



PRESS RELEASE

27 July 2017

Academy of St Martin in the Fields Music Director Joshua Bell renews contract for a further three years

The Academy's 2017/18 season now on sale

The **Academy of St Martin in the Fields** is delighted to announce that **Music Director Joshua Bell's** contract has been renewed for a further three years.

Joshua Bell, one of the world's most celebrated violinists and a renowned figure on the international concert stage, has been the London-based chamber orchestra's Music Director since 2011. Joshua Bell is only the second person to hold the title, succeeding Academy founder Sir Neville Marriner who was in the role from the orchestra's formation in 1958 until 2011. His appointment cemented a long and acclaimed partnership with the Academy which began in 1998 when he was 21 years old. Their first collaboration was an album of Bruch and Mendelssohn violin concertos - Joshua Bell's first concerto disc - conducted by Sir Neville Marriner.

Since his appointment as Music Director of the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Joshua Bell has directed the orchestra in critically acclaimed programmes in the UK and internationally. Milestones have included Joshua Bell play-directing an electrifying performance of Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto* for the first time in 2015, and a sell-out tour to Australia in 2017, his first visit to the continent with the Academy. The tour won in two categories at the recent **2017 Helpmann Awards**, which recognise distinguished artistic achievement and excellence across the live performance sector in Australia. Joshua Bell won Best Individual Classical Music Performance, and the Academy won Best Chamber and/or Instrumental Ensemble Concert.

Joshua Bell and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields have recorded extensively for Sony Classical. Recordings include Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, Beethoven's *Fourth and Seventh symphonies* (his first recording as Music Director), and an album of Bach concertos. In 2016, Joshua Bell and world-renowned cellist Steven Isserlis performed Brahms' *Double Concerto* on a critically lauded tour with the Academy. The concerto was recorded at Cadogan Hall and included on the *For the Love of Brahms* album which was released worldwide on Sony Classical in the autumn of 2016.

Joshua Bell comments: *"The Academy is an incredible group of musicians, and they are like family to me – our tours together are always highlights of my year. Having served as the Academy's Music Director since 2011, I'm thrilled that we'll be continuing our relationship for another three seasons, and I'm very excited about the plans for 2017/18 that we're presenting today. Here's to the next chapter in our adventure together!"*

Academy Principal First Violin Harvey de Souza says: *"I am so thrilled that we will be working under Joshua's leadership for even longer! Playing and making music with Joshua is THE highlight for me and we are looking forward to discovering new repertoire with him."*



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The Academy's 2017/18 season

The Academy of St Martin in the Fields continues to be one of the world's most prolific touring orchestras throughout the 2017/18 season, presenting 'Chamber Music on a Grand Scale' on three continents. Highlights include concerts with **Music Director Joshua Bell**, the UK premiere of **Edgar Meyer's Overture for Violin and Orchestra** (also with Joshua Bell), dates with **Principal Guest Conductor Murray Perahia**, a US tour for the Academy's renowned **Chamber Ensemble** and several visits to Hamburg's prestigious new concert hall, the **Elbphilharmonie**.

Concerts with Music Director Joshua Bell

The 2017 Edinburgh International Festival sees Joshua Bell as Artist in Residence, including a performance with the Academy on **24 August 2017** at Usher Hall in which he play-directs Bruch's *Scottish Fantasy*, along with Beethoven's *Symphony No. 6 'Pastoral'* and Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*.

In early **September 2017** Joshua Bell and the Academy travel to Bucharest and Frankfurt for concerts featuring Bruch and Beethoven. In **November 2017** they return to London's Wigmore Hall and appear at the Cambridge Music Festival, before travelling to Germany and Iceland for their debut in Reykjavik's Harpa Concert Hall. This tour will include performances of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings* and Piazzolla's *Four Seasons of Buenos Aires*.

On **12 January 2018** at **Cadogan Hall**, Joshua Bell and the orchestra perform the **UK premiere** of **Edgar Meyer's Overture for Violin and Orchestra**, which was co-commissioned by the Academy and the Bravo! Vail Festival, where it was premiered in summer 2017. The programme is book-ended by Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 2 in D major*. The programme will also tour to Dublin, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham and Friedrichshafen in Germany. The tour culminates on **25 January** at Bristol's Colston Hall, and this concert will be recorded for broadcast the following evening on the BBC's, *Radio 3 in Concert*.

Touring activity further afield for Joshua Bell and the Academy in 2018 includes a 15-date US tour from **9 March 2018** and a tour of Asia beginning in late **May 2018**. Joshua Bell and the Academy's third annual residency at the Bravo! Vail Festival in the US takes place from **21 – 24 June 2018**.

Guest Artists

Following a sell-out critically acclaimed residency at London's Barbican in the 2016/17 season, featuring the complete cycle of Beethoven's Piano Concertos, **Academy Principal Guest Conductor Murray Perahia** returns to direct the cycle in Germany and Paris in **October** and **November 2017**. The tour will also feature other Beethoven works including *Symphony No. 1 in C major* and *Romance No. 2 in F major*, play-directed by **Academy Leader Tomo Keller**, and will include a return visit to Hamburg's prestigious new concert hall, the **Elbphilharmonie**.

Guest soloists this season include award-winning British violinist **Daniel Hope** performing Bruch's *Violin Concerto No. 1* and Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor* in Italy on **31 August** and **1 September 2017**.



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Violist **Brett Dean** performs Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante in E flat major* with **Academy Leader Tomo Keller** at the Malmö Live Concert Hall on **21 September 2017**, and captivating young cellist **Laura van der Heijden** joins the orchestra on **15 December 2017** at London's Kings Place for a programme including *Schumann's Cello Concerto in A minor*, as part of the annual *Cello Unwrapped* Festival. In early 2018 pianists **Lucas and Arthur Jussen** will perform concertos by Bach and Mozart on tour in Germany with the Academy, commencing in Berlin on **31 January 2018** and culminating in Eindhoven on **5 February**.

Academy Chamber Ensemble on tour

The Academy's world-renowned Chamber Ensemble, play-directed by **Academy Leader Tomo Keller**, continue their international touring schedule throughout the 2017/18 season. The ensemble visits Spain in **August 2017** to perform Rossini, Brahms and Schubert at the Torroella and Santander Festivals, and a 12-date US tour in **October 2017** sees the Ensemble perform works by Korngold, Shostakovich, Dvořák, Mendelssohn and Enescu.

Other concerts

The Academy of St Martin in the Fields returns each season to perform at the church from where it takes its name. On **11 November 2017** at St Martin-in-the-Fields, the orchestra joins **St Martin's Voices** for *Bach's Mass in B minor* by candlelight, part of the *Sound of St Martin's Autumn Festival*. On **30 March 2018**, the Academy and St Martin's Voices present a Good Friday performance of Bach's *St John Passion*.

Classic FM's Artists in Residence

As Classic FM's first ever Artists in Residence since 2015, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields are proud to continue their partnership with the UK's most popular classical music station in the 2017/18 season. This will include the recording of selected Academy concerts for broadcast on Classic FM's weeknight programme *The Full Works Concert*.

For further details and announcements of additional performance dates visit: www.asmf.org

For further information, review tickets and images please contact:

Rebecca Driver Media Relations

Tel: 020 7247 1894

Email: nasarene@rdmr.co.uk | rebecca@rdmr.co.uk |

Web: www.rdmr.co.uk