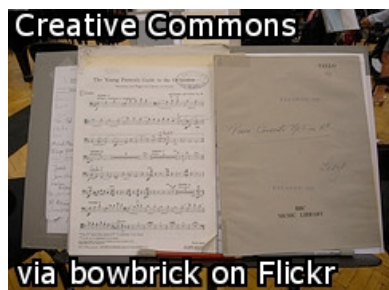


First woman to conduct oldest music festival

20th April, 2013



A woman will conduct an orchestra at the world's oldest and biggest music festival for the first time ever. The BBC Proms started 118 years ago, include 92 concerts over 8

weeks, but have never had a female conductor. American Marin Alsop will take charge of the orchestra for the final concert – the legendary Last Night of the Proms. This is a distinctly British occasion to celebrate the "pomp and circumstance" of Britain. Ms Alsop told the BBC: "I think the fact that I'm an American woman, conducting the last night of the Proms is really a statement." Talking of her achievement, she said: "I'm extraordinarily proud to be the first woman, but I'm also sad that it's 2013 and there still can be firsts for women."

The director of the Proms Roger Wright said he was happy to be part of changing the "man's world" of conducting. He said: "Marin hasn't been chosen because she is a woman conductor. She knows and loves the Proms." Ms Alsop said: "I always enjoy working with the British orchestral musicians and I'm particularly looking forward to interacting with the audience, who play such a crucial role in making this a night that is utterly unique and special. It is a great honour that I know will be a highlight for me." She added: "The whole world is watching you. You're addressing the biggest audience of your career. It's the nearest a classical musician gets to an acceptance speech at the Oscars."

Sources: BBC / Independent

Writing

Men have traditionally conducted orchestras. That tradition should not change. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

conduct / orchestra / music festival / legendary / celebrate / proud / achievement / man's world / musicians / interacting / audience / crucial role / unique / highlight

True / False

- A woman will conduct an orchestra at the world's oldest music festival. T / F
- The 118-year-old festival comprises 92 concerts. T / F
- The woman will conduct on the festival's important opening night. T / F
- The woman said her conducting was nothing to be proud of. T / F
- The festival director was happy to be changing the gender imbalance. T / F
- This will be the first time for the woman to work with British musicians. T / F
- The woman is looking forward to communicating with the audience. T / F
- The woman once gave a speech accepting an Oscar in Hollywood. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. include | a. especially |
| 2. legendary | b. comprise |
| 3. distinctly | c. key |
| 4. achievement | d. selected |
| 5. proud | e. unmistakably |
| 6. chosen | f. speaking to |
| 7. particularly | g. famed |
| 8. crucial | h. overjoyed |
| 9. addressing | i. crowd |
| 10. audience | j. accomplishment |

Discussion – Student A

- Would you like to play in a world-famous orchestra?
- What do you think of the fact no woman conducted at the Proms for 118 years?
- Do you think Alsop conducting at the Proms will change anything?
- Do you think it's difficult to conduct an orchestra?
- What do conductors do before a concert?
- Do you like listening to orchestras?
- What things are distinctly British?
- Is it sad that in 2013 there are still firsts for women?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. the world's oldest and biggest | a. I'm an American woman |
| 2. a distinctly | b. unique and special |
| 3. the fact that | c. musicians |
| 4. extraordinarily | d. firsts for women |
| 5. there still can be | e. speech |
| 6. the "man's world" | f. the audience |
| 7. orchestral | g. music festival |
| 8. interacting with | h. of conducting |
| 9. a night that is utterly | i. proud |
| 10. acceptance | j. British occasion |

Discussion – Student B

- Why are most (all) famous composers men?
- What differences do you think a woman conductor can bring to music?
- What other men's worlds need changing?
- What kind of person makes a good conductor?
- Which is better, an orchestral concert or a pop concert?
- Which is the world's best orchestra?
- What advice would you give to Marin Alsop?
- What questions would you like to ask Marin Alsop?

Spelling

- conduct an rhcosrtea
- the anldreeyg Last Night of the Proms
- a dtlciisnyt British occasion
- a etmeastnt
- talking of her tecievhnæm
- ixirtadenaloryr proud
- the drrioect of the Proms
- lryarupitcal looking forward to
- play such a liauccr role
- utterly neuqiu and special
- the biggest encuaied
- an ptceaecan speech

Answers – Synonym Match

1. b	2. g	3. e	4. j	5. h
6. d	7. a	8. c	9. f	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Traditionalist

You think a man should always conduct the world's oldest music festival. Tell the others three reasons why. Some traditions should never change. There are plenty more chances for women to conduct other orchestras.

Role B – Normal person

You think it should be normal for a woman to conduct an orchestra. Tell the others three reasons why. You also think tradition is silly – it gets in the way of progress. You think Ms Alsop will do a better job than a man.

Role C – Ms Alsop

You hate the fact that conducting is so male dominated. Tell the others three reasons why. You are shocked at why there have been so few women conductors and composers in history. You are shocked people want to stick to tradition – that only encourages sexism.

Role D – Concert goer

You don't care whether a man or woman conducts the orchestra. Tell the others three reasons why. You think it's great Ms Alsop is conducting. You hope she is the first of many conductors. You know women will bring something new and wonderful to conducting.

Speaking - Musician

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the musician you would love to be at the top at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- jazz saxophonist
- orchestra lead violinist
- flamenco guitarist
- classical sitar player
- concert pianist
- Peruvian pan pipes
- Chinese flute
- rock group drummer

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	T	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.