



Ambassador's Activities

2014

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Speech by HE Bernard Emié,
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom

at the Philharmonia Orchestra dinner

25 March 2014

David Whelton,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm very pleased to welcome you this evening to celebrate the Philharmonia Orchestra.

The reason for bringing you together today is twofold: firstly, to highlight this tremendous Francophile orchestra's programming of a concert series next season devoted to the seductive theme "City of Light: Paris 1900-1950", a journey through French music of that period. It was an exceptionally rich era for music, with composers as prolific as Claude Debussy and Olivier Messiaen [*prononcer "Messian"*], a veritable revolution closely bound up with the turmoil of the first half of the 20th century, a revolution not just in music but in every other artistic field as well.

And secondly, by being here this evening, you are lending your support to the Philharmonia for this unique series. Some of the greatest conductors, beginning with the orchestra's principal conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen, and the most talented soloists, ranging from Mitsuko Uchida to Pierre-Laurent Aimard, will be coming together to give exceptional concerts. The Philharmonia is also proposing a comprehensive programme that includes chamber music concerts, film screenings, a seminar and host of other events, not forgetting the educational aspect and the desire to give the greatest number of people access to cultural productions.

We would like to support the Philharmonia to help make next season a success, and we're actively involved in this.

Through this extraordinary season, the Philharmonia Orchestra is also helping to strengthen Franco-British friendship. Its international reputation is already established, but the recent production of Poulenc's opera *Dialogues des Carmélites* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris met with huge success, as a foretaste of what awaits us here in 2014-2015. It was also because of this close link between the Philharmonia and France that I wanted to host this dinner, here at the French Residence.

The Philharmonia Orchestra embodies the excellence of orchestral music, and this season will enable us to forge links with every artistic form.

In order for the music to cast its spell over an ever-wider audience through this repertoire – which is of central importance in classical music today and known throughout the world – and in order for this project to come to fruition, the Philharmonia Orchestra needs your support.

On behalf of the Philharmonia Orchestra, thank you for being here, and thank you in advance for your generous support. I now hand over to its Managing Director, David Whelton.

I wish you all an excellent evening./.