado Symphony, first as Music Director and now as Conductor Laureate.

However, Ms Alsop's profile is truly international. She has been Principal Guest Conductor with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, with whom she has made many recordings, and the City of London Sinfonia. Her many other guest conductorships are too numerous to recount here, but we may sense the scope of her reputation and influence by noting that they include the London Symphony and Philharmonic orchestras, the Tokyo Philharmonic, the Orchestre de Paris and the Bavarian Radio Symphony.

In the UK, Marin Alsop has made a huge impact on the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra during her time as Principal Conductor, broadening its repertoire in performance and recording, and enhancing its already impressive reputation, so that it has been described recently as 'the best UK orchestra outside London'. Here and everywhere she brings a highly individual and personal style to her conducting. Her ability to reach out from the podium to the public, and communicate her own 'boundless enthusiasm' for music, helps to explain why she has been described as 'a fantastic charismatic conductor' and 'a breath of fresh air in the music world'. But behind the charisma there is a perfectionist: Marin has a reputation for making the most of her rehearsals, especially in Britain where, for financial reasons, orchestras often have less time to practise. Here are some of the reasons why, after the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's performance at the 2005

BBC Proms, she was acclaimed by a critic as 'one of the finest conductors on the planet'.

In performance, and also in her critically acclaimed recordings, Marin Alsop has covered a wide range of music; in particular she is a great advocate of twentieth-century music. A favourite is Bernstein, whose Chichester Psalms she has recorded with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. With the same orchestra she has also recorded Bartok's Miraculous Mandarin and the symphonies of Kurt Weill. Other noteworthy recordings include a Brahms symphonic cycle with the London Philharmonic.

Ms Alsop's achievements have taken her to the first rank of world musicians, and have been marked by many awards and accolades, of which we can mention only some of the most distinguished. She was the first artist to win *Gramophone's* 'Artist of the Year' award and the Royal Philharmonic Society's Conductor's Award in the same year. In 2005 she won the Classical Brit Award for Best Female Artist. Her breadth of vision, and her social concerns, have also been recognised internationally: this year she was given a European Women of Achievement Award, and in 2006 was the only classical musician invited to join with heads of state and prime ministers at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. But Marin is best known, in the words of *Gramophone* magazine, as 'a deeply committed musician who combines a level of professionalism with a warmth and generosity of spirit that can't fail to endear her to musicians and her audiences'.

My Lady and Chancellor, I have the honour to present Marin Alsop, and ask you to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Music.